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FRIENDLY COUNSEL

TO

**CHRISTIANS,**

Who desire to do good

TO THE

**SOULS OF MEN.**



PITTSBURGH.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THAT it is the indispensable duty of every christian to warn impenitent sinners of their danger, and persuade them to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, will appear from several considerations:

1. *We are required to exhibit in our lives the spirit of Christ.* “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” The spirit of Christ, as it shines through the great work of redemption, resolves itself into these two simple emotions: COMPASSION FOR SINNERS, and ZEAL FOR THE HONOUR AND GLORY OF GOD. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” And while tasting the agonies of that bitter cup, his prayer was, “Father, glorify thy name.” It was, that mercy might be extended to the guilty, consistently with the honour and glory of God, that he laid down his life. Behold him, deeply feeling the dishonour done to God, by ungrateful and rebellious men, constantly reproving sin, weeping over the impenitence and hardness of heart of his countrymen, and even exerting his power to drive out those who were profaning the temple. And He says, “If any man will

come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and *follow* me." To *follow* Christ is to imitate his example. Hence, unless we follow Christ, in these particulars, we have no right to be called after his name. And, this we must do, *to the extent of our ability*, and at the expense of any personal sacrifice, not excepting, if need be, even *our own lives*. This is the true spirit of the gospel; and if it were carried out in the life of every professor of the religion of Jesus, the millennial glory would soon appear.

2. *We are required to love God with all our heart, soul, might, mind, and strength*. When we love a friend, we are careful of his honour. If we hear him defamed, or lightly spoken of, or see him ill-treated, it gives us pain. We take part with him, and vindicate his character. Now, we see God dishonoured, and his goodness abused, continually. Multitudes of impenitent sinners around us habitually cast off his authority, and refuse to honour him, as the moral governor of the universe. What can we do more for his honour and glory, than by reclaiming these rebellious subjects of his government, and bringing them back to loyalty and obedience?

3. *We are required to love our neighbour as ourselves*. Now, we profess to have seen the lost condition of dying sinners. We

think that God has taken our feet from the "horrible pit and miry clay." We profess to believe that all who have not embraced Christ, are every moment exposed to the horrors of the second death. Can we love them *as ourselves*, and make no effort to open their eyes to their awful danger, and persuade them to flee from it? Said a young man, "I do not believe there is any truth in what they tell us about eternal punishment; nor do I believe christians believe it themselves. *If they did, they could not manifest so little concern about it.*"

4. *The business of reclaiming a lost world, is committed to the church, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit.* It is the business of the church to apply "the truth" to the consciences of lost sinners. It is the office of the Spirit to make it effectual to their salvation.— "The spirit and the *bride* [the church] say *come.*" And even the hearer of the word is allowed to say "*come.*" Rev. 22: 17. The scriptures recognize the conversion of the sinner as the work of the christian. "*He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*" Jas. 5: 20. "*Others save with fear; pulling them out of the fire.*" Jude 23. "*Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*" Ps. 51: 12, 13. It is

true, we cannot, of our own power, convert souls. But, if we are faithful in the use of the means of God's appointment, he will make use of us as instruments for accomplishing this great work. Every one who has truly come to Christ, *knows the way*, and can direct others to him. And the personal application of the truth to the conscience of the sinner, is often as efficacious as when spoken from the pulpit.

Now, if this be a plain, positive duty, it cannot be neglected with impunity. God will not bless his children while they refuse to obey him. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." You may spend all your time on your knees, while living in the neglect of a plain duty, and get no blessing. We cannot expect to enjoy the presence of God, while we refuse to point sinners to Christ. The spiritual barrenness which reigns so extensively in the church, may doubtless be attributed greatly to the neglect of this duty, both on the part of pastors and people. If then christians wish their own hearts revived, they must try to persuade others to come to Christ. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Prov. 11: 25. If we wish to maintain constant communion with God, we must live in the habitual exercise of the spirit of Christ.

But, see that you do not mistake the spirit of Christ. Many christians content themselves with speaking to the impenitent whenever they meet them under favourable circumstances, in the ordinary intercourse of life. This is doubtless a duty; but it is not the *extent* of duty. It is only following *part* of the example of Christ. He *came* "to seek and to save that which was lost." "He *went about*, doing good." Is it not, then, the obvious duty of every one of his followers, to *seek* opportunities of conversing with the impenitent upon the great subject of their souls' salvation? The primitive christians carried out this principle in its fullest extent. In the 8th chapter of Acts, we read that the church at Jerusalem were all scattered abroad, except the apostles. "And they that were scattered abroad, *went every where*, preaching the word." And afterwards, in the eleventh chapter, 19th verse, we hear of them as far as Phenice and Cyprus, where they had travelled, preaching [in the Greek *talking*] the word as they went. It is to be particularly remarked that these, or at least, most of them, were the private members of the church; for the apostles still remained at Jerusalem. And what was the result of these joint labours of the whole church? Revivals of religion immediately spread all over the land of Judea and its vi-

city. And so might we see revivals spreading over this land; and continuing, with increasing power, and multitudes of sinners converted, if the church, *as one*, united in Christ, would come up to her duty. Nor would it stop here. The fire thus kindled would burn brighter and brighter, and extend, with increasing rapidity, till it spread over the whole world. Should not all private christians then, as well as ministers of the gospel, consider themselves placed, to some extent at least, in the situation of watchmen upon the walls of Zion? If they neglect to warn sinners, will they be guiltless of the blood of souls? How can they meet them at the bar of God? Ezek. 33: 1-9.

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As this work is one of great responsibility, Christians should enter upon it with the solemnities of the judgment day before them. To aid them in preparation for so important a duty, the following hints are given:

1. Endeavour to *get a deep and moving sense of the dishonour and contempt done unto God, by the impenitence and unbelief of the multitudes that surround you.* They are subjects of his moral government, living at enmity with him, and in open rebellion against his authority. Think how a parent is dishonoured by the disobedience of a child. Yet, earthly parents are weak and sinful creatures like their children. How much greater the dishonour cast upon an infinitely holy God, by the disobedience of the creatures of his power. Enter into the feelings of the Psalmist, and of

the weeping prophet, who gave vent to their grief in such strains as these: "I beheld the transgressors, and was *grieved*; because *they kept not thy word.*" "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, *because they keep not thy law.*" "But, if ye will not hear, my soul shall *weep* in secret places *for your pride.*" Psal. 119:136, 158. Jer. 13:17. Remember also that God has "*set a mark* upon those that *sigh and cry* for all the abominations that are done in the land; and that they only shall escape in the day of his wrath; for he will begin his judgments at his sanctuary. Ezek. 9:4.

