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ON SELFISHNESS.

The Fourteenth Yearly Epistle of the Johnstown Baptist Association.

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The Ministers and Delegates of the Johnstown Baptist Association to the Churches they represent, send Christian salutation :

Beloved Brethren,—The difficulty in writing this, our Fourteenth Anniversary Epistle, is not the lack of a subject on which to address you ; but, from the various subjects of paramount importance, which present themselves to our consideration, our difficulty is to make choice of the one best adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the Churches which we represent ; and at the same time to produce the greatest practical benefit to the various members of our widely extended community.

In our last Epistle we addressed you upon the subject of "*pecuniary indebtedness*," in which we expressed our conviction that it was wrong for a professor of religion, to neglect meeting his just liabilities, whether legal or moral, when they became due.

In the hope that our labour in that epistle has not been altogether lost ; nor its spirit received by you in vain ; but that the precious seeds thereof, though sown in weakness, have brought forth fruit creditable to the undertaking, we are induced to continue our remarks upon the same general principles of Christian morality, and address you upon the subject of **SELFISHNESS**.

The genius of the world, in which we live, is the spirit of selfishness ; while that of the gospel, which we profess, is the spirit of disinterested benevolence. These two are directly opposite the one to the other. The one seeks its own good only in harmony with the good of mankind : while the other seeks its own advantage, not only regardless of the good of others, but often at the expense of their rights.

This spirit of selfishness, to which we are all by nature pre-disposed, is not only fostered by imaginary necessities that surround us, but is also greatly promoted by educational habits. Hence that general disregard of Christian morality, and the low standard by which its merits are rated, even by members of the church.

That stern veracity, nice punctuality, ingenuousness, and moral honesty, which ought to characterize every Christian, and, without which, in ancient times, a man's religion was altogether vain, are now, alas ! often regarded as not indispensable in the behaviour of a professor of religion. A Christian's word, his yea, or his nay, was once as good as his bond ; and as sacred as his oath. Formerly, a Christian's representation of a subject, was as conformable to fact, as the image of a man in a mirror, is to his person ;