

LECTURES ON REVIVAL  
OF RELIGION

By

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“Sermons on Gospel Themes,” etc.

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## THE LECTURER'S PREFACE.

Let it be remembered, that these Lectures were delivered to my own congregation. They were entered upon, without my having previously marked out any plan or outline of them, and have been pursued, from week to week, as one subject naturally introduced another, and as, from one lecture to another, I saw the state of our people seemed to require.

I consented to have the Editor of the Evangelist report them, upon his own responsibility, because he thought that it might excite a deeper interest in, and extend the usefulness of, his paper. And as I am now a Pastor, and have not sufficient health to labor as an Evangelist, and as it has pleased the Head of the Church to give me some experience in revivals of religion, I thought it possible that, while I was doing the work of a Pastor in my own church, I might, in this way, be of some little service to the churches abroad.

I found a particular inducement to this course, in the fact that on my return from the Mediterranean, I learned, with pain, that the spirit of revival had greatly declined in the United States, and that a spirit of jangling and controversy alarmingly prevailed.

The peculiar circumstances of the church, and the state of revivals, was such, as unavoidably to lead me to the discussion of some points that I would gladly have avoided, had the omission been consistent with my main design, to reach and arouse the church, when she was fast settling down upon her lees.

I am far from setting up the claim of infallibility upon this or any other subject. I have given my own views, so far as I have gone, without pretending to have exhausted the subject, or to have spoken in the best possible manner upon the points I have discussed.

I am too well acquainted with the state of the church, and especially with the state of some of its ministers, to expect to escape without censure. I have felt obliged to say some things that I fear will not, in all instances, be received as kindly as they were intended. But whatever may be the result of saying the truth as it respects some, I have reason to believe, that the great body of praying people will receive and be benefited by what I have said.

What I have said upon the subject of prayer, will not, I am well aware, be understood and received by a certain portion of the church and all I can say is, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

I had not the most distant idea until recently, that these Lectures, in this, or any other form, would ever grow into a book; but the urgent call for their publication, in a volume, and the fact that I have had repeated assurances that the reading of them in the Evangelist, has been owned and blessed, to the quickening of individuals and churches, and has resulted in the conversion of many sinners, have led me to consent to their publication in this imperfect form.

The Reporter has succeeded, in general, in giving an outline of the Lectures, as they were delivered. His report, however, would, in general, make no more than a full skeleton of what was said on the subject at the time. In justice to the Reporter, I would say, that on reading his reports, in his paper, although there were some mistakes and misapprehensions, yet I have been surprised that, without stenography, he could so nearly report my meaning.

As for literary merit, they have none; nor do they lay claim to any. It was no part of my design to deliver elegant Lectures. They were my most familiar Friday evening discourses; and my great, and I may add my only object, was to have them understood and felt.

In correcting the Lectures for a volume, I have not had time, nor was it thought advisable to remodel them, and change the style in which they had been reported. I have, in some few instances, changed the phraseology, when a thought had been very awkwardly expressed, or when the true idea had not been given. But I have, in nearly every instance, left the sentences as they were reported when the thought was perspicuously expressed, although the style might have been improved by emendation. They were the editor's reports, and as such they must go before the public, with such little additions and alterations, as I have had time to make. Could I have written them out in full, I doubt not but they might have been more acceptable to many readers. But this was impossible, and the only alternative was, to let the public have them as they are, or refuse to let them go out in the form of a volume at all. I am sorry they are not better Lectures, and in a more attracting form; but I have done what I could under the circumstances; and, as it is the wish of many whom I love, and delight to please and honor, to have them, although in this imperfect form, they must have them.

C. G. FINNEY.

By perusing the above Preface, the reader will get a clue to the time and circumstances that led to the

delivery and publication of these Lectures. In revising them for a new edition, I have done little more than correct the phraseology in a few instances, add a few foot-notes, and replace the last two Lectures by newly-written ones on the same texts, and prepared especially for this edition. These Lectures are distinct from the course I deliver to my theological class upon the same subject. That course I may publish before my death. These Lectures have been translated in the Welsh and French languages, and have been very extensively circulated wherever the English or either of those languages is understood. One house in London published 80,000 copies In English. They are still in type and in market in Europe, and I have the great satisfaction of knowing that they have been made a great blessing to thousands of souls. Consequently, I have not thought it wise to recast them for the sake of giving them a more attractive form. God has owned and blessed the reading of them as they have been, and with the exceptions above noticed, I have given them to the present and coming generations. If the reader will peruse and remember the foregoing preface, he will understand what I said of the church and some of the ministers, and why I said it. I beseech my brethren not to take amiss what I have said, but rather to be assured that every sentence has been spoken in love, and often with a sorrowful

heart. May God continue to add His blessing to the reading of these Lectures.

THE AUTHOR.

OBERLIN COLLEGE, Oct. 22, 1868.

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#### ADVERTISEMENT BY THE REPORTER

The work of reporting these Lectures was undertaken for the purpose of increasing the interest and usefulness of the New York Evangelist. The Reporter is wholly unacquainted with short-hand, and has, therefore, only aimed to give a sketch of the leading thoughts of the discourse. It is hardly necessary to mention that Mr. Finney never writes his sermons, but guides his course of argument by a skeleton, or brief, carefully prepared, and so compact, that it can be written on one side of a card, about half as large as one of these printed pages. His manner is direct, and his language colloquial and Saxon, and his illustrations are drawn from the commonest incidents and maxims of life. The Reporter has aimed to preserve, as much as he could, the style of the speaker, and is thought to have been in some degree successful. If, in any cases, by letting his language

run in a colloquial strain, he has made the copy more simple and homely than the original, he hopes to be pardoned easily for a fault by no means prevalent.

If any one should attempt to criticise the style of these Reports, he will assuredly lose his labor; for the only ambition of the Reporter has been, to make such a use of language as should fully convey the meaning, and fairly exhibit the manner, of the Lecturer. When words have done this, they have done their great work. The notes were taken with a pencil, and transcribed in great haste, and sent to the printer without revision. In preparing them for publication, in this form, Mr. Finney has reviewed them with reference only to this point—the correct expression of the sentiment. The style of an off-hand sketch has been preserved, partly of choice, and partly from necessity. There was no time to remodel the work, and the public voice seemed to be, that it was more attractive and more useful in its present condensed form. Mr. Finney has, therefore, done little more than to amend where the Reporter misapprehended the meaning, or did not express it with sufficient distinctness. He has enlarged in a few places where the illustrations, as given by the Reporter, seemed to be incomplete.



My labor with these sketches is now done; and its results are sent forth in this permanent form, with the prayer, that God would employ the book, as he has already done the newspaper edition, to rouse, and teach, and strengthen his people, and to guide, unite, and encourage zealous Christians of all classes, in the great duty of saving sinners.

J.L.

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LECTURE I.

1 WHAT A REVIVAL OF RELIGION IS

2

3 Text.—O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of  
4 the years, in the midst of the years make known;  
5 in wrath remember mercy.—Hab. iii. 2.

6

7 IT is supposed that the prophet Habakkuk was  
8 contemporary with Jeremiah, and that this  
9 prophecy was uttered in anticipation of the  
10 Babylonish captivity. Looking at the judgments  
11 which were speedily to come upon his nation,  
12 the soul of the prophet was wrought up to an  
13 agony, and he cries out in his distress, “O Lord,  
14 revive thy work.” As if he had said, “O Lord,  
15 grant that thy judgments may not make Israel  
16 desolate. In the midst of these awful years, let  
17 the judgments of God be made the means of  
18 reviving religion among us. In wrath remember  
19 mercy.”

20

21 Religion is the work of man. It is something for  
22 man to do. It consists in obeying God with and  
23 from the heart. It is man's duty. It is true, God  
24 induces him to do it. He influences him by his  
25 Spirit, because of his great wickedness and  
26 reluctance to obey. If it were not necessary for  
27 God to influence men—if men were disposed to  
28 obey God, there would be no occasion to pray,  
29 "O Lord, revive thy work." The ground of  
30 necessity for such a prayer is, that men are  
31 wholly indisposed to obey; and unless God  
32 interpose the influence of his Spirit, not a man  
33 on earth will ever obey the commands of God.

34

35 A "Revival of Religion" presupposes a  
36 declension. Almost all the religion in the world  
37 has been produced by revivals. God has found it  
38 necessary to take advantage of the excitability  
39 there is in mankind, to produce powerful  
40 excitements among them, before he can lead  
41 them to obey. Men are so spiritually sluggish,  
42 there are so many things to lead their minds off  
43 from religion, and to oppose the influence of the  
44 Gospel, that it is necessary to raise an excitement  
45 among them, till the tide rises so high as to  
46 sweep away the opposing obstacles. They must  
47 be so excited that they will break over these

48 counteracting influences, before they will obey  
49 God. Not that excited feeling is religion, for it is  
50 not; but it is excited desire, appetite and feeling  
51 that prevents religion. The will is, in a sense,  
52 enslaved by the carnal and worldly desires.  
53 Hence it is necessary to awaken men to a sense  
54 of guilt and danger, and thus produce an  
55 excitement of counter feeling and desire which  
56 will break the power of carnal and worldly  
57 desire and leave the will free to obey God.

58

59 Look back at the history of the Jews, and you  
60 will see that God used to maintain religion  
61 among them by special occasions, when there  
62 would be a great excitement, and people would  
63 turn to the Lord. And after they had been thus  
64 revived, it would be but a short time before there  
65 would be so many counteracting influences  
66 brought to bear upon them, that religion would  
67 decline, and keep on declining, till God could  
68 have time—so to speak—to convict them of sin  
69 by his Spirit and rebuke them by his providence,  
70 and thus so gain the attention of the masses to  
71 the great subject of salvation, as to produce a  
72 widespread awakening of religious interest, and  
73 consequently a revival of religion. Then the  
74 counteracting causes would again operate, and  
75 religion would decline, and the nation would be

76 swept away in the vortex of luxury, idolatry, and  
77 pride.  
78  
79 There is so little principle in the church, so little  
80 firmness and stability of purpose, that unless the  
81 religious feelings are awakened and kept excited,  
82 counter worldly feeling and excitement will  
83 prevail, and men will not obey God. They have  
84 so little knowledge, and their principles are so  
85 weak, that unless they are excited, they will go  
86 back from the path of duty, and do nothing to  
87 promote the glory of God. The state of the world  
88 is still such, and probably will be till the  
89 millennium is fully come, that religion must be  
90 mainly promoted by means of revivals. How  
91 long and how often has the experiment been  
92 tried, to bring the church to act steadily for God,  
93 without these periodical excitements. Many  
94 good men have supposed, and still suppose, that  
95 the best way to promote religion, is to go along  
96 uniformly, and gather in the ungodly gradually,  
97 and without excitement. But however sound  
98 such reasoning may appear in the abstract, facts  
99 demonstrate its futility. If the church were far  
100 enough advanced in knowledge, and had  
101 stability of principle enough to keep awake, such  
102 a course would do; but the church is so little  
103 enlightened, and there are so many counteracting

104 causes, that she will not go steadily to work  
105 without a special interest being awakened. As  
106 the millennium advances, it is probable that  
107 these periodical excitements will be unknown.  
108 Then the church will be enlightened, and the  
109 counteracting causes removed, and the entire  
110 church will be in a state of habitual and steady  
111 obedience to God. The entire church will stand  
112 and take the infant mind, and cultivate it for  
113 God. Children will be trained up in the way they  
114 should go, and there will be no such torrents of  
115 worldliness, and fashion, and covetousness, to  
116 bear away the piety of the church, as soon as the  
117 excitement of a revival is withdrawn.

118  
119 It is very desirable it should be so. It is very  
120 desirable that the church should go on steadily in  
121 a course of obedience without these excitements.  
122 Such excitements are liable to injure the health.  
123 Our nervous system is so strung that any  
124 powerful excitement, if long continued, injures  
125 our health and unfits us for duty. If religion is  
126 ever to have a pervading influence in the world,  
127 it cannot be so; this spasmodic religion must be  
128 done away. Then it will be uncalled for.  
129 Christians will not sleep the greater part of the  
130 time, and once in a while wake up, and rub their  
131 eyes, and bluster about, and vociferate a little

132 while, and then go to sleep again. Then there  
133 will be no need that ministers should wear  
134 themselves out, and kill themselves, by their  
135 efforts to roll back the flood of worldly influence  
136 that sets in upon the church. But as yet the state  
137 of the Christian world is such, that to expect to  
138 promote religion without excitements is  
139 unphilosophical and absurd. The great political,  
140 and other worldly excitements that agitate  
141 Christendom, are all unfriendly to religion, and  
142 divert the mind from the interests of the soul.  
143 Now these excitements can only be counteracted  
144 by religious excitements. And until there is  
145 religious principle in the world to put down  
146 irreligious excitements, it is vain to try to  
147 promote religion, except by counteracting  
148 excitements. This is true in philosophy, and it is  
149 a historical fact.

150

151 It is altogether improbable that religion will ever  
152 make progress among heathen nations except  
153 through the influence of revivals. The attempt is  
154 now making to do it by education, and other  
155 cautious and gradual improvements. But so long  
156 as the laws of mind remain what they are, it  
157 cannot be done in this way. There must be  
158 excitement sufficient to wake up the dormant  
159 moral powers, and roll back the tide of



160 degradation and sin. And precisely so far as our  
161 own land approximates to heathenism, it is  
162 impossible for God or man to promote religion  
163 in such a state of things but by powerful  
164 excitements. This is evident from the fact that  
165 this has always been the way in which God has  
166 done it. God does not create these excitements,  
167 and choose this method to promote religion for  
168 nothing or without reason. Where mankind are  
169 so reluctant to obey God, they will not act until  
170 they are excited. For instance, how many there  
171 are who know that they ought to be religious, but  
172 they are afraid if they become pious they shall be  
173 laughed at by their companions. Many are  
174 wedded to idols, others are procrastinating  
175 repentance, until they are settled in life, or until  
176 they have secured some favorite worldly interest.  
177 Such persons never will give up their false  
178 shame, or relinquish their ambitious schemes, till  
179 they are so excited by a sense of guilt and danger  
180 that they cannot contain themselves any longer.

181

182 These remarks are designed only as an  
183 introduction to the discourse. I shall now  
184 proceed with the main design, to show,

185

186 I. What a revival of religion is not;

187

188 II. What it is; and,  
189  
190 III. The agencies employed in promoting it.  
191  
192 I. A REVIVAL OF RELIGION IS NOT A  
193 MIRACLE.  
194  
195 1. A miracle has been generally defined to be, a  
196 Divine interference, setting aside or suspending  
197 the laws of nature. It is not a miracle in this  
198 sense. All the laws of matter and mind remain in  
199 force. They are neither suspended nor set aside  
200 in a revival.  
201  
202 2. It is not a miracle according to another  
203 definition of the term miracle—something above  
204 the powers of nature. There is nothing in religion  
205 beyond the ordinary powers of nature. It consists  
206 entirely in the right exercise of the powers of  
207 nature. It is just that, and nothing else. When  
208 mankind become religious, they are not enabled  
209 to put forth exertions which they were unable  
210 before to put forth . They only exert the powers  
211 they had before in a different way, and use them  
212 for the glory of God.  
213  
214 3. It is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle,  
215 in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of

216 the right use of the constituted means—as much  
217 so as any other effect produced by the  
218 application of means. There may be a miracle  
219 among its antecedent causes, or there may not.  
220 The apostles employed miracles, simply as a  
221 means by which they arrested attention to their  
222 message, and established its divine authority.  
223 But the miracle was not the revival. The miracle  
224 was one thing; the revival that followed it was  
225 quite another thing. The revivals in the apostles’  
226 days were connected with miracles, but they  
227 were not miracles.

228  
229 I said that a revival is the result of the right use  
230 of the appropriate means. The means which God  
231 has enjoined for the production of a revival,  
232 doubtless have a natural tendency to produce a  
233 revival. Otherwise God would not have enjoined  
234 them. But means will not produce a revival, we  
235 all know, without the blessing of God. No more  
236 will grain, when it is sowed, produce a crop  
237 without the blessing of God. it is impossible for  
238 us to say that there is not as direct an influence  
239 or agency from God, to produce a crop of grain,  
240 as there is to produce a revival. What are the  
241 laws of nature according to which it is supposed  
242 that grain yields a crop? They are nothing but the  
243 constituted manner of the operations of God. In

244 the Bible, the word of God is compared to grain,  
245 and preaching is compared to sowing seed, and  
246 the results to the springing up and growth of the  
247 crop. And the result is just as philosophical in  
248 the one case, as in the other, and is as naturally  
249 connected with the cause; or, more correctly, a  
250 revival is as naturally a result of the use of the  
251 appropriate means as a crop is of the use of its  
252 appropriate means. It is true that religion does  
253 not properly belong to the category of cause and  
254 effect; but although It is not caused by means,  
255 yet it has its occasion, and may as naturally and  
256 certainly result from its occasion as a crop does  
257 from its cause.

258  
259 I wish this idea to be impressed on all your  
260 minds, for there has long been an idea prevalent  
261 that promoting religion has something very  
262 peculiar in it, not to be judged of by the ordinary  
263 rules of cause and effect; in short, that there is no  
264 connection of the means with the result, and no  
265 tendency in the means to produce the effect. No  
266 doctrine is more dangerous than this to the  
267 prosperity of the church, and nothing more  
268 absurd.

269  
270 Suppose a man were to go and preach this  
271 doctrine among farmers, about their sowing

272 grain. Let him tell them that God is a sovereign,  
273 and will give them a crop only when it pleases  
274 him, and that for them to plow and plant and  
275 labor as if they expected to raise a crop is very  
276 wrong, and taking the work out of the hands of  
277 God, that it interferes with his sovereignty, and  
278 is going on in their own strength: and that there  
279 is no connection between the means and the  
280 result on which they can depend. And now,  
281 suppose the farmers should believe such  
282 doctrine. Why, they would starve the world to  
283 death.

284  
285 Just such results will follow from the church's  
286 being persuaded that promoting religion is  
287 somehow so mysteriously a subject of Divine  
288 sovereignty, that there is no natural connection  
289 between the means and the end. What are the  
290 results? Why, generation after generation has  
291 gone down to hell. No doubt more than five  
292 thousand millions have gone down to hell, while  
293 the church has been dreaming, and waiting for  
294 God to save them without the use of means. It  
295 has been the devil's most successful means of  
296 destroying souls. The connection is as clear in  
297 religion as it is when the farmer sows his grain.  
298

299 There is one fact under the government of God,  
300 worthy of universal notice, and of everlasting  
301 remembrance; which is, that the most useful and  
302 important things are most easily and certainly  
303 obtained by the use of the appropriate means.  
304 This is evidently a principle in the Divine  
305 administration. Hence, all the necessaries of life  
306 are obtained with great certainty by the use of  
307 the simplest means. The luxuries are more  
308 difficult to obtain; the means to procure them are  
309 more intricate and less certain in their results;  
310 while things absolutely hurtful and poisonous,  
311 such as alcohol and the like, are often obtained  
312 only by torturing nature, and making use of a  
313 kind of infernal sorcery to procure the death-  
314 dealing abomination. This principle holds true in  
315 moral government, and as spiritual blessings are  
316 of surpassing importance, we should expect their  
317 attainment to be connected with great certainty  
318 with the use of the appropriate means; and such  
319 we find to be the fact; and I fully believe that  
320 could facts be known, it would be found that  
321 when the appointed means have been rightly  
322 used, spiritual blessings have been obtained with  
323 greater uniformity than temporal ones.

324

325 II. I AM TO SHOW WHAT A REVIVAL IS.

326

327 It is the renewal of the first love of Christians,  
328 resulting in the awakening and conversion of  
329 sinners to God. In the popular sense, a revival of  
330 religion in a community is the arousing,  
331 quickening, and reclaiming of the more or less  
332 backslidden church and the more or less general  
333 awakening of all classes, and insuring attention  
334 to the claims of God.

335

336 It presupposes that the church is sunk down in a  
337 backslidden state, and a revival consists in the  
338 return of a church from her backslidings, and in  
339 the conversion of sinners.

340

341 I. A revival always includes conviction of sin on  
342 the part of the church. Backslidden professors  
343 cannot wake up and begin right away in the  
344 service of God, without deep searchings of heart.  
345 The fountains of sin need to be broken up. In a  
346 true revival, Christians are always brought under  
347 such convictions; they see their sins in such a  
348 light, that often they find it impossible to  
349 maintain a hope of their acceptance with God. It  
350 does not always go to that extent; but there are  
351 always, in a genuine revival, deep convictions of  
352 sin, and often cases of abandoning all hope.

353

354 2. Backslidden Christians will be brought to  
355 repentance. A revival is nothing else than a new  
356 beginning of obedience to God. Just as in the  
357 case of a converted sinner, the first step is a deep  
358 repentance, a breaking down of heart, a getting  
359 down into the dust before God, with deep  
360 humility, and forsaking of sin.

361

362 3. Christians will have their faith renewed.  
363 While they are in their backslidden state they are  
364 blind to the state of sinners. Their hearts are as  
365 hard as marble. The truths of the Bible only  
366 appear like a dream. They admit it to be all true;  
367 their conscience and their judgment assent to it;  
368 but their faith does not see it standing out in bold  
369 relief, in all the burning realities of eternity. But  
370 when they enter into a revival, they no longer  
371 see men as trees walking, but they see things in  
372 that strong light which will renew the love of  
373 God in their hearts. This will lead them to labor  
374 zealously to bring others to him. They will feel  
375 grieved that others do not love God, when they  
376 love him so much. And they will set themselves  
377 feelingly to persuade their neighbors to give him  
378 their hearts. So their love to men will be  
379 renewed. They will be filled with a tender and  
380 burning love for souls. They will have a longing  
381 desire for the salvation of the whole world. They



382 will be in an agony for individuals whom they  
383 want to have saved—their friends, relations,  
384 enemies. They will not only be urging them to  
385 give their hearts to God, but they will carry them  
386 to God in the arms of faith, and with strong  
387 crying and tears beseech God to have mercy on  
388 them, and save their souls from endless  
389 burnings.

390

391 4. A revival breaks the power of the world and  
392 of sin over Christians. It brings them to such  
393 vantage ground that they get a fresh impulse  
394 towards heaven. They have a new foretaste of  
395 heaven, and new desires after union with God;  
396 and the charm of the world is broken, and the  
397 power of sin overcome.

398

399 5. When the churches are thus awakened and  
400 reformed, the reformation and salvation of  
401 sinners will follow, going through the same  
402 stages of conviction, repentance, and  
403 reformation. Their hearts will be broken down  
404 and changed. Very often the most abandoned  
405 profligates are among the subjects. Harlots, and  
406 drunkards, and infidels, and all sorts of  
407 abandoned characters, are awakened and  
408 converted. The worst among human beings are

409 softened, and reclaimed, and made to appear as  
410 lovely specimens of the beauty of holiness.

411

412 III. I AM TO CONSIDER THE AGENCIES  
413 EMPLOYED IN CARRYING FORWARD A  
414 REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

415

416 Ordinarily, there are three agents employed in  
417 the work of conversion, and one instrument. The  
418 agents are God,—some person who brings the  
419 truth to bear on the mind,—and the sinner  
420 himself. The instrument is the truth. There are  
421 always two agents, God and the sinner,  
422 employed and active in every case of genuine  
423 conversion.

424

425 1. The agency of God is two-fold; by his  
426 Providence and by his Spirit.

427

428 (1.) By his providential government, he so  
429 arranges events as to bring the sinner's mind and  
430 the truth in contact. He brings the sinner where  
431 the truth reaches his ears or his eyes. It is often  
432 interesting to trace the manner in which God  
433 arranges events so as to bring this about, and  
434 how he sometimes makes every thing seem to  
435 favor a revival. The state of the weather, and of  
436 the public health, and other circumstances

437 concur to make every thing just right to favor the  
438 application of truth with the greatest possible  
439 efficacy. How he sometimes sends a minister  
440 along, just at the time he is wanted! How he  
441 brings out a particular truth, just at the particular  
442 time when the individual it is fitted to reach is in  
443 the way to hear!

444

445 (2.) God's special agency by his Holy Spirit.  
446 Having direct access to the mind, and knowing  
447 infinitely well the whole history and state of  
448 each individual sinner, he employs that truth  
449 which is best adapted to his particular case, and  
450 then sets it home with Divine power. He gives it  
451 such vividness, strength, and power, that the  
452 sinner quails, and throws down his weapons of  
453 rebellion, and turns to the Lord. Under his  
454 influence, the truth burns and cuts its way like  
455 fire. He makes the truth stand out in such  
456 aspects, that it crushes the proudest man down  
457 with the weight of a mountain. If men were  
458 disposed to obey God, the truth is given with  
459 sufficient clearness in the Bible; and from  
460 preaching they could learn all that is necessary  
461 for them to know. But because they are wholly  
462 disinclined to obey it, God clears it up before  
463 their minds, and pours in a blaze of convincing  
464 light upon their souls, which they cannot

465 withstand, and they yield to it, and obey God,  
466 and are saved.

467

468 2. The agency of men is commonly employed.  
469 Men are not mere instruments in the hands of  
470 God. Truth is the instrument. The preacher is a  
471 moral agent in the work; he acts; he is not a mere  
472 passive instrument; he is voluntary in promoting  
473 the conversion of sinners.

474

475 3. The agency of the sinner himself. The  
476 conversion of a sinner consists in his obeying the  
477 truth. It is therefore impossible it should take  
478 place without his agency, for it consists in his  
479 acting right. He is influenced to this by the  
480 agency of God, and by the agency of men. Men  
481 act on their fellow-men, not only by language,  
482 but by their looks, their tears, their daily  
483 deportment. See that impenitent man there, who  
484 has a pious wife. Her very looks, her tenderness,  
485 her solemn, compassionate dignity, softened and  
486 moulded into the image of Christ are a sermon to  
487 him all the time. He has to turn his mind away,  
488 because it is such a reproach to him. He feels a  
489 sermon ringing in his ears all day long.

490

491 Mankind are accustomed to read the  
492 countenances of their neighbors. Sinners often

493 read the state of a Christian's mind in his eyes. If  
494 his eyes are full of levity, or worldly anxiety and  
495 contrivance, sinners read it. If they are full of the  
496 Spirit of God, sinners read it; and they are often  
497 led to conviction by barely seeing the  
498 countenance of Christians.

499

500 An individual once went into a manufactory to  
501 see the machinery. His mind was solemn, as he  
502 had been where there was a revival. The people  
503 who labored there all knew him by sight, and  
504 knew who he was. A young lady who was at  
505 work saw him, and whispered some foolish  
506 remark to her companion, and laughed. The  
507 person stopped and looked at her with a feeling  
508 of grief. She stopped, her thread broke, and she  
509 was so much agitated she could not join it. She  
510 looked out at the window to compose herself,  
511 and then tried again; again and again she strove  
512 to recover her self-command. At length she sat  
513 down, overcome with her feelings. The person  
514 then approached and spoke with her; she soon  
515 manifested a deep sense of sin. The feeling  
516 spread through the establishment like fire, and in  
517 a few hours almost every person employed there  
518 was under conviction, so much so, that the  
519 owner, though a worldly man, was astounded,  
520 and requested to have the works stop and have a

521 prayer meeting; for he said it was a great deal  
522 more important to have these people converted  
523 than to have the works go on. And in a few days,  
524 the owner and nearly every person employed in  
525 the establishment were hopefully converted. The  
526 eye of this individual, his solemn countenance,  
527 his compassionate feeling, rebuked the levity of  
528 the young woman, and brought her under  
529 conviction of sin: and this whole revival  
530 followed, probably in a great measure, from so  
531 small an incident.

532

533 If Christians have deep feeling on the subject of  
534 religion themselves, they will produce deep  
535 feeling wherever they go. And if they are cold,  
536 or light and trifling, they inevitably destroy all  
537 deep feeling, even in awakened sinners.

538

539 I knew a case, once, of an individual who was  
540 very anxious, but one day I was grieved to find  
541 that her convictions seemed to be all gone. I  
542 asked her what she had been doing. She told me  
543 she had been spending the afternoon at such a  
544 place, among some professors of religion, not  
545 thinking that it would dissipate her convictions  
546 to spend an afternoon with professors of  
547 religion. But they were trifling and vain, and  
548 thus her convictions were lost. And no doubt

549 those professors of religion, by their folly,  
550 destroyed a soul, for her convictions did not  
551 return.

552  
553 The church is required to use the means for the  
554 conversion of sinners. Sinners cannot properly  
555 be said to use the means for their own  
556 conversion. The church uses the means. What  
557 sinners do is to submit to the truth, or to resist it.  
558 It is a mistake of sinners, to think they are using  
559 means for their own conversion. The whole drift  
560 of a revival, and every thing about it, is designed  
561 to present the truth to your mind, for your  
562 obedience or resistance.

563  
564 REMARKS.

565  
566 1. Revivals were formerly regarded as miracles.  
567 And it has been so by some even in our day. And  
568 others have ideas on the subject so loose and  
569 unsatisfactory, that if they would only think,  
570 they would see their absurdity. For a long time,  
571 it was supposed by the church, that a revival was  
572 a miracle, an interposition of Divine power  
573 which they had nothing to do with, and which  
574 they had no more agency in producing, than they  
575 had in producing thunder, or a storm of hail, or  
576 an earthquake. It is only within a few years that

577 ministers generally have supposed revivals were  
578 to be promoted, by the use of means designed  
579 and adapted specially to that object. Even in  
580 New England, it has been supposed that revivals  
581 came just as showers do, sometimes in one town,  
582 and sometimes in another, and that ministers and  
583 churches could do nothing more to produce them  
584 than they could to make showers of rain come on  
585 their own town, when they are falling on a  
586 neighboring town.

587

588 It used to be supposed that a revival would come  
589 about once in fifteen years, and all would be  
590 converted that God intended to save, and then  
591 they must wait until another crop came forward  
592 on the stage of life. Finally, the time got  
593 shortened down to five years, and they supposed  
594 there might be a revival about as often as that.

595

596 I have heard a fact in relation to one of these  
597 pastors, who supposed revivals might come  
598 about once in five years. There had been a  
599 revival in his congregation. The next year, there  
600 was a revival in a neighboring town, and he went  
601 there to preach, and staid several days, till he got  
602 his soul all engaged in the work. He returned  
603 home on Saturday, and went into his study to  
604 prepare for the Sabbath. And his soul was in an



605 agony. He thought how many adult persons there  
606 were in his congregation at enmity with God—  
607 so many still unconverted—so many persons die  
608 yearly—such a portion of them unconverted—if  
609 a revival does not come under five years, so  
610 many adult heads of families will be in hell. He  
611 put down his calculations on paper, and  
612 embodied them in his sermon for the next day,  
613 with his heart bleeding at the dreadful picture.  
614 As I understood it, he did not do this with any  
615 expectation of a revival, but he felt deeply, and  
616 poured out his heart to his people. And that  
617 sermon awakened forty heads of families, and a  
618 powerful revival followed; and so his theory  
619 about a revival once in five years was all  
620 exploded.

621

622 Thus God has overthrown, generally, the theory  
623 that revivals are miracles.

624

625 2. Mistaken notions concerning the sovereignty  
626 of God have greatly hindered revivals.