2. *Realize continually the dreadful condition of the impenitent*, as represented in the scriptures. See them, in the midst of the full blaze of gospel light, blindly rushing down to eternal death. View them as the Bible views them, "*condemned already*;" John 3:18; *already "lost*;" and in the most imminent danger, every moment, of



being beyond recovery. See them wearying the patience and forbearance and long suffering of God, by obstinately refusing to accept the salvation he has provided at an infinite expense. Remember the "hole of the pit whence you were digged;" and that, but for the free, rich, and sovereign grace of God, you would now have been in the same condition; and show your gratitude by "teaching transgressors" God's ways. Ps. 51:13.

3. *Enter into the feelings of Christ.*

Endeavour to know the "fellowship of his sufferings." Be with him in his fasting and temptation; his extreme poverty; his exhausting labours; his mountain retreats for prayer, during the season devoted by the world to repose. Behold him every where meeting the opposition, malice, and scorn, of the very beings he came to save; see him weeping over their obstinacy and unbelief. Be with him in his agony in the garden; in the cruel la-

cerations of his body; in his racking pains upon the cross; but, above all, in the double anguish of his holy soul, while enduring the hidings of his Father's face. Remember that it was his compassion for sinners which led him to suffer all this. He saw the *whole* of that ruin into which they are fallen. He knew the worth of the soul. He knew the unutterable horrors of the "worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched." He requires you to feel as he felt. Phil. 2:5. "Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ." "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." Rom. 8:17. Sympathize also with the apostle Paul, who said, "I have *great heaviness and continual sorrow* in my heart," in view of the obstinate impenitence and unbelief of his countrymen. Try also to imbibe his spirit and feelings, when, at Ephesus, by the space of three years, he ceased not to warn eve-

ry one, night and day, *with tears*, both publicly and from *house to house*.—Acts 20:31, 20. Get your heart deeply imbued with such sentiments and feelings as these, and instead of finding it a difficult task to open your mouth to impenitent sinners, you will feel, with the prophet, that the word of God is in your hearts, *like a fire shut up in your bones*. Jer. 20:9.

4. Think much of the *love of God towards perishing sinners*. Do not think that He delights in the punishment of the wicked. Their misery is the necessary and unavoidable consequence of sin. At an infinite expense, He has provided a way of deliverance from sin and misery. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:17. And this wonderful deliverance is freely offered to all. “*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely.” “Him that

cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Rev. 22:17. John 6:37. But, as if this amazing display of divine love were not sufficient to convince His rebellious creatures that He does not delight in their destruction, He has declared with an oath, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. 33:11.—While you fellowship with God in this deep solicitude for the eternal welfare of sinners, tell them of it as He does; expostulate with them, "why will ye die?" entreat them to avail themselves of his divine benevolence—"Let *him that heareth*, say, Come."

5. See that you *do not indulge erroneous views of the sovereignty of God*. That God is a moral governor, and that he controls all events according to his own sovereign will, is a doctrine evidently taught in the Holy Scriptures. But this sovereignty is exercised in such a manner as to be per-

fectly consistent with the character of man, as a free moral agent. If the free agency of the creature were taken away, God would no longer be a *moral* governor. If sinners are lost it is by their own voluntary choice. God has given them a law which, if obeyed, would make them perfectly happy, as the angels in heaven. They have broken this law, and exposed themselves to its penalty, which is eternal death. But, the Lord Jesus, in his abounding and infinite love, has satisfied the demands of this law, and opened a way of salvation to all who will accept of it, as a free gift of God's grace. This salvation is freely offered to all. All might partake of it, "*if they would.*" Matt. 23:37. But, such is the stubbornness and pride of the natural heart, that all mankind obstinately refuse to accept of salvation, on the only terms upon which God can bestow it, and preserve the rectitude of his moral character. Would it not, therefore, be

doubly just, notwithstanding this wonderful provision for their salvation, if God should leave all mankind to perish in the ruin which they have brought upon themselves; and from which they refuse to accept deliverance? But, here is compassion like a God! He determines to make one effort more to save lost sinners. He sends his Holy Spirit to incline their hearts to embrace the salvation so freely provided in the gospel. But, He operates upon the heart of the sinner in perfect accordance with the natural faculties of the soul. He violates none of the laws of mind. And his operations are simultaneous with the action of the sinner. No sinner is ever saved contrary to his own will. The renewing energy of the Spirit is exerted just as the healing power of Christ was manifest in the case of the man with the withered hand. Christ commanded him to stretch it out. He obeyed, *and in the act of obedience*, new life and

energy were imparted to the arm, which was of itself perfectly prostrate and powerless. The sinner is commanded to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet, it is manifestly plain, that, while the sinner remains inactive, upon the ground that he can do nothing, this work will never be wrought in his soul. It must be *in the act of obedience*. When Christ commanded the man to stretch forth his hand, if he had replied, "Lord, it is withered and lifeless, I *cannot* stretch it out;" and so refused to make the effort, it is perfectly obvious that it never would have been healed. And so, when God commands the sinner to repent, and believe in Christ; if he says, "I *cannot* repent—I *cannot* believe;" and so refuses to make the attempt, *he can never be saved*. His *will not* is *his cannot*. The only answer we can give a sinner, in such a case, is, if he *will not* repent and believe in the Lord

Jesus Christ, he *must be lost*, for not *obeying* God!

Although the conversion of the sinner is the sovereign act of God; yet this sovereignty is not exerted *arbitrarily* or *capriciously*. God has appointed certain means to accompany certain ends. He has declared with an oath that the conversion of sinners is agreeable to his will. But this, he has appointed to be accomplished through the agency of his word and spirit. He has committed his word to his people; and promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it. Now, what have we to do, but to lay divine truth upon the conscience of sinners, and ask God for his Holy Spirit to make it effectual to their salvation? When and after we have done these, *then* is our time to repose upon his sovereignty in disposing, according to his infinite wisdom, of the means we have used, and of the sinner on whom they have been used. Our skirts are then clean of his blood.



