

ADVICE TO SERVANTS

*Who desire to serve "as the Servants of Christ,"
and "to do the will of God from the heart."*

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
Psalm cxix. 105.

I. REMEMBER THESE DANGERS TO SHUN THEM.

1. **EYE-SERVICE.** "Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart," Eph. vi. 6.

2. **DISHONESTY.** "Thou shalt not steal;" even in the smallest instance, Exod. xx. 15. "Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity," Tit. ii. 10.

3. **DECEIT AND LYING.** Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, attempted to deceive his master; for which he was punished by God, and became a leper all his days. Read his history, 2 Kings v. 20—27.

4. **SULLENNESS AND IMPERTINENCE.** "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, *not answering again,*" Tit. ii. 9.

5. **IMPATIENCE UNDER REPROOF.** Hagar having fled from her mistress Sarai, "the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands," Gen. xvi. 6, 9.

6. **CONNIVING** at the faults of your fellow servants. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him," Lev. xix. 17.

7. **SETTING OR FOLLOWING A BAD EXAMPLE IN THE HOUSE.** "One sinner destroyeth much good," Eccl. ix. 18. "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners," 1 Cor. xv. 33.

8. **IDLE AND FOOLISH CONVERSATION.** "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks," Eph. v. 4. "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," Matt. xii. 36.

9. **SLOTH AND SELF-INDULGENCE.** Christ our Lord thus warned his disciples against these and other sins:

“But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers,” Luke xii. 45, 46. “He also that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster,” Prov. xviii. 9.

10. WASTING YOUR MASTER’S GOODS. “When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost,” John vi. 12. “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful,” 1 Cor. iv. 2.

11. SLANDERING, OR DESPISING YOUR MASTER. “Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit,” 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

12. BOLDNESS IN DRESS AND MANNER. “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety,” 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

13. ACTING IN ANY WAY AGAINST THE LIGHT OF CONSCIENCE. “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons,” Col. iii. 25. “And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes,” Luke xii. 47. “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin,” James iv. 17.

II REMEMBER THESE DUTIES, BY THE GRACE OF GOD TO DO THEM.

1. OBEDIENCE. Eph. vi. 5.

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.”

Let it be punctual. As Abraham’s servant said, “Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master,” Gen. xxiv. 56. “As the cold of snow at the time of harvest, so is a faithful

messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters," Prov. xxv. 13.

Let it be active and diligent. "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," Rom. xii. 11.

Let it be willing and obliging. As Jacob's: "And ye know that with all my power I have served your father," Gen xxxi. 6. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men," Col. iii. 23.

Let it be respectful. "And with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ," Eph. vi. 5.

Let it be patient. "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God," 1 Peter ii. 18—20.

Let it be universal. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God," Col. iii. 22.

But let it in no case interfere with your obedience to God. "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men," Acts v. 29.

2. FIDELITY. Tit. ii. 10.

"Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity: that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

Be trustworthy in all things. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness," Levit. xix. 35. Joseph's master "left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat," Gen. xxxix. 6.

Be faithful in that which is least. "For he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much," Luke xvi. 10.

Be conscientious, strict, and upright, always and in every thing. "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee," Psalm xxv. 21.

3. GRATITUDE. Eph. v. 20.

"Giving thanks always unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

For your home, provision, respectability, and temporal comforts. “The living God giveth us all things richly to enjoy,” 1 Tim. vi. 17.

For whatever Christian privileges you may enjoy. “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord,” Psalm cxxii. 1. “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name,” Psalm c.

4. KINDNESS TO YOUR FELLOW SERVANTS. Eph. iv. 32.

“And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Forbearing with one another. “A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger,” Prov. xv. 1. “The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with,” Prov. xvii. 14. “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye,” Col. iii. 13.

Sympathy. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,” Gal. vi. 2. “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another,” Gal. v. 13.

Exciting one another to love. “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works,” Heb. x. 24. “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend,” Prov. xxvii. 17.

III. REMEMBER THESE ENCOURAGEMENTS HELD OUT TO YOU.

1. *Jesus became a servant to sinners.* “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men,” Phil. ii. 6, 7. See also the account of Christ’s deep humility, in washing his disciples’ feet, John xiii. 1—17. “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,” Matt. xx. 28. “For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth,” Luke xxii. 27.

2. *Jesus condescends to be your example.* “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps,” 1 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

3. *Jesus honours you with the title of his servants and his freemen.* “Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ,” Col. iii. 24. “For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also, he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant,” 1 Cor. vii. 22.

4. *God will take you under his special care and protection.* “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil,” 1 Peter iii. 12.