627

628 Many people have supposed God's sovereignty  
629 to be some thing very different from what it is.  
630 They have supposed it to be such an arbitrary  
631 disposal of events, and particularly of the gift of  
632 his Spirit, as precluded a rational employment of

633 means for promoting a revival of religion. But  
634 there is no evidence from the Bible that God  
635 exercises any such sovereignty as that. There are  
636 no facts to prove it. But every thing goes to show  
637 that God has connected means with the end  
638 through all the departments of his government—  
639 in nature and in grace. There is no natural event  
640 in which his own agency is not concerned. He  
641 has not built the creation like a vast machine that  
642 will go on alone without his further care. He has  
643 not retired from the universe, to let it work for  
644 itself. This is mere atheism. He exercises a  
645 universal superintendence and control. And yet  
646 every event in nature has been brought about by  
647 means. He neither administers providence nor  
648 grace with that sort of sovereignty that dispenses  
649 with the use of means. There is no more  
650 sovereignty in one than in the other.

651

652 And yet some people are terribly alarmed at all  
653 direct efforts to promote a revival, and they cry  
654 out, “You are trying to get up a revival in your  
655 own strength. Take care, you are interfering with  
656 the sovereignty of God. Better keep along in the  
657 usual course, and let God give a revival when he  
658 thinks it is best. God is a sovereign, and it is very  
659 wrong for you to attempt to get up a revival, just  
660 because you think a revival is needed.” This is

661 just such preaching as the devil wants. And men  
662 cannot do the devil's work more effectually than  
663 by preaching up the sovereignty of God, as a  
664 reason why we should not put forth efforts to  
665 produce a revival.

666  
667 3. You see the error of those who are beginning  
668 to think that religion can be better promoted in  
669 the world without revivals, and who are disposed  
670 to give up all efforts to produce religious  
671 awakenings. Because there are evils arising in  
672 some instances out of great excitements on the  
673 subject of religion, they are of opinion that it is  
674 best to dispense with them altogether. This  
675 cannot, and must not be. True, there is danger of  
676 abuses. In cases of great religious as well as all  
677 other excitements, more or less incidental evils  
678 may be expected of course. But this is no reason  
679 why they should be given up. The best things are  
680 always liable to abuses. Great and manifold evils  
681 have originated in the providential and moral  
682 governments of God. But these foreseen  
683 perversions and evils were not considered a  
684 sufficient reason for giving them up. For the  
685 establishment of these governments was on the  
686 whole the best that could be done for the  
687 production of the greatest amount of happiness.  
688 So in revivals of religion, it is found by

689 experience, that in the present state of the world,  
690 religion cannot be promoted to any considerable  
691 extent without them. The evils which are  
692 sometimes complained of, when they are real,  
693 are incidental, and of small importance when  
694 compared with the amount of good produced by  
695 revivals. The sentiment should not be admitted  
696 by the church for a moment, that revivals may be  
697 given up. It is fraught with all that is dangerous  
698 to the interests of Zion, is death to the cause of  
699 missions, and brings in its train the damnation of  
700 the world.

701  
702 Finally.—I have a proposal to make to you who  
703 are here present. I have not commenced this  
704 course of Lectures on Revivals to get up a  
705 curious theory of my own on the subject. I  
706 would not spend my time and strength merely to  
707 give you instructions, to gratify your curiosity,  
708 and furnish you something to talk about. I have  
709 no idea of preaching about revivals. It is not my  
710 design to preach so as to have you able to say at  
711 the close, “We understand all about revivals  
712 now,” while you do nothing. But I wish to ask  
713 you a question. What do you hear lectures on  
714 revivals for? Do you mean that whenever you  
715 are convinced what your duty is in promoting a  
716 revival, you will go to work and practise it?

717

718 Will you follow the instructions I shall give you  
719 from the word of God, and put them in practise  
720 in your own lives? Will you bring them to bear  
721 upon your families, your acquaintance,  
722 neighbors, and through the city? Or will you  
723 spend the winter in learning about revivals, and  
724 do nothing for them? I want you, as fast as you  
725 learn any thing on the subject of revivals, to put  
726 it in practice, and go to work and see if you  
727 cannot promote a revival among sinners here. If  
728 you will not do this, I wish you to let me know at  
729 the beginning, so that I need not waste my  
730 strength. You ought to decide now whether you  
731 will do this or not. You know that we call  
732 sinners to decide on the spot whether they will  
733 obey the Gospel. And we have no more authority  
734 to let you take time to deliberate whether you  
735 will obey God, than we have to let sinners do so.  
736 We call on you to unite now in a solemn pledge  
737 to God, that you will do your duty as fast as you  
738 learn what it is, and to pray that He will pour out  
739 his Spirit upon this church and upon all the city  
740 this winter.

741

742

743

744 LECTURE II.

745

746 WHEN A REVIVAL IS TO BE EXPECTED.

747

748 Text.—Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy  
749 people may rejoice in thee?—Psalm lxxxv. 6.

750

751 THIS Psalm seems to have been written soon  
752 after the return of the people of Israel from the  
753 Babylonish captivity; as you will easily see from  
754 the language at the commencement of it. The  
755 Psalmist felt that God had been very favorable to  
756 the people, and while contemplating the  
757 goodness of the Lord in bringing them back  
758 from the land where they had been carried away  
759 captive, and while looking at the prospects  
760 before them, he breaks out into a prayer for a  
761 Revival of Religion. “Wilt thou not revive us  
762 again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?”  
763 Since God in his providence had re-established  
764 the ordinances of his house among them, he  
765 prays that there may be also a revival of religion,  
766 to crown the work.

767

768 Last Friday evening I attempted to show what a  
769 Revival of Religion is not; what a Revival is;  
770 and the agencies to be employed in promoting it.  
771 The topics to which I wish to call your attention  
772 to-night, are,

773

774 I. When a Revival of Religion is needed.

775

776 II. The importance of a Revival when it is  
777 needed.

778

779 III. When a Revival of Religion may be  
780 expected.

781

782 I. WHEN IS A REVIVAL OF RELIGION  
783 NEEDED?

784

785 1. When there is a want of brotherly love and  
786 Christian confidence among professors of  
787 religion, then a revival is needed. Then there is a  
788 loud call for God to revive his work. When  
789 Christians have sunk down into a low and  
790 backslidden state, they neither have, nor ought to  
791 have, nor is there reason to have, the same love  
792 and confidence toward each other, as when they  
793 are all alive, and active, and living holy lives.  
794 The love of benevolence may be the same, but  
795 not the love of complacency. God loves all men  
796 with the love of benevolence, but he does not  
797 feel the love of complacency toward any but  
798 those who live holy. Christians do not and  
799 cannot love each other with the love of  
800 complacency, only in proportion to their

801 holiness. If Christian love is the love of the  
802 image of Christ in his people, then it never can  
803 be exercised only where that image really or  
804 apparently exists. A person must reflect the  
805 image of Christ, and show the spirit of Christ,  
806 before other Christians can love him with the  
807 love of complacency. It is in vain to call on  
808 Christians to love one another with the love of  
809 complacency, as Christians, when they are sunk  
810 down in stupidity. They see nothing in each  
811 other to produce this love. It is next to  
812 impossible that they should feel otherwise  
813 toward each other, than they do toward sinners.  
814 Merely knowing that they belong to the church,  
815 or seeing them occasionally at the communion  
816 table, will not produce Christian love, unless  
817 they see the image of Christ.

818

819 2. When there are dissensions, and jealousies,  
820 and evil speakings among professors of religion,  
821 then there is great need of a revival. These things  
822 show that Christians have got far from God, and  
823 it is time to think earnestly of a revival. Religion  
824 cannot prosper with such things in the church,  
825 and nothing can put an end to them like a  
826 revival.

827



828 3. When there is a worldly spirit in the church. It  
829 is manifest that the church is sunk down into a  
830 low and backslidden state, when you see  
831 Christians conform to the world in dress,  
832 equipage, parties, seeking worldly amusements,  
833 reading novels, and other books such as the  
834 world read. It shows that they are far from God,  
835 and that there is great need of a Revival of  
836 Religion.

837  
838 4. When the church finds its members falling  
839 into gross and scandalous sins, then it is time for  
840 the church to awake and cry to God for a  
841 Revival of Religion. When such things are  
842 taking place, as give the enemies of religion an  
843 occasion for reproach, it is time for the church to  
844 ask God, “What will become of thy great  
845 name?”

846  
847 5. When there is a spirit of controversy in the  
848 church or in the land, a revival is needful. The  
849 spirit of religion is not the spirit of controversy.  
850 There can be no prosperity in religion, where the  
851 spirit of controversy prevails.

852  
853 6. When the wicked triumph over the church,  
854 and revile them, it is time to seek for a Revival  
855 of Religion.

856

857 7. When sinners are careless and stupid, and  
858 sinking into hell unconcerned, it is time the  
859 church should bestir themselves. It is as much  
860 the duty of the church to awake, as it is of the  
861 firemen to awake when a fire breaks out in the  
862 night in a great city. The church ought to put out  
863 the fires of hell which are laying hold of the  
864 wicked. Sleep! Should the firemen sleep, and let  
865 the whole city burn down: what would be  
866 thought of such firemen? And yet their guilt  
867 would not compare with the guilt of Christians  
868 who sleep while sinners around them are sinking  
869 stupid into the fires of hell.

870

871 II. I AM TO SHOW THE IMPORTANCE OF A  
872 REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN SUCH  
873 CIRCUMSTANCES.

874

875 1. A Revival of Religion is the only possible  
876 thing that can wipe away the reproach which  
877 covers the church, and restore religion to the  
878 place it ought to have in the estimation of the  
879 public. Without a revival, this reproach will  
880 cover the church more and more, until it is  
881 overwhelmed with universal contempt. You may  
882 do any thing else you please, and you can  
883 change the aspects of society in some respects,

884 but you will do no real good; you only make it  
885 worse without a Revival of Religion. You may  
886 go and build a splendid new house of worship,  
887 and line your seats with damask, put up a costly  
888 pulpit, and get a magnificent organ, and every  
889 thing of that kind, to make a show and dash, and  
890 in that way you may procure a sort of respect for  
891 religion among the wicked, but it does no good  
892 in reality. It rather does hurt. It misleads them as  
893 to the real nature of religion; and so far from  
894 converting them, it carries them farther away  
895 from salvation. Look wherever they have  
896 surrounded the altar of Christianity with  
897 splendor, and you will find that the impression  
898 produced is contrary to the true nature of  
899 religion. There must be a waking up of energy,  
900 on the part of Christians, and an outpouring of  
901 God's Spirit, or the world will laugh at the  
902 church.

903

904 2. Nothing else will restore Christian love and  
905 confidence among church members. Nothing but  
906 a Revival of Religion can restore it, and nothing  
907 else ought to restore it. There is no other way to  
908 wake up that love of Christians for one another,  
909 which is sometimes felt, when they have such  
910 love as they cannot express. You cannot have  
911 such love without confidence; and you cannot

912 restore confidence without such evidence of  
913 piety as is seen in a revival. If a minister finds he  
914 has lost in any degree the confidence of his  
915 people, he ought to labor for a revival as the only  
916 means of regaining their confidence. I do not  
917 mean that this should be his motive in laboring  
918 for a revival, to regain the confidence of his  
919 people, but that a revival through his  
920 instrumentality, and ordinarily nothing else, will  
921 restore to him the confidence of the praying part  
922 of his people. So if an elder or private member  
923 of the church finds his brethren cold towards  
924 him, there is but one way to remedy it. It is by  
925 being revived himself, and pouring out from his  
926 eyes and from his life the splendor of the image  
927 of Christ. This spirit will catch and spread in the  
928 church, and confidence will be renewed, and  
929 brotherly love prevail again.

930

931 3. At such a time a Revival of Religion is  
932 indispensable to avert the judgments of God  
933 from the church. This would be strange  
934 preaching, if revivals are only miracles, and if  
935 the church has no more agency in producing  
936 them, than it has in making a thunder storm. To  
937 say to the church, that unless there is a revival  
938 you may expect judgments, would then be as  
939 ridiculous as to say, If you do not have a thunder

940 storm, you may expect judgments. The fact is,  
941 that Christians are more to blame for not being  
942 revived, than sinners are for not being converted.  
943 And if they are not awakened, they may know  
944 assuredly that God will visit them with his  
945 judgments. How often God visited the Jewish  
946 church with judgments, because they would not  
947 repent and be revived at the call of his prophets!  
948 How often have we seen churches, and even  
949 whole denominations, cursed with a curse,  
950 because they would not wake up and seek the  
951 Lord, and pray, “Wilt thou not revive us again,  
952 that thy people may rejoice in thee?”

953

954 4. Nothing but a Revival of Religion can  
955 preserve such a church from annihilation. A  
956 church declining in this way cannot continue to  
957 exist without a revival. If it receives new  
958 members, they will, for the most part, be made  
959 up of ungodly persons. Without revivals there  
960 will not ordinarily be as many persons converted  
961 as will die off in a year. There have been  
962 churches in this country where the members  
963 have died off, and there were no revivals to  
964 convert others in their place, till the church has  
965 run out, and the organization has been dissolved.

966

967 A minister told me that he once labored as a  
968 missionary in Virginia, on the ground where  
969 such a man as Samuel Davies once flashed and  
970 shone like a flaming torch; and that Davies's  
971 church was so reduced as to have but one male  
972 member, and he, if I remember right, was a  
973 colored man. The church had got proud, and was  
974 all run out. I have heard of a church in  
975 Pennsylvania, that was formerly flourishing, but  
976 neglected revivals, and it became so reduced that  
977 the pastor had to send to a neighboring church  
978 for a ruling elder when he administered the  
979 communion. [1]

980

981 5. Nothing but a Revival of Religion can prevent  
982 the means of grace from doing a great injury to  
983 the ungodly. Without a revival, they will grow  
984 harder and harder under preaching, and will  
985 experience a more horrible damnation than they  
986 would if they had never heard the Gospel. Your  
987 children and your friends will go down to a  
988 much more horrible fate in hell, in consequence  
989 of the means of grace, if there are no revivals to  
990 convert them to God. Better were it for them if  
991 there were no means of grace, no sanctuary, no  
992 Bible, no preaching, and if they had never heard  
993 the Gospel, than to live and die where there is no

994 revival. The Gospel is the savor of death unto  
995 death, if it is not made a savor of life unto life.

996

997 6. There is no other way in which a church can  
998 be sanctified, grow in grace, and be fitted for  
999 heaven. What is growing in grace? Is it hearing  
1000 sermons and getting some new notions about  
1001 religion? No—no such thing. The Christian who  
1002 does this, and nothing more, is getting worse and  
1003 worse, more and more hardened, and every week  
1004 it is more difficult to rouse him up to duty.

1005

1006 III. I AM TO SHOW WHEN A REVIVAL OF  
1007 RELIGION MAY BE EXPECTED.

1008

1009 1. When the providence of God indicates that a  
1010 revival is at hand. The indications of God's  
1011 providence are sometimes so plain as to amount  
1012 to a revelation of his will. There is a conspiring  
1013 of events to open the way, a preparation of  
1014 circumstances to favor a revival, so that those  
1015 who are looking out can see that a revival is at  
1016 hand, just as plainly as if it had been revealed  
1017 from Heaven. Cases have occurred in this  
1018 country, where the providential manifestations  
1019 were so plain, that those who are careful  
1020 observers, felt no hesitation in saying that God  
1021 was coming to pour out his Spirit, and grant a

1022 revival of religion. There are various ways for  
1023 God to indicate his will to a people—sometimes  
1024 by giving them peculiar means, sometimes by  
1025 peculiar and alarming events, sometimes by  
1026 remarkably favoring the employment of means,  
1027 by the weather, health, etc.

1028

1029 2. When the wickedness of the wicked grieves  
1030 and humbles and distresses Christians.

1031 Sometimes Christians do not seem to mind any  
1032 thing about the wickedness around them. Or if  
1033 they talk about it, it is in a cold, and callous, and  
1034 unfeeling way, as if they despaired of a  
1035 reformation: they are disposed to scold at  
1036 sinners—not to feel the compassion of the Son  
1037 of God for them. But sometimes the conduct of  
1038 the wicked drives Christians to prayer, and  
1039 breaks them down, and makes them sorrowful  
1040 and tender-hearted, so that they can weep day  
1041 and night, and instead of scolding and  
1042 reproaching them, they pray earnestly for them.  
1043 Then you may expect a revival. Indeed this is a  
1044 revival begun already. Sometimes the wicked  
1045 will get up an opposition to religion. And when  
1046 this drives Christians to their knees in prayer to  
1047 God, with strong crying and tears, you may be  
1048 certain there is going to be a revival. The  
1049 prevalence of wickedness is no evidence at all



1050 that there is not going to be a revival. That is  
1051 often God's time to work. When the enemy  
1052 cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts  
1053 up a standard against him. Often the first  
1054 indication of a revival, is the devil's getting up  
1055 something new in opposition. It will invariably  
1056 have one of two effects. It will either drive  
1057 Christians to God, or it will drive them farther  
1058 away from God, to some carnal policy or other  
1059 that will only make things worse. Frequently the  
1060 most outrageous wickedness of the ungodly is  
1061 followed by a revival. If Christians are made to  
1062 feel that they have no hope but in God, and if  
1063 they have sufficient feeling left to care for the  
1064 honor of God and the salvation of the souls of  
1065 the impenitent, there will certainly be a revival.  
1066 Let hell boil over if it will, and spew out as  
1067 many devils as there are stones in the pavements,  
1068 if it only drives Christians to God in prayer—  
1069 they cannot hinder a revival. Let Satan get up a  
1070 row, and sound his horn as loud as he pleases; if  
1071 Christians will only be humbled and pray, they  
1072 shall soon see God's naked arm in a revival of  
1073 religion. I have known instances where a revival  
1074 has broken in upon the ranks of the enemy,  
1075 almost as suddenly as a clap of thunder, and  
1076 scattered them—taken the very ringleaders as  
1077 trophies, and broken up their party in an instant.

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3. A revival may be expected when Christians have a spirit of prayer for a revival. That is, when they pray as if their hearts were set upon a revival. Sometimes Christians are not engaged in prayer for a revival, not even when they are warm in prayer. Their minds are upon something else; they are praying for something else—the salvation of the heathen and the like—and not for a revival among themselves. But when they feel the want of a revival, they pray for it; they feel for their own families and neighborhoods, and pray for them as if they could not be denied. What constitutes a spirit of prayer? Is it many prayers and warm words? No. Prayer is the state of the heart. The spirit of prayer is a state of continual desire and anxiety of mind for the salvation of sinners. It is something that weighs them down. It is the same, so far as the philosophy of the mind is concerned, as when a man is anxious for some worldly interest. A Christian who has this spirit of prayer feels anxious for souls. It is the subject of his thoughts all the time, and makes him look and act as if he had a load on his mind. He thinks of it by day, and dreams of it by night. This is properly praying without ceasing. The man's prayers seem to flow from his heart liquid as water—”O

1106 Lord, revive thy work.” Sometimes this feeling  
1107 is very deep; persons have been bowed down, so  
1108 that they could neither stand nor sit. I can name  
1109 men in this state, of firm nerves, who stand high  
1110 in character, who have been absolutely crushed  
1111 with grief for the state of sinners. They have had  
1112 an actual travail of soul for sinners, till they were  
1113 as helpless as children. The feeling is not always  
1114 so great as this, but such things are much more  
1115 common than is supposed. In the great revivals  
1116 in 1826, they were common. This is by no means  
1117 enthusiasm. It is just what Paul felt, when he  
1118 says, “My little children, of whom I travail in  
1119 birth.” I heard of a person in this State, who  
1120 prayed for sinners, and finally got into such a  
1121 state of mind, that she could not live without  
1122 prayer. She could not rest day nor night, unless  
1123 there was somebody praying. Then she would be  
1124 at ease; but if they ceased, she would shriek in  
1125 agony till there was prayer again. And this  
1126 continued for two days, until she prevailed in  
1127 prayer, and her soul was relieved. This travail of  
1128 soul, is that deep agony, which persons feel  
1129 when they lay hold on God for such a blessing,  
1130 and will not let him go till they receive it. I do  
1131 not mean to be understood that it is essential to a  
1132 spirit of prayer, that the distress should be so  
1133 great as this. But this deep, continual, earnest

1134 desire for the salvation of sinners, is what  
1135 constitutes the spirit of prayer for a revival. It is  
1136 a revival begun so far as this spirit of prayer  
1137 extends.

1138

1139 When this feeling exists in a church, unless the  
1140 Spirit is grieved away by sin, there will infallibly  
1141 be a revival of Christians generally, and it will  
1142 involve the conversion of sinners to God. This  
1143 anxiety and distress increases till the revival  
1144 commences. A clergyman in W——n told me of  
1145 a revival among his people, which commenced  
1146 with a zealous and devoted woman in the  
1147 church. She became anxious about sinners, and  
1148 went to praying for them, and she prayed and her  
1149 distress increased; and she finally came to her  
1150 minister, and talked with him, and asked him to  
1151 appoint an anxious meeting, for she felt that one  
1152 was needed. The minister put her off, for he felt  
1153 nothing of it. The next week she came again, and  
1154 besought him to appoint an anxious meeting; she  
1155 knew there would be somebody to come, for she  
1156 felt as if God was going to pour out his Spirit.  
1157 He put her off again. And finally she said to him,  
1158 “If you do not appoint an anxious meeting I shall  
1159 die, for there is certainly going to be a revival.”  
1160 The next Sabbath he appointed a meeting, and  
1161 said that if there were any who wished to

1162 converse with him about the salvation of their  
1163 souls, he would meet them on such an evening.  
1164 He did not know of one, but when he went to the  
1165 place, to his astonishment he found a large  
1166 number of anxious inquirers. Now do not you  
1167 think that woman knew there was going to be a  
1168 revival? Call it what you please, a new  
1169 revelation, or an old revelation, or any thing else.  
1170 I say it was the Spirit of God that taught that  
1171 praying woman there was going to be a revival.  
1172 “The secret of the Lord” was with her, and she  
1173 knew it. She knew God had been in her heart,  
1174 and filled it so full that she could contain no  
1175 longer.

1176  
1177 Sometimes ministers have had this distress about  
1178 their congregations, so that they felt as if they  
1179 could not live unless they could see a revival.  
1180 Sometimes elders and deacons, or private  
1181 members of the church, men or women, have the  
1182 spirit of prayer for a revival of religion, so that  
1183 they will hold on and prevail with God, till he  
1184 pours out his Spirit. The first ray of light that  
1185 broke in upon the midnight which rested on the  
1186 churches in Oneida county, in the fall of 1825,  
1187 was from a woman in feeble health, who, I  
1188 believe, had never been in a powerful revival.  
1189 Her soul was exercised about sinners. She was in

1190 an agony for the land. She did not know what  
1191 ailed her, but she kept praying more and more,  
1192 till it seemed as if her agony would destroy her  
1193 body. At length she became full of joy, and  
1194 exclaimed, “God has come! God has come!  
1195 There is no mistake about it, the work is begun,  
1196 and is going over all the region.” And sure  
1197 enough, the work began, and her family were  
1198 almost all converted, and the work spread all  
1199 over that part of the country. Now, do you think  
1200 that woman was deceived? I tell you, no. She  
1201 knew she had prevailed with God in prayer. She  
1202 had travailed in birth for souls, and she knew it.  
1203 This was not the only instance, by many, that I  
1204 knew in that region.

1205  
1206 Generally, there are but few professors of  
1207 religion that know any thing about this spirit of  
1208 prayer which prevails with God. I have been  
1209 amazed to see such accounts as are often  
1210 published about revivals, as if the revival had  
1211 come without any cause—nobody knew why or  
1212 wherefore. I have sometimes inquired into such  
1213 cases; when it had been given out that nobody  
1214 knew any thing about it until one Sabbath they  
1215 saw in the face of the congregation that God was  
1216 there, or they saw it in their conference room, or  
1217 prayer meeting, and were astonished at the

1218 mysterious sovereignty of God, in bringing in a  
1219 revival without any apparent connection with  
1220 means. Now mark me. Go and inquire among  
1221 the obscure members of the church, and you will  
1222 always find that somebody had been praying for  
1223 a revival, and was expecting it—some man or  
1224 woman had been agonizing in prayer, for the  
1225 salvation of sinners, until they gained the  
1226 blessing. It may have found the minister and the  
1227 body of the church fast asleep, and they would  
1228 wake up all of a sudden, like a man just rubbing  
1229 his eyes open, and running round the room  
1230 pushing things over, and wondering where all  
1231 this excitement came from. But though few  
1232 knew it, you may be sure there has been  
1233 somebody on the watch-tower; constant in  
1234 prayer till the blessing came. Generally, a revival  
1235 is more or less extensive, as there are more or  
1236 less persons who have the spirit of prayer. But I  
1237 will not dwell on this subject any further at  
1238 present, as the subject of prayer will come up  
1239 again in this course of lectures.

1240

1241 4. Another sign that a revival may be expected,  
1242 is when the attention of ministers is especially  
1243 directed to this particular object, and when their  
1244 preaching and other efforts are aimed  
1245 particularly at the conversion of sinners. Most of

1246 the time the labors of ministers are, it would  
1247 seem, directed to other objects. They seem to  
1248 preach and labor with no particular design to  
1249 effect the immediate conversion of sinners. And  
1250 then it need not be expected that there will be a  
1251 revival under their preaching. There never will  
1252 be a revival till somebody makes particular  
1253 efforts for this end. But when the attention of a  
1254 minister is directed to the state of the families in  
1255 his congregation, and his heart is full of feeling  
1256 of the necessity of a revival, and when he puts  
1257 forth the proper efforts for this end, then you  
1258 may be prepared to expect a revival. As I  
1259 explained last week, the connection between the  
1260 right use of means for a revival, and a revival, is  
1261 as philosophically sure as between the right use  
1262 of means to raise grain, and a crop of wheat. I  
1263 believe, in fact, it is more certain, and that there  
1264 are fewer instances of failure. The effect is more  
1265 certain to follow. The paramount importance of  
1266 spiritual things makes it reasonable that it should  
1267 be so. Take the Bible, the nature of the case, and  
1268 the history of the church all together, and you  
1269 will find fewer failures in the use of means for a  
1270 revival, than in farming, or any other worldly  
1271 business. In worldly business there are  
1272 sometimes cases where counteracting causes  
1273 annihilate all a man can do. In raising grain, for



1274 instance, there are cases which are beyond the  
1275 control of man, such as drought, hard winter,  
1276 worms, and so on. So in laboring to promote a  
1277 revival, there may things occur to counteract it,  
1278 something or other turning up to divert the  
1279 public attention from religion, which may baffle  
1280 every effort. But I believe there are fewer such  
1281 cases in the moral than in the natural world. I  
1282 have seldom seen an individual fail, when he  
1283 used the means for promoting a revival in  
1284 earnest, in the manner pointed out in the word of  
1285 God. I believe a man may enter on the work of  
1286 promoting a revival, with as reasonable an  
1287 expectation of success, as he can enter on any  
1288 other work with an expectation of success; with  
1289 the same expectation as the farmer has of a crop  
1290 when he sows his grain. I have sometimes seen  
1291 this tried and succeed under circumstances the  
1292 most forbidding that can be conceived.

1293

1294 The great revival in Rochester began under the  
1295 most disadvantageous circumstances that could  
1296 well be imagined. It seemed as though Satan had  
1297 interposed every possible obstacle to a revival.  
1298 The three churches were at variance; one had no  
1299 minister, one was divided and about to dismiss  
1300 their minister. An elder of the third Presbyterian  
1301 church had brought a charge of unchristian

1302 conduct against the pastor of the first church, and  
1303 they were just going to have a trial before the  
1304 presbytery. After the work began, one of the first  
1305 things was, the great stone church gave way, and  
1306 created a panic. Then one of the churches went  
1307 on and dismissed their minister right in the midst  
1308 of it. Another church nearly broke down. Many  
1309 other things occurred, so that it seemed as if the  
1310 devil was determined to divert the public  
1311 attention from the subject of religion. But there  
1312 were a few remarkable cases of the spirit of  
1313 prayer, which assured us that God was there, and  
1314 we went on: and the more Satan opposed, the  
1315 Spirit of the Lord lifted up the standard higher  
1316 and higher, till finally a wave of salvation rolled  
1317 over the place.

1318

1319 5. A revival of religion may be expected when  
1320 Christians begin to confess their sins to one  
1321 another. At other times, they confess in a general  
1322 manner, as if they were only half in earnest.  
1323 They may do it in eloquent language, but it does  
1324 not mean any thing. But when there is an  
1325 ingenuous breaking down, and a pouring out of  
1326 the heart in making a confession of their sins, the  
1327 flood-gates will soon burst open, and salvation  
1328 will flow over the place.

1329

1330 6. A revival may be expected whenever  
1331 Christians are found willing to make the sacrifice  
1332 necessary to carry it on. They must be willing to  
1333 sacrifice their feelings, their business, their time,  
1334 to help forward the work. Ministers must be  
1335 willing to lay out their strength, and to jeopard  
1336 their health and life. They must be willing to  
1337 offend the impenitent by plain and faithful  
1338 dealing, and perhaps offend many members of  
1339 the church who will not come up to the work.  
1340 They must take a decided stand with the revival,  
1341 be the consequences what they may. They must  
1342 be prepared to go on with the work, even though  
1343 they should lose the affections of all the  
1344 impenitent, and of all the cold part of the church.  
1345 The minister must be prepared, if it is the will of  
1346 God, to be driven away from the place. He must  
1347 be determined to go straight forward, and leave  
1348 the entire event with God.

1349

1350 I knew a minister who had a young man laboring  
1351 with him in a revival. The young man preached  
1352 pretty plain, and the wicked did not like him.  
1353 They said, We like our minister, and we wish to  
1354 have him preach. They finally said so much that  
1355 the minister told the young man, "Mr. Such-a-  
1356 one, that gives so much towards my support,  
1357 says so and so. Mr. A. says so, and Mr. B. says

1358 so. They think it will break up the society if you  
1359 continue to preach, and I think you had better  
1360 not preach any more.” The young man went  
1361 away, but the Spirit of God immediately  
1362 withdrew from the place, and the revival stopped  
1363 short. The minister, by yielding to the wicked  
1364 desires of the wicked, drove him away. He was  
1365 afraid the devil would drive him away from his  
1366 people, and by undertaking to satisfy the devil,  
1367 he offended God. And God so ordered events,  
1368 that in a short time he had to leave his people  
1369 after all. He undertook to go between the devil  
1370 and God, and God dismissed him.

1371

1372 The people, also, must be willing to have a  
1373 revival, let the sacrifice be what it may. It will  
1374 not do for them to say, “We are willing to attend  
1375 so many meetings, but we cannot attend any  
1376 more.” Or, “We are willing to have a revival if it  
1377 will not disturb our arrangements about our  
1378 business, or prevent our making money.” I tell  
1379 you, such people will never have a revival, till  
1380 they are willing to do any thing, and sacrifice  
1381 any thing, that God indicates to be their duty.  
1382 Christian merchants must feel willing to lock up  
1383 their stores for six months, if it is necessary to  
1384 carry on a revival. I do not mean to say any such  
1385 thing is called for, or that it is their duty to do so.

1386 But if there should be such a state of feeling as  
1387 to call for it, then it would be their duty, and they  
1388 ought to be willing to do it. They ought to be  
1389 willing to do it if God calls, and he can easily  
1390 burn down their stores if they do not. In fact, I  
1391 should not be sorry to see such a revival in New  
1392 York, as would make every merchant in the city  
1393 lock up his store till spring, and say he had sold  
1394 goods enough, and now he would give up his  
1395 whole time to lead sinners to Christ.