6. Endeavour to get clear and experimental views of *the nature of that great moral change* called conversion. On this point much misapprehension prevails, with the impenitent; even those of them who have been well instructed in the doctrines of Christianity. And, it is greatly to be feared that the import of the terms in which they are usually addressed, as, “come to Christ;” “Give your hearts to Christ;” “Submit yourselves to God;” “Give yourselves away to him,” &c. are not generally understood. It is to be feared also that there is great misapprehension as to the manner of the Spirit’s operations. Many sinners expect to be acted upon by some sensible miraculous impulse, creating anew all the faculties of the soul. But this every Christian knows is a vain expectation. This “new birth” consists simply of “*Repentance* towards God, and *faith* towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” Repentance is a sincere and heartfelt

sorrow for sin, on account of its odious nature, as committed against a holy God; with a steadfast determination to forsake it. Faith is a belief "*with all the heart*" in Jesus Christ, as the only Lord and Saviour; and an acceptance of him in these offices, *with all the heart*.—Acts 8:37. Rom 10:10. These exercises are accompanied with an entire renunciation or giving up of "self," and all selfish objects; a giving away of ourselves and all we have to God; with a determination henceforth to live for "the Lord," and not for ourselves. Rom. 14:7. It is in fact literally *forsaking all* for Christ. Not a *being willing* only, but an actual forsaking of all; not considering ourselves or any thing we have as our own; but holding ourselves in readiness, whenever the glory of God requires it, to give up all we have, property, friends, and even our own lives.

7. Cherish a deep and abiding *sense of your dependence upon the Spirit of*

*God*, as the author of a right spirit in yourself and of success with others. Without his gracious influences upon the hearts of sinners, all your efforts for their salvation will be vain. If you go about the work relying upon your own strength, you will utterly fail. God will not encourage a self-confident, self-seeking spirit, in his children. “*I can do all things,*” says the apostle Paul, “through Christ which strengtheneth me.” A sense of your dependence, will have a tendency to keep you humble. It will enable you to see your own impotence—cause you to be importunate in prayer, and to give all the glory of your success to God. The labours of such a spirit God will bless.

8. *Be much in prayer.* This will be the great secret of your success.—Meditate much upon the amazing promises of God, in relation to prayer.—Exercise strong and unshaken confidence in these promises. Try their re-

ality, by actually putting forth the prayer of faith, for the conversion of sinners. *Spend much time in prayer.* No Christian ever became eminent in this holy exercise, without visiting his closet frequently. And, if you feel the burden of dying immortal souls pressing upon you, your heart will continually rise up to God for the outpouring of his Spirit on them. *A man of prayer* carries *omnipotence* in his bosom. The Holy Ghost *dwells* with him. All obstacles melt away before the spirit of prayer. There is, as it were, a *heavenly atmosphere* about such a person, which fills even opposers with awe. Before you go out to converse with the impenitent, *first* visit your closet, and obtain evidence in your own soul of the presence of God to go with you. Much depends upon this; for if the Spirit of God does not go with you, your labour will be lost. However, do not make your want of feeling an excuse for neglecting the duty. your soul may be blessed in the

very act of discharging it, for the Lord commended her, who did "what she could."

Permit a few suggestions respecting the MANNER of performing the duty enjoined, "let him that heareth say, come:"

1. Go out in a spirit of simple and humble dependence upon God, but with the *expectation of success*. By so doing, you will greatly honour God; for in no way can he be so highly honoured by his people, as by a strong confidence in the efficacy of his word and spirit, and by an unwavering faith in his grace and promises; nor can he be more dishonoured than by the unbelief of his own children? "Be strong in the Lord." This will make you as bold as a lion. It will inspire you with a courage and patience which no obstacles can daunt, and no opposition overcome. It will enable you to say with the Psalmist, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

“The God of Israel is the strength of his people.”

2. Improve the *most favourable opportunities* for conversing with the impenitent. “A word spoken in due season, how good is it!” Prov. 15:23. It is generally advisable to visit them at their houses, at those hours when they are least encumbered with business. When the mind is burdened with care, and the chilling influence of worldly pursuits exerts its full power, it is very difficult to reach the conscience. Yet, do not carry this so far as to neglect opportunities for doing good, through an excessive fear of doing harm.

3. Perform this duty with a *tender melting spirit*. This was the feeling of the the apostle Paul. “I have *great heaviness and sorrow of heart*—for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Rom. 9:2, 3. “By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one day and night, *with tears.*” Acts 20:31. “Out of much affliction

and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with *many tears*." 2 Cor. 2:4. "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you *even weeping*, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ." Phil. 3:18. Such a spirit as this might melt a heart which would be provoked to opposition by a *harsh imperious* manner. Approach the impenitent, not in the assuming attitude of a teacher, but with the kind and tender exposition of a friend and brother. Let even the *tone of your voice* indicate both your low estimate of yourself, and the tender regard you feel for their souls. Even the same words which would provoke anger and opposition, when spoken in a loud and bold strain, would touch the heart, if advanced in a modest *under tone*. "A *soft* answer turneth away wrath." Prov. 15:1. "A word *fitly spoken* is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Prov. 25:11.

4. *First* ascertain, by kind and familiar inquiries, the *present spiritual*

*condition* of the person with whom you converse: his knowledge and admissions of the fundamental doctrines of christianity, and his feelings and his determinations in relation to the interests of his soul. For introducing your subject, no better course can be recommended than to follow the example of our Saviour. He improved every opportunity for drawing out serious reflections from the most common occurrences of life. By the replies made to these reflections, you can form some estimate of the state of feeling. If you discover any appearance of tenderness, you may safely proceed with faithful, affectionate, direct personal questions. But, if great insensibility is manifest send up your heart to God for direction, while you use that "prudence which is profitable to direct." The insensibility only shows, that there is the greater necessity, that some how or other, the power of the gospel should be brought to their hearts. By unnecessary ab-



ruptness, in cases of this kind, you may defeat your object.

