

Letter - to Jedediah Burchard

by Charles Finney

Finney emphasizes the importance of bold and faithful preaching in the face of opposition and difficulty.

Scripture: Matthew 10:27, John 16:8, Acts 2:2, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Ephesians 6:17, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 4:12, James 5:16, 1 Peter 4:11

Topics: "Revival", "Boldness in Preaching"

Description

Charles Finney writes to Jedediah Burchard about the powerful revival taking place, describing the intense emotional responses of individuals as they encounter the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes the importance of preaching truth boldly and directly, arguing that the effectiveness of ministry is often hindered by a softened approach to the gospel. Finney notes the opposition he faces but remains encouraged by the conversions happening in response to fervent prayer and the Spirit's movement. He urges Burchard to continue in faith and to trust in God's power to transform lives through the unvarnished truth of the gospel.

Transcript

To Jedediah Burchard

28 July 1826

[Present whereabouts unknown. It came up for auction at Swann Galleries in New York in a sale of Autographs on 6 November 1997. Oberlin College Archives obtained a photocopy.]

Jedediah Burchard (1791-1864) was a prominent revivalist who was associated with Finney in their early labours.

Address: Rev. Jedediah Burchard.

Sackets Harbor.

Jeff. Co. N. York.

Postmark: AUBURN. N.Y. July 28

Letter: Auburn 28th July 1826

My Dear Burchard.

Your letter came to hand
last night & 12 o'clock. I think I can in some
measure enter into your feelings & will try to
pray for you. The State of things here was
horrid when I came. But God seems to have
taken hold in his great strength.

Opposition is dreadful. Something like 36 had
obtained hopes previous to last evening.

At our meeting of inquiry last night the
blessed Spirit came like a "mighty rushing wind."
The people were thrown into awful consternation.

They Strewed the floor & rolled & writhed
in dreadful agony. It was wonderful to see
them come in to the Kingdom one after another
& begin to pray in dreadful distress for others
that lay around them. How many got into the
liberty I can not say, as the confusion & distress were
so great. Mr Lansing says he can count 12 that he
remembers. How many more there may be that came

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into the kingdom there I dont know-

To give you a description of this meeting were
impossible. Almost all the conversions here as yet
have occurred at, or immediately after a meeting of
inquiry. I have seen the same - in other places.

Almost all are converted on the spot, in direct
answer to prayer, to all appearance.

Church here not awake. Some even of them
oppose most bitterly. But O Dear Burchard,
God is here!! How it will eventuate God only
knows. They come out against me here, as usual,
in the newspapers. God have mercy on them.

difficulty

All their [difficulty] seems to be with my manner of exhibiting
truth - for they confess that it is the truth.

Now Burchard I am more & more convinced
every day that much, very much, & infinitely more
than has been supposed, is depending on the plain
pointed, cutting, severe manner of applying
truth to the conscience & heart. I believe that this
was the character of christ's preaching-

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This made them say "he hath a Devil & is mad
why hear ye him." If our ministers preach the
same gospel that he preached, why do so many
sinners love & sp[e]ak well of them? Not because
they are better [] nor because they preach in
a better mann[er] nor because human nature
is altered, nor has the true gospel become more
palatable to wicked men. I most solemnly
believe that the defect lies in the manner so far
as human instrumentality goes. Our ministers soften
down the tone of their preaching & this takes off
the edge for fear of giving offence. O may God

lead us all in the right way. "Be not afraid []
, says God, "lest I confound thee before them.["]
If a man fears to force home truth with all his
strength upon his congregation, I believe that his
unbelief will provoke the Spirit, that no blessing
will follow, "whatever is not of faith is sin" unless
we absolutely trust in God to give effect, & believe
that he will give effect to his word, we sin. O that
Ministers would take the sword of the Spirit out of its scabbard
& take of the garland of flowers from its blasing edges, they would
find that it would cut, & "pierce to the dividing assunder of
soul & spirit". This place & region is getting into a tremendous
uproar. A Revival has commenced in Cayuga. I have been there twice.

[along the left margin of page 3]

Several there, were converted many more convicted. People that come here from a
here

distance are smitten [here] & I hope they will scatter the fire

Lydia says give my love to Mr. & Mrs Burchard. Yours in haste. C. G. Finney

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/charles-finney/letter-to-jedediah-burchard/>

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