1396

1397 7. A revival may be expected when ministers  
1398 and professors are willing to have God promote  
1399 it by what instruments he pleases. Sometimes  
1400 ministers are not willing to have a revival unless  
1401 they can have the management of it, or unless  
1402 their agency can be conspicuous in promoting it.  
1403 They wish to prescribe to God what he shall  
1404 direct and bless, and what men he shall put  
1405 forward. They will have no new measures. They  
1406 cannot have any of this new-light preaching, or  
1407 of these evangelists that go about the country  
1408 preaching. They have a great deal to say about  
1409 God's being a sovereign, and that he will have  
1410 revivals come in his own way and time. But then  
1411 he must choose to have it just in their way, or  
1412 they will have nothing to do with it. Such men  
1413 will sleep on till they are awakened by the

1414 judgment trumpet, without a revival, unless they  
1415 are willing that God should come in his own  
1416 way—unless they are willing to have any thing  
1417 or any body employed, that will do the most  
1418 good.

1419

1420 8. Strictly I should say that when the foregoing  
1421 things occur, a revival, to the same extent,  
1422 already exists. In truth a revival should be  
1423 expected whenever it is needed. If we need to be  
1424 revived it is our duty to be revived. If it is duty it  
1425 is possible, and we should set about being  
1426 revived ourselves, and, relying on the promise of  
1427 Christ to be with us in making disciples always  
1428 and everywhere, we ought to labor to revive  
1429 Christians and convert sinners, with confident  
1430 expectation of success. Therefore, whenever the  
1431 church needs reviving they ought and may  
1432 expect to be revived, and to see sinners  
1433 converted to Christ. When those things are seen  
1434 which are named under the foregoing heads, let  
1435 Christians and ministers be encouraged and  
1436 know that a good work is already begun. Follow  
1437 it up.

1438

1439 REMARKS.

1440

1441 1. Brethren, you can tell from our subject,  
1442 whether you need a revival here or not, in this  
1443 church, and in this city; and whether you are  
1444 going to have one or not. Elders of the church,  
1445 men, women, any of you, and all of you—what  
1446 do you say?  
1447  
1448 Do you need a revival here?  
1449  
1450 Do you expect to have one?  
1451  
1452 Have you any reason to expect one?  
1453  
1454 You need not make any mist about it; for you  
1455 know, or can know if you will, whether you have  
1456 any reason to look for a revival here.  
1457  
1458 2. You see why you have not a revival. It is only  
1459 because you do not want one. Because you are  
1460 not praying for it; nor anxious for it, nor putting  
1461 forth efforts for it. I appeal to your own  
1462 consciences. Are you making these efforts now,  
1463 to promote a revival? You know, brethren, what  
1464 the truth is about it. Will you stand up and say  
1465 that you have made the efforts for a revival and  
1466 been disappointed—that you have cried to God,  
1467 “Wilt thou not revive us?” and God would not  
1468 do it?

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3. Do you wish for a revival? Will you have one? If God should ask you this moment, by an audible voice from heaven, “Do you want a revival?” would you dare to say, Yes? “Are you willing to make the sacrifices?” would you answer, Yes? “When shall it begin?” would you answer, Let it begin to-night—let it begin here—let it begin in my heart NOW? Would you dare to say so to God, if you should hear his voice to-night?

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[1] Why not, in such a case, let any member of the church, male or female, distribute the elements? Is it indispensable to have an elder?

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### LECTURE III.

#### HOW TO PROMOTE A REVIVAL.

Text.—Break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.—Hosea x. 12.



1497 THE Jews were a nation of farmers, and it is  
1498 therefore a common thing in the Scriptures to  
1499 refer for illustrations to their occupation, and to  
1500 the scenes with which farmers and shepherds are  
1501 familiar. The prophet Hosea addresses them as a  
1502 nation of backsliders, and reproves them for  
1503 their idolatry, and threatens them with the  
1504 judgments of God. I have showed you in my first  
1505 lecture what a revival is not—what it is—and the  
1506 agencies to be employed in promoting it; and in  
1507 my second, when it is needed—its importance—  
1508 and when it may be expected. My design in this  
1509 lecture is to show,

1510

1511 HOW A REVIVAL IS TO BE PROMOTED.

1512

1513 A revival consists of two parts; as it respects the  
1514 church, and as it respects the ungodly. I shall  
1515 speak to-night of a revival in the church. Fallow  
1516 ground is ground which has once been tilled, but  
1517 which now lies waste, and needs to be broken up  
1518 and mellowed, before it is suited to receive  
1519 grain. I shall show, as it respects a revival in the  
1520 church,

1521

1522 1. What it is to break up the fallow ground, in  
1523 the sense of the text.

1524

1525 2. How it is to be performed.

1526

1527 I. WHAT IS IT TO BREAK UP THE FALLOW  
1528 GROUND?

1529

1530 To break up the fallow ground, is to break up  
1531 your hearts—to prepare your minds to bring  
1532 forth fruit unto God. The mind of man is often  
1533 compared in the Bible to ground, and the word  
1534 of God to seed sown in it, and the fruit  
1535 represents the actions and affections of those  
1536 who receive it. To break up the fallow ground,  
1537 therefore, is to bring the mind into such a state,  
1538 that it is fitted to receive the word of God.

1539 Sometimes your hearts get matted down hard  
1540 and dry, and all run to waste, till there is no such  
1541 thing as getting fruit from them till they are all  
1542 broken up, and mellowed down, and fitted to  
1543 receive the word of God. It is this softening of  
1544 the heart, so as to make it feel the truth, which  
1545 the prophet calls breaking up your fallow  
1546 ground.

1547

1548 II. HOW IS THE FALLOW GROUND TO BE  
1549 BROKEN UP?

1550

1551 1. It is not by any direct efforts to feel. People  
1552 run into a mistake on this subject, from not

1553 making the laws of mind the object of thought.  
1554 There are great errors on the subject of the laws  
1555 which govern the mind. People talk about  
1556 religious feeling, as if they thought they could,  
1557 by direct effort, call forth religious affection. But  
1558 this is not the way the mind acts. No man can  
1559 make himself feel in this way, merely by trying  
1560 to feel. The feelings of the mind are not directly  
1561 under our control. We cannot by willing, or by  
1562 direct volition, call forth religious feelings. We  
1563 might as well think to call spirits up from the  
1564 deep. They are purely involuntary states of mind.  
1565 They naturally and necessarily exist in the mind  
1566 under certain circumstances calculated to excite  
1567 them. But they can be controlled indirectly.  
1568 Otherwise there would be no moral character in  
1569 our feelings, if there were not a way to control  
1570 them. We cannot say, "Now I will feel so and so  
1571 towards such an object." But we can command  
1572 our attention to it, and look at it intently, till the  
1573 involuntary affections arise. Let a man who is  
1574 away from his family, bring them up before his  
1575 mind, and will he not feel? But it is not by  
1576 saying to himself, "Now I will feel deeply for  
1577 my family." A man can direct his attention to  
1578 any object, about which he ought to feel and  
1579 wishes to feel, and in that way he will call into  
1580 existence the proper emotions. Let a man call up

1581 his enemy before his mind, and his feelings of  
1582 enmity will rise. So if a man thinks of God, and  
1583 fastens his mind on any parts of God's character,  
1584 he will feel—emotions will come up, by the very  
1585 laws of mind. If he is a friend of God, let him  
1586 contemplate God as a gracious and holy being,  
1587 and he will have emotions of friendship kindled  
1588 up in his mind. If he is an enemy of God, only  
1589 let him get the true character of God before his  
1590 mind, and look at it, and fasten his attention on  
1591 it, and his enmity will rise against God, or he  
1592 will break down and give his heart to God.

1593

1594 If you wish to break up the fallow ground of  
1595 your hearts, and make your minds feel on the  
1596 subject of religion, you must go to work just as  
1597 you would to feel on any other subject. Instead  
1598 of keeping your thoughts on every thing else,  
1599 and then imagine that by going to a few  
1600 meetings you will get your feelings enlisted, go  
1601 the common sense way to work, as you would  
1602 on any other subject. It is just as easy to make  
1603 your minds feel on the subject of religion as it is  
1604 on any other subject. God has put these states of  
1605 mind under your control. If people were as  
1606 unphilosophical about moving their limbs, as  
1607 they are about regulating their emotions, you  
1608 would never have got here to meeting to-night.

1609

1610 If you mean to break up the fallow ground of  
1611 your hearts, you must begin by looking at your  
1612 hearts—examine and note the state of your  
1613 minds, and see where you are. Many never seem  
1614 to think about this. They pay no attention to their  
1615 own hearts, and never know whether they are  
1616 doing well in religion or not—whether they are  
1617 gaining ground or going back—whether they are  
1618 fruitful, or lying waste like the fallow ground.

1619 Now you must draw off your attention from  
1620 other things, and look into this. Make a business  
1621 of it. Do not be in a hurry. Examine thoroughly  
1622 the state of your hearts, and see where you are—  
1623 whether you are walking with God every day, or  
1624 walking with the devil—whether you are serving  
1625 God or serving the devil most—whether you are  
1626 under the dominion of the prince of darkness, or  
1627 the Lord Jesus Christ.

1628

1629 To do all this, you must set yourself at work to  
1630 consider your sins. You must examine  
1631 yourselves. And by this I do not mean, that you  
1632 must stop and look directly within to see what is  
1633 the present state of your feelings. That is the  
1634 very way to put a stop to all feeling. This is just  
1635 as absurd as it would be for a man to shut his  
1636 eyes on the lamp, and try to turn his eyes inward

1637 to find out whether there was any image painted  
1638 on the retina. The man complains that he does  
1639 not see anything! And why? Because he has  
1640 turned his eyes away from the objects of sight.  
1641 The truth is, our moral feelings are as much an  
1642 object of consciousness as our sensations. And  
1643 the way to excite is to go on acting, and  
1644 employing our minds. Then we can tell our  
1645 moral feelings by consciousness, just as I could  
1646 tell my natural feelings by consciousness, if I  
1647 should put my hand in the fire.

1648

1649 Self-examination consists in looking at your  
1650 lives, in considering your actions, in calling up  
1651 the past, and learning its true character. Look  
1652 back over your past history. Take up your  
1653 individual sins one by one, and look at them. I  
1654 do not mean that you should just cast a glance at  
1655 your past life, and see that it has been full of  
1656 sins, and then go to God and make a sort of  
1657 general confession, and ask for pardon. That is  
1658 not the way. You must take them up one by one.  
1659 It will be a good thing to take a pen and paper, as  
1660 you go over them, and write them down as they  
1661 occur to you. Go over them as carefully as a  
1662 merchant goes over his books; and as often as a  
1663 sin comes before your memory, add it to the list.  
1664 General confessions of sin will never do. Your

1665 sins were committed one by one; and as far as  
1666 you can come at them, they ought to be reviewed  
1667 and repented of one by one. Now begin; and take  
1668 up first what are commonly, but improperly,  
1669 called your

1670

1671 SINS OF OMISSION.

1672

1673 1. Ingratitude. Take this sin, for instance, and  
1674 write down under it all the instances you can  
1675 remember, wherein you have received favors  
1676 from God, for which you have never exercised  
1677 gratitude. How many cases can you remember?  
1678 Some remarkable providence, some wonderful  
1679 turn of events, that saved you from ruin. Set  
1680 down the instances of God's goodness to you  
1681 when you were in sin, before your conversion.  
1682 Then the mercy of God in the circumstances of  
1683 your conversion, for which you have never been  
1684 half thankful enough. The numerous mercies you  
1685 have received since. How long the catalogue of  
1686 instances, where your ingratitude is so black that  
1687 you are forced to hide your face in confusion!  
1688 Now go on your knees, and confess them one by  
1689 one to God, and ask forgiveness. The very act of  
1690 confession, by the laws of suggestion, will bring  
1691 up others to your memory. Put down these. Go  
1692 over these three or four times in this way, and

1693 you will find an astonishing amount of mercies,  
1694 for which you have never thanked God. Then  
1695 take another sin. Let it be,

1696

1697 2. Want of love to God. Write that down, and go  
1698 over all the instances you can remember, when  
1699 you did not give to the blessed God that hearty  
1700 love which you ought.

1701

1702 Think how grieved and alarmed you would be, if  
1703 you discovered any flagging of affection for you  
1704 in your wife, husband, or children; if you saw  
1705 somebody else engrossing their hearts, and  
1706 thoughts, and time. Perhaps, in such a case, you  
1707 would well nigh die with a just and virtuous  
1708 jealousy. Now, God styles himself a jealous  
1709 God; and have you not given your heart to other  
1710 loves: played the harlot, and infinitely offended  
1711 him?

1712

1713 3. Neglect of the Bible. Put down the cases,  
1714 when for days, and perhaps for weeks—yea, it  
1715 may be, even for months together, you had no  
1716 pleasure in God's word. Perhaps you did not  
1717 read a chapter, or if you read it, it was in a way  
1718 that was still more displeasing to God. Many  
1719 people read over a whole chapter in such a way,  
1720 that if they were put under oath when they have



1721 done, they could not tell what they have been  
1722 reading. With so little attention do they read, that  
1723 they cannot remember where they have read  
1724 from morning till evening, unless they put in a  
1725 string or turn down a leaf. This demonstrates that  
1726 they did not lay to heart what they read, that they  
1727 did not make it a subject of reflection. If you  
1728 were reading a novel, or any other piece of  
1729 intelligence that greatly interested you, would  
1730 you not remember what you read last? And the  
1731 fact that you fold a leaf or put in a string,  
1732 demonstrates that you read rather as a task, than  
1733 from love or reverence for the word of God. The  
1734 word of God is the rule of your duty. And do  
1735 you pay so little regard to it as not to remember  
1736 what you read? If so, no wonder that you live so  
1737 at random, and that your religion is such a  
1738 miserable failure.

1739

1740 4. Unbelief. Instances in which you have  
1741 virtually charged the God of truth with lying, by  
1742 your unbelief of his express promises and  
1743 declarations. God has promised to give the Holy  
1744 Spirit to them that ask him. Now, have you  
1745 believed this? Have you expected him to  
1746 answer? Have you not virtually said in your  
1747 hearts, when you prayed for the Holy Spirit, “I  
1748 do not believe that I shall receive it?” If you

1749 have not believed nor expected you should  
1750 receive the blessing, which God has expressly  
1751 promised, you have charged him with lying.

1752

1753 5. Neglect of prayer. Times when you omitted  
1754 secret prayer, family prayer, and prayer  
1755 meetings, or have prayed in such a way as more  
1756 grievously to offend God, than to have neglected  
1757 it altogether.

1758

1759 6. Neglect of the means of grace. When you  
1760 have suffered trifling excuses to prevent your  
1761 attending meetings, have neglected and poured  
1762 contempt upon the means of salvation, merely  
1763 from disrelish of spiritual duties.

1764

1765 7. The manner in which you have performed  
1766 those duties—want of feeling—want of faith—  
1767 worldly frame of mind—so that your words were  
1768 nothing but the mere chattering of a wretch, that  
1769 did not deserve that God should feel the least  
1770 care for him. When you have fallen down upon  
1771 your knees, and said your prayers, in such an  
1772 unfeeling and careless manner, that if you had  
1773 been put under oath five minutes after you left  
1774 your closet, you could not have told what you  
1775 had been praying for.

1776

1777 8. Your want of love for the souls of your  
1778 fellow-men. Look round upon your friends and  
1779 relations, and remember how little compassion  
1780 you have felt for them. You have stood by and  
1781 seen them going right to hell, and it seems as  
1782 though you did not care if they did. How many  
1783 days have there been, in which you did not make  
1784 their condition the subject of a single fervent  
1785 prayer, or even an ardent desire for their  
1786 salvation?

1787

1788 9. Your want of care for the heathen. Perhaps  
1789 you have not cared enough for them to attempt  
1790 to learn their condition; perhaps not even to take  
1791 a Missionary paper. Look at this, and see how  
1792 much you do really care for the heathen, and set  
1793 down honestly the real amount of your feelings  
1794 for them, and your desire for their salvation.  
1795 Measure your desire for their salvation by the  
1796 self-denial you practise, in giving of your  
1797 substance to send them the Gospel. Do you deny  
1798 yourself even the hurtful superfluities of life,  
1799 such as tea, coffee, and tobacco? Do you  
1800 retrench your style of living, and really subject  
1801 yourself to any inconvenience to save them? Do  
1802 you daily pray for them in your closet? Do you  
1803 statedly attend the monthly concert? Are you  
1804 from month to month laying by something to put

1805 into the treasury of the Lord, when you go up to  
1806 pray? If you are not doing these things, and if  
1807 your soul is not agonized for the poor benighted  
1808 heathen, why are you such a hypocrite as to  
1809 pretend to be a Christian? Why, your profession  
1810 is an insult to Jesus Christ!

1811

1812 10. Your neglect of family duties. How you have  
1813 lived before them, how you have prayed, what  
1814 an example you have set before them. What  
1815 direct efforts do you habitually make for their  
1816 spiritual good? What duty have you not  
1817 neglected?

1818

1819 11. Neglect of social duties.

1820

1821 12. Neglect of watchfulness over your own life.  
1822 Instances in which you have hurried over your  
1823 private duties, and not taken yourself to task, nor  
1824 honestly made up your accounts with God.  
1825 Where you have entirely neglected to watch your  
1826 conduct, and have been off your guard, and have  
1827 sinned before the world, and before the church,  
1828 and before God.

1829

1830 13. Neglect to watch over your brethren. How  
1831 often have you broken your covenant, that you  
1832 would watch over them in the Lord! How little

1833 do you know or care about the state of their  
1834 souls! And yet you are under a solemn oath to  
1835 watch over them. What have you done to make  
1836 yourself acquainted with them? How many of  
1837 them have you interested yourself for, to know  
1838 their spiritual state? Go over the list, and  
1839 wherever you find there has been a neglect, write  
1840 it down. How many times have you seen your  
1841 brethren growing cold in religion, and have not  
1842 spoken to them about it? You have seen them  
1843 beginning to neglect one duty after another, and  
1844 you did not reprove them in a brotherly way.  
1845 You have seen them falling into sin, and you let  
1846 them go on. And yet you pretend to love them.  
1847 What a hypocrite! Would you see your wife or  
1848 child going into disgrace, or into the fire, and  
1849 hold your peace? No, you would not. What do  
1850 you think of yourself, then, to pretend to love  
1851 Christians, and to love Christ, while you can see  
1852 them going into disgrace, and say nothing to  
1853 them?

1854

1855 14. Neglect of self-denial. There are many  
1856 professors who are willing to do almost any  
1857 thing in religion, that does not require self-  
1858 denial. But when they are called to do any thing  
1859 that requires them to deny themselves, Oh! that  
1860 is too much. They think they are doing a great

1861 deal for God, and doing about as much as he  
1862 ought to ask in reason, if they are only doing  
1863 what they can do about as well as not; but they  
1864 are not willing to deny themselves any comfort  
1865 or convenience whatever, for the sake of serving  
1866 the Lord. They will not willingly suffer reproach  
1867 for the name of Christ. Nor will they deny  
1868 themselves the luxuries of life, to save a world  
1869 from hell. So far are they from remembering that  
1870 self-denial is a condition of discipleship, that  
1871 they do not know what self-denial is. They never  
1872 have really denied themselves a riband or a pin  
1873 for Christ, and for the Gospel. Oh, how soon  
1874 such professors will be in hell! Some are giving  
1875 of their abundance, and are giving much, and are  
1876 ready to complain that others don't give more;  
1877 when, in truth, they do not give any thing that  
1878 they need, any thing that they could enjoy, if  
1879 they kept it. They only give of their surplus  
1880 wealth; and perhaps that poor woman, who puts  
1881 in twelve and a half cents at the monthly concert,  
1882 has exercised more self-denial, than they have in  
1883 giving thousands.

1884  
1885 From these we now turn to

1886  
1887 SINS OF COMMISSION.  
1888

1889 1. Worldly mindedness. What has been the state  
1890 of your heart in regard to your worldly  
1891 possessions? Have you looked at them as really  
1892 yours—as if you had a right to dispose of them  
1893 as your own, according to your own will? If you  
1894 have, write that down. If you have loved  
1895 property, and sought after it for its own sake, or  
1896 to gratify lust or ambition, or a worldly spirit, or  
1897 to lay it up for your families, you have sinned,  
1898 and must repent.

1899  
1900 2. Pride. Recollect all the instances you can, in  
1901 which you have detected yourself in the exercise  
1902 of pride. Vanity is a particular form of pride.  
1903 How many times have you detected yourself in  
1904 consulting vanity, about your dress and  
1905 appearance? How many times have you thought  
1906 more, and taken more pains, and spent more  
1907 time, about decorating your body to go to  
1908 church, than you have about preparing your  
1909 mind for the worship of God? You have gone to  
1910 the house of God caring more how you appear  
1911 outwardly in the sight of mortal men, than how  
1912 your soul appears in the sight of the heart-  
1913 searching God. You have in fact set up yourself  
1914 to be worshipped by them, rather than prepared  
1915 to worship God yourself. You came to divide the  
1916 worship of God's house, to draw off the

1917 attention of God's people to look at your pretty  
1918 appearance. It is in vain to pretend now, that you  
1919 don't care any thing about having people look at  
1920 you. Be honest about it. Would you take all this  
1921 pains about your looks if every body was blind?  
1922

1923 3. Envy. Look at the cases in which you were  
1924 envious at those who you thought were above  
1925 you in any respect. Or perhaps you have envied  
1926 those who have been more talented or more  
1927 useful than yourself. Have you not so envied  
1928 some, that you have been pained to hear them  
1929 praised? It has been more agreeable to you to  
1930 dwell upon their faults, than upon their virtues,  
1931 upon their failures, than upon their success. Be  
1932 honest with yourself, and if you have harbored  
1933 this spirit of hell, repent deeply before God, or  
1934 he will never forgive you.

1935  
1936 4. Censoriousness. Instances in which you have  
1937 had a bitter spirit, and spoken of Christians in a  
1938 manner entirely devoid of charity and love—  
1939 charity, which requires you always to hope the  
1940 best the case will admit, and to put the best  
1941 construction upon any ambiguous conduct.

1942  
1943 5. Slander. The times you have spoken behind  
1944 people's backs of their faults, real or supposed,



1945 of members of the church or others,  
1946 unnecessarily or without good reason. This is  
1947 slander. You need not lie to be guilty of  
1948 slander;—to tell the truth with the design to  
1949 injure, is slander.

1950

1951 6. Levity. How often have you trifled before  
1952 God, as you would not have dared to trifle in the  
1953 presence of an earthly sovereign? You have  
1954 either been an Atheist, and forgotten that there  
1955 was a God, or have had less respect for him, and  
1956 his presence, than you would have had for an  
1957 earthly judge.

1958

1959 7. Lying. Understand now what lying is. Any  
1960 species of designed deception for a selfish reason  
1961 is lying. If the deception is not a design it is not  
1962 lying. But if you design to make an impression  
1963 contrary to the naked truth, you lie. Put down all  
1964 those cases you can recollect. Don't call them by  
1965 any soft name. God calls them LIES, and  
1966 charges you with LYING, and you had better  
1967 charge yourself correctly.

1968

1969 How innumerable are the falsehoods perpetrated  
1970 every day in business, and in social intercourse,  
1971 by words, and looks, and actions—designed to

1972 make an impression on others contrary to the  
1973 truth for selfish reasons.  
1974  
1975 8. Cheating. Set down all the cases in which you  
1976 have dealt with an individual, and done to him  
1977 that which you would not like to have done to  
1978 you. That is cheating. God has laid down a rule  
1979 in the case; “All things whatsoever ye would that  
1980 men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”  
1981 That is the rule; and now if you have not done so  
1982 you are a cheat. Mind, the rule is not that you  
1983 should do what you might reasonably expect  
1984 them to do to you. That is a rule which would  
1985 admit of every degree of wickedness. But it is  
1986 “As ye WOULD they should do to you.”  
1987  
1988 9. Hypocrisy. For instance, in your prayers and  
1989 confessions to God. Set down the instances in  
1990 which you have prayed for things you did not  
1991 really want. And the evidence is, that when you  
1992 had done praying, you could not tell what you  
1993 had prayed for. How many times have you  
1994 confessed sins that you did not mean to break  
1995 off, and when you had no solemn purpose not to  
1996 repeat them? Yes, have confessed sins when you  
1997 knew you as much expected to go and repeat  
1998 them as you expected to live.  
1999

2000 10. Robbing God. Instances in which you have  
2001 misspent your time, and squandered hours which  
2002 God gave you to serve him and save souls, in  
2003 vain amusements or foolish conversation,  
2004 reading novels, or doing nothing; cases where  
2005 you have misapplied your talents and powers of  
2006 mind; where you have squandered money on  
2007 your lusts, or spent it for things you did not  
2008 need, and which neither contributed to your  
2009 health, comfort or usefulness. Perhaps some of  
2010 you who are here to-night have laid out God's  
2011 money for TOBACCO. I will not speak of rum,  
2012 for I presume there is no professor of religion  
2013 here to-night that would drink rum. I hope there  
2014 is no one that uses that filthy poison, tobacco.  
2015 Think of a professor of religion, using God's  
2016 money to poison himself with tobacco!

2017  
2018 11. Bad temper. Perhaps you have abused your  
2019 wife, or your children, or your family, or  
2020 servants, or neighbors. Write it all down.

2021  
2022 12. Hindering others from being useful. Perhaps  
2023 you have weakened their influence by  
2024 insinuations against them. You have not only  
2025 robbed God of your own talents, but tied the  
2026 hands of somebody else. What a wicked servant  
2027 is he that loiters himself, and hinders the rest!

2028 This is done sometimes by taking their time  
2029 needlessly; sometimes by destroying Christian  
2030 confidence in them. Thus you have played into  
2031 the hands of Satan, and not only showed yourself  
2032 an idle vagabond, but prevented others from  
2033 working.

2034  
2035 If you find you have committed a fault against an  
2036 individual, and that individual is within your  
2037 reach, go and confess it immediately, and get  
2038 that out of the way. If the individual you have  
2039 injured is too far off for you to go and see him,  
2040 sit down and write him a letter, and confess the  
2041 injury, pay the postage, and put it into the mail  
2042 immediately. I say, pay the postage, or otherwise  
2043 you will only make the matter worse. You will  
2044 add to the former injury, by making him a bill of  
2045 expense. The man that writes a letter on his own  
2046 business, and sends it to another without paying  
2047 the postage, is dishonest, and has cheated him  
2048 out of so much. And if he would cheat a man out  
2049 of a sixpence or shilling, when the temptation is  
2050 so small, what would he not do were the  
2051 temptation greater, if he had the prospect of  
2052 impunity? If you have defrauded any body, send  
2053 the money, the full amount and the interest.  
2054

2055 Go thoroughly to work in all this. Go now. Don't  
2056 put it off; that will only make the matter worse.  
2057 Confess to God those sins that have been  
2058 committed against God, and to man those sins  
2059 that have been committed against man. Don't  
2060 think of getting off by going round the stumbling  
2061 blocks. Take them up out of the way. In breaking  
2062 up your fallow ground, you must remove every  
2063 obstruction. Things may be left that you may  
2064 think little things, and you may wonder why you  
2065 do not feel as you wish to in religion, when the  
2066 reason is that your proud and carnal mind has  
2067 covered up something which God required you  
2068 to confess and remove. Break up all the ground  
2069 and turn it over. Do not balk it, as the farmers  
2070 say; do not turn aside for little difficulties; drive  
2071 the plow right through them, beam deep, and  
2072 turn the ground all up, so that it may all be  
2073 mellow and soft, and fit to receive the seed and  
2074 bear fruit a hundred fold.

2075  
2076 When you have gone over your whole history in  
2077 this way, thoroughly, if you will then go over the  
2078 ground the second time, and give your solemn  
2079 and fixed attention to it, you will find that the  
2080 things you have put down will suggest other  
2081 things of which you have been guilty, connected  
2082 with them, or near them. Then go over it a third

2083 time, and you will recollect other things  
2084 connected with these. And you will find in the  
2085 end that you can remember an amount of your  
2086 history, and particular actions, even in this life,  
2087 which you did not think you should remember in  
2088 eternity. Unless you do take up your sins in this  
2089 way, and consider them in detail, one by one,  
2090 you can form no idea of the amount of your sins.  
2091 You should go over it as thoroughly and as  
2092 carefully, and as solemnly, as you would if you  
2093 were just preparing yourself for the judgment.

2094  
2095 As you go over the catalogue of your sins, be  
2096 sure to resolve upon present and entire  
2097 reformation. Wherever you find any thing  
2098 wrong, resolve at once, in the strength of God, to  
2099 sin no more in that way. It will be of no benefit  
2100 to examine yourself, unless you determine to  
2101 amend in every particular that you find wrong in  
2102 heart, temper, or conduct.

2103  
2104 If you find, as you go on with this duty, that your  
2105 mind is still all dark, cast about you, and you  
2106 will find there is some reason for the Spirit of  
2107 God to depart from you. You have not been  
2108 faithful and thorough. In the progress of such a  
2109 work you have got to do violence to yourself,  
2110 and bring yourself as a rational being up to this

2111 work, with the Bible before you, and try your  
2112 heart till you do feel. You need not expect that  
2113 God will work a miracle for you to break up  
2114 your fallow ground. It is to be done by means.  
2115 Fasten your attention to the subject of your sins.  
2116 You cannot look at your sins long and  
2117 thoroughly, and see how bad they are, without  
2118 feeling, and feeling deeply. Experience  
2119 abundantly proves the benefit of going over our  
2120 history in this way. Set yourself to the work  
2121 now; resolve that you never will stop till you  
2122 find you can pray. You never will have the spirit  
2123 of prayer, till you examine yourself, and confess  
2124 your sins, and break up your fallow ground. You  
2125 never will have the Spirit of God dwelling in  
2126 you, till you have unraveled this whole mystery  
2127 of iniquity, and spread out your sins before God.  
2128 Let there be this deep work of repentance, and  
2129 full confession, this breaking down before God,  
2130 and you will have as much of the spirit of prayer  
2131 as your body can bear up under. The reason why  
2132 so few Christians know any thing about the spirit  
2133 of prayer, is because they never would take the  
2134 pains to examine themselves properly, and so  
2135 never knew what it was to have their hearts all  
2136 broken up in this way.  
2137

2138 You see I have only begun to lay open this  
2139 subject to-night. I want to lay it out before you,  
2140 in the course of these lectures, so that if you will  
2141 begin and go on to do as I say, the results will be  
2142 just as certain as they are when the farmer breaks  
2143 up a fallow field, and mellows it, and sows his  
2144 grain. It will be so, if you will only begin in this  
2145 way, and hold on till all your hardened and  
2146 callous hearts break up.

2147

2148 REMARKS.

2149

2150 1. It will do no good to preach to you while your  
2151 hearts are in this hardened, and waste, and  
2152 fallow state. The farmer might just as well sow  
2153 his grain on the rock. It will bring forth no fruit.  
2154 This is the reason why there are so many  
2155 fruitless professors in the church, and why there  
2156 is so much outside machinery, and so little deep-  
2157 toned feeling in the church. Look at the Sabbath-  
2158 school for instance, and see how much  
2159 machinery there is, and how little of the power  
2160 of godliness. If you go on in this way, the word  
2161 of God will continue to harden you, and you will  
2162 grow worse and worse, just as the rain and snow  
2163 on an old fallow field makes the turf thicker, and  
2164 the clods stronger.