5. If the individual with whom you are conversing is *ignorant of the great fundamental* doctrines of christianity, endeavour to explain to him, in as simple and brief a manner as possible, those great truths which it is necessary for him to believe, in order to become a christian. Acquaint him with his true condition, as a lost and ruined sinner, and point out the only way of salvation through Christ. Try to make him understand the nature of true conversion. But, by no means enter into general and irrelevant discussions; this would defeat your whole purpose, by turning off the attention of the sinner from the consideration of his own personal state before God. Endeavour, in the most direct manner possible, to get at the *conscience* of the impenitent. This is generally a most difficult matter. You will often find every avenue of approach most strictly guarded, and most cour-

ageously defended. Your attention will be diverted by speculations upon doctrine; by scattered conversation about the inconsistent conduct of professors; the externals of religion; or something else entirely foreign to the personal interests of the individual.— But do not suffer yourself to be drawn into an argument upon any of these matters. Ply the truth to his conscience, to make him feel that his controversy is with God. “For every man shall bear his own burden.” Gal. 6: 15. “Every one shall give an account for himself unto God.” Rom. 14: 12. Be especially careful that you do not make yourself the offended party, and treat him as if he had injured you. Convince him that *he himself* is a lost sinner, already sentenced by the word of God, and every moment exposed to the agonies of eternal death.— Show him his absolute need of a Saviour. Press upon him the duty of immediate repentance and faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ; and the danger and guilt of every moment's delay. Try to explain to him, by familiar illustrations, what is meant by repentance and faith in Christ. Describe the *feelings* of the true penitent, and give him, if possible, an experimental view of faith. This every christian can do, who has much experience of these emotions in his own soul. Show him that every moment while he rejects the salvation offered in the gospel, he is committing a new act of aggravated rebellion against God. Strive to bring him to a solemn stand; and if possible get him to take *some step* which will manifest his determination to put off this great work no longer. This first step may be an attention to some particular duty; such as closet or family prayer, or attendance upon a particular meeting. Yet, the utmost caution should be observed, that he may not mistake this direction for the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Show him

that he is an enemy to God; and that he can do nothing pleasing in his sight, till he ceases his rebellion and opposition to his government, by repentance and unconditional submission. You cannot too strenuously enforce the awful truth, that all which an unconverted person does is sin. Yet, show him that he is under the most solemn obligation, not only to pray, but to perform every christian duty; and that his impenitence and unbelief do not, in the least, release him from this obligation. Endeavour to remove the impression that a long season of distress must necessarily precede conversion; or that the work requires a series of protracted efforts. On the day of Pentecost three thousand were converted in a few hours; and the jailer believed and was baptized *rejoicing* with all his house, *the same hour* that he was brought under the influence of the truth. Show him that his only hope is in Christ; and that he can do nothing to recommend himself

to the favour of God. He must come as a sinner; acknowledge the justice of God in his condemnation, and cast himself upon His mere grace, through the atoning blood of Christ. He can make himself no better. Staying away from Christ to get more conviction or feeling, (instead of coming to Christ as he commands,) is sin, and only aggravates his guilt. Whatever may be his anxiety, his prayers, or his tears, he is continually irreconciled to God, so long as he refuses to accept of Christ, the only meritorious cause of salvation.

6. Most unconverted persons have *some particular idol*—some one object upon which their affections mainly centre. This above all others, they are unwilling to give up. If possible, ascertain *what* this is. In some, it is the love of pleasure; in others, the love of wealth; in others, self conceit, the pride of independence, ambition of worldly distinction; or some other favourite ob-

ject of carnal enjoyment. You will frequently meet with persons who have such an idol, and yet say they wish to be christians; that they love Christ and are willing to give him their hearts.— With such, your first object should be to convince them that they are *deceived* in supposing they wish to become christians. Until this is done, it is impossible to approach their consciences. The most effectual way to accomplish this, is to explain to them what is meant by “forsaking all” for Christ; [Luke xiv. 33.] and then proceed to inquire whether they are willing to give up this or that object, until you discover the darling idol of their hearts. Then bend all your energies to that point. If you can persuade them to give up their favourite sin, they will soon make an entire surrender of every thing else.

7. Keep a supply of *tracts appropriate* to the various circumstances of impenitent sinners; and leave with the

person with whom you have been conversing, one adapted to his case.— This is of great importance as the reading of it will tend to fix upon his mind the impression your conversation may have made, and lead him to compare it with the word of God.

8. If circumstances do not forbid it, pray with the individual with whom you have been conversing before you leave him. Nothing is better calculated to soften the heart of an impenitent sinner, than a direct appeal to the throne of grace in his behalf; and if you do really offer up the prayer of faith, the Holy Spirit will descend upon him while you are yet speaking. Bear him continually upon your mind, and make him a subject of daily prayer in your closet. Agonize at the throne of grace for his soul. Take fast hold of the promises made to prayer; and let not your faith and supplications fail till you obtain the blessing.

9. When you have called up the at-

tentive of the sinner to a serious concern for the salvation of his soul, he is brought into a *perilous condition*.—Under no circumstances can the unconverted sinner, committing aggravated sin, and engaging in high handed rebellion against God, resist the workings of the Holy Spirit. His situation is one of the most perilous and dangerous. On the one hand, he is exposed to the danger of a *false hope*; on the other, they are a danger of *quenching* the Holy Spirit, and *sealing* their own condemnation. When therefore, you have been the instrument of bringing the sinner into this perilous condition, you are under the most solemn obligation if he still remains within your reach, to *follow up* your efforts. When you have faithfully performed the duties already mentioned, leave him till he has had time for serious reflection, and deliberate action. But, do not leave him too long, lest his impressions should wear off for want of



the continued application of the truth to his conscience; or, lest temptations should beset his mind, which your kind counsel might remove. Repeat your visits from time to time, till you know the result.

10. You will find many sinners, under some degree of serious impression, who acknowledge that they are *not* "*altogether*" *christians*; and yet seem to think they are in a fair way to become such. They are *resting* upon their anxiety; their regular attendance upon the means of grace; and upon trying, as they say, to do "*as well as they can.*" They think if they persevere in this course of *seeking*, they shall so far *gain the favour* of God, that he will convert their souls. Show them that God will have no neutrals in his kingdom: that every man is either the friend or the enemy of God. "He that is not with me is against me." To meet this self-righteous spirit show them the holiness and spirituality of God's law; that a

single transgression is an act of rebellion against his government, and that, while they pretend to be *doing as well as they can*, they are resisting the claims of God. They are trying to seek his favour, while they persevere in rejecting the only offer of mercy which he can make, consistently with the holiness and rectitude of his character. God abhors their unholy performances, while their rebellious hearts refuse to surrender, and accept of pardon and life on *His* own and only terms. They must see their lost, ruined, helpless, and hopeless condition, before they will cast themselves entirely upon Christ.

