

**THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSOR  
ADDRESSED, IN A SERIES OF  
COUNSELS AND CAUTIONS TO  
THE MEMBERS OF CHRISTIAN  
CHURCHES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649548309

The Christian Professor Addressed, in a Series of Counsels and Cautions to the Members of  
Christian Churches by John Angell James

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**JOHN ANGELL JAMES**

**THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSOR  
ADDRESSED, IN A SERIES OF  
COUNSELS AND CAUTIONS TO  
THE MEMBERS OF CHRISTIAN  
CHURCHES**



THE  
CHRISTIAN PROFESSOR  
ADDRESSED,  
IN A SERIES OF  
COUNSELS AND CAUTIONS  
TO THE MEMBERS  
OF  
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

BY JOHN ANGELL JAMES.

NEW-YORK:  
D. APPLETON & CO.,  
200, BROADWAY.  
—  
1838.

## P R E F A C E.

---

THE substance of most of the chapters of this volume, was delivered in a course of sermons addressed to the church of which the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer. The seasons chosen for delivering them were those Sabbath mornings on which the Lord's Supper was administered; and this time was selected, because it may be supposed, that if ever the minds of Professing Christians are more than usually softened to receive the impression of practical truth, it is when the eucharistic emblems of which they are about to partake, stand uncovered before them, and as they silently point to the cross, say in the ear of faith, "*Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*"

When I look into the New Testament, and read what a Christian *should be*, and then look into the church of God, and see what Christians *are*, I am painfully affected by observing the dissimilarity; and in my jealousy for the honour of the Christian Profession, have made this effort, perhaps a feeble one, certainly an anxious one, to remove its blemishes, to restore its impaired beauty, and thus raise its reputation.

What my opinion of the prevailing state of religion in the present day is, will appear still more clearly in the following pages, and especially in the chapter devoted to the consideration of this subject. That evangelical piety is advancing and spreading over a wider surface, I have not a doubt: but what it is gaining in breadth, it is losing, I am afraid, in depth. Politics,

and their sad accompaniments, party strife and animosity ; trade carried on as it has been, with such rage of competition, and upon such a basis of credit, and to such an extent of speculation ; together with that worldly spirit to which an age of growing refinement and luxury usually gives rise, are exceedingly adverse to a religion, of which the elements are *faith, hope, love*. The church of Christ, in all the sections of it, is sadly mixed up with the world as to its spirit, and many of its customs ; and the great body of the faithful, are far less marked in their separation from the followers of pleasure, and the worshippers of Mammon, than they ought to be. "*Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,*" is the description of a religion too rarely to be seen in this day. A few years ago, an attempt was made to call the attention of the churches, to the subject of a revival of piety, and some efforts not wholly ineffectual were made to rouse the slumbering people of God, and induce them to seek for a more copious effusion of the Holy Spirit. But the call to united and fervent prayer, soon subsided amidst the busy hum of commerce, the noise of party, and the strife of tongues. Still, however, I believe, notwithstanding, that the cause of the Lord is advancing upon the earth, and that the work of grace is begun in many persons, whose lot and whose grief it is, to be far more occupied with things seen and temporal than accords with their happiness.

Some of the great masters of painting have manifested their skill in taking portraits of themselves. Conceive of one of those noble pictures, fresh from the artist's pencil, presenting in the magic of drawing and colouring, an almost speaking representation of the great original. By some neglect, however, it is thrown aside, and in its unworthy banishment, amidst the lumber of an attic, soon becomes covered with dust and dirt, till its beauty is disfigured, and its transcendent excellence is disguised. Still, in despite of these defilements, there is the likeness and the work-

manship of the immortal author, which, by a careful removal of the accidental adhesions, again shine forth upon enraptured spectators, as a glorious display of human genius. Is it a profane or unworthy simile, to say that a Christian in his present state of imperfection, is something like this? He is the image of God, as delineated by God himself, but O, how covered with the dust and impurities of his earthly condition; still, however, beneath that blemished exterior, there is the likeness and workmanship of the Great God, and which, when purified from every speck and disfigurement, He will present in its restored state to the admiring gaze of the universe.

I am anxious, that as much as possible of the imperfections of the Christian character should *now* be displaced in our earthly sojourn, and as much as may be, of its great excellence should *now* be seen. For if we profess as Christians, to have the mind of Christ, and to bear the image of God, how tremblingly anxious, how prayerfully cautious should we be, not by retaining any thing in our conduct, which is opposite to the Divine nature, to circulate a slander against God himself.

There is an ineffable beauty in the Christian character, as delineated by our Lord Jesus Christ in his personal ministry, and by his holy apostles, and there wants nothing but the tolerably fair copy of this in the conduct of all who bear the Christian name, to silence, if not convince, the spirit of infidelity. If the Christian church were composed only of persons whose characters were truly formed upon the model of the Sermon upon the Mount, or the Apostle's description of charity, there would be no need of such defences of Christianity as those of LARDNER, BUTLER, PALRY, and CHALMERS: men would *see* that Christianity came from heaven, because there was nothing like it upon earth. The gospel *is* its own witness, but then its testimony is so often contradicted by its professed believers, so far as their conduct

•



goes, that it is got rid of on the alleged unbelief of its friends, for it is said, if they believed it in reality, they would act in greater conformity to its requirements. When the Church of Christ, shall by its spirit and conduct, bear the same testimony for the gospel, as the gospel does for itself, then in the mouth of these two witnesses, shall the truth of Christianity be established, beyond, I will not say the power of refutation, for that it is already, but beyond the possibility of objection.