2165



2166 2. See why so much preaching is wasted, and  
2167 worse than wasted. It is because the church will  
2168 not break up their fallow ground. A preacher  
2169 may wear out his life, and do very little good,  
2170 while there are so many stony-ground hearers,  
2171 who have never had their fallow ground broken  
2172 up. They are only half converted, and their  
2173 religion is rather a change of opinion than a  
2174 change of the feeling of their hearts. There is  
2175 mechanical religion enough, but very little that  
2176 looks like deep heart-work.

2177  
2178 3. Professors of religion should never satisfy  
2179 themselves, or expect a revival, just by starting  
2180 out of their slumbers, and blustering about, and  
2181 making a noise, and talking to sinners. They  
2182 must get their fallow ground broken up. It is  
2183 utterly unphilosophical to think of getting  
2184 engaged in religion in this way. If your fallow  
2185 ground is broken up, then the way to get more  
2186 feeling, is to go out and see sinners on the road  
2187 to hell, and talk to them, and guide inquiring  
2188 souls, and you will get more feeling. You may  
2189 get into an excitement without this breaking up;  
2190 you may show a kind of zeal, but it will not last  
2191 long, and it will not take hold of sinners, unless  
2192 your hearts are broken up. The reason is, that

2193 you go about it mechanically, and have not  
2194 broken up your fallow ground.  
2195  
2196 4. And now, finally, will you break up your  
2197 fallow ground? Will you enter upon the course  
2198 now pointed out, and persevere till you are  
2199 thoroughly awake? If you fail here, if you do not  
2200 do this, and get prepared, you can go no further  
2201 with me in this course of lectures. I have gone  
2202 with you as far as it is of any use to go, until  
2203 your fallow ground is broken up. Now, you must  
2204 make thorough work upon this point, or all I  
2205 have further to say will do you little good. Nay,  
2206 it will only harden and make you worse. If, when  
2207 next Friday night arrives, it finds you with  
2208 unbroken hearts, you need not expect to be  
2209 benefited by what I shall say. If you do not set  
2210 about this work immediately, I shall take it for  
2211 granted that you do not mean to be revived, that  
2212 you have forsaken your minister, and mean to let  
2213 him go up to battle alone. If you do not do this, I  
2214 charge you with having forsaken Christ, with  
2215 refusing to repent and do your first work. But if  
2216 you will be prepared to enter upon the work, I  
2217 propose, God willing, next Friday evening, to  
2218 lead you into the work of saving sinners.  
2219  
2220

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2221

2222 LECTURE IV.

2223

2224 PREVAILING PRAYER.

2225

2226 Text.—The effectual, fervent prayer of a  
2227 righteous man availeth much.—James v. 16.

2228

2229 THE last lecture referred principally to the  
2230 confession of sin. To-night my remarks will be  
2231 chiefly confined to the subject of intercession, or  
2232 prayer. There are two kinds of means requisite to  
2233 promote a revival; one to influence men, the  
2234 other to influence God. The truth is employed to  
2235 influence men, and prayer to move God. When I  
2236 speak of moving God, I do not mean that God's  
2237 mind is changed by prayer, or that his  
2238 disposition or character is changed. But prayer  
2239 produces such a change in us and fulfils such  
2240 conditions as renders it consistent for God to do  
2241 as it would not be consistent for him to do  
2242 otherwise. When a sinner repents, that state of  
2243 mind makes it proper for God to forgive him.  
2244 God has always been ready to forgive him on  
2245 that condition, so that when the sinner changes  
2246 his mind towards God, it requires no change of  
2247 feeling in God to pardon him. It is the sinner's  
2248 repentance that renders his forgiveness proper,

2249 and is the occasion of God's acting as he does.  
2250 So when Christians offer effectual prayer, their  
2251 state of mind renders it proper for God to answer  
2252 them. He was always ready to bestow the  
2253 blessing, on the condition that they felt right, and  
2254 offered the right kind of prayer. Whenever this  
2255 change takes place in them, and they offer the  
2256 right kind of prayer, then God, without any  
2257 change in himself, can answer them. When we  
2258 offer effectual fervent prayer for others, the fact  
2259 that we offer such prayer renders it consistent for  
2260 him to do what we pray for, when otherwise it  
2261 would not have been consistent.

2262

2263 Prayer is an essential link in the chain of causes  
2264 that lead to a revival; as much so as truth is.  
2265 Some have zealously used truth to convert men,  
2266 and laid very little stress on prayer. They have  
2267 preached, and talked, and distributed tracts with  
2268 great zeal, and then wondered that they had so  
2269 little success. And the reason was, that they  
2270 forgot to use the other branch of the means,  
2271 effectual prayer. They overlooked the fact, that  
2272 truth by itself will never produce the effect,  
2273 without the Spirit of God, and that Spirit is given  
2274 in answer to earnest prayer.

2275

2276 Sometimes it happens that those who are the  
2277 most engaged in employing truth, are not the  
2278 most engaged in prayer. This is always  
2279 unhappy.—For unless they, or somebody else  
2280 have the spirit of prayer, the truth by itself will  
2281 do nothing but harden men in impenitence.  
2282 Probably in the day of judgment it will be found  
2283 that nothing is ever done by the truth, used ever  
2284 so zealously, unless there is a spirit of prayer  
2285 somewhere in connection with the presentation  
2286 of truth.

2287  
2288 Others err on the other side. Not that they lay too  
2289 much stress on prayer. But they overlook the fact  
2290 that prayer might be offered for ever, by itself,  
2291 and nothing would be done. Because sinners are  
2292 not converted by direct contact of the Holy  
2293 Ghost, but by the truth, employed as a means. To  
2294 expect the conversion of sinners by prayer alone,  
2295 without the employment of truth, is to tempt  
2296 God.

2297  
2298 The subject of discourse this evening, is  
2299

## 2300 PREVAILING PRAYER.

2301

2302 I. I propose to show what is effectual or  
2303 prevailing prayer.

2304

2305 II. State some of the most essential attributes of  
2306 prevailing prayer.

2307

2308 III. Give some reasons why God requires this  
2309 kind of prayer.

2310

2311 IV. Show that such prayer will avail much.

2312

2313 I. I proceed to show what is prevailing prayer.

2314

2315 1. Effectual, prevailing prayer, does not consist  
2316 in benevolent desires merely. Benevolent desires  
2317 are doubtless pleasing to God. Such desires  
2318 pervade heaven, and are found in all holy beings.  
2319 But they are not prayer. Men may have these  
2320 desires as the angels and glorified spirits have  
2321 them. But this is not the effectual, prevailing  
2322 prayer, spoken of in the text. Prevailing prayer is  
2323 something more than this.

2324

2325 2. Prevailing, or effectual prayer, is that prayer  
2326 which obtains the blessing that it seeks. It is that  
2327 prayer which effectually moves God. The very  
2328 idea of effectual prayer is, that it effects its  
2329 object.

2330

2331 II. I will state some of the most essential  
2332 attributes of prevailing prayer. I cannot detail in  
2333 full all the things that go to make up prevailing  
2334 prayer. But I will mention some things that are  
2335 essential to it; some things which a person must  
2336 do in order to prevail in prayer.

2337

2338 1. He must pray for a definite object. He need  
2339 not expect to offer such prayer, if he prays at  
2340 random, without any distinct or definite object.  
2341 He must have an object distinctly before his  
2342 mind. I speak now of secret prayer. Many people  
2343 go away into their closets, because they must say  
2344 their prayers. The time has come that they are in  
2345 the habit of going by themselves for prayer, in  
2346 the morning, or at noon, or at whatever time of  
2347 day it may be. And instead of having any thing  
2348 to say, any definite object before their mind, they  
2349 fall down on their knees, and pray for just what  
2350 comes into their minds, for everything that floats  
2351 in their imagination at the time, and when they  
2352 have done, they could not tell hardly a word of  
2353 what they have been praying for. This is not  
2354 effectual prayer. What should we think of any  
2355 body who should try to move a legislature so,  
2356 and should say, "Now it is winter, and the  
2357 legislature is in session, and it is time to send up  
2358 petitions," and should go up to the legislature

2359 and petition at random, without any definite  
2360 object? Do you think such petitions would move  
2361 the legislature?

2362

2363 A man must have some definite object before his  
2364 mind. He cannot pray effectually for a variety of  
2365 objects at once. The mind of man is so  
2366 constituted that it cannot fasten its desires  
2367 intensely upon many things at the same time. All  
2368 the instances of effectual prayer recorded in the  
2369 Bible were of this kind. Wherever you see that  
2370 the blessing sought for in prayer was attained,  
2371 you will find that the prayer which was offered  
2372 was prayer for that definite object.

2373

2374 2. Prayer, to be effectual, must be in accordance  
2375 with the revealed will of God. To pray for things  
2376 contrary to the revealed will of God, is to tempt  
2377 God. There are three ways in which God's will  
2378 is revealed to men for their guidance in prayer.

2379

2380 (1.) By express promises or predictions in the  
2381 Bible, that he will give or do certain things.  
2382 Either by express promises in regard to  
2383 particular things, or promises in general terms,  
2384 so that we may apply them to particular things.  
2385 For instance, there is this promise: "Whatsoever



2386 things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye  
2387 receive them, and ye shall have them.”

2388

2389 (2.) Sometimes God reveals his will by his  
2390 providence. When he makes it clear that such  
2391 and such events are about to take place, it is as  
2392 much a revelation as if he had written it in his  
2393 word. It would be impossible to reveal every  
2394 thing in the Bible. But God often makes it clear  
2395 to those who have spiritual discernment, that it is  
2396 his will to grant such and such blessings.

2397

2398 (3.) By his Spirit. When God’s people are at a  
2399 loss what to pray for, agreeable to his will, his  
2400 Spirit often instructs them. Where there is no  
2401 particular revelation, and providence leaves it  
2402 dark, and we know not what to pray for as we  
2403 ought, we are expressly told, that “the Spirit also  
2404 helpeth our infirmities,” and “the Spirit itself  
2405 maketh intercession for us with groanings that  
2406 cannot be uttered.” A great deal has been said on  
2407 the subject of praying in faith for things not  
2408 revealed. It is objected, that this doctrine implies  
2409 a new revelation. I answer, that, new or old, it is  
2410 the very revelation that Jehovah says he makes.  
2411 It is just as plain here, as if it were now revealed  
2412 by a voice from heaven, that the Spirit of God  
2413 helps the people of God to pray according to the

2414 will of God, when they themselves know not  
2415 what things they ought to pray for. “And he that  
2416 searcheth the heart knoweth the mind of the  
2417 Spirit,” because he maketh intercession for the  
2418 saints according to the will of God, and he leads  
2419 Christians to pray for just those things, with  
2420 groanings that cannot be uttered. When neither  
2421 the word nor providence enables them to decide,  
2422 then let them be filled with the Spirit, as God  
2423 commands them to be. He says, “Be ye filled  
2424 with the Spirit.” And He will lead their mind to  
2425 such things as God is willing to grant.

2426  
2427 3. To pray effectually, you must pray with  
2428 submission to the will of God. Do not confound  
2429 submission with indifference. No two things are  
2430 more unlike. I once knew an individual come  
2431 where there was a revival. He himself was cold,  
2432 and did not enter into the spirit of it, and had no  
2433 spirit of prayer; and when he heard the brethren  
2434 pray as if they could not be denied, he was  
2435 shocked at their boldness, and kept all the time  
2436 insisting on the importance of praying with  
2437 submission; when it was as plain as any thing  
2438 could be, that he confounded submission with  
2439 indifference  
2440

2441 So again, do not confound submission in prayer  
2442 with a general confidence that God will do what  
2443 is right. It is proper to have this confidence that  
2444 God will do what is right in all things. But this is  
2445 a different thing from submission. What I mean  
2446 by submission in prayer, is, acquiescence in the  
2447 revealed will of God. To submit to any  
2448 command of God is to obey it. Submission to  
2449 some supposable or possible, but secret decree  
2450 of God, is not submission. To submit to any  
2451 dispensation of Providence is impossible till it  
2452 comes. For we never can know what the event is  
2453 to be, till it takes place. Take a case: David,  
2454 when his child was sick, was distressed, and  
2455 agonized in prayer, and refused to be comforted.  
2456 He took it so much to heart, that when the child  
2457 died, his servants were afraid to tell him the  
2458 child was dead, for fear he would vex himself  
2459 still worse. But as soon as he heard that the child  
2460 was dead, he laid aside his grief, and arose, and  
2461 asked for food, and ate and drank as usual.  
2462 While the child was yet alive, he did not know  
2463 what was the will of God, and so he fasted and  
2464 prayed, and said, “Who can tell whether God  
2465 will be gracious to me, that my child may live?”  
2466 He did not know but that his prayer and agony  
2467 was the very thing on which it turned, whether  
2468 the child was to live or not. He thought that if he

2469 humbled himself and entreated God, perhaps  
2470 God would spare him this blow. But as soon as  
2471 God's will appeared, and the child was dead, he  
2472 bowed like a saint. He seemed not only to  
2473 acquiesce, but actually to take a satisfaction in it.  
2474 "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."  
2475 This was true submission. He reasoned correctly  
2476 in the case. While he had no revelation of the  
2477 will of God, he did not know but what the  
2478 child's recovery depended on his prayer. But  
2479 when he had a revelation of the will of God, he  
2480 submitted. While the will of God is not known,  
2481 to submit, without prayer, is tempting God.  
2482 Perhaps, and for aught you know, the fact of  
2483 your offering the right kind of prayer, may be  
2484 the thing on which the event turns. In the case of  
2485 an impenitent friend, the very condition on  
2486 which he is to be saved from hell, may be the  
2487 fervency and importunity of your prayer for that  
2488 individual.

2489  
2490 4. Effectual prayer for an object implies a desire  
2491 for that object commensurate with its  
2492 importance. If a person truly desires any  
2493 blessing, his desires will bear some proportion to  
2494 the greatness of the blessing. The desires of the  
2495 Lord Jesus Christ for the blessing he prayed for,  
2496 were amazingly strong, and amounted even to

2497 agony. If the desire for an object is strong, and is  
2498 a benevolent desire, and the thing not contrary to  
2499 the will and providence of God, the presumption  
2500 is, that it will be granted. There are two reasons  
2501 for this presumption:

2502

2503 (1.) From the general benevolence of God. If it is  
2504 a desirable object; if, so far as we can see, it  
2505 would be an act of benevolence in God to grant  
2506 it, his general benevolence is presumptive  
2507 evidence that he will grant it.

2508

2509 (2.) If you find yourself exercised with  
2510 benevolent desires for any object, there is a  
2511 strong presumption that the Spirit of God is  
2512 exciting these very desires, and stirring you up to  
2513 pray for that object, so that it may be granted in  
2514 answer to prayer. In such a case no degree of  
2515 desire or importunity in prayer is improper. A  
2516 Christian may come up, as it were, and take hold  
2517 of the hand of God. See the case of Jacob, when  
2518 he exclaimed, in an agony of desire, "I will not  
2519 let thee go, except thou bless me." Was God  
2520 displeased with his boldness and importunity?  
2521 Not at all; but he granted him the very thing he  
2522 prayed for. So in the case of Moses. God said to  
2523 Moses, "Let me alone, that I may destroy them,  
2524 and blot out their name from under heaven, and I

2525 will make of thee a nation mightier and greater  
2526 than they.” What did Moses do? Did he stand  
2527 aside and let God do as he said? No, his mind  
2528 runs back to the Egyptians, and he thinks how  
2529 they will triumph. “Wherefore should the  
2530 Egyptians say, For mischief did he bring them  
2531 out.” It seemed as if he took hold of the uplifted  
2532 hand of God, to avert the blow. Did God rebuke  
2533 him for his interference, and tell him he had no  
2534 business to interfere? No; it seemed as if he was  
2535 unable to deny any thing to such importunity,  
2536 and so Moses stood in the gap, and prevailed  
2537 with God.

2538  
2539 It is said of Xavier, the missionary, that he was  
2540 once called to pray for a man who was sick, and  
2541 he prayed so fervently that he seemed as it were  
2542 to do violence to heaven—so the writer  
2543 expresses it. And he prevailed, and the man  
2544 recovered.

2545  
2546 Such prayer is often offered in the present day,  
2547 when Christians have been wrought up to such a  
2548 pitch of importunity and such a holy boldness,  
2549 that afterwards, when they looked back upon it,  
2550 they were frightened and amazed at themselves,  
2551 to think they should dare to exercise such  
2552 importunity with God. And yet these prayers

2553 have prevailed, and obtained the blessing. And  
2554 many of these persons, that I am acquainted  
2555 with, are among the holiest persons I know in  
2556 the world.

2557

2558 5. Prayer, to be effectual, must be offered from  
2559 right motives. Prayer should not be selfish, but  
2560 dictated by a supreme regard for the glory of  
2561 God. A great deal of prayer is offered from pure  
2562 selfishness. Women sometimes pray for their  
2563 husbands, that they may be converted, because  
2564 they say, “It would be so much more pleasant to  
2565 have my husband go to meeting with me,” and  
2566 all that. And they seem never to lift up their  
2567 thoughts above self at all. They do not seem to  
2568 think how their husbands are dishonoring God  
2569 by their sins, and how God would be glorified in  
2570 their conversion. So it is with parents very often.  
2571 They cannot bear to think that their children  
2572 should be lost. They pray for them very earnestly  
2573 indeed. But if you go to talk with them, they are  
2574 very tender, and tell you how good their children  
2575 are, how they respect religion, and they think  
2576 they are almost Christians now; and so they talk  
2577 as if they were afraid you would hurt their  
2578 children if you should tell them the truth. They  
2579 do not think how such amiable and lovely  
2580 children are dishonoring God by their sins; they

2581 are only thinking what a dreadful thing it will be  
2582 for them to go to hell. Ah! unless their thoughts  
2583 rise higher than this, their prayers will never  
2584 prevail with a holy God. The temptation to  
2585 selfish motives is so strong, that there is reason  
2586 to fear a great many parental prayers never rise  
2587 above the yearnings of parental tenderness. And  
2588 that is the reason why so many prayers are not  
2589 heard, and why so many pious, praying parents  
2590 have ungodly children. Much of the prayer for  
2591 the heathen world seems to be based on no  
2592 higher principle than sympathy. Missionary  
2593 agents, and others, are dwelling almost  
2594 exclusively upon the six hundred millions of  
2595 heathens going to hell, while little is said of their  
2596 dishonoring God. This is a great evil; and until  
2597 the church have higher motives for prayer and  
2598 missionary effort than sympathy for the heathen,  
2599 their prayers and efforts will never amount to  
2600 much.

2601  
2602 6. Prayer, to be effectual, must be by the  
2603 intercession of the Spirit. You never can expect  
2604 to offer prayer according to the will of God  
2605 without the Spirit. In the first two cases, it is not  
2606 because Christians are unable to offer such  
2607 prayer, where the will of God is revealed in his  
2608 word, or indicated by his providence. They are



2609 able to do it, just as they are able to be holy. But  
2610 the fact is, that they are so wicked, that they  
2611 never do offer such prayer, without they are  
2612 influenced by the Spirit of God. There must be a  
2613 faith, such as produced by the effectual  
2614 operation of the Holy Ghost.

2615

2616 7. It must be persevering prayer. As a general  
2617 thing, Christians who have backslidden and lost  
2618 the spirit of prayer, will not get at once into the  
2619 habit of persevering prayer. Their minds are not  
2620 in a right state, and they cannot fix their minds,  
2621 and hold on till the blessing comes. If their  
2622 minds were in that state, that they would  
2623 persevere till the answer comes, effectual prayer  
2624 might be offered at once, as well as after praying  
2625 ever so many times for an object. But they have  
2626 to pray again and again, because their thoughts  
2627 are so apt to wander away, and are so easily  
2628 diverted from the object to something else. Until  
2629 their minds get imbued with the spirit of prayer,  
2630 they will not keep fixed to one point, and push  
2631 their petition to an issue on the spot. Do not  
2632 think you are prepared to offer prevailing prayer,  
2633 if your feelings will let you pray once for an  
2634 object, and then leave it. Most Christians come  
2635 up to prevailing prayer by a protracted process.  
2636 Their minds gradually become filled with

2637 anxiety about an object, so that they will even go  
2638 about their business, sighing out their desires to  
2639 God. Just as the mother whose child is sick, goes  
2640 round her house, sighing as if her heart would  
2641 break. And if she is a praying mother, her sighs  
2642 are breathed out to God all the day long. If she  
2643 goes out of the room where her child is, her  
2644 mind is still on it; and if she is asleep, still her  
2645 thoughts are on it, and she starts in her dreams,  
2646 thinking it is dying. Her whole mind is absorbed  
2647 in that sick child. This is the state of mind in  
2648 which Christians offer prevailing prayer.

2649  
2650 What was the reason that Jacob wrestled all  
2651 night in prayer with God? He knew that he had  
2652 done his brother Esau a great injury, in getting  
2653 away the birthright a long time ago. And now he  
2654 was informed that his injured brother was  
2655 coming to meet him, with an armed force  
2656 altogether too powerful for him to contend  
2657 against. And there was great reason to suppose  
2658 he was coming with a purpose of revenge. There  
2659 were two reasons then why he should be  
2660 distressed. The first was, that he had done this  
2661 great injury, and had never made any reparation.  
2662 The other was, that Esau was coming with a  
2663 force sufficient to crush him. Now, what does he  
2664 do? Why, he first arranges everything in the best

2665 manner he can to meet his brother, sending his  
2666 present first, then his property, then his family,  
2667 putting those he loved most farthest behind. And  
2668 by this time his mind was so exercised that he  
2669 could not contain himself. He goes away alone  
2670 over the brook, and pours out his very soul in an  
2671 agony of prayer all night. And just as the day  
2672 was breaking, the angel of the covenant said,  
2673 “Let me go;” and his whole being was, as it  
2674 were, agonized at the thought of giving up, and  
2675 he cried out, “I will not let thee go except thou  
2676 bless me.” His soul was wrought up into an  
2677 agony, and he obtained the blessing, but he  
2678 always bore the marks of it, and showed that his  
2679 body had been greatly affected by this mental  
2680 struggle. This is prevailing prayer.

2681

2682 Now, do not deceive yourselves with thinking  
2683 that you offer effectual prayer, unless you have  
2684 this intense desire for the blessing. I do not  
2685 believe in it. Prayer is not effectual unless it is  
2686 offered up with an agony of desire. The apostle  
2687 Paul speaks of it as a travail of the soul. Jesus  
2688 Christ, when he was praying in the garden, was  
2689 in such an agony, that he sweat as it were great  
2690 drops of blood falling down to the ground. I  
2691 have never known a person sweat blood; but I  
2692 have known a person pray till the blood started

2693 from the nose. And I have known persons pray  
2694 till they were all wet with perspiration, in the  
2695 coldest weather in winter. I have known persons  
2696 pray for hours, till their strength was all  
2697 exhausted with the agony of their minds. Such  
2698 prayers prevailed with God.

2699  
2700 This agony in prayer was prevalent in President  
2701 Edwards' day, in the revivals that then took  
2702 place. It was one of the great stumbling blocks in  
2703 those days, to persons who were opposed to the  
2704 revival, that people used to pray till their bodies  
2705 were overpowered with their feelings. I will read  
2706 a paragraph of what President Edwards says on  
2707 the subject, to let you see that this is not a new  
2708 thing in the Church, but has always prevailed  
2709 wherever revivals prevailed with power. It is  
2710 from his Thoughts on Revivals.

2711  
2712 "We cannot determine that God never shall give  
2713 any person so much of a discovery of himself,  
2714 not only as to weaken their bodies, but to take  
2715 away their lives. It is supposed by very learned  
2716 and judicious divines, that Moses' life was taken  
2717 away after this manner; and this has also been  
2718 supposed to be the case with some other saints.  
2719 Yea, I do not see any solid, sure grounds any  
2720 have to determine, that God shall never make

2721 such strong impressions on the mind by his  
2722 Spirit, that shall be an occasion of so impairing  
2723 the frame of the body, and particularly that part  
2724 of the body, the brain, that persons shall be  
2725 deprived of the use of reason. As I said before, It  
2726 is too much for us to determine, that God will  
2727 not bring an outward calamity in bestowing  
2728 spiritual and eternal blessings: so it is too much  
2729 for us to determine, how great an outward  
2730 calamity he will bring. If God give a great  
2731 increase of discoveries of himself, and of love to  
2732 him, the benefit is infinitely greater than the  
2733 calamity, though the life should presently after  
2734 be taken away; yea, though the soul should not  
2735 immediately be taken to heaven, but should lie  
2736 some years in a deep sleep, and then be taken to  
2737 heaven; or, which is much the same thing, if it  
2738 be deprived of the use of its faculties, and be  
2739 inactive and unserviceable, as if it lay in a deep  
2740 sleep for some years, and then should pass into  
2741 glory. We cannot determine how great a  
2742 calamity distraction is, when considered with all  
2743 its consequences, and all that might have been  
2744 consequent, if the distraction had not happened;  
2745 nor indeed whether (thus considered) it be any  
2746 calamity at all, or whether it be not a mercy, by  
2747 preventing some great sin, or some more  
2748 dreadful thing, if it had not been. It were a great

2749 fault in us to limit a sovereign, all-wise God,  
2750 whose judgments are a great deep, and his ways  
2751 past finding out, where he has not limited  
2752 himself, and in things concerning which he has  
2753 not told us what his way shall be. It is  
2754 remarkable, considering in what multitudes of  
2755 instances, and to how great a degree, the frame  
2756 of the body has been overpowered of late, that  
2757 persons' lives have, notwithstanding, been  
2758 preserved, and that the instances of those that  
2759 have been deprived of reason, have been so very  
2760 few, and those, perhaps all of them, persons  
2761 under the peculiar disadvantage of a weak,  
2762 vapory habit of body. A merciful and careful  
2763 Divine hand is very manifest in it, that in so  
2764 many instances where the ship has begun to sink,  
2765 yet it has been upheld, and has not totally sunk.  
2766 The instances of such as have been deprived of  
2767 reason are so few, that certainly they are not  
2768 enough to cause us to be in any fright, as though  
2769 this work that has been carried on in the country  
2770 was like to be of baneful influence; unless we are  
2771 disposed to gather up all that we can to darken it,  
2772 and set it forth in frightful colors.  
2773  
2774 "There is one particular kind of exercise and  
2775 concern of mind, that many have been  
2776 overpowered by, that has been especially

2777 stumbling to some; and that is, the deep concern  
2778 and distress that they have been in for the souls  
2779 of others. I am sorry that any put us to the  
2780 trouble of doing that which seems so needless, as  
2781 defending such a thing as this. It seems like mere  
2782 trifling, in so plain a case, to enter into a formal  
2783 and particular debate, in order to determine  
2784 whether there be anything in the greatness and  
2785 importance of the case that will answer and bear  
2786 a proportion to the greatness of the concern that  
2787 some have manifested. Men may be allowed,  
2788 from no higher a principle than common  
2789 ingenuity and humanity, to be very deeply  
2790 concerned and greatly exercised in mind at  
2791 seeing others in great danger of no greater a  
2792 calamity than drowning, or being burnt up in a  
2793 house on fire. And if so, then doubtless it will be  
2794 allowed to be equally reasonable, if they saw  
2795 them in danger of a calamity ten times greater, to  
2796 be still much more concerned; and so much  
2797 more still, if the calamity was still vastly greater.  
2798 And why, then, should it be thought  
2799 unreasonable, and looked upon with a very  
2800 suspicious eye, as if it must come from some bad  
2801 cause, when persons are extremely concerned at  
2802 seeing others in very great danger of suffering  
2803 the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God to all  
2804 eternity? And besides, it will doubtless be

2805 allowed that those that have very great degrees  
2806 of the Spirit of God, that is, a spirit of love, may  
2807 well be supposed to have vastly more of love  
2808 and compassion to their fellow creatures, than  
2809 those that are influenced only by common  
2810 humanity. Why should it be thought strange that  
2811 those that are full of the Spirit of Christ should  
2812 be proportionably, in their love to souls, like to  
2813 Christ? who had so strong a love to them and  
2814 concern for them as to be willing to drink the  
2815 dregs of the cup of God's fury for them; and at  
2816 the same time that he offered up his blood for  
2817 souls, offered up also, as their high priest, strong  
2818 crying and tears, with an extreme agony, when  
2819 the soul of Christ was, as it were, in travail for  
2820 the souls of the elect; and, therefore, in saving  
2821 them, he is said to see of the travail of his soul.  
2822 As such a spirit of love to and concern for souls  
2823 was the spirit of Christ, so it is the spirit of the  
2824 church; and, therefore, the church, in desiring  
2825 and seeking that Christ might be brought forth in  
2826 the world and in the souls of men, is represented,  
2827 Rev. xii., as a woman crying, travailing in birth,  
2828 and pained to be delivered.' The spirit of those  
2829 that have been in distress for the souls of others,  
2830 so far as I can discern, seems not to be different  
2831 from that of the apostle, who travailed for souls,  
2832 and was ready to wish himself accursed from



2833 Christ for others. And that of the Psalmist, Psalm  
2834 cxix. 53, Horror hath taken hold upon me,  
2835 because of the wicked that forsake the law.’ And  
2836 v. 136, Rivers of waters run down mine eyes,  
2837 because they keep not thy law.’ And that of the  
2838 prophet Jeremiah, Jer. iv. 19, My bowels! my  
2839 bowels! I am pained at my very heart; My heart  
2840 maketh a noise in me: I cannot hold my peace,  
2841 because thou hast heard. O my soul, the sound of  
2842 the trumpet, the alarm of war!’ And so, chap. ix.  
2843 1, and xiii. 17, and Isa. xxii. 4. We read of  
2844 Mordecai, when he saw his people in danger of  
2845 being destroyed with a temporal destruction,  
2846 Esther iv. 1, that he rent his clothes, and put on  
2847 sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst  
2848 of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry.  
2849 And why, then, should persons be thought to be  
2850 distracted, when they cannot forbear crying out  
2851 at the consideration of the misery of those that  
2852 are going to eternal destruction?” [2]

2853

2854 I have read this to show that this thing was  
2855 common in the great revivals of those days. It  
2856 has always been so in all great revivals, and has  
2857 been more or less common in proportion to the  
2858 greatness, and extent, and depth of the work. It  
2859 was so in the great revivals in Scotland, and

2860 multitudes used to be overpowered, and some  
2861 almost died, by the depth of their agony.

2862

2863 9. If you mean to pray effectually, you must pray  
2864 a great deal. It was said of the apostle James,  
2865 that after he was dead it was found his knees  
2866 were callous like a camel's knees, by praying so  
2867 much. Ah! here was the secret of the success of  
2868 those primitive ministers. They had callous  
2869 knees.

2870

2871 10. If you intend prayer to be effectual, it must  
2872 be offered in the name of Christ. You cannot  
2873 come to God in your own name. You cannot  
2874 plead your own merits. But you can come in a  
2875 name that is always acceptable. You all know  
2876 what it is to use the name of a man. If you  
2877 should go to the bank with a draft or note,  
2878 endorsed by John Jacob Astor, that would be  
2879 giving you his name, and you know you could  
2880 get the money from the bank just as well as he  
2881 could himself. Now, Jesus Christ gives you the  
2882 use of his name. And when you pray in the name  
2883 of Christ, the meaning of it is, that you can  
2884 prevail just as well as he could himself, and  
2885 receive just as much as God's well-beloved Son  
2886 would if he were to pray himself for the same  
2887 things. But you must pray in faith. His name has

2888 all the virtue in your lips that it has in his own,  
2889 and God is just as free to bestow blessings upon  
2890 you, when you ask in the name of Christ, and in  
2891 faith, as he would be to bestow them upon  
2892 Christ, if he should ask.