11. Avoid producing the impression upon the mind of the sinner that his present condition is *his misfortune*, rather than his *guilt*. This is often done by injudicious expressions of pity. While you approach him with all the tenderness of a heart tremblingly alive to his situation, yet maintain the honour of God. The lost and ruined con-

dition of the sinner, is the result of his wilful and determined rebellion against his Maker. Show him that God's justice would shine with unclouded splendour in his eternal punishment. He has deliberately and wilfully transgressed God's holy law, rejected every offer of mercy, and obstinately resisted the Holy Ghost. If he goes down to eternal death, it will be of his own free will and deliberate choice. Sinners are disposed to throw the blame of their situation upon God, while he declares, with emphasis, that "*they have destroyed themselves.*" Be exceedingly cautious, then, to use no expression, either in your conversation or your prayers, which can be so wrested by the sinner as to give him the least shadow of excuse for remaining in impenitence. Let every thing be calculated to justify God, and condemn the sinner—to show him that God is *right*, and he is *wrong*—for this is the solemn truth, in the case.

12. Do *not* think you have accomplished your object by engaging in *general and vague conversation about the importance of religion, &c.* There are many things of this nature, concerning which the sinner will agree with you; and you may leave him, after an hour's conversation of this kind, with the self-complacent feeling that he is about as good a christian as yourself. Especially avoid any commonplace remarks just as you are about to leave him, after a serious attempt to reach his conscience. Every such thing tends to dissipate serious impressions. "Then cometh the enemy, and catcheth away that which was sown."

13. Be very *cautious in speaking to others* about the conversation you have had with individuals. Never do it unless some good end can plainly be accomplished by it. Seldom mention it before unconverted persons, or in the presence of professors of religion, who manifest little interest in the conversion

of sinners—"Your good will be evil spoken of." Rom. 14: 16. Do not speak of it for the gratification of idle curiosity, or gossiping egotism, or in any irreverent manner. And, if you converse about it, with your praying brethren, for the purpose of mutual encouragement, and for asking the aid of their prayers, it is generally advisable to *conceal the name* of the individual.

14. Be very *careful* in your conversation with those who *profess recently to have experienced a change of heart*. "The heart is deceitful, *above all things;*" and the number of apparently *dead* professors in the church, shows that multitudes *may be* deceived in relation to their supposed conversion. Beware how you *rejoice with them*, however confident they may be, or however clear their views appear. The seed sown upon stony ground sprung up rapidly, and appeared at first even more thrifty than that sown upon good ground. Do not appear confident

that the work is genuine. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Caution them against the danger of deception. Tell them that, if they are really born again, they have but just commenced a warfare which will end only with their lives. Press upon them the importance of self-examination; and of renewing daily the acts of repentance and submission to God. Leave upon their minds the impression, that *their subsequent lives only can test the genuineness of their conversion*. It is only "He that *endureth to the end*," that shall be saved. If they have really experienced a saving change, you cannot deprive them of it. But, if you cherish in their minds a delusive hope, you may contribute to the loss of their souls. There may, however, be some persons of a gloomy temperament not inclined to self-confidence, accustomed to look upon the dark side of every thing, who require a different mode of treatment.

**CONCLUSION.**—What would be the

result, if the Spirit of Christ were thus carried out in the daily conduct of those who profess to be his disciples? If every one who bears the christian name, would seek daily opportunities of conversing with impenitent sinners, in the spirit of prayer and humble dependence upon the Holy Spirit and tender concern for the conversion of their fellow men, a universal sensation would pervade the land. The kingdom of heaven would suffer *violence*, and multitudes would *press* into it. The flame thus lighted would reflect back upon the church. Christians would "grow in grace." Their graces would be "shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day."





# APPENDIX.



## MAXIMS FOR CHRISTIANS.

1. It is the duty of every christian to be revived in heart, *growing in grace*, and doing all he or she can to glorify God. The obligation of this duty rests upon the present moment. Rom. 13: 11; 1 Thess. 5: 4—8; Eph. 5: 14; Isa. 60: 1; 1 John 1: 6; Heb. 3: 15; 2 Cor. 6: 2.

2. God hears and answers the prayers of his children, when they are in the way of obedience. 1 John 3: 22; John 15: 7.

3. When christians pray and labour for the salvation of souls, and that God may be glorified, sinners will be converted. Mal. 3: 10.

4. It is the *sinful* neglect of the church that prevents her from enjoy-

ing a perpetual revival. Isa. 66:8.  
*(Inference from the above.)*

5. When no souls are converted in a congregation, let no follower of Christ look round upon this or that brother, or sister, or any number of them, who do not come up to the work, and complain that they are standing in the way of God's blessing. Let him look at *home* and say "Lord is it I?" Mat. 7:1—5; Rom. 2:1; 1 Cor. 4:5.

6. If but *two* members of a church get truly revived themselves, and agree together, and offer up the prayer of faith for a revival of religion, they may expect that blessing will be granted. Mat. 18:19.

7. No church can be without a revival, and be guiltless. Rev. 2:4; 3:15, 16.

8. Let not God's praying people be discouraged because their numbers are few in comparison with the whole church. Judges 7:7; 1 Sam. 14:1—16.

9. *The curse of the Lord* rests upon

those members of the church, who refuse to come up to the work of converting souls. Judges 5:23. The *principle of God's government*, developed in this passage, applies to the church in all ages.

10. Let not christians spend their time and divert their attention, by complaining to one another, of those who stand back. It is not their business to curse them; Rom. 12:14; neither to *wait* for them; but to *go forward*, in the strength of the Lord. 'There are multitudes in the church, who are "twice dead, and plucked up by the roots." If you wait for them, you will never do any thing.

11. While the world lies in wickedness, there is no time for christians to seek for personal enjoyment. The feelings of christians, while labouring for the salvation of souls, are compared in Scripture to the severest agonies and most painful struggles to which human nature is subject. Gal. 4:19. And God has pronounced a heavy wo upon

“them that are at ease in Zion.” Amos 6: 1. Yet, although our rest be not on earth, if we are found faithful, God will give us, on our way, joys which no man can take from us. John 16: 21, 22.