It is I think, extremely probable, that great injury is done to the Christian character and profession, by an abuse of the commonly admitted fact, that there is no perfection upon earth. By the aid of this humiliating concession, it is to be feared that many reconcile themselves to far more and greater imperfections, than are in any case compatible with consistency, and in some with sincerity. There is no perfection. But is there no command to us to seek after it? Is it not our duty to obtain it? The man who does not make it the object of his desire and pursuit; who does not wish and endeavour to obtain every kind of holy excellence, and in every possible degree, has reason to doubt the reality of his religion. *A professing Christian ought to be a character of universal loveliness*, in which no degree, not even the smallest, of any kind of known imperfection should be allowed to remain. It should be with him as to holy character, as it is with persons of much neatness and nicety as to their dress, who are not only rendered uncomfortable by great defilements, but who are uneasy till every discernible speck of dust is removed, and the whole garment presents an unsullied surface. There is such a thing as *moral neatness*, which, in addition to freedom from and abhorrence of greater sins, adds a sensitiveness to lesser ones, and a studious effort after universal purity. Perfection is our duty; perfection should be our wish, and perfection our aim; by which I mean to say that a Christian is not to allow himself to practice

any degree of any sin ; and is to seek every possible degree of every holy virtue. How different an aspect would the Christian Profession present, if all who made it were to make perfection of character their aim, and according to apostolic exhortation were to "*perfect holiness in the fear of God,*" and to stand forth before the world, "*blameless and harmless, the无可非议 sons of God.*"

It was not my intention in this work, to enter into the consideration of private, experimental, or doctrinal religion, so much as into its practical parts ; and to contemplate the believer rather as a professor, than a Christian, or at least, rather as a Christian in relation to the church and to the world, than in his individual capacity ; or in his retirements. To have followed precisely in the same track as Mr. JAY, in his lovely work, "*THE CHRISTIAN CONTEMPLATED,*" would have been worse than unnecessary.

I design this little volume as a sequel to "*The Church Member's Guide,*" and as an amplification of some topics touched upon incidentally in that work. It has been the fate of that book, to obtain for its author a notoriety which he certainly did not contemplate in composing it. Advantage has been taken, by one of the tricks of controversy, of the admissions of abuses to which, like every thing else that is good, the principles of nonconformity have been subjected in the practices of some of the churches, to turn these candid exposures, against the whole system of voluntary churches. This is a disingenuous artifice, a miserable sophism, a dangerous weapon, since no system in this world of imperfection can stand before it ; no, not even that set up by Apostles themselves ; for the same kind of evils, which I have acknowledged are to be found amongst us, are to be traced in all the primitive churches planted and superintended by inspired men.\*

\* Mr. Hall, in replying to one of his opponents in the controversy on "*The Terms of Communion,*" complains indignantly of the same species of disingenuous warfare. Speaking of some quotations that had been made from his own writings, he says—"It is obvious that he who wishes to judge of them fairly, must view them in their pro-

Perhaps the same means will be employed in reference to this volume. If so, those who use them are quite welcome to them. To guard, however, as much as possible against misconception, or misrepresentation, I would affirm, once for all, that I think professors of *all* denominations are much below their privileges, their principles, and their obligations; and that I have not addressed the contents of these chapters to my own flock, because I think they are behind others in piety, but because I wish them to be above and beyond the average religion of the day.

It will be expected, perhaps, that I ought to take some public notice of a volume of letters addressed to me by Mr. BENVENUEY. I do not know that the circumstance of my name being placed in the title page of that book, lays me under any obligation to notice its contents at all, much less to reply to them. I can have no hesitation, however, in briefly adverting to that singular production. My own opinion of it, and of the author's other works, accords in some measure with those which have been already expressed from other quarters. It is a book which can please none, and yet may improve all, if indeed they are in a mood to receive and profit by what is administered in so very gentle manner. It may be called, to use an artist's phrase, *a study* in church polity, in which among some things to commend, there are more to

per place, accompanied with their respective proofs and illustrations; and that to tear them from their connection, and exhibit them in their naked form, as though they had been expressed in the author's own terms, is a direct appeal to prejudice. The obvious design is to deter the reader at the outset, and to dispose him to prejudge the cause before it is heard. To range in the course of controversy insinuations and innuendos which have no other tendency than to impair the impartiality of the reader, is too common an artifice; but such an open barefaced appeal to popular prejudice is of rare occurrence. (Not rare now.) It is an expedient to which no man will condescend who is conscious of possessing superior resources. To this part of the performance, no reply will be expected, for though the author feels himself fully equal to the task of answering his opponent, he confesses himself quite at a loss to answer himself. Like a certain animal in the Eastern part of the world, who is reported to be extremely fond of climbing a tree for that purpose, he merely pelt the author with his own produce."—HALL'S Works, vol. II. page 220.