2893

2894 11. You cannot prevail in prayer, without  
2895 renouncing all your sins. You must not only  
2896 recall them to mind, but you must actually  
2897 renounce them, and leave them off, and in the  
2898 purpose of your heart renounce them all for ever.

2899

2900 12. You must pray in faith. You must expect to  
2901 obtain the things you ask for. You need not look  
2902 for an answer to prayer, if you pray without an  
2903 expectation of obtaining it. You are not to form  
2904 such expectations without any reason for them.  
2905 In the cases I have supposed, there is a reason  
2906 for the expectation. In case the thing is revealed  
2907 in God's word, if you pray without an  
2908 expectation of receiving the blessings, you just  
2909 make God a liar. If the will of God is indicated  
2910 by his providence, you ought to depend on it,  
2911 according to the clearness of the indication, so  
2912 far as to expect the blessing if you pray for it.  
2913 And if you are led by his Spirit to pray for  
2914 certain things, you have just as much reason to

2915 expect the thing to be done as if God had  
2916 revealed it in his word.  
2917  
2918 But some say, “Will not this view of the leadings  
2919 of the Spirit of God lead people into  
2920 fanaticism?” I answer, that I know not but many  
2921 may deceive themselves in respect to this matter.  
2922 Multitudes have deceived themselves in regard  
2923 to all the other points of religion. And if some  
2924 people should think they are led by the Spirit of  
2925 God, when it is nothing but their own  
2926 imagination, is that any reason why those who  
2927 know that they are led by the Spirit should not  
2928 follow? Many people suppose themselves to be  
2929 converted when they are not. Is that any reason  
2930 why we should not cleave to the Lord Jesus  
2931 Christ? Suppose some people are deceived in  
2932 thinking they love God, is that any reason why  
2933 the pious saint who knows he has the love of  
2934 God shed abroad in his heart, should not give  
2935 vent to his feelings in songs of praise? So I  
2936 suppose some may deceive themselves in  
2937 thinking they are led by the Spirit of God. But  
2938 there is no need of being deceived. If people  
2939 follow impulses, it is their own fault. I do not  
2940 want you to follow impulses. I want you to be  
2941 sober minded, and follow the sober, rational  
2942 leadings of the Spirit of God. There are those

2943 who understand what I mean, and who know  
2944 very well what it is to give themselves up to the  
2945 Spirit of God in prayer.

2946

2947 III. I will state some of the reasons why these  
2948 things are essential to effectual prayer. Why  
2949 does God require such prayer, such strong  
2950 desires, such agonizing supplications?

2951

2952 1. These strong desires strongly illustrate the  
2953 strength of God's feelings. They are like the real  
2954 feelings of God for impenitent sinners. When I  
2955 have seen, as I sometimes have, the amazing  
2956 strength of love for souls that has been felt by  
2957 Christians, I have been wonderfully impressed  
2958 with the amazing love of God, and his desires  
2959 for their salvation. The case of a certain woman,  
2960 of whom I read, in a revival, made the greatest  
2961 impression on my mind. She had such an  
2962 unutterable compassion and love for souls, that  
2963 she actually panted for breath almost to  
2964 suffocation. What must be the strength of the  
2965 desire which God feels, when his Spirit produces  
2966 in Christians such amazing agony, such throes of  
2967 soul, such travail—God has chosen the best  
2968 word to express it—it is travail—travail of the  
2969 soul.

2970

2971 I have seen a man of as much strength of  
2972 intellect and muscle as any man in the  
2973 community, fall down prostrate, absolutely  
2974 overpowered by his unutterable desires for  
2975 sinners. I know this is a stumbling block to  
2976 many; and it always will be as long as there  
2977 remain in the church so many blind and stupid  
2978 professors of religion. But I cannot doubt that  
2979 these things are the work of the Spirit of God.  
2980 Oh that the whole church could be so filled with  
2981 the Spirit as to travail in prayer, till a nation  
2982 should be born in a day!

2983  
2984 It is said in the word of God, that as soon “as  
2985 Zion travailed, she brought forth.” What does  
2986 that mean? I asked a professor of religion this  
2987 question once. He was making exceptions about  
2988 our ideas of effectual prayer, and I asked him  
2989 what he supposed was meant by Zion’s  
2990 travailing. “Oh,” said he, “it means that as soon  
2991 as the church walk together in the fellowship of  
2992 the Gospel, then it will be said that Zion travels!  
2993 This walking together is called travelling.” Not  
2994 the same term, you see. So much he knew.

2995  
2996 2. These strong desires that I have described, are  
2997 the natural results of great benevolence and clear  
2998 views of the danger of sinners. It is perfectly

2999 reasonable that it should be so. If the women  
3000 who are in this house should look up there, and  
3001 see a family burning to death in the fire, and hear  
3002 their shrieks, and behold their agony, they would  
3003 feel distressed, and it is very likely that many of  
3004 them would faint away with agony. And nobody  
3005 would wonder at it, or say they were fools or  
3006 crazy to feel so much distressed at such an awful  
3007 sight. They would think it strange if there were  
3008 not some expressions of powerful feeling. Why  
3009 is it any wonder, then, if Christians should feel  
3010 as I have described, when they have clear views  
3011 of the state of sinners, and the awful danger they  
3012 are in? The fact is, that those individuals who  
3013 never have felt so, have never felt much real  
3014 benevolence, and their piety must be of a very  
3015 superficial character. I do not mean to judge  
3016 harshly, or to speak unkindly. But I state it as a  
3017 simple matter of fact; and people may talk about  
3018 it as they please, but I know that such piety is  
3019 superficial. This is not censoriousness, but plain  
3020 truth.

3021  
3022 People sometimes wonder at Christians having  
3023 such feelings. Wonder at what? Why, at the  
3024 natural, and philosophical, and necessary results  
3025 of deep piety towards God, and deep

3026 benevolence towards man, in view of the great  
3027 danger they see sinners to be in.

3028

3029 3. The soul of a Christian, when it is thus  
3030 burdened, must have relief. God rolls this weight  
3031 upon the soul of a Christian, for the purpose of  
3032 bringing him near to himself. Christians are  
3033 often so unbelieving, that they will not exercise  
3034 proper faith in God, till he rolls this burden upon  
3035 them, so heavy that they cannot live under it, and  
3036 then they must go to God for relief. It is like the  
3037 case of many a convicted sinner. God is willing  
3038 to receive him at once, if he will come right to  
3039 him, with faith in Jesus Christ. But the sinner  
3040 will not come. He hangs back, and struggles, and  
3041 groans under the burden of his sins, and will not  
3042 throw himself upon God, till his burden of  
3043 conviction becomes so great that he can live no  
3044 longer; and when he is driven to desperation, as  
3045 it were, and feels as if he was ready to sink into  
3046 hell, he makes a mighty plunge, and throws  
3047 himself upon God's mercy as his only hope. It  
3048 was his duty to come before. God had no delight  
3049 in his distress, for its own sake. It was only the  
3050 sinner's obstinacy that created the necessity for  
3051 all this distress. He would not come without it.  
3052 So when professors of religion get loaded down  
3053 with the weight of souls, they often pray again



3054 and again, and yet the burden is not gone, nor  
3055 their distress abated, because they have never  
3056 thrown it all upon God in faith. But they cannot  
3057 get rid of the burden. So long as their  
3058 benevolence continues it will remain and  
3059 increase, and unless they resist and quench the  
3060 Holy Ghost they can get no relief, until at length,  
3061 when they are driven to extremity, they make a  
3062 desperate effort, roll the burden off upon the  
3063 Lord Jesus Christ, and exercise a child-like  
3064 confidence in him. Then they feel relieved; then  
3065 they feel as if the soul they were praying for  
3066 would be saved. The burden is gone, and God  
3067 seems in kindness to sooth down the mind to feel  
3068 a sweet assurance that the blessing will be  
3069 granted. Often, after a Christian has had this  
3070 struggle, this agony in prayer, and has obtained  
3071 relief in this way, you will find the sweetest and  
3072 most heavenly affections flow out—the soul  
3073 rests sweetly and gloriously in God, and rejoices,  
3074 “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

3075  
3076 Do any of you think now, that there are no such  
3077 things in the experience of believers? I tell you,  
3078 if I had time, I could show you from President  
3079 Edwards, and other approved writers, cases and  
3080 descriptions just like this. Do you ask why we  
3081 never have such things here in New York? I tell

3082 you, it is not at all because you are so much  
3083 wiser than Christians are in the country, or  
3084 because you have so much more intelligence or  
3085 more enlarged views of the nature of religion, or  
3086 a more stable and well regulated piety. I tell you,  
3087 no; instead of priding yourselves in being free  
3088 from such extravagances, you ought to hide your  
3089 heads, because Christians in New York are so  
3090 worldly, and have so much starch, and pride, and  
3091 fashion, that they cannot come down to such  
3092 spirituality as this. I wish it could be so. Oh that  
3093 there might be such a spirit in this city, and in  
3094 this church! I know it would make a noise, if we  
3095 had such things done here. But I would not care  
3096 for that. Let them say, if they please, that the  
3097 folks in Chatham Chapel are getting deranged.  
3098 We need not be afraid of that, if we could live  
3099 near enough to God to enjoy his Spirit in the  
3100 manner I have described.

3101

3102 4. These effects of the Spirit of prayer upon the  
3103 body are themselves no part of religion. It is  
3104 only that the body is often so weak that the  
3105 feelings of the soul overpower it. These bodily  
3106 effects are not at all essential to prevailing  
3107 prayer, but only a natural or physical result of  
3108 highly excited emotions of the mind. It is not at  
3109 all unusual for the body to be weakened and

3110 even overcome by any powerful emotion of the  
3111 mind, on other subjects besides religion. The  
3112 door-keeper of Congress in the time of the  
3113 revolution, fell down dead on the reception of  
3114 some highly cheering intelligence. I knew a  
3115 woman in Rochester, who was in a great agony  
3116 of prayer for the conversion of her son-in-law.  
3117 One morning he was at an anxious meeting, and  
3118 she remained at home praying for him. At the  
3119 close of the meeting, he came home a convert,  
3120 and she was so rejoiced that she fell down and  
3121 died on the spot. It is no more strange that these  
3122 effects should be produced by religion than by  
3123 strong feeling on any other subject. It is not  
3124 essential to prayer, but the natural result of great  
3125 effort of the mind.

3126  
3127 5. Doubtless one great reason why God requires  
3128 the exercise of this agonizing prayer is, that it  
3129 forms such a bond of union between Christ and  
3130 the Church. It creates such a sympathy between  
3131 them. It is as if Christ came and poured the  
3132 overflowings of his own benevolent heart into  
3133 his church, and led them to sympathize and to  
3134 co-operate with him, as they never do in any  
3135 other way. They feel just as Christ feels—so full  
3136 of compassion for sinners that they cannot  
3137 contain themselves. Thus it is often with those

3138 ministers who are distinguished for their success  
3139 in preaching to sinners; they often have such  
3140 compassion, such overflowing desires for their  
3141 salvation, that it shows itself in their speaking,  
3142 and their preaching, just as though Jesus Christ  
3143 spoke through them. The words come from their  
3144 lips fresh and warm, as if from the very heart of  
3145 Christ. I do not mean that he dictates their  
3146 words; but he excites the feelings that give  
3147 utterance to them. Then you see a movement in  
3148 the hearers, as if Christ himself spoke through  
3149 lips of clay.

3150

3151 6. This travailing in birth for souls creates also a  
3152 remarkable bond of union between warm-  
3153 hearted Christians and the young converts.  
3154 Those who are converted appear very dear to the  
3155 hearts that have had this spirit of prayer for  
3156 them. The feeling is like that of a mother for her  
3157 first-born. Paul expresses it beautifully, when he  
3158 says, "My little children!" His heart was warm  
3159 and tender to them. "My little children, of whom  
3160 I travail in birth again." They had backslidden,  
3161 and he has all the agonies of a parent over a  
3162 wandering child. "I travail in birth again, till  
3163 Christ be formed in you, the hope of glory." In a  
3164 revival, I have often noticed how those who have  
3165 had the spirit of prayer, love the young converts.

3166 I know this is all algebra to those who have  
3167 never felt it. But to those who have experienced  
3168 the agony of wrestling, prevailing prayer, for the  
3169 conversion of a soul, you may depend upon it,  
3170 that soul, after it is converted, appears as dear as  
3171 a child is to the mother who has brought it forth  
3172 with pain. He has agonized for it, and received it  
3173 in answer to prayer, and can present it before the  
3174 Lord Jesus Christ, saying, "Here, Lord, am I, and  
3175 the children thou hast given me."

3176

3177 7. Another reason why God requires this sort of  
3178 prayer is, that it is the only way in which the  
3179 church can be properly prepared to receive great  
3180 blessings without being injured by them. When  
3181 the church is thus prostrated in the dust before  
3182 God, and is in the depth of agony in prayer, the  
3183 blessing does them good. While at the same  
3184 time, if they had received the blessing without  
3185 this deep prostration of soul, it would have  
3186 puffed them up with pride. But as it is, it  
3187 increases their holiness, their love, their  
3188 humility.

3189

3190 IV. I am to show that such prayer as I have  
3191 described will avail much. But time fails me to  
3192 go into a particular detail of the evidence which I  
3193 intended to bring forward under this head.

3194  
3195 Elijah the prophet mourned over the declensions  
3196 of the house of Israel, and when he saw that no  
3197 other means were likely to be effectual, to  
3198 prevent a perpetual going away into idolatry, he  
3199 prayed that the judgments of God might come  
3200 upon the guilty nation. He prayed that it might  
3201 not rain, and God shut up the heavens for three  
3202 years and six months, till the people were driven  
3203 to the last extremity. And when he saw that it  
3204 was time to relent, what does he do? See him go  
3205 up to the mountain and bow down in prayer. He  
3206 wished to be alone; and he told his servant to go  
3207 seven times, while he was agonizing in prayer.  
3208 The last time, the servant told him there was a  
3209 little cloud appeared, like a man's hand, and he  
3210 instantly arose from his knees—the blessing was  
3211 obtained. The time had come for the calamity to  
3212 be turned back. “Ah, but,” you say, “Elijah was a  
3213 prophet.” Now do not make this objection. They  
3214 made it in the apostle's days, and what does the  
3215 apostle say? Why he brought forward this very  
3216 instance, and the fact that Elijah was a man of  
3217 like passions with ourselves, as a case of  
3218 prevailing prayer, and insisted that they should  
3219 pray so too.  
3220

3221 John Knox was a man famous for his power in  
3222 prayer, so that bloody Queen Mary used to say  
3223 she feared his prayers more than all the armies of  
3224 Europe. And events showed that she had reason  
3225 to do it. He used to be in such an agony for the  
3226 deliverance of his country that he could not  
3227 sleep. He had a place in his garden where he  
3228 used to go to pray. One night he and several  
3229 friends were praying together, and as they  
3230 prayed, Knox spoke and said that deliverance  
3231 had come. He could not tell what had happened,  
3232 but he felt that something had taken place, for  
3233 God had heard their prayers. What was it? Why  
3234 the next news they had was, that Mary was dead!

3235  
3236 Take a fact which was related, in my hearing, by  
3237 a minister. He said, that in a certain town there  
3238 had been no revival for many years; the church  
3239 was nearly run out, the youth were all  
3240 unconverted, and desolation reigned unbroken.  
3241 There lived in a retired part of the town, an aged  
3242 man, a blacksmith by trade, and of so  
3243 stammering a tongue, that it was painful to hear  
3244 him speak. On one Friday, as he was at work in  
3245 his shop, alone, his mind became greatly  
3246 exercised about the state of the church, and of  
3247 the impenitent. His agony became so great, that

3248 he was induced to lay by his work, lock the shop  
3249 door, and spend the afternoon in prayer.

3250

3251 He prevailed, and on the Sabbath called on the  
3252 minister, and desired him to appoint a  
3253 conference meeting. After some hesitation, the  
3254 minister consented, observing, however, that he  
3255 feared but few would attend. He appointed it the  
3256 same evening, at a large private house. When  
3257 evening came, more assembled than could be  
3258 accommodated in the house. All was silent for a  
3259 time, until one sinner broke out in tears, and  
3260 said, if any one could pray, he begged him to  
3261 pray for him. Another followed, and another,  
3262 and still another, until it was found that persons  
3263 from every quarter of the town were under deep  
3264 conviction. And what was remarkable was, that  
3265 they all dated their conviction at the hour when  
3266 the old man was praying in his shop. A powerful  
3267 revival followed. Thus this old stammering man  
3268 prevailed, and, as a prince, had power with God.  
3269 I could name multitudes of similar cases, but, for  
3270 want of time, must conclude with a few.

3271

3272 REMARKS.

3273

3274 1. A great deal of prayer is lost, and many  
3275 people never prevail in prayer, because, when



3276 they have desires for particular blessings, they  
3277 do not follow them up. They may have had  
3278 desires, benevolent and pure, which were excited  
3279 by the Spirit of God; and when they have them,  
3280 they should persevere in prayer, for if they turn  
3281 off their attention to other objects, they will  
3282 quench the Spirit. We tell sinners not to turn off  
3283 their minds from the one object, but to keep their  
3284 attention fixed there, till they are saved. When  
3285 you find these holy desires in your minds, take  
3286 care of two things:

3287

3288 (1.) Do not quench the Spirit.

3289

3290 (2.) Do not be diverted to other objects.

3291

3292 Follow the leadings of the Spirit, till you have  
3293 offered that effectual fervent prayer that availeth  
3294 much.

3295

3296 2. Without the spirit of prayer, ministers will do  
3297 but little good. A minister need not expect much  
3298 success, unless he prays for it. Sometimes others  
3299 may have the spirit of prayer, and obtain a  
3300 blessing on his labors. Generally, however, those  
3301 preachers are the most successful who have the  
3302 most of a spirit of prayer themselves.

3303

3304 3. Not only must ministers have the spirit of  
3305 prayer, but it is necessary that the church should  
3306 unite in offering that effectual fervent prayer  
3307 which can prevail with God. You need not  
3308 expect a blessing, unless you ask for it. “For all  
3309 these things will I be inquired of by the house of  
3310 Israel, to do it.”

3311

3312 Now, my brethren, I have only to ask you, in  
3313 regard to what I have preached to-night, “Will  
3314 you do it?” Have you done what I preached to  
3315 you last Friday evening? Have you gone over  
3316 with your sins, and confessed them, and got  
3317 them all out of the way? Can you pray now?  
3318 And will you join and offer prevailing prayer,  
3319 that the Spirit of God may come down here?

3320

3321

3322

3323 [2] Edwards’ Works. vol. iv. p. 85. New York  
3324 edition.

3325

3326

3327

3328 LECTURE V.

3329

3330 THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

3331

3332 Text.—”Therefore I say unto you, What things  
3333 soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye  
3334 receive them, and ye shall have them.”—Mark  
3335 xi. 24.

3336

3337 THESE words have been by some supposed to  
3338 refer exclusively to the faith of miracles. But  
3339 there is not the least evidence of this. That the  
3340 text was not designed by our Saviour to refer  
3341 exclusively to the faith of miracles, is proved by  
3342 the connection in which it stands. If you read the  
3343 chapter, you will see that Christ and his apostles  
3344 were at this time very much engaged in their  
3345 work, and very prayerful; and as they returned  
3346 from their places of retirement in the morning,  
3347 faint and hungry, they saw a fig-tree at a little  
3348 distance. It looked very beautiful, and doubtless  
3349 gave signs of having fruit on it; but when they  
3350 came nigh, they found nothing on it but leaves.  
3351 And Jesus said, “No man eat fruit of thee  
3352 hereafter for ever.

3353

3354 “And in the morning, as they passed by, they  
3355 saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.

3356

3357 “And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto  
3358 him, Master, behold the fig-tree which thou  
3359 cursedst is withered away.

3360

3361 “And Jesus answering, saith unto them, have  
3362 faith in God.

3363

3364 “For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall  
3365 say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be  
3366 thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his  
3367 heart, but shall believe that those things which  
3368 he saith shall come to pass; he shall have  
3369 whatsoever he saith.”

3370

3371 Then follow the words of the text:

3372

3373 “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever  
3374 ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive  
3375 them, and ye shall have them.”

3376

3377 Our Saviour was desirous of giving his disciples  
3378 instructions respecting the nature and power of  
3379 prayer, and the necessity of strong faith in God.

3380

3381 He therefore stated a very strong case, a  
3382 miracle—one so great as the removal of a  
3383 mountain into the sea. And he tells them, that if  
3384 they exercise a proper faith in God, they might  
3385 do such things. But his remarks are not to be  
3386 limited to faith merely in regard to working  
3387 miracles, for he goes on to say,

3387

3388 “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have  
3389 aught against any, that your Father also which is  
3390 in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

3391

3392 “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your  
3393 Father which is in heaven may forgive you your  
3394 trespasses.”

3395

3396 Does that relate to miracles? When you pray,  
3397 you must forgive. Is that required only when a  
3398 man wishes to work a miracle? There are many  
3399 other promises in the Bible nearly related to this,  
3400 and speaking nearly the same language, which  
3401 have been all disposed of in this short-handed  
3402 way, as referring to the faith employed in  
3403 miracles. Just as if the faith of miracles was  
3404 something different from faith in God!

3405

3406 In my last lecture, I dwelt upon the subject of  
3407 “prevailing prayer;” and you will recollect that I  
3408 passed over the subject of faith in prayer very  
3409 briefly, because I wished to reserve it for a  
3410 separate discussion. The subject to-night is,

3411

3412 THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

3413

3414 I propose,

3415

- 3416 I. To show that faith is an indispensable  
3417 condition of prevailing prayer.  
3418
- 3419 II. Show what it is that we are to believe when  
3420 we pray.  
3421
- 3422 III. Show when we are bound to exercise this  
3423 faith, or to believe that we shall receive the thing  
3424 that we ask for.  
3425
- 3426 IV. That this kind of faith in prayer always does  
3427 obtain the blessing sought.  
3428
- 3429 V. Explain how we are to come into the state of  
3430 mind, in which we can exercise such faith.  
3431
- 3432 VI. Answer several objections, which are  
3433 sometimes alleged against these views of prayer.  
3434
- 3435 I. That faith is an indispensable condition of  
3436 prevailing prayer, will not be seriously doubted.  
3437 There is such a thing as offering benevolent  
3438 desires, which are acceptable to God as such,  
3439 that do not include the exercise of faith in regard  
3440 to the actual reception of those blessings. But  
3441 such desires are not prevailing prayer, the prayer  
3442 of faith. God may see fit to grant the things  
3443 desired, as an act of kindness and love, but it

3444 would not be properly in answer to prayer. I am  
3445 speaking now of the kind of faith that insures the  
3446 blessing. Do not understand me as saying that  
3447 there is nothing in prayer that is acceptable to  
3448 God, or that even obtains the blessing  
3449 sometimes, without this kind of faith. But I am  
3450 speaking of the faith which secures the very  
3451 blessing it seeks. To prove that faith is  
3452 indispensable to prevailing prayer, it is only  
3453 necessary to repeat what the apostle James  
3454 expressly tells us: "If any of you lack wisdom,  
3455 let him ask of God, that giveth to all men  
3456 liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be  
3457 given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing  
3458 wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of  
3459 the sea, driven with the wind and tossed."

3460

3461 II. We are to inquire what we are to believe  
3462 when we pray.

3463

3464 1. We are to believe in the existence of God—  
3465 "He that cometh to God must believe that he  
3466 is"—and in his willingness to answer prayer—  
3467 "that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them  
3468 that diligently seek him." There are many who  
3469 believe in the existence of God, and do not  
3470 believe in the efficacy of prayer. They profess to

3471 believe in God, but deny the necessity or  
3472 influence of prayer.  
3473  
3474 2. We are to believe that we shall receive—  
3475 something—what? Not something, or anything,  
3476 as it happens, but some particular thing we ask  
3477 for. We are not to think that God is such a being,  
3478 that if we ask a fish, he will give us a serpent, or  
3479 if we ask bread, he will give us a stone. But he  
3480 says, “What things soever ye desire, when ye  
3481 pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall  
3482 have them.” With respect to the faith of  
3483 miracles, it is plain that they were bound to  
3484 believe they should receive just what they asked  
3485 for—that the very thing itself should come to  
3486 pass. That is what they were to believe. Now  
3487 what ought men to believe in regard to other  
3488 blessings? Is it a mere loose idea, that if a man  
3489 prays for a specific blessing, God will by some  
3490 mysterious sovereignty give something or other  
3491 to him, or something to somebody else,  
3492 somewhere? When a man prays for his  
3493 children’s conversion, is he to believe that either  
3494 his children will be converted, or somebody’s  
3495 else children, and it is altogether uncertain  
3496 which? All this is utter nonsense, and highly  
3497 dishonorable to God. No, we are to believe that  
3498 we shall receive the very things that we ask for.



3499

3500

III. When are we bound to make this prayer?

3501

When are we bound to believe that we shall have

3502

the very things we pray for? I answer, When we

3503

have evidence of it. Faith must always have

3504

evidence. A man cannot believe a thing, unless

3505

he sees something which he supposes to be

3506

evidence. He is under no obligation to believe,

3507

and has no right to believe, a thing will be done,

3508

unless he has evidence. It is the height of

3509

fanaticism to believe without evidence. The

3510

kinds of evidence a man may have are the

3511

following:

3512

3513

1. Suppose that God has especially promised the

3514

thing. As for instance, God says he is more ready

3515

to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than

3516

parents are to give bread to their children. Here

3517

we are bound to believe that we shall receive it

3518

when we pray for it. You have no right to put in

3519

an if, and say, "Lord, if it be thy will, give us thy

3520

Holy Spirit." This is to insult God. To put an if

3521

into God's promise, where God has put none, is

3522

tantamount to charging God with being

3523

insincere. It is like saying, "O God, if thou art in

3524

earnest in making these promises, grant us the

3525

blessing we pray for."

3526

3527 I heard of a case where a young convert was the  
3528 means of teaching a minister a solemn truth on  
3529 the subject of prayer. She was from a very  
3530 wicked family, and went to live with a minister.  
3531 While there, she was hopefully converted, and  
3532 appeared well. One day she came to the  
3533 minister's study, while he was in it—a thing she  
3534 was not in the habit of doing; and he thought  
3535 there must be something the matter. So he asked  
3536 her to sit down, and kindly inquired into the state  
3537 of her religious feelings; she said, she was  
3538 distressed at the manner in which the old church  
3539 members prayed for the Spirit. They would pray  
3540 for the Holy Spirit to come, and would seem to  
3541 be very much in earnest, and plead the promises  
3542 of God, and then say, "O Lord, if it be thy will,  
3543 grant us these blessings for Christ's sake." She  
3544 thought that saying, "if it be thy will," when God  
3545 has expressly promised it, was questioning  
3546 whether God was sincere in his promises. The  
3547 minister tried to reason her out of it, and of  
3548 course he succeeded in confounding her. But she  
3549 was distressed and filled with grief, and said, "I  
3550 cannot argue the point with you, sir, but it is  
3551 impressed on my mind that it is wrong, and  
3552 dishonoring God." And she went away weeping  
3553 with anguish. The minister saw she was not  
3554 satisfied, and it led him to look at the matter

3555 again, and finally he saw that it was putting in an  
3556 if where God had put none, and where he had  
3557 revealed his will expressly, and that it was an  
3558 insult to God. And he went and told his church  
3559 they were bound to believe that God was in  
3560 earnest when he made them a promise. And the  
3561 spirit of prayer came down upon that church, and  
3562 a most powerful revival followed.

3563

3564 2. Where there is a general promise in the  
3565 Scriptures which you may reasonably apply to  
3566 the particular case before you. If its real meaning  
3567 includes the particular thing for which you pray,  
3568 or if you can reasonably apply the principle of  
3569 the promise to the case, there you have evidence.  
3570 For instance, suppose it is a time when  
3571 wickedness prevails greatly, and you are led to  
3572 pray for God's interference? What promise have  
3573 you? Why, this one: “

3574

3575 When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the  
3576 Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against  
3577 him.” Here you see is a general promise laying  
3578 down a principle of God's administration, which  
3579 you may apply to the case before you, as a  
3580 warrant for exercising faith in prayer. And if the  
3581 case come up, to inquire as to the time in which  
3582 God will grant blessings in answer to prayer, you

3583 have this promise: “While they are yet speaking,  
3584 I will hear.”

3585

3586 There is a vast amount of general promises and  
3587 principles laid down in the Bible, which  
3588 Christians might make use of, if they would only  
3589 think. Whenever you are in circumstances to  
3590 which the promises or principles apply, there  
3591 you are to use them. A parent finds this promise:  
3592 “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to  
3593 everlasting upon them that fear him, and his  
3594 righteousness unto children’s children, to such as  
3595 keep his covenant, and to those that remember  
3596 his commandments to do them.” Now, here is a  
3597 promise made to those that possess a certain  
3598 character. If any parent is conscious that this is  
3599 his character, he has a rightful ground to apply it  
3600 to himself and his family. If you have this  
3601 character, you are bound to make use of this  
3602 promise in prayer, and believe it, even to your  
3603 children’s children.

3604

3605 If I had time to-night, I could go from one end of  
3606 the Bible to the other, and produce an  
3607 astonishing variety of texts that are applicable as  
3608 promises; enough to prove, that in whatever  
3609 circumstances a child of God may be placed,  
3610 God has provided in the Bible some promise,

3611 either general or particular, which he can apply,  
3612 that is precisely suited to his case. Many of  
3613 God's promises are very broad on purpose to  
3614 cover much ground. What can be broader than  
3615 the promise in the text: "Whatsoever things ye  
3616 desire when ye pray?" What praying Christian is  
3617 there who has not been surprised at the length,  
3618 and breadth, and fullness, of the promises of  
3619 God, when the Spirit has applied them to his  
3620 heart? Who that lives a life of prayer, has not  
3621 wondered at his own blindness, in not having  
3622 before seen and felt the extent of meaning and  
3623 richness of those promises, when viewed under  
3624 the light of the Spirit of God? At such times he  
3625 has been astonished at his own ignorance, and  
3626 found the Spirit applying the promises and  
3627 declarations of the Bible in a sense in which he  
3628 had never dreamed of their being applicable  
3629 before. The manner in which the apostles  
3630 applied the promises, and prophecies, and  
3631 declarations of the Old Testament, places in a  
3632 strong light the breadth of meaning, and fullness,  
3633 and richness of the word of God. He that walks  
3634 in the light of God's countenance, and is filled  
3635 with the Spirit of God as he ought to be, will  
3636 often make an appropriation of promises to  
3637 himself, and an application of them to his own  
3638 circumstances, and the circumstances of those

3639 for whom he prays, that a blind professor of  
3640 religion would never dream of.  
3641  
3642 3. Where there is any prophetic declaration, that  
3643 the thing prayed for is agreeable to the will of  
3644 God. When it is plain from prophecy that the  
3645 event is certainly to come, you are bound to  
3646 believe it, and to make it the ground for your  
3647 special faith in prayer. If the time is not specified  
3648 in the Bible, and there is no evidence from other  
3649 sources, you are not bound to believe that it shall  
3650 take place now, or immediately. But if the time  
3651 is specified, or if the time may be learned from  
3652 the study of the prophecies, and it appears to  
3653 have arrived, then Christians are under  
3654 obligations to understand and apply it, by  
3655 offering the prayer of faith. For instance, take  
3656 the case of Daniel, in regard to the return of the  
3657 Jews from captivity. What does he say? “I  
3658 Daniel understood by books the number of the  
3659 years whereof the word of the Lord came to  
3660 Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish  
3661 seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”  
3662 Here he learned from books, that is, he studied  
3663 his Bible, and in that way understood that the  
3664 length of the captivity was to be seventy years.  
3665 What does he do then? Does he sit down upon  
3666 the promise, and say, “God has pledged himself

3667 to put an end to the captivity in seventy years,  
3668 and the time has expired, and there is no need of  
3669 doing any thing?" Oh no; he says, "And I set my  
3670 face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and  
3671 supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and  
3672 ashes." He set himself at once to pray that the  
3673 thing might be accomplished. He prayed in faith.  
3674 But what was he to believe? What he had  
3675 learned from prophecy. There are many  
3676 prophecies yet unfulfilled, in the Bible, which  
3677 Christians are bound to understand, as far as they  
3678 are capable of understanding them, and then  
3679 make them the basis of believing prayer. Do not  
3680 think, as some seem to, that because a thing is  
3681 foretold in prophecy it is not necessary to pray  
3682 for it, or that it will come whether Christians  
3683 pray for it or not. There is no truth in this. God  
3684 says, in regard to this very class of events, which  
3685 are revealed in prophecy, "Nevertheless, for all  
3686 these things will I be inquired of by the house of  
3687 Israel to do it for them."