12. The progress of a revival is arrested only when God’s people grieve away his Holy Spirit; therefore the cessation of a revival brings great guilt upon the church. 2 Chron. 15:2; 1 Thess. 5: 19; Eph. 4: 30; Isa. 63: 10.



## HINDERANCES TO REVIVALS.

1. *Want of unity* of feeling, and united effort among the praying members of the church; and also between them and their pastor. A revived christian may enjoy a state of spiritual feeling which the backslider in heart, who has grown carnal and worldly, cannot understand. A very important point

in social prayer is, that the hearts of all present be *united* in their *feelings, desires and petitions*; for this is the condition of the special promise which authorizes these meetings. Mat. 18: 19; Amos 3:3.

2. Indolence and the *love of ease*, which cannot endure the painful, persevering effort necessary to maintain such a spirit of prayer as that described in Rom. 8: 26; and such a system of self denying activity as the conversion of souls requires. Our *rest* is placed in Heaven, Ps. 17: 15.

3. Indulging in *conversation about the faults* of brethren and sisters in the church. This, though a very common practice, is plainly forbidden in Scripture. The effect of it is to diminish our own brotherly love and esteem for the person whose character we have been discussing; to give employment for tale-bearers; and to stir up hard feeling and strife in the church.— This, besides bringing guilt upon our

own souls, will meet us in the praying circle, and prevent the necessary union of feeling. Thus, the spirit will be grieved away; for he cannot dwell in a heart that is a prey to jealous and bitter feelings. Rom. 1:29, 30; Ps. 15:3; Prov. 25:23; 2 Cor. 12:20; Tit. 3:2; Eph. 4:31; 1 Pet. 2:1.

4. Attendance of christians upon *social parties* for mere worldly enjoyment. The spirit of the world reigns in these parties. The Spirit of God must therefore be grieved away by those who frequent them. 2 Cor. 6:14—17.

5. *Light and vain*, or unnecessary worldly conversation, among christians, grieves the spirit. Mat. 12:36; Eph. 5:4.

6. Finding *fault with preaching*.—This is especially injurious to children, when it comes from their parents. They will naturally feel more confidence in their parents than in their minister; and if they get the impression that he is wrong upon one point, they will con-

clude he is wrong in every thing. This prejudice existing in their minds, will wholly destroy the effect of preaching. Again, when the sinner's conscience is smarting under the truth, if members of the church represent in their conversation, that the preacher has been too hasty or too harsh, they thereby ease his conscience, and sustain him in his rebellion against God. Such professors of religion often act the part of traitors in the camp of the living God, by strengthening the hands of his enemies in opposing the extension of his kingdom.

7. Sin, in a single member of the church, requiring *discipline*, even though it be for a time concealed, may hinder a revival. Josh. chap. 7.

8. Secret *sins, indulged in the hearts* of praying christians, such as spiritual pride, self-seeking, self-complacency, envy, &c., may hinder a revival. Ps. 66: 18; Prov. 28: 9.

9. *Unbelief*. This, of all others, is  
2\*

the greatest hinderance to revivals.—The promises of God are so abundant, and so full, clear, and explicit, that we can neither doubt his willingness nor his ability to answer the prayers of his children; and that especially when they pray for the outpouring of his Holy Spirit. Mal. 3:10; Mat. 7:7—11; Isa. 55; Luke 18:1—8; Ps. 65:2; Ps. 102:17; Luke 11:5—13; Mat. 18:19; Mark 11:24; John 16:23, 24; 1 John 5:14, 15; Prov. 15:29; Jer. 29:12, 13; Ps. 145:18, 19. No sin is more dishonouring to God than unbelief. It is discrediting the word of the Almighty. We have the most awful warnings in his word against indulging it. We read of one place where Jesus could not do many mighty works because of the unbelief of the people. If he could not work miracles on account of their unbelief, can he revive his work and convert souls, while his people are filled with unbelief? Mat. 13:58; Rom. 11:20, 21; Heb. 3:12.



10. Resting too much on appearances. A revival is the work of the Lord. He is both able and willing to perform it, in answer to the prayers of his children. The question then rests between you and God. If you will put forth the prayer of faith, accompanied with the necessary effort, all the powers of darkness cannot prevent you from receiving the blessing. The word of Omnipotence is pledged for it. Keep your eye steadily fixed on Him, from whom alone help cometh. *Labour* as though the work were entirely your own; *feel* as if it were God's work alone. If you look to appearances, when they are favourable you will be elated with the idea that you have obtained the blessing, begin to rejoice, relax your efforts, and ere you are aware, the Spirit will be gone; when they are unfavourable, you will be discouraged, give way to unbelief, and so grieve the Spirit. It was looking at appearances, and forgetting the invisible

arm of Jehovah, which led to all the rebellion of the children of Israel, in the wilderness, which provoked God to swear in his wrath that they should not enter his rest. Ex. 5:21, 23; 14:10—15; 16:2, 3; 17:1—3.

11. Trusting to ministers and the special efforts of the church. Jer. 17:5, 7, 8; Ps. 84:12; Ps. 34:8; 2 Cor. 1:9; Isa. 50:10; 26:4; Prov. 3:5; Ps. 125:1.

12. The *impression* that a *revival cannot long continue*. This leads christians to think, as soon as they discover any decline of feeling, that the work is over. So they relax their efforts, and quiet their consciences with the idea that it is not the Lord's will that it should continue. But if they would search their own hearts, they would find that *guilt* rests upon their souls. They have grieved away the Holy Spirit. If, on the first discovery of a decline of feeling, they would search out their sin, repent, humble themselves before God, and beg the

return of the Holy Comforter, they might ensure a continuance of his blessed presence. Isa. 59: 1, 2; Jer. 5: 25; 3: 12.



## HINTS ON PRAYER.

1. The object of prayer is not to persuade the Almighty to give us what we need, but to bring our own souls into an attitude suitable for receiving his blessing. Hence, it is a state of feeling in the soul expressed by corresponding words. This, however, is by no means inconsistent with the exercise of deep, agonizing, and painful struggles of soul. Mal. 3: 6; Rom. 8: 26; Luke 22: 44; Gen. 32: 24—28.

