

The copy of the Gentleman's letters to Sir Thomas Dale, that after married Powhatan's daughter:

Honourable Sir, and most worthy Governor:

When your leisure shall best serve you to peruse these lines, I trust in God, the beginning will not strike into you a greater admiration, than the end will give you good content. It is a matter of no small moment, concerning my own particular which here I impart unto you, and which toucheth me so nearly, as the tenderness of my salvation. Howbeit I freely subject myself to your grave and mature judgment, deliberation, approbation and determination ...

Let therefore this my well advised protestation, which here I make between God and my own conscience, be a sufficient witness, at the dreadful day of judgment (when the secret of all men's hearts shall be opened) to condemn me herein, if my chiefest intent and purpose be not, to strive with all my power of body and mind, in the undertaking of so mighty a matter, no way led (so far forth as man's weakness may permit) with the unbridled desire of carnal affection: but for the good of this plantation for the honour of our country, for the glory of God, for my own salvation, and for the converting to the true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, an unbelieving creature, namely *Pokahuntas*. *To whom my hearty and best thoughts are, and have a long time been so entangled, and enthralled in so intricate a labyrinth, that I was even awearied to unwind myself thereout.* But almighty God, who never faileth his, that truly invoke his holy name, hath opened the gate, and led me by the hand that I might plainly see and discern the safe paths wherein to tread.

To you therefore (most noble Sir) the patron and Father of us in this country do I utter the effects of this my settled and long continued affection (which hath made a mighty war in my meditations) and here I do truly relate, to what issue this dangerous combat is come unto, wherein I have not only examined, but thoroughly tried and pared my thoughts even to the quick, before I could find any fit, wholesome, and apt applications to cure so dangerous an ulcer. I never failed to offer my daily and faithful prayers to God, for his sacred and holy assistance. I forgot no to set before mine eyes the frailty of mankind, his proneness to evil, his indulgency of wicked thoughts, with many other imperfections wherein man is daily ensnared, and oftentimes overthrown, and them compared to my present estate. Nor was I ignorant of the heavy displeasure which almighty God conceived against the sons of *Levi* and *Israel* for marrying strange wives, nor of the inconveniences which may thereby arise, with other the like good motions which made me looke about warily and with good circumspections, into the grounds and principal agitations, which thus should provoke me to be in love with *one whose education hath been rude, her manners barbarous, her generation accursed, and so discrepant in all nurture from myself*, that often times with fear and trembling, I have ended my private controversy with this: surely these are wicked instigations, hatched by him who seeketh and delighteth in man's destructions; and so with fervent prayers, to be ever preserved from such diabolical assaults (as I took those to be) I

have taken some rest.

Thus when I had thought I had obtained my peace and quietness, behold another, but more gracious temptation hath made breaches into my holiest and strongest meditations; with which I have been put to a new trial, in a straighter [more rigorous] manner than the former: for besides the many passions and sufferings, which I have daily, hourly, yea and in my sleep endured, even awaking me to astonishment, taxing me with remissness and carelessness, refusing and neglecting to perform the duty of a good Christian, pulling me by the ear, and crying: "why dost thou not endeavor to make her a Christian?" And these [voices?] have happened to my greater wonder, even when she hath been furthest separated from me, which in common reason (were it not an undoubted work of God) might breed forgetfulness of a far more worthy creature. Besides, I say the holy spirit of God hath often demanded of me, why I was created? If not for transitory pleasures and worldly vanities, but to labor in the Lord's vineyard, there to sow and plant, to nourish and increase the fruits thereof, daily adding with the good husband in the Gospel, somewhat to the talent, that in the end the fruits may be reaped, to the comfort of the laborer in this life, and his salvation in the world to come? And if this be, as undoubtedly it is, the service Jesus Christ requireth of his best servants; woe unto him that hath these instruments of piety put into his hands, and willfully despiseth to work with them. Likewise, adding hereunto *her great appearance of love to me, her desire to be taught and instructed in the knowledge of God, her capableness of understanding, her aptness and willingness to receive any good impressions, and also the spiritual, besides her own incitements stirring me up hereunto.*

What should I do? Shall I be of so untoward a disposition, as to refuse to lead the blind into the right way? Shall I be so unnatural, as not to give bread to the hungry? Or uncharitable, as not to cover the naked? Shall I despise to actuate these pious duties of a Christian? Shall the base fear of displeasing the world, overpower and withhold me from revealing unto man these spiritual works of the Lord, which in my meditations and prayers, I have daily made known unto him? God forbid

Now if the vulgar sort, who square all men's actions by the base rule of their own filthiness, shall tax or taunt me in this my godly labour: let them know, it is not any hungry appetite, to gorge myself with incontinence; sure (if I would, and were so sensually inclined) I might satisfy such desire, though not without a seared conscience, yet with Christians more pleasing to the eye, and less fearful in the offence unlawfully committed. Nor am I in so desperate a state, that I regard not what becometh of me; nor am I out of hope but one day to see my country, nor so void of friends, nor mean in birth, but there to obtain a match to my great content; nor have I ignorantly passed over my hopes there, or regardlessly seek to lose the love of my friends, by taking this course ...

But shall it please God thus to dispose of me ... I will heartily accept of it: as a godly tax appointed me, and I will never cease (God assisting me) until I have accomplished, and brought to perfection, so holy a work, in which I will daily pray God to bless me, *to mine, and her eternal happiness.*

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John Rolfe.