3688  
3689 4. When the signs of the times, or the providence  
3690 of God, indicate that a particular blessing is  
3691 about to be bestowed, we are bound to believe it,  
3692 The Lord Jesus Christ blamed the Jews, and  
3693 called them hypocrites, because they did not  
3694 understand the indications of Providence. They

3695 could understand the signs of the weather, and  
3696 see when it was about to rain, and when it would  
3697 be fair weather; but they could not see, from the  
3698 signs of the times, that the time had come for the  
3699 Messiah to appear, and build up the house of  
3700 God. There are many professors of religion who  
3701 are always stumbling and hanging back,  
3702 whenever any thing is proposed to be done. They  
3703 always say, The time has not come—the time  
3704 has not come; when there are others who pay  
3705 attention to the signs of the times, and who have  
3706 spiritual discernment to understand them. These  
3707 pray in faith for the blessing, and it comes.

3708

3709 5. When the Spirit of God is upon you, and  
3710 excites strong desires for any blessing, you are  
3711 bound to pray for it in faith. You are bound to  
3712 infer, from the fact that you find yourself drawn  
3713 to desire such a thing while in the exercise of  
3714 such holy affections as the Spirit of God  
3715 produces, that these desires are the work of the  
3716 Spirit. People are not apt to desire with the right  
3717 kind of desires, unless they are excited by the  
3718 Spirit of God. The apostle refers to these desires,  
3719 excited by the Spirit, in his epistle to the  
3720 Romans, where he says—”Likewise the Spirit  
3721 also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not  
3722 what we should pray for as we ought; but the



3723 Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with  
3724 groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that  
3725 searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of  
3726 the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the  
3727 saints, according to the will of God.” Here, then,  
3728 if you find your self strongly drawn to desire a  
3729 blessing, you are to understand it as an  
3730 intimation that God is willing to bestow that  
3731 particular blessing, and so you are bound to  
3732 believe it. God does not trifle with his children.  
3733 He does not go and excite in them a desire for  
3734 one blessing, to turn them off with something  
3735 else. But he excites the very desires he is willing  
3736 to gratify. And when they feel such desires, they  
3737 are bound to follow them out till they get the  
3738 blessing.

3739  
3740 IV. I will proceed to show that this kind of faith  
3741 always obtains the object. The text is plain here,  
3742 to show that you shall receive the very thing  
3743 prayed for. It does not say, “Believe that ye shall  
3744 receive, and ye shall either have that or  
3745 something else equivalent to it.” To prove that  
3746 this faith obtains the very blessing asked, I  
3747 observe,

3748  
3749 1. That otherwise we could never know whether  
3750 our prayers were answered. And we might

3751 continue praying and praying, long after the  
3752 prayer was answered by some other blessing  
3753 equivalent to the one we ask for.

3754

3755 2. If we are not bound to expect the very thing  
3756 we ask for, it must be that the Spirit of God  
3757 deceives us. Why should he excite us to desire a  
3758 certain blessing, when he means to grant  
3759 something else?

3760

3761 3. What is the meaning of this passage, “If a man  
3762 ask bread, will he give him a stone?” Does not  
3763 our Saviour rebuke the idea that prayer may be  
3764 answered by giving something else? What  
3765 encouragement have we to pray for any thing in  
3766 particular, if we are to ask for one thing and  
3767 receive another? Suppose a Christian should  
3768 pray for a revival here—he would be answered  
3769 by a revival in China. Or he might pray for a  
3770 revival, and God would send the cholera, or an  
3771 earthquake. All the history of the church shows  
3772 that when God answers prayer, he gives his  
3773 people the very thing for which their prayers are  
3774 offered. God confers other blessings, on both  
3775 saints and sinners, which they do not pray for at  
3776 all. He sends his rain both upon the just and the  
3777 unjust, But when he answers prayer, it is by  
3778 doing what they ask him to do. To be sure, he

3779 often more than answers prayer. He grants them  
3780 not only what they ask, but often connects other  
3781 blessings with it.

3782

3783 4. Perhaps you may feel a difficulty here about  
3784 the prayers of Jesus Christ. People may often  
3785 ask, “Did not he pray in the garden for the cup to  
3786 be removed, and was his prayer answered?” I  
3787 answer that this is no difficulty at all, for the  
3788 prayer was answered. The cup he prayed to be  
3789 delivered from was removed. This is what the  
3790 apostle refers to, when he says—”Who in the  
3791 days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers  
3792 and supplications with strong crying and tears  
3793 unto him that was able to save him from death,  
3794 was heard in that he feared.” Now I ask, On  
3795 what occasion was he saved from death, if not  
3796 on this? Was it the death of the cross he prayed  
3797 to be delivered from? Not at all. But the case  
3798 was this. A short time before he was betrayed,  
3799 we hear him saying to his disciples, “My soul is  
3800 exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.”  
3801 Anguish of mind came rolling in upon him, till  
3802 he was just ready to die, and he went out into the  
3803 garden to pray, and told his disciples to watch,  
3804 and then he went by himself and prayed; “O my  
3805 Father,” said he, “if it be possible, let this cup  
3806 pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as

3807 thou wilt.” In his agony he rose from his knees,  
3808 and walked the garden, till he came where his  
3809 disciples were, and there he saw them fast  
3810 asleep. He awaked them and said, “What, could  
3811 ye not watch with me one hour?” And then he  
3812 went again, for he was in such distress that he  
3813 could not stand still, and again he poured out his  
3814 soul. And the third time he goes away and prays,  
3815 “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from  
3816 me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be  
3817 done.” And now the third time of praying, there  
3818 appeared an angel unto him from heaven,  
3819 strengthening him. And his mind became  
3820 composed, and calm, and the cup was gone. Till  
3821 then, he had been in such an agony that his sweat  
3822 was as it were great drops of blood, but now it  
3823 was all over.

3824  
3825 Some have supposed that he was praying against  
3826 the cross, and begging to be delivered from  
3827 dying on the cross! Did Christ ever shrink from  
3828 the cross? Never. He came into the world on  
3829 purpose to die on the cross, and he never shrunk  
3830 from it. But he was afraid he should die in the  
3831 garden before he came to the cross. The burden  
3832 on his soul was so great, and produced such an  
3833 agony, that he felt as if he was on the point of  
3834 dying, His soul was sorrowful even unto death.

3835 But after the angel appeared unto him, we hear  
3836 no more of his agony of soul. He had prayed for  
3837 relief from that cup, and his prayer was  
3838 answered. He became calm, and had no more  
3839 mental suffering till just as he expired. This case,  
3840 therefore, is no exception. He received the very  
3841 thing for which he asked, as he says, "I knew  
3842 thou always hearest me."

3843

3844 But there is another case often brought up, where  
3845 the apostle Paul prayed against the thorn in the  
3846 flesh. He says, "I besought the Lord thrice, that it  
3847 might depart from me." And God answered him,  
3848 "My grace is sufficient for thee." It is the  
3849 opinion of Dr. Clarke and others, that Paul's  
3850 prayer was answered in the very thing for which  
3851 he prayed. That "the thorn in the flesh, the  
3852 messenger of Satan," of which he speaks, was a  
3853 false apostle who had distracted and perverted  
3854 the church at Corinth. That Paul prayed against  
3855 his influence, and the Lord answered him by  
3856 assuring him, "My grace is sufficient for thee."  
3857 Who does not know that it was, and that Paul's  
3858 influence ultimately triumphed?

3859

3860 But admitting that Paul's prayer was not  
3861 answered by granting the particular thing for  
3862 which he prayed, in order to make out this case

3863 as an exception to the prayer of faith, they are  
3864 obliged to assume the very thing to be proved;  
3865 and that is, that the apostle prayed in faith. There  
3866 is no reason to suppose that Paul would always  
3867 pray in faith, any more than that any other  
3868 Christian does. The very manner in which God  
3869 answered him shows that it was not in faith. He  
3870 virtually tells him, “That thorn is necessary for  
3871 your sanctification, and to keep you from being  
3872 exalted above measure. I sent it upon you in  
3873 love, and in faithfulness, and you have no  
3874 business to pray that I should take it away.—  
3875 LET IT ALONE.”

3876  
3877 There is not only no evidence that he prayed in  
3878 faith, but a strong presumption that he did not.  
3879 From the history it is evident that he had nothing  
3880 on which to repose faith. There was no express  
3881 promise, no general promise, that could be  
3882 applicable, no providence of God, no prophecy,  
3883 no teaching of the Spirit that God would remove  
3884 this thorn; but the presumption was that God  
3885 would not remove it. He had given it to him for a  
3886 particular purpose. His prayer appears to have  
3887 been selfish, or at least praying against a mere  
3888 personal influence. This was not any personal  
3889 suffering that retarded his usefulness, but on the  
3890 contrary it was given him to increase his

3891 usefulness by keeping him humble; and because  
3892 on some account he found it inconvenient and  
3893 mortifying, he set himself to pray out of his own  
3894 heart, evidently without being led to it by the  
3895 Spirit of God. But did Paul pray in faith without  
3896 the Spirit of God, any more than any other man?  
3897 And will any one undertake to say that the Spirit  
3898 of God led him to pray that this might be  
3899 removed, when God himself had given it for a  
3900 particular purpose, which purpose could not be  
3901 answered only as the thorn continued with him?

3902

3903 Why then is this made an exception to the  
3904 general rule laid down in the text, that a man  
3905 shall receive whatsoever he asks in faith? I was  
3906 once amazed and grieved at a public  
3907 examination at a Theological Seminary, to hear  
3908 them darken counsel by words without  
3909 knowledge on this subject. This case of Paul,  
3910 and that of Christ just adverted to, were both of  
3911 them cited as instances to prove to their students  
3912 that the prayer of faith would not be answered in  
3913 the particular thing for which they prayed. Now  
3914 to teach such sentiments as these in or out of a  
3915 Theological Seminary, is to trifle with the word  
3916 of God, and to break the power of the Christian  
3917 ministry. Has it come to this, that our grave  
3918 doctors in our seminaries, are employed to

3919 instruct Zion's watchmen, to believe and teach  
3920 that it is not to be expected that the prayer of  
3921 faith is to be answered in granting the object for  
3922 which we pray? Oh, tell it not in Gath, nor let the  
3923 sound reach Askelon! What is to become of the  
3924 church while such are the views of its gravest  
3925 and most influential ministers? I would not be  
3926 unkind nor censorious, but as one of the  
3927 ministers of Jesus Christ, I feel bound to bear  
3928 testimony against such a perversion of the word  
3929 of God.

3930

3931 5. It is evident that the prayer of faith will obtain  
3932 the blessing, from the fact that our faith rests on  
3933 evidence that to grant that thing is the will of  
3934 God. Not evidence that something else will be  
3935 granted, but that this particular thing will be. But  
3936 how, then, can we have evidence that this thing  
3937 will be granted, if another thing is to be granted?  
3938 People often receive more than they pray for.  
3939 Solomon prayed for wisdom, and God granted  
3940 him riches and honor in addition. So a wife  
3941 sometimes prays for the conversion of her  
3942 husband, and if she offers the prayer, of faith,  
3943 God may not only grant that blessing, but  
3944 convert her child, and her whole family.  
3945 Blessings sometimes seem to hang together, so  
3946 that if a Christian gains one he gets them all.



3947

3948 V. I am to show how we are to come into this  
3949 state of mind, in which we can offer such prayer.

3950 People sometimes ask, “How shall I offer such  
3951 prayer? Shall I say, Now I will pray in faith for  
3952 such and such a blessing?” No, the human mind  
3953 is not moved in this way. You might just as well  
3954 say, “Now I will call up a spirit from the  
3955 bottomless pit.” I answer,

3956

3957 1. You must first obtain evidence that God will  
3958 bestow the blessing. How did Daniel make out to  
3959 offer the prayer of faith? He searched the  
3960 Scriptures. Now, you need not let your Bible lie  
3961 on a shelf, and expect God to reveal his promises  
3962 to you. Search the Scriptures, and see where you  
3963 can get either a general or special promise, or a  
3964 prophecy, on which you can plant your feet  
3965 when you pray. Go through the Bible, and you  
3966 will find it full of such things—precious  
3967 promises, which you may plead in faith. You  
3968 never need to want for objects of prayer, if you  
3969 will do as Daniel did. Persons are staggered on  
3970 this subject, because they never make a proper  
3971 use of the Bible.

3972

3973 A curious case occurred in one of the towns in  
3974 the western part of this state. There was a revival

3975 there. A certain clergyman came to visit the  
3976 place, and heard a great deal said about the  
3977 Prayer of Faith. He was staggered at what they  
3978 said, for he had never regarded the subject in the  
3979 light they did. He inquired about it of the  
3980 minister that was laboring there. The minister  
3981 requested him, in a kind spirit, to go home, and  
3982 take his Testament, look out the passages that  
3983 refer to prayer, and go round to his most praying  
3984 people, and ask them how they understood these  
3985 passages. He said he would do it, for though  
3986 these views were new to him, he was willing to  
3987 learn. He did it, and went to his praying men and  
3988 women, and read the passages without note or  
3989 comment, and asked what they thought. He  
3990 found their plain common sense had led them to  
3991 understand these passages, and to believe that  
3992 they mean just as they say. This affected him,  
3993 and then the fact of his going round and  
3994 presenting the promises before their minds  
3995 awakened the spirit of prayer in them, and a  
3996 revival followed.

3997

3998 I could name many individuals who have set  
3999 themselves to examine the Bible on this subject,  
4000 and before they got half through with it have  
4001 been filled with the spirit of prayer. They found  
4002 that God meant by his promises just what a

4003 plain, common sense man would understand  
4004 them to mean. I advise you to try it. You have  
4005 Bibles; look them over, and whenever you find a  
4006 promise that you can use, fasten it in your mind  
4007 before you go on; and I venture to predict you  
4008 will not get through the book without finding out  
4009 that God's promises mean just what they say.

4010

4011 2. Cherish the good desires you have. Christians  
4012 very often lose their good desires by not  
4013 attending to this; and then their prayers are mere  
4014 words, without any desire or earnestness at all.  
4015 The least longing of desire must be cherished. If  
4016 your body was likely to freeze, and you had even  
4017 the least spark of fire, how you would cherish it!  
4018 So if you have the least desire for a blessing, let  
4019 it be ever so small, do not trifle it away. Do not  
4020 grieve the Spirit. Do not be diverted. Do not lose  
4021 good desires by levity, by censoriousness, by  
4022 worldly-mindedness. Watch and pray, and  
4023 follow it up, or you will never pray the prayer of  
4024 faith.

4025

4026 2. Entire consecration to God is indispensable to  
4027 the prayer of faith. You must live a holy life, and  
4028 consecrate all to God—your time, talents,  
4029 influence—all you have, and all you are, to be  
4030 his entirely. Read the lives of pious men, and

4031 you will be struck with this fact: that they used  
4032 to set apart times to renew their covenant, and  
4033 dedicate themselves anew to God; and whenever  
4034 they have done so, a blessing has always  
4035 followed immediately. If I had Edwards here to-  
4036 night, I could read passages showing how it was  
4037 in his days.

4038

4039 4. You must persevere. You are not to pray for a  
4040 thing once, and then cease, and call that the  
4041 prayer of faith. Look at Daniel. He prayed  
4042 twenty-one days, and did not cease till he had  
4043 obtained the blessing. He set his heart and his  
4044 face unto the Lord, to seek by prayer and  
4045 supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and  
4046 ashes: and he held on three weeks, and then the  
4047 answer came. And why did not it come before?  
4048 God sent an Archangel to bear the message, but  
4049 the devil hindered him all this time. See what  
4050 Christ says in the parable of the unjust judge,  
4051 and the parable of the loaves. What does he  
4052 teach us by them? Why, that God will grant  
4053 answers to prayer when it is importunate. "Shall  
4054 not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and  
4055 night unto him?"

4056

4057 5. If you would pray in faith, be sure to walk  
4058 every day with God. If you do, he will tell you

4059 what to pray for. Be filled with his Spirit, and he  
4060 will give you objects enough to pray for. He will  
4061 give you as much of the spirit of prayer as you  
4062 have strength of body to bear.

4063

4064 Said a good man to me, “Oh, I am dying for the  
4065 want of strength to pray. My body is crushed, the  
4066 world is on me, and how can I forbear praying!”

4067 I have known that man go to bed absolutely sick,  
4068 for weakness and faintness, under the pressure.

4069 And I have known him pray as if he would do  
4070 violence to heaven, and then seen the blessing  
4071 come as plainly in answer to his prayer as if it  
4072 was revealed, so that no person would doubt it  
4073 any more than if God had spoken from heaven.

4074 Shall I tell you how he died? He prayed more  
4075 and more, and he used to take the map of the  
4076 world before him and pray, and look over the  
4077 different countries and pray for them, till he  
4078 absolutely expired in his room praying. Blessed  
4079 man! He was the reproach of the ungodly and of  
4080 carnal, unbelieving professors, but he was the  
4081 favorite of heaven, and a prevailing prince in  
4082 prayer.

4083

4084 VI. I will refer to some objections which are  
4085 brought forward against this doctrine.

4086

4087 1. "It leads to fanaticism and amounts to a new  
4088 revelation." Why should this be a stumbling  
4089 block? They must have evidence to believe  
4090 before they can offer the prayer of faith. And if  
4091 God gives other evidence besides the senses,  
4092 where is the objection? True, there is a sense in  
4093 which this is a new revelation; it is making  
4094 known a thing by his Spirit. But it is the very  
4095 revelation which God has promised to give. It is  
4096 just the one we are to expect, if the Bible is true;  
4097 that when we know not what we ought to pray  
4098 for, according to the will of God, his Spirit helps  
4099 our infirmities, and teaches us the very thing to  
4100 pray for. Shall we deny the teaching of the  
4101 Spirit?

4102  
4103 2. It is often asked, "Is it our duty to pray the  
4104 prayer of faith for the salvation of all men?" I  
4105 answer, No; for that is not a thing according to  
4106 the will of God. It is directly contrary to his  
4107 revealed will. We have no evidence that all will  
4108 be saved. We should feel benevolently to all,  
4109 and, in itself considered, desire their salvation.  
4110 But God has revealed it to us that many of the  
4111 human race shall be damned. And it cannot be a  
4112 duty to believe that they shall all be saved, in the  
4113 face of a revelation to the contrary. In Christ's  
4114 prayer, in the seventeenth chapter of John, he

4115 expressly said, "I pray not for the world but for  
4116 those thou hast given me."

4117

4118 3. But say some, "If we were to offer this prayer  
4119 for all men, would not all men be saved?" I  
4120 answer, Yes, and so they would be saved, if they  
4121 would all repent. But they will not. Neither will  
4122 Christians offer the prayer of faith for all,  
4123 because there is no evidence on which to ground  
4124 a belief that God intends to save all men.

4125

4126 4. But you ask, "For whom are we to offer this  
4127 prayer? We want to know in what cases, for  
4128 what persons, and places, and at what times, etc.,  
4129 we are to make the prayer of faith." I answer, as  
4130 I have already answered, When you have  
4131 evidence, from promises, or prophecies, or  
4132 providences, or the leadings of the Spirit, that  
4133 God will do the things you pray for.

4134

4135 5. "How is it that so many prayers of pious  
4136 parents for their children are not answered? Did  
4137 you not say there was a promise which pious  
4138 parents may apply to their children? Why is it,  
4139 then, that so many pious praying parents have  
4140 had impenitent children, that died in their sins?"  
4141 Granted that it is so, what does it prove? Let God  
4142 be true, but every man a liar. Which shall we

4143 believe, that God's promise has failed, or that  
4144 these parents did not do their duty? Perhaps they  
4145 did not believe the promise, or did not believe  
4146 there was any such thing as the prayer of faith.  
4147 Wherever you find a professor that does not  
4148 believe in any such prayer, you find, as a general  
4149 thing, that he has children and domestics yet in  
4150 their sins. And no wonder, unless they are  
4151 converted in answer to the prayers of somebody  
4152 else.

4153

4154 6. "Will not these views lead to fanaticism? Will  
4155 not many people think they are offering the  
4156 prayer of faith when they are not?" That is the  
4157 same objection that the Unitarians make against  
4158 the doctrine of regeneration—that many people  
4159 think they have been born again when they have  
4160 not. It is an argument against all spiritual  
4161 religion whatever. Some think they have it when  
4162 they have not, and are fanatics. But there are  
4163 those who know what the prayer of faith is, just  
4164 as there are those who know what spiritual  
4165 experience is, though it may stumble cold-  
4166 hearted professors who know it not. Even  
4167 ministers often lay themselves open to the  
4168 rebuke which Christ gave to Nicodemus: "Art  
4169 thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these  
4170 things?"



4171

4172 REMARKS.

4173

4174 1. Persons who have not known by experience  
4175 what this is, have great reason to doubt their  
4176 piety. This is by no means uncharitable. Let  
4177 them examine themselves. It is to be feared that  
4178 they understand prayer as Nicodemus did the  
4179 new birth. They have not walked with God, and  
4180 you cannot describe it to them, any more than  
4181 you can describe a beautiful painting to a blind  
4182 man who cannot see colors. Many professors can  
4183 understand about the prayer of faith just as much  
4184 as a blind man does of colors.

4185

4186 2. There is reason to believe millions are in hell  
4187 because professors have not offered the prayer of  
4188 faith. When they had promises under their eye,  
4189 they have not had faith enough to use them.

4190 Thus parents let their children, and even  
4191 baptized children, go down to hell because they  
4192 would not believe the promises of God.

4193 Doubtless many women's husbands have gone  
4194 to hell, when they might have prevailed with  
4195 God in prayer and saved them. The signs of the  
4196 times and the indications of Providence were  
4197 favorable, perhaps, and the Spirit of God  
4198 prompted desires for their salvation, and they

4199 had evidence enough to believe that God was  
4200 ready to grant a blessing, and if they had only  
4201 prayed in faith, God would have granted it; but  
4202 God turned it away because they would not  
4203 discern the signs of the times.

4204

4205 3. You say, “This leaves the church under a great  
4206 load of guilt.” True, it does so; and no doubt  
4207 multitudes will stand up before God covered all  
4208 over with the blood of souls that have been lost  
4209 through their want of faith. The promises of  
4210 God, accumulated in their Bibles, will stare them  
4211 in the face and weigh them down to hell.

4212

4213 4. Many professors of religion live so far from  
4214 God that to talk to them about the prayer of faith  
4215 is all unintelligible. Very often the greatest  
4216 offence possible to them is to preach about this  
4217 kind of prayer.

4218

4219 5. I want to ask the professors who are here a  
4220 few questions. Do you know what it is to pray in  
4221 faith? Did you ever pray in this way? Have you  
4222 ever prayed till your mind was assured the  
4223 blessing would come—till you felt that rest in  
4224 God, that confidence, as perfect as if you saw  
4225 God come down from heaven to give it to you?  
4226 If not, you ought to examine your foundation.

4227 How can you live without praying in faith at all?  
4228 How do you live in view of your children, while  
4229 you have no assurance whatever that they will be  
4230 converted? One would think you would go  
4231 deranged. I knew a father at the West; he was a  
4232 good man, but he had erroneous views  
4233 respecting the prayer of faith; and his whole  
4234 family of children were grown up and not one of  
4235 them converted. At length his son sickened and  
4236 seemed about to die. The father prayed, but the  
4237 son grew worse and seemed sinking into the  
4238 grave without hope. The father prayed till his  
4239 anguish was unutterable. He went at last and  
4240 prayed—(there seemed no prospect of his son’s  
4241 life)—but he poured out his soul as if he would  
4242 not be denied, till at length he got an assurance  
4243 that his son would not only live, but be  
4244 converted; and not only this one, but his whole  
4245 family, would be converted to God. He came  
4246 into the house and told his family his son would  
4247 not die. They were astonished at him. “I tell  
4248 you,” says he, “he won’t die. And no child of  
4249 mine will ever die in his sins.” That man’s  
4250 children were all converted years ago.

4251  
4252 What do you think of that? Was that fanaticism?  
4253 If you believe so, it is because you know nothing  
4254 about the matter. Do you pray so? Do you live in

4255 such a manner that you can offer such prayer for  
4256 your children? I know that the children of  
4257 professors may sometimes be converted in  
4258 answer to the prayers of somebody else. But  
4259 ought you to live so? Dare you trust to the  
4260 prayers of others when God calls you to sustain  
4261 this most important relation to your children?  
4262

4263 Finally—See what combined effort is made to  
4264 dispose of the Bible. The wicked are for  
4265 throwing away the threatenings of the Bible, and  
4266 the church the promises. And what is there left?  
4267 Between them, they leave the Bible a blank. I  
4268 say it in love: What are our Bibles good for if we  
4269 do not lay hold on their precious promises, and  
4270 use them as the ground of our faith when we  
4271 pray for the blessing of God? You had better  
4272 send your Bibles to the heathen, where they will  
4273 do some good, if you are not going to believe  
4274 and use them. I have no evidence that there is  
4275 much of this prayer now in this church or in this  
4276 city. And what will become of it? What will  
4277 become of your children? your neighbors? the  
4278 wicked?

4279  
4280  
4281  
4282

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LECTURE VI.

4283

4284 THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

4285

4286 Text.—Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our  
4287 infirmities: for we know not what we should  
4288 pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh  
4289 intercession for us with groanings which cannot  
4290 be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts  
4291 knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because  
4292 he maketh intercession for the saints, according  
4293 to the will of God.—Romans viii. 26, 27.

4294

4295 My last lecture but one was on the subject of  
4296 Effectual Prayer; in which I observed that one of  
4297 the most important attributes of effectual or  
4298 prevailing prayer is Faith. This was so extensive  
4299 a subject that I reserved it for a separate  
4300 discussion. And accordingly, I lectured last  
4301 Friday evening on the subject of Faith in Prayer,  
4302 or, as it is termed, the Prayer of Faith. It was my  
4303 intention to discuss the subject in a single  
4304 lecture. But as I was under the necessity of  
4305 condensing so much on some points, it occurred  
4306 to me, and was mentioned by others, that there  
4307 might be some questions which people would  
4308 ask, that ought to be answered more fully,  
4309 especially as the subject is one on which there is  
4310 so much darkness. One grand design in

4311 preaching is to exhibit the truth in such a way as  
4312 to answer the questions which would naturally  
4313 arise in the minds of those who read the Bible  
4314 with attention, and who want to know what it  
4315 means, so that they can put it in practice. In  
4316 explaining the text, I propose to show,  
4317  
4318 I. What Spirit is here spoken of, “The Spirit also  
4319 helpeth our infirmities.”  
4320  
4321 II. What that Spirit does for us.  
4322  
4323 III. Why he does what the text declares him to  
4324 do.  
4325  
4326 IV. How he accomplishes it.  
4327  
4328 V. The degree in which he influences the minds  
4329 of those who are under his influence.  
4330  
4331 VI. How his influences are to be distinguished  
4332 from the influences of evil spirits, or from the  
4333 suggestions of our own minds.  
4334  
4335 VII. How we are to obtain this agency of the  
4336 Holy Spirit.  
4337

4338 VIII. Who have a right to expect to enjoy his  
4339 influences in this matter—or for whom the Spirit  
4340 does the things spoken of in the text.

4341

4342 I. What Spirit is it that is spoken of in the text?

4343

4344 Some have supposed that the Spirit spoken of in  
4345 the text means our own spirit—our own mind.

4346 But a little attention to the text will show plainly  
4347 that this is not the meaning. “The Spirit helpeth

4348 our infirmities” would then read, “Our own spirit  
4349 helpeth the infirmities of our own spirit,”—and

4350 “Our own spirit likewise maketh intercession for  
4351 our own spirit.” You see you can make no sense

4352 of it on that supposition. It is evident from the

4353 manner in which the text is introduced, that the

4354 Spirit referred to is the Holy Ghost. “For if ye

4355 live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through

4356 the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye

4357 shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of

4358 God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not

4359 received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but

4360 ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby

4361 we cry, Abba, Father, The Spirit itself beareth

4362 witness with our spirit, that we are the children

4363 of God.” And the text is plainly speaking of the

4364 same Spirit.

4365

4366 II. What the Spirit does.

4367

4368 Answer—He intercedes for the saints. “He  
4369 maketh intercession for us,” and “helpeth our  
4370 infirmities,” when “we know not what to pray  
4371 for as we ought.” He helps Christians to pray  
4372 according to the will of God, or for the things  
4373 that God desires them to pray for.

4374

4375 III. Why is the Holy Spirit thus employed?

4376

4377 Because of our ignorance. Because we know not  
4378 what we should pray for as we ought. We are so  
4379 ignorant both of the will of God, revealed in the  
4380 Bible, and of his unrevealed will, as we ought to  
4381 learn it from his providence. Mankind are vastly  
4382 ignorant both of the promises and prophecies of  
4383 the Bible, and blind to the providence of God.  
4384 And they are still more in the dark about those  
4385 points of which God has said nothing but by the  
4386 leadings of his Spirit. You recollect that I named  
4387 these four sources of evidence on which to  
4388 ground faith in prayer—promises, prophecies,  
4389 providences, and the Holy Spirit. When all other  
4390 means fail of leading us to the knowledge of  
4391 what we ought to pray for, the Spirit does it.

4392



4393 IV. How does he make intercession for the  
4394 saints? In what mode does he operate, so as to  
4395 help our infirmities?