2. *Preparation.* If you were going before an earthly governor, to beg for your own life or the life of a friend, and he were the only person that had power to pardon the criminal condemned

to death, could you help thinking, with intense anxiety, about the object of your petition? Would it not be the all-absorbing subject of your thoughts? Would it not fill your soul with a deep and thrilling interest? With what consistency, then, can you come before the Creator and Governor of the Universe, to ask for the life of your immortal soul, or to intercede for that of a fellow being, guilty of high treason against his government, and justly condemned to eternal misery, without first thinking, with deep and trembling anxiety, about the object of your petition?

3. The social prayer meeting is no place to complain of *coldness*. It is sin to go there with a cold heart. The revival must commence in the closet. If any one is *cold*, let him humble himself before God, and pray and *fast* if necessary, till his "heart burns within him." Then let him go to the prayer meeting, and unite his heart with those who are already revived, in pleading for the out-

pouring of God's Spirit. When a brother comes to a prayer meeting with a cold heart, and is called upon to pray, he does not lead the devotions of others. He has no errand but his own, to the throne of grace. He does not *feel in unison* with his brethren. He feels intensely on no point. He wanders over the world; embraces a multitude of objects, entirely foreign from the particular one for which *special* prayer is to be made; prolongs the exercise to a tedious length; introduces vain repetitions in reference to almost every object embraced in his petition, amplifying upon every idea, expressing it in several different forms of speech. Then, perhaps, he begins to feel a little warmed, and returns and goes over the same ground a second time. In this way, he chills the feelings of others, and diverts their attention also from the *special* object for which they are assembled. A few brethren, who come to prayer meetings with cold hearts, may thus become

chilling to others and a great hinderance to a revival.

4. *Regular attendance* upon the prayer meeting is necessary to promote unity of feeling. When a brother has been several times absent from the praying circle, he will generally have lost something of his interest in the special object which is presented there. His feeling is not up to the standard which prevails in the meeting. If he leads in prayer, he does not lead the feelings of others.

5. Most of the prayers recorded in Scripture are for *special objects*.— Gen. 24:12—14; Ex. 5:22, 23; 17:4; 32:31, 32; 33:13—16; Num. 11:11—15; 12:13; 14:13—19; 16:22; Josh. 7:7—9; 2 Kings 19:15—19; 20:3; Neh. 1:5—11; Dan. 9:4—19; Luke 22:42; Acts 1:24, 25; 4:24—30.

6. In relation to these prayers, several things are to be observed:

**First.** *They generally contain but*

*one object of petition.* This is reasonable; for we cannot feel intensely in relation to many objects at the same time. When a child is hungry, it does not ask for a great many things; but simply cries out for bread. "*Bread, bread,*" is the burden of its desire.

Second. *They are short.* This also is reasonable; for when we feel an earnest desire for a particular object, it takes but a short time to express it.

Third. *They are simple and in their language pointed.* They give an exact description of the object desired, which shows that it was clearly and vividly impressed upon the mind of the author. This is reasonable. The general fact, that misery and wretchedness prevail in the earth, produces little impression upon our minds; while the recital of the circumstances of a particular case of distress stirs up every sympathy of the soul. So it is in prayer. It is particular, not general objects, which fill the soul with intense desire

7. It is scriptural for brethren to *agree* together to pray for particular objects. Mat. 18: 19, 20.

8. When the brother who is called upon to pray, wanders from the object agreed upon, he does not lead the devotions of the whole assembly.

9. There are several reasons why prayers in social meetings, should be *short*:

First. Long prayers are generally pointless and dull.

Second. They distract the minds of associated worshippers with divers impressions, and prevent the concentration of feeling upon the special object agreed upon.

Third. It is desirable that as many as possible should have an opportunity of leading in the exercise. This promotes community of feeling and christian fellowship. Variety gives interest to every thing. The expressions of one or two are not so likely to be instrumental in touching the affections of



each one, as when a greater number are engaged. To accomplish this desirable result, prayers must be *very short*. And, if you will look over the special prayers recorded in Scripture, as mentioned No. 4, you will be astonished to learn how little time must have been consumed in their delivery.

10. Long exhortations are entirely out of place in a prayer meeting. The object is to *pray*, rather than to *learn* or *talk*. It is very proper, however, that a soul stirring appeal should be given, and that such truths as have a direct bearing upon the circumstances of those assembled, should be declared. But this should be done in the briefest manner possible. An exhortation, or a remark, in a prayer meeting, should be *directly to the point*. And, when an idea is expressed, it should be left without enlargement. Let others make their own reflections. An exhortation should seldom exceed five minutes; that other brethren may have an oppor-

tunity of communicating the impressions which press upon their minds.— Although all may not wish to do so at every meeting; yet, very few can have the opportunity, if the remarks of any one exceed these limits.

Attention to these things would give life and animation to meetings which would otherwise be dull and spiritless. The person who conducts the meeting, however, should so direct the exercises that most of the time may be spent in prayer.



## EXAMINE YOUR PRAYERS.

When christians have been, for some length of time, praying for a revival, without receiving the blessing, it is time for them to conclude they have been *asking amiss*. If you would know the reason why your prayers have not been answered, examine them, with

reference to the following particulars:

1. You may not have desired a revival of religion *that God might be glorified*; but that you might be honoured as the instrument, or *gratified* with the comfort of his special presence; or you may have desired it simply from feelings of natural sympathy for sinners, without regard to the honour of God. 1 Cor. 10:31; Jas. 4:3.

2. You may be indulging sin, or neglecting duty; in which case, the Lord will not answer your prayers.—The habitual indulgence of one sinful passion, or the habitual neglect of one known duty, is sufficient to prevent you from receiving the blessing of God.—Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:9; Isa. 59:1, 2.

3. You may be exercising an unforgiving temper. Mark 11:25, 26; Mat. 18:35.

4. You may not have been sufficiently humble. Ps. 138:6; Isa. 66:2; 51:15; 1 Pet. 5:6; Jas. 4:10.

5. You may not have asked *in faith*. Jas. 1:5—8; Mark 11:24.

6. Your supplications may not have been sufficiently earnest. Luke 22:4; Jas. 5:17; Acts 12:5.



## PROTRACTED MEETINGS

ARE WARRANTED BY SCRIPTURE.

Chron. 30:23. *And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days; and they kept other seven days with gladness.*

AND EMINENTLY BLESSED OF GOD.