5. *God will not forget your services.* “He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured,” Prov. xxvii. 18. “Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free,” Eph. vi. 8. To each one of his faithful disciples Christ will say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord,” Matt. xxv. 21.

6. *God will make you blessings to those whom you serve.* “And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry; for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake,” Gen. xxx. 27. Joseph’s master “saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass, from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house, for Joseph’s sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field,” Gen. xxxix. 3—5. Read also about the Syrian captive maid, who was made a blessing to her master, 2 Kings v. 2—5.

7. *God will thus enable you to adorn and recommend the gospel.* “Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity:

that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," Tit. ii. 10.

8. *And God will give you to taste the sweets of godliness here and hereafter.* "For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8.

IV. REMEMBER THESE RULES, AND OBSERVE THEM CONSTANTLY.

1. *Never forget that without Christ you can do nothing.* "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit in itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing," John xv. 4, 5.

2. *Be constant and earnest in prayer for the Holy Spirit promised to you.* "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days, will I pour out my Spirit," Joel ii. 29. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," Luke xi. 13. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth," John xiv. 16.

3. *Engage in no part of your duty without prayer.* "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Jesus Christ concerning you," 1 Thess. v. 17, 18. Abraham's servant prayed, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham," Gen. xxiv. 10—12.

4. *Often lift up your hearts to God in the midst of your work.* "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint," Luke xviii. 1. Nehemiah regarded this duty: "Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven," Neh. ii. 4.

5. *In the fear of God, resist every temptation and tempter to evil.* "Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long," Prov. xxiii. 17. "Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," James iv. 7. Joseph said,

“There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Gen. xxxix. 9.

6. *Shun, as well as resist, every occasion and circumstance of temptation.* “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away,” Prov. iv. 14, 15. Thus Joseph acted: “And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her,” Gen. xxxix. 10.

7. *Be always employed.* “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil,” Eph. v. 16.

8. *Never be afraid of speaking the truth.* “The lip of truth shall be established for ever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment. Lying lips are abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight,” Prov. xii. 19, 22. “Lie not one to another,” Col. iii. 9.

9. *Do not be fond of change, or giving warning hastily.* “As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place,” Prov. xxvii. 8. “And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where,” etc., Gen. xiii. 10—13. He looked only to worldly advantage, and thus fell into sin, and exposed himself to suffering.

10. *Endeavour to feel for your master's trials, and to make yourselves helpful in them.* We have an example of this in David's servants, and the little Israelitish maid. “And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead,” etc.; 2 Sam. xii. 18. “And she said unto her mistress, Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy,” 2 Kings v. 3.

11. *Be not talkative.* “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin; but he that refraineth his lips is wise,” Prov. x. 19.

12. *Remember, the eye of God is always upon you.* “O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,” Psalm cxxxix. 15, 23, 24. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,” Prov. xv. 3.

13. *Never neglect secret prayer.* "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet," etc., Matt. vi. 6.

14. *Make daily use of the word of God.* "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night," etc., Josh. i. 8.

15. *Make conscience of keeping holy the sabbath day.* "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy," etc., Ex. xx. 8—10. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, etc.: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord," etc., Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

V. REMEMBER WHAT THE WORD OF GOD SAYS OF SERVANTS.

1. OF GOOD SERVANTS.

As of Eliezer in Abraham's house. See Gen. xxiv.

Jacob in Laban's house. See Gen. xxx. 27.

Joseph in Potiphar's house. See Gen. xxxix. 1—10.

Moses in God's house. Num. xii. 7; Heb. iii. 2, 5.

David in Saul's house. See 1 Sam. xviii. 5.

Obadiah in Ahab's house. See 1 Kings xviii. 3, 4.

Naaman's maid and servants. See 2 Kings v. 2, 3, 13.

Nehemiah in the king of Persia's service. See Neh. i. ii.

Daniel in Darius's service. See Dan. vi. 4.

The servant in the centurion's house. Luke vii. 2.

2. OF BAD SERVANTS.

As of *quarrelsome servants.* See Gen. xiii. 7.

Deceitful and dishonest servants. See 2 Kings v. 20—27.

Sullen servants. See Job xix. 15, 16.

Proud and self-willed servants. See Prov. xxx. 21, 22.

Remember, if you are a Christian servant, much more is fairly expected of you,—for the example of your fellow-servants,—for your duty to your earthly Master,—and for the honour of your heavenly Master. See Matt. v. 45.

Let your light shine. Godliness shines bright in a Christian servant. Finally, weigh much and often this one question, How may I behave as a servant, so that my master's house may be blessed the more for my being in it?