4396

4397 Not by superseding the use of our faculties. It is  
4398 not by praying for us, while we do nothing. He  
4399 prays for us, by exciting our own faculties. Not  
4400 that he immediately suggests to us words, or  
4401 guides our language. But he enlightens our  
4402 minds, and makes the truth take hold of our  
4403 souls. He leads us to consider the state of the  
4404 church, and the condition of sinners around us.  
4405 The manner in which he brings the truth before  
4406 the mind, and keeps it there till it produces its  
4407 effect, we cannot tell. But we can know as much  
4408 as this—that he leads us to a deep consideration  
4409 of the state of things; and the result of this, the  
4410 natural and philosophical result, is, deep feeling.  
4411 When the Spirit brings the truth up before a  
4412 man's mind, there is only one way in which he  
4413 can keep from deep feeling. That is, by turning  
4414 away his thoughts, and leading his mind to think  
4415 of other things. Sinners, when the Spirit of God  
4416 brings the truth before them, must feel. They feel  
4417 wrong, as long as they remain impenitent. So, if  
4418 a man is a Christian, and the Holy Spirit brings a  
4419 subject into warm contact with his heart, it is just  
4420 as impossible he should not feel, as it is that your

4421 hand should not feel if you put it into the fire. If  
4422 the Spirit of God leads him to dwell on things  
4423 calculated to excite warm and overpowering  
4424 feelings, and he is not excited by them, it proves  
4425 that he has no love for souls, nothing of the  
4426 Spirit of Christ, and knows nothing about  
4427 Christian experience.

4428

4429 2. The Spirit makes the Christian feel the value  
4430 of souls, and the guilt and danger of sinners in  
4431 their present condition. It is amazing how dark  
4432 and stupid Christians often are about this. Even  
4433 Christian parents let their children go right down  
4434 to hell before their eyes, and scarcely seem to  
4435 exercise a single feeling, or put forth an effort to  
4436 save them. And why? Because they are so blind  
4437 to what hell is, so unbelieving about the Bible,  
4438 so ignorant of the precious promises which God  
4439 has made to faithful parents. They grieve the  
4440 Spirit of God away, and it is in vain to try to  
4441 make them pray for their children, while the  
4442 Spirit of God is away from them.

4443

4444 3. He leads Christians to understand and apply  
4445 the promises of Scripture. It is wonderful that in  
4446 no age have Christians been able fully to apply  
4447 the promises of Scripture to the events of life, as  
4448 they go along. This is not because the promises

4449 themselves are obscure. The promises  
4450 themselves are plain enough. But there has  
4451 always been a wonderful disposition to overlook  
4452 the Scriptures, as a source of light respecting the  
4453 passing events of life. How astonished the  
4454 apostles were at Christ's application of so many  
4455 prophecies to himself! They seemed to be  
4456 continually ready to exclaim, "Astonishing! Can  
4457 it be so? We never understood it before." Who,  
4458 that has witnessed the manner in which the  
4459 apostles, influenced and inspired by the Holy  
4460 Ghost, applied passages of the Old Testament to  
4461 Gospel times, has not been amazed at the  
4462 richness of meaning which they found in the  
4463 Scriptures? So it has been with many a  
4464 Christian; while deeply engaged in prayer, he  
4465 has seen that passages of Scripture are  
4466 appropriate which he never thought of before, as  
4467 having any such application.

4468

4469 I once knew an individual who was in great  
4470 spiritual darkness. He had retired for prayer,  
4471 resolved that he would not desist till he had  
4472 found the Lord. He kneeled down and tried to  
4473 pray. All was dark, and he could not pray. He  
4474 rose from his knees, and stood for a while, but  
4475 he could not give it up, for he had promised that  
4476 he would not let the sun go down before he had

4477 given himself to God. He knelt again, but it was  
4478 all dark, and his heart was hard as before. He  
4479 was nearly in despair, and said in agony, "I have  
4480 grieved the Spirit of God away, and there is no  
4481 promise for me. I am shut out from the presence  
4482 of God." But his resolution was formed not to  
4483 give over, and again he knelt down. He had said  
4484 but a few words, when this passage came into  
4485 his mind as fresh as if he had just read it; it  
4486 seemed as if he had just been reading the words,  
4487 "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall  
4488 search for me with all your heart." Jer. xxix. 13.  
4489 Though this promise was in the Old Testament,  
4490 and was addressed to the Jews, it was still as  
4491 applicable to him as to them. And it broke his  
4492 heart, like the hammer of the Lord, in a moment.  
4493 He prayed, and rose up, happy in God. Thus it  
4494 often happens when professors of religion are  
4495 praying for their children. Sometimes they pray,  
4496 and are in darkness and doubt, feeling as if there  
4497 was no foundation for faith, and no special  
4498 promises for the children of believers. But while  
4499 they are pleading, God has shown them the full  
4500 meaning of some promise, and their soul has  
4501 rested on it as on the mighty arm of God. I once  
4502 heard of a widow who was greatly exercised  
4503 about her children, till this passage was brought  
4504 powerfully to her mind: "Leave thy fatherless

4505 children with me, I will preserve them alive.”  
4506 She saw it had an extended meaning, and she  
4507 was enabled to lay hold on it, as it were, with her  
4508 hands; and then she prevailed in prayer, and her  
4509 children were converted. The Holy Spirit was  
4510 sent into the world by the Saviour, to guide his  
4511 people and instruct them, and bring things to  
4512 their remembrance, as well as to convince the  
4513 world of sin.

4514  
4515 4. The Spirit leads Christians to desire and pray  
4516 for things of which nothing is specifically said in  
4517 the word of God. Take the case of an individual,  
4518 That God is willing to save is a general truth. So  
4519 it is a general truth that he is willing to answer  
4520 prayer. But how shall I know the will of God  
4521 respecting that individual, whether I can pray in  
4522 faith according to the will of God for the  
4523 conversion and salvation of that individual, or  
4524 not? Here the agency of the Spirit comes in, to  
4525 lead the minds of God’s people to pray for those  
4526 individuals, and at those times, when God is  
4527 prepared to bless them. When we know not what  
4528 to pray for, the Holy Spirit leads the mind to  
4529 dwell on some object, to consider its situation, to  
4530 realize its value, and to feel for it, and pray, and  
4531 travail in birth, till the object is attained. This  
4532 sort of experience I know is less common in

4533 cities than it is in some parts of the country,  
4534 because of the infinite number of things to divert  
4535 the attention and grieve the Spirit in cities. I  
4536 have had much opportunity to know how it has  
4537 been in some sections. I was acquainted with an  
4538 individual who used to keep a list of persons that  
4539 he was specially concerned for; and I have had  
4540 the opportunity to know a multitude of persons  
4541 for whom he became thus interested, who were  
4542 immediately converted. I have seen him pray for  
4543 persons on his list, when he was literally in an  
4544 agony for them; and have sometimes known him  
4545 call on some other person to help him pray for  
4546 such a one. I have known his mind to fasten on  
4547 an individual of hardened, abandoned character,  
4548 and who could not be reached in any ordinary  
4549 way. In a town in the north part of this State,  
4550 where there was a revival, there was a certain  
4551 individual who was a most violent and  
4552 outrageous opposer. He kept a tavern, and used  
4553 to delight in swearing at a desperate rate,  
4554 whenever there were Christians within hearing,  
4555 on purpose to hurt their feelings. He was so bad,  
4556 that one man said he believed he should have to  
4557 sell his place, or give it away, and move out of  
4558 town, for he could not live near a man that swore  
4559 so. This good man, that I was speaking of, was  
4560 passing through the town, and heard of the case,

4561 and was very much grieved and distressed for  
4562 the individual. He took him on his praying list.  
4563 The case weighed on his mind, when he was  
4564 asleep and when he was awake. He kept thinking  
4565 about him, and praying for him for days. And the  
4566 first we knew of it, this ungodly man came into a  
4567 meeting, and got up and confessed his sins, and  
4568 poured out his soul. His bar-room immediately  
4569 became the place where they held prayer  
4570 meetings. In this manner the Spirit of God leads  
4571 individual Christians to pray for things which  
4572 they would not pray for, unless they were led by  
4573 the Spirit. And thus they pray for things  
4574 according to the will of God.

4575  
4576 By some, this may be said to be a revelation  
4577 from God. I do not doubt that great evil has been  
4578 done by saying that this kind of influence  
4579 amounts to a new revelation. And many people  
4580 will be afraid of it if they hear it called a new  
4581 revelation, so that they will not stop to inquire  
4582 what it means, or whether the Scriptures teach it  
4583 or not. They suppose it to be a complete answer  
4584 to the idea. But the plain truth of the matter is,  
4585 that the Spirit leads a man to pray. And if God  
4586 leads a man to pray for an individual, the  
4587 inference from the Bible is, that God designs to  
4588 save that individual. If we find by comparing our

4589 state of mind with the Bible, that we are led by  
4590 the Spirit to pray for an individual, we have  
4591 good evidence to believe that God is prepared to  
4592 bless him.

4593

4594 6. By giving to Christians a spiritual discernment  
4595 respecting the movements and developments of  
4596 Providence. Devoted, praying Christians often  
4597 see these things so clearly, and look so far ahead,  
4598 as greatly to stumble others. They sometimes  
4599 almost seem to prophesy. No doubt persons may  
4600 be deluded, and sometimes are so, by leaning to  
4601 their own understanding when they think they  
4602 are led by the Spirit. But there is no doubt that a  
4603 Christian may be made to see and to discern  
4604 clearly the signs of the times, so as to  
4605 understand, by providence, what to expect, and  
4606 thus to pray for it in faith. Thus they are often  
4607 led to expect a revival, and to pray for it in faith,  
4608 when nobody else can see the least signs of it.

4609

4610 There was a woman in New Jersey, in a place  
4611 where there had been a revival. She was very  
4612 positive there was going to be another. She  
4613 insisted upon it that they had had the former  
4614 rain, and were now going to have the latter rain.  
4615 She wanted to have conference meetings  
4616 appointed. But the minister and elders saw



4617 nothing to encourage it, and would do nothing.  
4618 She saw they were blind, and so she went  
4619 forward and got a carpenter to make seats for  
4620 her, for she said she would have meetings in her  
4621 own house. There was certainly going to be a  
4622 revival. She had scarcely opened her doors for  
4623 meetings, before the Spirit of God came down in  
4624 great power. And these sleepy church members  
4625 found themselves surrounded all at once with  
4626 convicted sinners. And they could only say,  
4627 “Surely the Lord was in this place, and we knew  
4628 it not.” The reason why such persons understand  
4629 the indication of God’s will is not because of the  
4630 superior wisdom that is in them, but because the  
4631 Spirit of God leads them to see the signs of the  
4632 times. And this, not by revelation; but they are  
4633 led to see that converging of providences to a  
4634 single point, which produces in them a confident  
4635 expectation of a certain result.

4636

4637 V. In what degree are we to expect the Spirit of  
4638 God to affect the minds of believers? The text  
4639 says, “The Spirit maketh intercession with  
4640 groanings that cannot be uttered.” The meaning  
4641 of this I understand to be, that the Spirit excites  
4642 desires too great to be uttered except by groans.  
4643 Something that language cannot utter—making  
4644 the soul too full to utter its feelings by words,

4645 where the person can only groan them out to  
4646 God, who understands the language of the heart.

4647

4648 VI. How are we to know whether it is the Spirit  
4649 of God that influences our minds or not?

4650

4651 1. Not by feeling that some external influence or  
4652 agency is applied to us. We are not to expect to  
4653 feel our minds in direct physical contact with  
4654 God. If such a thing can be, we know of no way  
4655 in which it can be made sensible. We know that  
4656 we exercise our minds freely, and that our  
4657 thoughts are exercised on something that excites  
4658 our feelings. But we are not to expect a miracle  
4659 to be wrought, as if we were led by the hand,  
4660 sensibly, or like something whispered in the ear,  
4661 or any miraculous manifestation of the will of  
4662 God. People often grieve the Spirit away,  
4663 because they do not harbor him and cherish his  
4664 influences. Sinners often do this ignorantly.  
4665 They suppose that if they were under conviction  
4666 by the Spirit, they should have such and such  
4667 mysterious feelings, a shock would come upon  
4668 them, which they could not mistake. Many  
4669 Christians are so ignorant of the Spirit's  
4670 influences, and have thought so little about  
4671 having his assistance in prayer, that when they  
4672 have them they do not know it, and so do not

4673 cherish, and yield to them, and preserve them.  
4674 We are conscious of nothing in the case, only the  
4675 movement of our own minds. There is nothing  
4676 else that can be felt. We are merely aware that  
4677 our thoughts are intensely employed on a certain  
4678 subject. Christians are often unnecessarily  
4679 misled and distressed on this point, for fear they  
4680 have not the Spirit of God. They feel intensely,  
4681 but they know not what makes them feel. They  
4682 are distressed about sinners; but why should they  
4683 not be distressed, when they think of their  
4684 condition? They keep thinking about them all the  
4685 time, and why shouldn't they be distressed?  
4686 Now, the truth is, that the very fact that you are  
4687 thinking upon them is evidence that the Spirit of  
4688 God is leading you. Do you not know that the  
4689 greater part of the time these things do not affect  
4690 you so? The greater part of the time you do not  
4691 think much about the case of sinners. You know  
4692 their salvation is always equally important. But  
4693 at other times, even when you are quite at  
4694 leisure, your mind is entirely dark, and vacant of  
4695 any feeling for them. But now, although you  
4696 may be busy about other things, you think, you  
4697 pray, and feel intensely for them, even while you  
4698 are about business that at other times would  
4699 occupy all your thoughts. Now, almost every  
4700 thought you have is, "God have mercy on them."

4701 Why is this? Why, their case is placed in a  
4702 strong light before your mind. Do you ask what  
4703 it is that leads your mind to exercise  
4704 benevolence for sinners, and to agonize in prayer  
4705 for them? What can it be but the Spirit of God?  
4706 There are no devils that would lead you so. If  
4707 your feelings are truly benevolent, you are to  
4708 consider it as the Holy Spirit leading you to pray  
4709 for things according to the will of God.

4710  
4711 2. Try the spirits by the Bible. People are  
4712 sometimes led away by strange fantasies and  
4713 crazy impulses. If you compare them faithfully  
4714 with the Bible, you never need be led astray.  
4715 You can always know whether your feelings are  
4716 produced by the Spirit's influences, by  
4717 comparing your desires with the spirit and  
4718 temper of religion as described in the Bible. The  
4719 Bible commands you to try the spirits. "Beloved,  
4720 believe not every spirit, but try the spirits,  
4721 whether they be of God." Observe not only your  
4722 own feelings in regard to your fellow-men, but  
4723 also, and more especially, the teachings of the  
4724 Spirit within you respecting our Lord Jesus  
4725 Christ. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God.  
4726 Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is  
4727 come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that  
4728 confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the

4729 flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of  
4730 Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it shall  
4731 come; and even now already it is in the world.”

4732

4733 VII. How shall we get this influence of the Spirit  
4734 of God?

4735

4736 1. It must be sought by fervent, believing prayer.  
4737 Christ says, “If ye then, being evil, know how to  
4738 give good gifts to your children, how much more  
4739 shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit  
4740 to them that ask him!” Does any one say, I have  
4741 prayed for him, and he does not come? It is  
4742 because you do not pray aright. “Ye ask and  
4743 receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may  
4744 consume it upon your lusts.” You do not pray  
4745 from right motives. A professor of religion, and  
4746 a principal member in a church, once asked a  
4747 minister what he thought of his case; he had  
4748 been praying week after week for the Spirit, and  
4749 had not received him. The minister asked him  
4750 what his motive was in praying. He said he  
4751 wanted to be happy. He knew those who had the  
4752 Spirit were happy, and he wanted to enjoy his  
4753 mind as they did. Why, the devil himself might  
4754 pray so. That is mere selfishness. The man  
4755 turned away in anger. He saw that he had never  
4756 known what it was to pray. He was convinced he

4757 was a hypocrite, and that his prayers were all  
4758 selfish, dictated only by a desire for his own  
4759 happiness. David prayed that God would uphold  
4760 him by his free Spirit, that he might teach  
4761 transgressors and turn sinners to God. A  
4762 Christian should pray for the Spirit that he may  
4763 be the more useful and glorify God more; not  
4764 that he himself may be more happy. This man  
4765 saw clearly where he had been in error, and he  
4766 was converted. Perhaps many here have been  
4767 just so. You ought to examine and see if all your  
4768 prayers are not selfish.

4769  
4770 2. Use the means adapted to stir up your minds  
4771 on the subject, and to keep your attention fixed  
4772 there. If a man prays for the Spirit, and then  
4773 diverts his mind to other objects; uses no other  
4774 means, but goes right away to worldly objects;  
4775 he tempts God, he swings loose from his object,  
4776 and it would be a miracle if he should get what  
4777 he prays for. How is a sinner to get conviction?  
4778 Why, by thinking of his sins. That is the way for  
4779 a Christian to obtain deep feeling, by thinking on  
4780 the object. God is not going to pour these things  
4781 on you without any effort of your own. You  
4782 must cherish the slightest impressions. Take the  
4783 Bible, and go over the passages that show the  
4784 condition and prospects of the world. Look at the

4785 world, look at your children, and your neighbors,  
4786 and see their condition while they remain in sin,  
4787 and persevere in prayer and effort till you obtain  
4788 the blessing of the Spirit of God to dwell in you.  
4789 This was the way, doubtless, that Dr. Watts  
4790 came to have the feelings which he has  
4791 described in the second Hymn of the second  
4792 Book, which you would do well to read after you  
4793 go home.

4794

4795

4796 My thoughts on awful subjects roll,

4797

4798 Damnation and the dead:

4799

4800 What horrors seize the guilty soul

4801

4802 Upon a dying bed!

4803

4804

4805 Lingerin' about these mortal shores,

4806

4807 She makes a long delay,

4808

4809 Till, like a flood, with rapid force

4810

4811 Death sweeps the wretch away.

4812

4813  
4814 Then, swift and dreadful, she descends  
4815  
4816 Down to the fiery coast,  
4817  
4818 Amongst abominable fiends,  
4819  
4820 Herself a frightened ghost.  
4821  
4822  
4823 There endless crowds of sinners lie,  
4824  
4825 And darkness makes their chains;  
4826  
4827 Tortured with keen despair thy cry,  
4828  
4829 Yet wait for fiercer pains.  
4830  
4831  
4832 Not all their anguish and their blood  
4833  
4834 For their past guilt atones,  
4835  
4836 Nor the compassion of a God  
4837  
4838 Shall hearken to their groans.  
4839  
4840



4841     Amazing grace, that kept my breath,  
4842  
4843     Nor bid my soul remove,  
4844  
4845     Till I had learned my Saviour's death,  
4846  
4847     And well insured his love!  
4848  
4849     Look, as it were, through a telescope that will  
4850     bring it up near to you; look into hell, and hear  
4851     them groan; then turn the glass upwards and  
4852     look at heaven, and see the saints there, in their  
4853     white robes, with their harps in their hands, and  
4854     hear them sing the song of redeeming love; and  
4855     ask yourself—Is it possible, that I should prevail  
4856     with God to elevate the sinner there? Do this,  
4857     and if you are not a wicked man, and a stranger  
4858     to God, you will soon have as much of the spirit  
4859     of prayer as your body can sustain.  
4860  
4861     3. You must watch unto prayer. You must keep a  
4862     look out, and see if God grants the blessing  
4863     when you ask him. People sometimes pray, and  
4864     never look to see if the prayer is granted. Be  
4865     careful also, not to grieve the Spirit of God.  
4866     Confess and forsake your sins. God will never  
4867     lead you as one of his hidden ones, and let you  
4868     into his secrets, unless you confess and forsake

4869 your sins. Not be always confessing and never  
4870 forsake, but confess and forsake too. Make  
4871 redress wherever you have committed an injury.  
4872 You cannot expect to get the spirit of prayer  
4873 first, and then repent. You cannot fight it through  
4874 so. Professors of religion, who are proud and  
4875 unyielding, and justify themselves, never will  
4876 force God to dwell with them.

4877

4878 4. Aim to obey perfectly the written law. In other  
4879 words, have no fellowship with sin. Aim at  
4880 being entirely above the world; “Be ye perfect  
4881 even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” If you  
4882 sin at all, let it be your daily grief. The man who  
4883 does not aim at this, means to live in sin. Such a  
4884 man need not expect God’s blessing, for he is  
4885 not sincere in desiring to keep all his  
4886 commandments.

4887

4888 VIII. For whom does the Spirit intercede?

4889

4890 Answer—He maketh intercession for the saints,  
4891 for all saints, for any who are saints. “Likewise  
4892 the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we  
4893 know not what we should pray for as we ought;  
4894 but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us  
4895 with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he  
4896 that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the

4897 mind of the Spirit, because he maketh  
4898 intercession for the saints according to the will  
4899 of God.”—Rom. viii. 26, 27.

4900

4901 REMARKS.

4902

4903 1. Why do you suppose it is, that so little stress  
4904 is laid on the influences of the Spirit in prayer,  
4905 when so much is said about his influences in  
4906 conversion? Many people are amazingly afraid  
4907 the Spirit’s influences will be left out. They lay  
4908 great stress on the Spirit’s influences in  
4909 converting sinners. But how little is said, how  
4910 little is printed, about his influence in prayer!  
4911 How little complaining that people do not make  
4912 enough of the Spirit’s influences in leading  
4913 Christians to pray according to the will of God!  
4914 Let it never be forgotten, that no Christian ever  
4915 prays aright, unless led by the Spirit. He has  
4916 natural power to pray, and so far as the will of  
4917 God is revealed, is able to do it; but he never  
4918 does, unless the Spirit of God influences him.  
4919 Just as sinners are able to repent, but never do,  
4920 unless influenced by the Spirit.

4921

4922 2. This subject lays open the foundation of the  
4923 difficulty felt by many persons on the subject of  
4924 the Prayer of Faith. They object to the idea that

4925 faith in prayer is a belief that we shall receive  
4926 the very things for which we ask; and insist that  
4927 there can be no foundation or evidence upon  
4928 which to rest such a belief. In a sermon  
4929 published a few years since, upon this subject,  
4930 the writer brings forward this difficulty, and  
4931 presents it in its full strength. I have, says he, no  
4932 evidence that the thing prayed for will be  
4933 granted, until I have prayed in faith; because,  
4934 praying in faith is the condition upon which it is  
4935 promised. And of course I cannot claim the  
4936 promise, until I have fulfilled the condition.  
4937 Now, if the condition is, that I am to believe I  
4938 shall receive the very blessing for which I ask, it  
4939 is evident that the promise is given upon the  
4940 performance of an impossible condition, and is  
4941 of course a mere nullity. The promise would  
4942 amount to just this: You shall have whatsoever  
4943 you ask, upon the condition that you first believe  
4944 that you shall receive it. Now, I must fulfill the  
4945 condition before I can claim the promise. But I  
4946 can have no evidence that I shall receive it until I  
4947 have believed that I shall receive it. This reduces  
4948 me to the necessity of believing that I shall  
4949 receive it before I have any evidence that I shall  
4950 receive it—which is impossible.  
4951

4952 The whole force of this objection arises out of  
4953 the fact, that the Spirit's influences are entirely  
4954 overlooked, which he exerts in leading an  
4955 individual to the exercise of faith. It has been  
4956 supposed that the passage in Mark xi. 22 and 24,  
4957 with other kindred promises on the subject of the  
4958 Prayer of Faith, relate exclusively to miracles.  
4959 But suppose this were true. I would ask, What  
4960 were the apostles to believe, when they prayed  
4961 for a miracle? Were they to believe that the  
4962 precise miracle would be performed for which  
4963 they prayed? It is evident that they were. In the  
4964 verses just alluded to, Christ says, "For verily I  
4965 say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this  
4966 mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast  
4967 into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but  
4968 SHALL BELIEVE THAT THESE THINGS  
4969 WHICH HE SAITH SHALL COME TO PASS,  
4970 he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I  
4971 say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when  
4972 ye pray, BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE  
4973 THEM, and ye shall have them." Here it is  
4974 evident, that the thing to be believed, and which  
4975 they were not to doubt in their heart, was, that  
4976 they should have the very blessing for which  
4977 they prayed. Now the objection above stated, lies  
4978 in all its force against this kind of faith, when  
4979 praying for the performance of a miracle. If it be

4980 impossible to believe this in praying for any  
4981 other blessing. it was equally so in praying for a  
4982 miracle. I might ask, Could an apostle believe  
4983 that the miracle would be wrought, before he had  
4984 fulfilled the condition? inasmuch as the  
4985 condition was, that he should believe that he  
4986 should receive that for which he prayed. Either  
4987 the promise is a nullity and a deception, or there  
4988 is a possibility of performing the condition.

4989  
4990 Now, as I have said, the whole difficulty lies in  
4991 the fact that the Spirit's influences are entirely  
4992 overlooked, and that faith which is of the  
4993 operation of God, is left out of the question. If  
4994 the objection is good against praying for any  
4995 object, it is as good against praying in faith for  
4996 the performance of a miracle. The fact is, that  
4997 the Spirit of God could give evidence, on which  
4998 to believe that any particular miracle would be  
4999 granted; could lead the mind to a firm reliance  
5000 upon God, and trust that the blessing sought  
5001 would be obtained. And so at the present day he  
5002 can give the same assurance, in praying for any  
5003 blessing that we need. Neither in the one case  
5004 nor the other, are the influences of the Spirit  
5005 miraculous. Praying is the same thing, whether  
5006 you pray for the conversion of a soul, or for a  
5007 miracle. Faith is the same thing in the one case

5008 as in the other; it only terminates on a different  
5009 object; in the one case on the conversion of a  
5010 soul, and in the other on the performance of a  
5011 miracle. Nor is faith exercised in the one more  
5012 than in the other, without reference to a promise;  
5013 and a general promise may with the same  
5014 propriety be applied to the conversion of a soul  
5015 as to the performance of a miracle. And it is  
5016 equally true in the one case as the other, that no  
5017 man ever prays in faith without being influenced  
5018 by the Spirit of God. And if the Spirit could lead  
5019 the mind of an apostle to exercise faith in regard  
5020 to a miracle, he can lead the mind of another  
5021 Christian to exercise faith in regard to receiving  
5022 any other blessing, by a reference to the same  
5023 general promise.

5024

5025 Should any one ask, “When are we under an  
5026 obligation to believe that we shall receive the  
5027 blessing for which we ask?” I answer:

5028

5029 (1.) When there is a particular promise,  
5030 specifying the particular blessing: as where we  
5031 pray for the Holy Spirit. This blessing is  
5032 particularly named in the promise, and here we  
5033 have evidence, and are bound to believe,  
5034 whether we have any Divine influence or not;  
5035 just as sinners are bound to repent whether the

5036 Spirit strives with them or not. Their obligation  
5037 rests, not upon the Spirit's influences, but upon  
5038 the powers of moral agency which they possess;  
5039 upon their ability to do their duty. And while it is  
5040 true that not one of them ever will repent without  
5041 the influences of the Spirit, still they have power  
5042 to do so, and are under obligation to do so,  
5043 whether the Spirit strives with them or not. So  
5044 with the Christian. He is bound to believe where  
5045 he has evidence. And although he never does  
5046 believe, even where he has an express promise,  
5047 without the Spirit of God, yet his obligation to  
5048 do so rests upon his ability, and not upon the  
5049 Divine influence.

5050  
5051 (2.) Where God makes a revelation by his  
5052 providence, we are bound to believe in  
5053 proportion to the clearness of the providential  
5054 indication.

5055  
5056 (3.) So where there is a prophecy, we are bound  
5057 also to believe. But in neither of these cases do  
5058 we, in fact, believe, without the Spirit of God.

5059  
5060 But where there is neither promise, providence,  
5061 nor prophecy, on which to repose our faith, we  
5062 are under no obligation to believe, unless, as I  
5063 have shown in this discourse, the Spirit gives us



5064 evidence, by creating desires, and by leading us  
5065 to pray for a particular object. In the case of  
5066 those promises of a general nature, where we are  
5067 honestly at a loss to know in what particular  
5068 cases to apply them, it may be considered rather  
5069 as our privilege than as our duty, in many  
5070 instances, to apply them to particular cases; but  
5071 whenever the Spirit of God leads us to apply  
5072 them to a particular object, then it becomes our  
5073 duty so to apply them. In this case, God explains  
5074 his own promise, and shows how he designed it  
5075 should be applied. And then our obligation to  
5076 make this application, and to believe in reference  
5077 to this particular object, remains in full force.

5078  
5079 3. Some have supposed that Paul prayed in faith  
5080 for the removal of the thorn in the flesh, and that  
5081 it was not granted. But they cannot prove that  
5082 Paul prayed in faith. The presumption is all on  
5083 the other side, as I have shown in a former  
5084 lecture. He had neither promise, nor prophecy,  
5085 nor providence, nor the Spirit of God, to lead  
5086 him to believe. The whole objection goes on the  
5087 ground that the apostle might pray in faith  
5088 without being led by the Spirit. This is truly a  
5089 shorthand method of disposing of the Spirit's  
5090 influences in prayer. Certainly, to assume that he  
5091 prayed in faith, is to assume either that he prayed

5092 in faith without being led by the Spirit, or that  
5093 the Spirit of God led him to pray for that which  
5094 was not according to the will of God.

5095

5096 I have dwelt the more on this subject, because I  
5097 want to have it made so plain, that you will all  
5098 be careful not to grieve the Spirit. I want you to  
5099 have high ideas of the Holy Ghost, and to feel  
5100 that nothing good will be done without his  
5101 influences. No praying or preaching will be of  
5102 any avail without him. If Jesus Christ were to  
5103 come down here and preach to sinners, not one  
5104 would be converted without the Spirit. Be  
5105 careful then not to grieve him away, by slighting  
5106 or neglecting his heavenly influences when he  
5107 invites you to pray.

5108

5109 4. In praying for an object, it is necessary to  
5110 persevere till you obtain it. Oh, with what  
5111 eagerness Christians sometimes pursue a sinner  
5112 in their prayers, when the Spirit of God has fixed  
5113 their desires on him! No miser pursues his gold  
5114 with so fixed a determination.

5115

5116 5. The fear of being led by impulses has done  
5117 great injury, by not being duly considered. A  
5118 person's mind may be led by an ignis fatuus. But  
5119 we do wrong if we let the fear of impulses lead

5120 us to resist the good impulses of the Holy Ghost.  
5121 No wonder Christians do not have the spirit of  
5122 prayer, if they are unwilling to take the trouble  
5123 to distinguish; and so reject or resist all impulses  
5124 and all leadings of invisible agents. A great deal  
5125 has been said about fanaticism, that is very  
5126 unguarded, and that causes many minds to reject  
5127 the leadings of the Spirit of God. “As many as  
5128 are the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God.”  
5129 And it is our duty to try the Spirits whether they  
5130 be of God. We should insist on a close scrutiny  
5131 and an accurate discrimination. There must be  
5132 such a thing as being led by the Spirit. And when  
5133 we are convinced it is of God, we should be sure  
5134 to follow—follow on, with full confidence that  
5135 he will not lead us wrong.

5136

5137 6. We see from this subject the absurdity of  
5138 using forms of prayer. The very idea of using a  
5139 form rejects, of course, the leadings of the Spirit.  
5140 Nothing is more calculated to destroy the spirit  
5141 of prayer, and entirely to darken and confuse the  
5142 mind, as to what constitutes prayer, than to use  
5143 forms. Forms of prayer are not only absurd in  
5144 themselves, but they are the very device of the  
5145 devil to destroy the spirit and break the power of  
5146 prayer. It is of no use to say the form is a good  
5147 one. Prayer does not consist in words. And it

5148 matters not what the words are, if the heart is not  
5149 led by the Spirit of God. If the desire is not  
5150 enkindled, the thoughts directed, and the whole  
5151 current of feeling produced and led by the Spirit  
5152 of God, it is not prayer. And set forms are, of all  
5153 things, best calculated to keep an individual  
5154 from praying as he ought.