Chron. 30:26, 27. *So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon ....there was not the like in Jerusalem, &c.* See first of Acts, and history of modern revivals.

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### HINTS

FOR CHRISTIANS, IN VIEW OF SUCH MEETINGS.

I. If these meetings are not *blessed*, the fairest opportunities and the most promising means for the conversion of sinners are lost: And the hearts of sin-

ners are rendered *more* callous to the truth. Prov. 1:23, 33.—Therefore,

*I am resolved* before God to avoid *every* sin by which the usefulness of these meetings may be prevented, and perform *every* duty devolving on me, to render them successful.

II. Some meetings are not blessed, for the want of earnest, importunate, believing prayer.—Therefore,

*I am resolved* to “pray without ceasing,” and to present my prayers in humility and faith.

Ps. 66:18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Jas. 4:3. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.

Jas. 5:16. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.

III. Some meetings are not blessed, because men *rely* too much upon an arm of flesh.—Therefore,

*I am resolved* I will constantly cherish the conviction that without the *Holy Spirit*, no good effects can be expected.

1 Cor. 3:6. I have planted, Apollos watered: but *God* gave the increase.

Zec. 4:6. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.

IV. These meetings are often unsuccessful because the people of God make such a reliance on DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY that they neglect to pray or labour with earnestness and fervor: *forgetting the uniform and necessary connexion between the means and the end.* Josh. 6:3—6; 2 Kings 5:10, 11, &c.—Therefore,

*I am resolved* faithfully to use those means which God has promised to bless, viz:—

1. Christian example.
2. Direct personal conversation.
3. Believing prayer.

(1.) Matth. 5:16. Let your light *so shine* before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Ph. 2:15; Eph. 5:15; Jas. 3:13.

(2.) Col. 4:6. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. Eph. 4:29.

(3.) See No. 2, and Ez. 36:27. Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.

V. Sometimes these meetings fail of being useful, because the lay members of the church depend too much upon the ministers—or upon each other.—Therefore,

*I am resolved* to cherish a sense of *my* personal responsibility; and remember that to labor for the salvation of souls is a *common* christian duty.

Jas. 5:20. He which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. Prov. 11:30; 28:23.

VI. Sometimes these meetings are not blessed, because they are not well attended.—Therefore,

*I am resolved*, 1. I will attend as much as practicable myself.

Heb. 10:25. Not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is.

2. I will endeavour so to arrange my domestic concerns as to permit my family to attend.

Josh. 24: 15. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Eph. 6: 4.

Col. 4: 1. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

3. I will endeavour to persuade my friends and neighbours to attend.

Luke 14: 21. Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind....Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

Rev. 22: 17. The Bride (the church) says come. Acts 10: 24. And Cornelius waited for them, and *had called together his kinsmen and near friends.*

VII. The cause of sinners' remaining unconverted is, that nothing is said to them but from the pulpit.—  
Therefore,

*I will embrace every opportunity to converse with them on the subject of the salvation of their souls.*

2 Tim. 4: 2. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine. Prov. 15: 23. A word spoken in due season, how good is it!



VIII. Unnecessary conversation on topics seemingly connected with the object of the meetings, often dissipates impressions, and prevents the blessing.—Therefore,

*I will not* allow myself to be heard highly commending or complaining about the preaching or exhortation, and will check all spirit of criticism.

Prov. 15: 4. A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach of the spirit.

IX. Conversation on subjects foreign to the object of the meeting, during the interval of worship, often unfits the mind to pray, and grieves the spirit of God.—Therefore,

*I am resolved* I will not allow myself unnecessarily to converse on subjects of a worldly nature, and never on light, improper topics, and will discourage such conversation in others.

Prov. 15: 2. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. Eph. 5: 4. Nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which is not

convenient, (proper,) but rather giving of thanks.

X. The good effects of meetings, may be perverted by divisions in feelings and operations.—Therefore,

*I will make* no complaint about the measures or the manner in which the meeting is conducted, but in candor to those who conduct them.

1 Pet. 3:8. Be ye all of one mind; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

XI. Prayers and exhortations that are too long, or on subjects too various, prevent the impression of divine truth; or tend to dissipate impressions when made.—Therefore,

*I am resolved* if I am called upon to pray or speak, to have my address or prayer short, and bearing upon the express object of the meeting.

Eccles. 5:2. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

XII. Sometimes the minds of sinners are prejudiced and their ears clo-

sed against the truth, because personal or public addresses are made in an improper spirit. Therefore,

*It shall be* one object in my secret prayers to acquire a just estimate of the value of the soul, and a just apprehension of its danger; that I may warn and entreat with tenderness, propriety and faithfulness.

Acts 20: 31. I ceased not to warn *every one* night and day *with tears*.

2 Tim. 2: 24, 25. The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meakness instructing those that oppose themselves.

XIII. The harbouring of unkind feelings, the want of charity and forbearance, ill will, the indulgences of *former* prejudices, or animosities, may prevent the blessing.—Therefore,

*I am resolved* that no such unholy feeling shall find a place in my bosom for a moment: I will seek reconciliation where I have given or taken offence, and will endeavour to cherish toward all the brethren a spirit of chris

tian fellowship and kindness, and toward every enemy, a spirit of forgiveness and affection.

Mat. 5:23. If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and *then* come and offer thy gift.

Jas. 3:14—16. 1 Pet. 3:9. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.

XIV. Meetings are often unsuccessful because christians rely too much upon them; they expect that nothing can be done at any other time, and then, when the meeting commences, they are unprepared for its solemn duties.—Therefore,

*I am resolved* to live always in such a manner, that I may be employed by the Spirit of God in promoting his work. The shortness of time, my covenant vows, the Spirit of God, the bleeding cause of Christ, a coming judgment, the realities of eternity, and the glory of God,—all admonish me to “present

my body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is my reasonable service."

Eccl. 9:10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might: for there is no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, wither thou goest.

XV. Though "hand join in hand," the united efforts of *thousands of impenitent sinners* cannot prevent the blessing; but **ONE** lukewarm, sinful child of God *may* do it.—Therefore,

I will renew my covenant engagement, return to my "first love," and "come up" with renewed zeal, "to the help of the Lord against the mighty," that the blood of dying souls may not "be found in my skirts."

Remember "Achan the *troubler* of Israel." 1 Chron. 2:7.











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