5155

5156 7. The subject furnishes a test of character. The  
5157 Spirit maketh intercession—for whom? For the  
5158 saints. Those who are saints are thus exercised.  
5159 If you are saints, you know by experience what  
5160 it is to be thus exercised, or it is because you  
5161 have grieved the Spirit of God, so that he will  
5162 not lead you. You live in such a manner that this  
5163 Holy Comforter will not dwell with you, nor  
5164 give you the spirit of prayer. If this is so, you  
5165 must repent. Whether you are a Christian or not,  
5166 do not stop to settle that, but repent, as if you  
5167 never had repented. Do your first works. Do not  
5168 take it for granted that you are a Christian, but  
5169 go like a humble sinner, and pour out your heart  
5170 unto the Lord. You never can have the spirit of  
5171 prayer in any other way.

5172

5173 8. The importance of understanding this subject.

5174

5175 (1.) In order to be useful. Without this spirit  
5176 there can be no such sympathy between you and  
5177 God that you can either walk with God or work  
5178 with God. You need to have a strong beating of  
5179 your heart with his, or you need not expect to be  
5180 greatly useful.

5181  
5182 (2.) As important as your sanctification. Without  
5183 such a spirit you will not be sanctified, you will  
5184 not understand the Bible, you will not know how  
5185 to apply it to your case. I want you to feel the  
5186 importance of having God with you all the time.  
5187 If you live as you ought, he says he will come  
5188 unto you, and make his abode with you, and sup  
5189 with you, and you with him.

5190  
5191 9. If people know not the spirit of prayer, they  
5192 are very apt to be unbelieving in regard to the  
5193 results of prayer. They do not see what takes  
5194 place, or do not see the connection, or do not see  
5195 the evidence. They are not expecting spiritual  
5196 blessings. When sinners are convicted, they  
5197 think they are only frightened by such terrible  
5198 preaching. And when people are converted, they  
5199 feel no confidence, and only say, "We'll see how  
5200 they turn out."

5201

5202 10. Those who have the spirit of prayer know  
5203 when the blessing comes. It was just so when  
5204 Jesus Christ appeared. These ungodly doctors  
5205 did not know him. Why? Because they were not  
5206 praying for the redemption of Israel. But Simeon  
5207 and Anna knew him. How was that? Mark what  
5208 they said, how they prayed and how they lived.  
5209 They were praying in faith, and so they were not  
5210 surprised when he came. So it is with such  
5211 Christians. If sinners are convicted or converted,  
5212 they are not surprised at it. They were expecting  
5213 just such things. They know God when he  
5214 comes, because they were looking out for his  
5215 visits.

5216  
5217 11. There are three classes of persons in the  
5218 church who are liable to error, or have left the  
5219 truth out of view, on this subject.

5220  
5221 (1.) Those who place great reliance on prayer,  
5222 and use no other means. They are alarmed at any  
5223 special means, and talk about your “getting up a  
5224 revival.”

5225  
5226 (2.) Over against these are those who use means,  
5227 and pray, but never think about the influences of  
5228 the Spirit in prayer. They talk about prayer for  
5229 the Spirit, and feel the importance of the Spirit in

5230 the conversion of sinners, but do not realize the  
5231 importance of the Spirit in prayer. And their  
5232 prayers are all cold talk, nothing that any body  
5233 can feel, or that can take hold of God.

5234

5235 (3.) Those who have certain strange notions  
5236 about the sovereignty of God, and are waiting  
5237 for God to convert the world without prayer or  
5238 means.

5239

5240 There must be in the church a deeper sense of  
5241 the need of the spirit of prayer. The fact is that,  
5242 generally, those who use means most  
5243 assiduously, and make the most strenuous efforts  
5244 for the salvation of men, and who have the most  
5245 correct notions of the manner in which means  
5246 should be used for converting sinners, also pray  
5247 most for the Spirit of God, and wrestle most with  
5248 God for his blessing. And what is the result? Let  
5249 facts speak, and say whether these persons do or  
5250 do not pray, and whether the Spirit of God does  
5251 not testify to their prayers, and follow their  
5252 labors with his power.

5253

5254 12. A spirit very different from the spirit of  
5255 prayer appears to prevail in certain portions of  
5256 the Presbyterian church at the present time.

5257 Nothing will produce an excitement and

5258 opposition so quick as the spirit of prayer. If any  
5259 person should feel burdened with the case of  
5260 sinners, in prayer, so as to groan in his prayer,  
5261 why, the women are nervous, and he is visited at  
5262 once with rebuke and opposition. From my soul  
5263 I abhor all affectation of feeling where there is  
5264 none, and all attempts to work one's self up into  
5265 feeling by groans. But I feel bound to defend the  
5266 position that there is such a thing as being in a  
5267 state of mind in which there is but one way to  
5268 keep from groaning; and that is, by resisting the  
5269 Holy Ghost. I was once present where this  
5270 subject was discussed. It was said that groaning  
5271 ought to be discountenanced. The question was  
5272 asked, whether God could not produce such a  
5273 state of feeling that to abstain from groaning was  
5274 impossible? and the answer was, "Yes, but he  
5275 never does." Then the apostle Paul was  
5276 egregiously deceived when he wrote about  
5277 groanings that cannot be uttered. Edwards was  
5278 deceived when he wrote his book upon revivals.  
5279 Revivals are all in the dark. Now, no man who  
5280 reviews the history of the church will adopt such  
5281 a sentiment. I do not like this attempt to shut out,  
5282 or stifle, or keep down, or limit the spirit of  
5283 prayer. I would sooner cut off my right hand  
5284 than rebuke the spirit of prayer, as I have heard



5285 of its being done by saying, “Do not let me hear  
5286 any more groaning.”

5287

5288 But then, I hardly know where to conclude this  
5289 subject. I should like to discuss it a month, and  
5290 till the whole church could understand it, so as to  
5291 pray the prayer of faith. Beloved, I want to ask  
5292 you if you believe all this? Or do you wonder  
5293 that I should talk so? Perhaps some of you have  
5294 had some glimpses of these things. Now, will  
5295 you give yourselves up to prayer, and live so as  
5296 to have the spirit of prayer, and have the spirit  
5297 with you all the time? Oh, for a praying church!  
5298 I once knew a minister who had a revival  
5299 fourteen winters in succession. I did not know  
5300 how to account for it till I saw one of his  
5301 members get up in a prayer meeting and make a  
5302 confession. “Brethren,” said he, “I have been  
5303 long in the habit of praying every Saturday night  
5304 till after midnight, for the descent of the Holy  
5305 Ghost among us. And now, brethren,” and he  
5306 began to weep, “I confess that I have neglected it  
5307 for two or three weeks.” The secret was out.  
5308 That minister had a praying church. Brethren, in  
5309 my present state of health, I find it impossible to  
5310 pray as much as I have been in the habit of  
5311 doing, and continue to preach. It overcomes my  
5312 strength. Now, shall I give myself up to prayer,

5313 and stop preaching? That will not do. Now, will  
5314 not you, who are in health, throw yourselves into  
5315 this work, and bear this burden, and lay  
5316 yourselves out in prayer, till God will pour out  
5317 his blessing upon us?

5318

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5319

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5320

5321 LECTURE VII.

5322

5323 ON BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

5324

5325 Text.—Be filled with the Spirit.—Eph. v. 18.

5326

5327 SEVERAL of my last lectures have been on the  
5328 subject of prayer, and the importance of having  
5329 the spirit of prayer, of the intercession of the  
5330 Holy Ghost. Whenever the necessity and  
5331 importance of the Spirit's influences are held  
5332 forth, there can be no doubt that persons are in  
5333 danger of abusing the doctrine, and perverting it  
5334 to their own injury. For instance, when you tell  
5335 sinners that without the Holy Spirit they never  
5336 will repent, they are very liable to pervert the  
5337 truth, and understand by it that they cannot  
5338 repent, and therefore are under no obligation to  
5339 do it until they feel the Spirit. It is often difficult  
5340 to make them see that all the "cannot" consists in

5341 their unwillingness, and not in their inability. So  
5342 again, when we tell Christians that they need the  
5343 Spirit's aid in prayer, they are very apt to think  
5344 they are under no obligation to pray the prayer of  
5345 faith, until they feel the influences of the Spirit.  
5346 They overlook their obligation to be filled with  
5347 the Spirit and wait for the spirit of prayer to  
5348 come upon them without asking, and thus tempt  
5349 God.

5350

5351 Before we come to consider the other  
5352 department of means for promoting a revival,  
5353 that is, the means to be used with sinners, I wish  
5354 to show you, that if you live without the Spirit,  
5355 you are without excuse. Obligation to perform  
5356 duty never rests on the condition, that we shall  
5357 first have the influence of the Spirit, but on the  
5358 powers of moral agency. We, as moral agents,  
5359 have the power to obey God, and are perfectly  
5360 bound to obey, and the reason we do not is, that  
5361 we are unwilling. The influences of the Spirit are  
5362 wholly a matter of grace. If they were  
5363 indispensable to enable us to perform duty, the  
5364 bestowment of them would not be a gracious act,  
5365 but a mere matter of common justice. Sinners are  
5366 not bound to repent because they have the  
5367 Spirit's influence, or because they can obtain it,  
5368 but because they are moral agents, and have the

5369 powers which God requires them to exercise. So  
5370 in the case of Christians. They are not bound to  
5371 pray in faith because they have the Spirit,  
5372 (except in those cases where his influences in  
5373 begetting desire constitute the evidence that it is  
5374 God's will to grant the object of desire,) but  
5375 because they have evidence. They are not bound  
5376 to pray in faith at all, except when they have  
5377 evidence as the foundation of their faith. They  
5378 must have evidence from promises, or principle,  
5379 or prophecy, or providence. And where they  
5380 have evidence independent of his influences,  
5381 they are bound to exercise faith, whether they  
5382 have the Spirit's influence or not. They are  
5383 bound to see the evidence, and to believe. The  
5384 Spirit is given not to enable them to see or  
5385 believe, but because without it they will not  
5386 look, nor feel, nor act, as they ought. I purpose  
5387 this evening to show from the text,

5388

5389 I. That Christians may be filled with the Spirit of  
5390 God.

5391

5392 II. That it is their duty to be filled with the Spirit.

5393

5394 III. Why they are not filled with the Spirit.

5395

5396 IV. The guilt of those who have not the Spirit of  
5397 God, to lead their minds in duty and prayer.

5398

5399 V. The consequences that will follow if they are  
5400 filled with the Spirit.

5401

5402 VI. The consequences if they are not.

5403

5404 I. I am to show you that you may have the Spirit.

5405 Not because it is a matter of justice for God to  
5406 give you his Spirit, but because he has promised  
5407 to give it to those that ask. "If ye then, being  
5408 evil, know how to give good gifts to your  
5409 children, how much more shall your Father  
5410 which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them  
5411 that ask him?" If you ask [for] the Holy Spirit,  
5412 God has promised to give it.

5413

5414 But again, God has commanded you to have it.  
5415 He says in the text, "Be filled with the Spirit."  
5416 When God commands us to do a thing, it is the  
5417 highest possible evidence that we can do it. For  
5418 God to command, is equivalent to an oath that  
5419 we can do it. He has no right to command,  
5420 unless we have power to obey. There is no  
5421 stopping short of the conclusion that God is an  
5422 infinite tyrant, if he commands that which is  
5423 impracticable.

5424

5425 II. I am to show, secondly, that it is your duty.

5426

5427 1. Because you have a promise of it.

5428

5429 2. Because God has commanded it.

5430

5431 3. It is essential to your own growth in grace that  
5432 you should be filled with the Spirit.

5433

5434 4. It is as important as it is that you should be  
5435 sanctified.

5436

5437 5. It is as necessary as it is that you should be  
5438 useful and do good in the world.

5439

5440 6. If you do not have the Spirit of God in you,  
5441 you will dishonor God, disgrace the church, and  
5442 die and go to hell.

5443

5444 III. Why many do not have the Spirit. There are  
5445 some, even professors of religion, who will say,  
5446 "I do not know any thing about this; I never had  
5447 any such experience; either it is not true or I am  
5448 all wrong." No doubt you are all wrong, if you  
5449 know nothing about the influence of the Spirit. I  
5450 want to present you with a few of the reasons

5451 that may prevent you from being filled with the  
5452 Spirit.

5453

5454 1. It may be that you live a hypocritical life.  
5455 Your prayers are not earnest and sincere. Not  
5456 only is your religion a mere outside show,  
5457 without any heart, but you are insincere in your  
5458 intercourse with others. Thus you do many  
5459 things to grieve the Spirit, so that he cannot  
5460 dwell with you.

5461

5462 A minister was once boarding in a certain  
5463 family, and the lady of the house was constantly  
5464 complaining that she did not enjoy her mind, and  
5465 nothing seemed to help her. One day some ladies  
5466 called to see her, and she protested that she was  
5467 very much offended because they had not called  
5468 before, and pressed them to stay and spend the  
5469 day, and declared she could not consent to let  
5470 them go. They excused themselves, however,  
5471 and left the house, and as soon as they were  
5472 gone, she said to her servant, she wondered these  
5473 people had so little sense as to be always  
5474 troubling her, and taking up her time. The  
5475 minister heard it, and immediately rebuked her,  
5476 and told her she could now see why she did not  
5477 enjoy religion. It was because she was in the  
5478 daily habit of insincerity that amounted to

5479 downright lying. And the Spirit of truth could  
5480 not dwell in such a heart.

5481

5482 2. Others have so much levity that the Spirit will  
5483 not dwell with them. The Spirit of God is  
5484 solemn, and serious, and will not dwell with  
5485 those who give way to thoughtless levity.

5486

5487 3. Others are so proud that they cannot have the  
5488 Spirit. They are so fond of dress, high life,  
5489 equipage, fashion, etc., that it is no wonder they  
5490 are not filled with the Spirit. And yet such  
5491 persons will pretend to be at a loss to know why  
5492 it is that they do not enjoy religion!

5493

5494 4. Some are so worldly-minded, love property so  
5495 well, and are trying so hard to get rich, that they  
5496 cannot have the Spirit. How can he dwell with  
5497 them, when their thoughts are all on things of the  
5498 world, and all their powers absorbed in  
5499 procuring wealth? And they hold on to it when  
5500 they get it, and they are pained if pressed by  
5501 conscience to do something for the conversion of  
5502 the world. They show how much they love the  
5503 world, in all their intercourse with others. Little  
5504 things show it. They will screw down a poor  
5505 man, who is doing a little piece of work for  
5506 them, to the lowest penny. If they are dealing on



5507 a large scale, very likely they will be liberal and  
5508 fair, because it is for their advantage. But if it is  
5509 a person they care not about, a laborer, or a  
5510 mechanic, or a servant, they will grind him down  
5511 to the last fraction, no matter what it is really  
5512 worth; and they actually pretend to make  
5513 conscience of it, that they cannot possibly give  
5514 any more. Now they would be ashamed to deal  
5515 so with people of their own rank, because it  
5516 would be known and injure their reputation. But  
5517 God knows it, and has it all written down, that  
5518 they are covetous and unfair in their dealings,  
5519 and will not do right, only when it is for their  
5520 interest. Now how can such professors have the  
5521 Spirit of God? It is impossible.

5522  
5523 There are a multitude of such things, by which  
5524 the Spirit of God is grieved. People call them  
5525 little sins, but God will not call them little. I was  
5526 struck with this thought, when I saw a little  
5527 notice in the Evangelist. The publishers stated  
5528 that they had many thousand dollars in the hands  
5529 of subscribers, which was justly due, and that it  
5530 would cost them as much as it was worth to send  
5531 an agent to collect it. I suppose it is so with all  
5532 the other religious papers, that subscribers either  
5533 put the publisher to the trouble and expense of  
5534 sending an agent to collect his due, or else they

5535 cheat him out of it. There are doubtless, I do not  
5536 know how many, thousands of dollars held back  
5537 in this way by professors of religion, just  
5538 because it is in such small sums, or they are so  
5539 far off that they cannot be sued. And yet these  
5540 people will pray, and appear very pious, and  
5541 wonder why they cannot enjoy religion, and  
5542 have the Spirit of God! It is this looseness of  
5543 moral principle, this want of conscience about  
5544 little matters, prevailing in the church, that  
5545 grieves away the Holy Ghost. Why, it would be  
5546 disgraceful to God to dwell and have  
5547 communion with such persons, who will take an  
5548 advantage and cheat their neighbor out of his  
5549 dues, because they can do it and not be  
5550 disgraced.

5551

5552 5. Others do not fully confess and forsake their  
5553 sins, and so cannot enjoy the Spirit's presence.  
5554 They will confess their sins in general terms,  
5555 perhaps, and are ready always to acknowledge  
5556 that they are sinners. Or they will confess  
5557 partially some particular sins. But they do it  
5558 reservedly, proudly, guardedly, as if they were  
5559 afraid they should say a little more than is  
5560 necessary; that is, when they confess to men the  
5561 injuries done to them. They do it in a way which  
5562 shows that, instead of bursting forth from an

5563 ingenuous heart, the confession is wrung from  
5564 them, by the hand of conscience gripping them.  
5565 If they have injured any one, they will make a  
5566 partial recantation, which is hard-hearted, cruel,  
5567 and hypocritical, and then they will ask, “Now,  
5568 brother, are you satisfied?” And you know it  
5569 would be very difficult for a person to say that  
5570 he was not satisfied, even if the confession is  
5571 cold and heartless. But I tell you God is not  
5572 satisfied. He knows whether you have gone the  
5573 full length of honest confession, and taken all the  
5574 blame that belongs to you. If your confessions  
5575 have been constrained and wrung from you, do  
5576 you suppose you can cheat God? “He that  
5577 covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso  
5578 confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy.” “He  
5579 that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Unless  
5580 you come quite down, and confess your sins  
5581 honestly, and remunerate where you have done  
5582 injury, you have no right to expect the spirit of  
5583 prayer.

5584  
5585 6. Others are neglecting some known duty, and  
5586 that is the reason why they have not the Spirit.  
5587 One does not pray in his family, though he  
5588 knows he ought to do it, and yet he is trying to  
5589 get the spirit of prayer! There is many a young  
5590 man who feels in his heart that he ought to

5591 prepare for the ministry, and he has not the spirit  
5592 of prayer because he has some worldly object in  
5593 view, which prevents his devoting himself to the  
5594 work. He has known his duty, and refuses to do  
5595 it, and now he is praying for direction from the  
5596 Spirit of God. He cannot have it. One has  
5597 neglected to make a profession of religion. He  
5598 knows his duty, but he refuses to join the church.  
5599 He once had the spirit of prayer, but neglecting  
5600 his duty, he grieved the Spirit away. And now he  
5601 thinks, if he could once more enjoy the light of  
5602 God's countenance, and have his evidences  
5603 renewed, he would do his duty, and join the  
5604 church. And so he is praying for it again, and  
5605 trying to bring God over to his terms, to grant  
5606 him his presence. You need not expect it. You  
5607 will live and die in darkness, unless you are  
5608 willing first to do your duty, before God  
5609 manifests himself as reconciled to you. It is in  
5610 vain to say, you will come forward if God will  
5611 first show you the light of his countenance. He  
5612 never will do it as long as you live; he will let  
5613 you die without it, if you refuse to do your duty.

5614  
5615 I have known women who felt that they ought to  
5616 talk to their unconverted husbands, and pray  
5617 with them, but they have neglected it, and so  
5618 they get into the dark. They knew their duty and

5619 refused to do it; they went round it, and there  
5620 they lost the spirit of prayer.

5621

5622 If you have neglected any known duty, and thus  
5623 lost the spirit of prayer, you must yield first. God  
5624 has a controversy with you; you have refused  
5625 obedience to God, and you must retract it. You  
5626 may have forgotten it, but God has not, and you  
5627 must set yourself to recall it to mind, and repent.  
5628 God never will yield nor grant you his Spirit, till  
5629 you repent. Had I an omniscient eye now, I  
5630 could call the names of the individuals in this  
5631 congregation, who had neglected some known  
5632 duty, or committed some sin, that they have not  
5633 repented of, and now they are praying for the  
5634 spirit of prayer, but they cannot succeed in  
5635 obtaining it.

5636

5637 To illustrate this I will relate a case. A good man  
5638 in the western part of this State, had been a long  
5639 time an engaged Christian, and he used to talk to  
5640 the sleepy church with which he was connected.  
5641 By-and-by the church was offended and got out  
5642 of patience, and many told him they wished he  
5643 would let them alone, they did not think he could  
5644 do them any good. He took them at their word,  
5645 and they all went to sleep together, and remained  
5646 so two or three years. By-and-by a minister came

5647 among them and a revival commenced, but this  
5648 elder seemed to have lost his spirituality. He  
5649 used to be forward in a good work, but now he  
5650 held back. Everybody thought it unaccountable.  
5651 Finally, as he was going home one night, the  
5652 truth of his situation flashed upon his mind, and  
5653 he went into absolute despair for a few minutes.  
5654 At length his thoughts were directed back to that  
5655 sinful resolution to let the church alone in their  
5656 sins. He felt that no language could describe the  
5657 blackness of that sin. He realized that moment  
5658 what it was to be lost, and to find that God had a  
5659 controversy with him. He saw that it was a bad  
5660 spirit which caused the resolution: the same that  
5661 caused Moses to say, "You rebels." He humbled  
5662 himself on the spot, and God poured out his  
5663 Spirit on him. Perhaps some of you that hear me  
5664 are in just this situation. You have said  
5665 something provoking or unkind to some person.  
5666 Perhaps it was peevishness to a servant that was  
5667 a Christian. Or perhaps it was speaking  
5668 censoriously of a minister or some other person.  
5669 Perhaps you have been angry because your  
5670 opinions have not been taken, or your dignity  
5671 has been encroached upon. Search thoroughly,  
5672 and see if you cannot find out the sin. Perhaps  
5673 you have forgotten it. But God has not forgotten  
5674 it, and never will forgive your unchristian

5675 conduct until you repent. God cannot overlook  
5676 it. It would do no good if he should. What good  
5677 would it do to forgive, while the sin is rankling  
5678 in your heart?

5679

5680 7. Perhaps you have resisted the Spirit of God.  
5681 Perhaps you are in the habit of resisting the  
5682 Spirit. You resist conviction. In preaching, when  
5683 something has been said that reached your case,  
5684 your heart has risen up against it and resisted.  
5685 Many are willing to hear plain and searching  
5686 preaching so long as they can apply it all to  
5687 others; a misanthropic spirit makes them take a  
5688 satisfaction in hearing others searched and  
5689 rebuked; but if the truth touch them, they  
5690 directly cry out that it is personal and abusive. Is  
5691 this your case?

5692

5693 8. The fact is that you do not on the whole desire  
5694 the Spirit. This is true in every case in which you  
5695 do not have the Spirit. Let me not be mistaken  
5696 here. I want you should carefully discriminate.  
5697 Nothing is more common than for people to  
5698 desire a thing on some accounts, which they do  
5699 not choose on the whole. A person may see an  
5700 article in a store which he desires to purchase,  
5701 and he goes in and asks the price, and thinks of it  
5702 a little, and on the whole concludes not to

5703 purchase it. He desires the article, but does not  
5704 like the price, or does not like to be at the  
5705 expense, so that, upon the whole, he prefers not  
5706 to purchase it. That is the reason why he does  
5707 not purchase it. So persons may desire the Spirit  
5708 of God on some accounts; from a regard to the  
5709 comfort and joy of heart which it brings. If you  
5710 know what it is by former experience to  
5711 commune with God, and how sweet it is to  
5712 dissolve in penitence and to be filled with the  
5713 Spirit, you cannot but desire a return of those  
5714 joys. And you may set yourself to pray earnestly  
5715 for it, and to pray for a revival of religion. But  
5716 on the whole you are unwilling it should come.  
5717 You have so much to do that you cannot attend  
5718 to it. Or it will require so many sacrifices, that  
5719 you cannot bear to have it. There are some  
5720 things you are not willing to give up. You find  
5721 that if you wish to have the Spirit of God dwell  
5722 with you, you must lead a different life, you  
5723 must give up the world, you must make  
5724 sacrifices, you must break off from your worldly  
5725 associates, and makes confession of your sins.  
5726 And so on the whole you do not choose to have  
5727 him come, unless he will consent to dwell with  
5728 you and let you live as you please. But that he  
5729 never will do.  
5730



5731 9. Perhaps you do not pray for the Spirit; or you  
5732 pray and use no other means, or pray and do not  
5733 act consistently with your prayers. Or you use  
5734 means calculated to resist them. Or you ask, and  
5735 as soon as he comes and begins to affect your  
5736 mind, you grieve him right away, and will not  
5737 walk with him.

5738

5739 IV. I am to show the great guilt of not having the  
5740 Spirit of God.

5741

5742 1. Your guilt is just as great as the authority of  
5743 God is great, which commands you to be filled  
5744 with the Spirit. God commands it, and it is just  
5745 as much a disobedience of God's commands, as  
5746 it is to swear profanely, or steal, or commit  
5747 adultery, or break the Sabbath. Think of that.  
5748 And yet there are many people who do not  
5749 blame themselves at all for not having the Spirit.  
5750 They even think themselves quite pious  
5751 Christians, because they go to prayer meetings,  
5752 and partake of the sacrament, and all that,  
5753 though they live year after year without the  
5754 Spirit of God. Now, you see the same God who  
5755 says, "Do not get drunk," says also, "Be filled  
5756 with the Spirit." You all say, if a man is an  
5757 habitual murderer, or a thief, he is no Christian.  
5758 Why? Because he lives in habitual disobedience

5759 to God. So if he swears, you have no charity for  
5760 him. You will not allow him to plead that his  
5761 heart is right, and words are nothing. God does  
5762 not care anything about words. You would think  
5763 it outrageous to have such a man in church, or to  
5764 have a company of such people pretend to call  
5765 themselves a church of Christ. And yet they are  
5766 not a whit more absolutely living in  
5767 disobedience to God than you are, who live  
5768 without the spirit of prayer, and without the  
5769 presence of God.

5770

5771 2. Your guilt is equal to all the good you might  
5772 do if you had the Spirit of God in as great a  
5773 measure as it is your duty to have it, and as you  
5774 might have it. You, elders of this church! how  
5775 much good you might do, if you had the Spirit.  
5776 And you, Sunday-school teachers, how much  
5777 good you might do; and you, church-members,  
5778 too, if you were filled with the Spirit, you might  
5779 do vast good, infinite good. Well, your guilt is  
5780 just as great. Here is a blessing promised, and  
5781 you can have it by doing your duty. You are  
5782 entirely responsible to the church and to God for  
5783 all this good that you might do. A man is  
5784 responsible for all the good he can do.

5785

5786 3. Your guilt is further measured by all the evil  
5787 which you do in consequence of not having the  
5788 Spirit. You are a dishonor to religion. You are a  
5789 stumbling block to the church, and to the world.  
5790 And your guilt is enhanced by all the various  
5791 influences you exert. And it will prove so in the  
5792 day of judgment.

5793

5794 V. The consequences of having the Spirit.

5795

5796 1. You will be called eccentric; and probably  
5797 you will deserve it. Probably you will really be  
5798 eccentric. I never knew a person who was filled  
5799 with the Spirit, that was not called eccentric.  
5800 And the reason is, that they are unlike other  
5801 people. This is always a term of comparison.  
5802 There is therefore the best of reasons why such  
5803 persons should appear eccentric. They act under  
5804 different influences, take different views, are  
5805 moved by different motives, led by a different  
5806 spirit. You are to expect such remarks. How  
5807 often I have heard the remark respecting such  
5808 and such persons, "He is a very good man—but  
5809 he is rather eccentric." I have sometimes asked  
5810 for the particulars; in what does his eccentricity  
5811 consist? I hear the catalogue, and the amount is,  
5812 that he is spiritual. Make up your mind for this,  
5813 to be eccentric. There is such a thing as affected

5814 eccentricity. Horrible! But there is such a thing  
5815 as being so deeply imbued with the Spirit of  
5816 God, that you must and will act so as to appear  
5817 strange and eccentric, to those who cannot  
5818 understand the reasons of your conduct.

5819

5820 2 If you have much of the Spirit of God, it is not  
5821 unlikely you will be thought deranged, by many.  
5822 We judge men to be deranged when they act  
5823 differently from what we think to be prudent and  
5824 according to common sense, and when they  
5825 come to conclusions for which we can see no  
5826 good reasons. Paul was accused of being  
5827 deranged by those who did not understand the  
5828 views of things under which he acted. No doubt  
5829 Festus thought the man was crazy, and that much  
5830 learning had made him mad. But Paul said, "I  
5831 am not mad, most noble Festus." His conduct  
5832 was so strange, so novel, that Festus thought it  
5833 must be insanity. But the truth was, he only saw  
5834 the subject so clearly that he threw his whole  
5835 soul into it. They were entirely in the dark in  
5836 respect to the motive by which he was actuated.  
5837 This is by no means uncommon. Multitudes  
5838 have appeared to those who had no spirituality  
5839 as if they were deranged. Yet they saw good  
5840 reasons for doing as they did. God was leading  
5841 their minds to act in such a way that those who

5842 were not spiritual could not see the reasons. You  
5843 must make up your mind to this, and so much  
5844 the more, as you live more above the world and  
5845 walk with God.

5846

5847 3. If you have the Spirit of God, you must expect  
5848 to feel great distress in view of the church and  
5849 the world. Some spiritual epicures ask for the  
5850 Spirit because they think it will make them so  
5851 perfectly happy. Some people think that spiritual  
5852 Christians are always very happy and free from  
5853 sorrow.

5854

5855 There never was a greater mistake. Read your  
5856 Bibles, and see how the prophets and apostles  
5857 were always groaning and distressed in view of  
5858 the state of the church and the world. The  
5859 apostle Paul says he was always bearing about in  
5860 his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. I protest,  
5861 says he, that I die daily. You will know what it is  
5862 to sympathize with the Lord Jesus Christ, and be  
5863 baptized with the baptism that he was baptized  
5864 with. Oh how he agonized in view of the state of  
5865 sinners! how he travailed in soul for their  
5866 salvation! The more you have of his Spirit, the  
5867 more clearly you will see the state of sinners,  
5868 and the more deeply you will be distressed about  
5869 them. Many times you will feel as if you could

5870 not live in view of their situation; your distress  
5871 will be unutterable. Paul says, Rom ix: 1-3: “I  
5872 say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience  
5873 also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I  
5874 have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my  
5875 heart. For I could wish that myself were  
5876 accursed from Christ for my brethren, my  
5877 kinsmen according to the flesh.”

5878

5879 4. You will be often grieved with the state of the  
5880 ministry. Some years since I met a woman  
5881 belonging to one of the churches in this city. I  
5882 inquired of her the state of religion here. She  
5883 seemed unwilling to say much about it, made  
5884 some general remarks, and then choked, and her  
5885 eyes filled, and she said, “Oh, our minister’s  
5886 mind seems to be very dark.” Spiritual  
5887 Christians often feel like this, and often weep  
5888 over it. I have seen much of it, and often found  
5889 Christians who wept and groaned in secret, to  
5890 see the darkness on the minds of ministers in  
5891 regard to religion, their earthliness and fear of  
5892 man; but they dared not speak of it, lest they  
5893 should be denounced and threatened, and  
5894 perhaps turned out of the church. I do not say  
5895 these things censoriously, to reproach my  
5896 brethren, but because they are true. And  
5897 ministers ought to know that nothing is more

5898 common than for spiritual Christians to feel  
5899 burdened and distressed at the state of the  
5900 ministry. I would not wake up any wrong feeling  
5901 towards ministers, but it is time it should be  
5902 known that Christians do often get spiritual  
5903 views of things, and their souls are kindled up,  
5904 and then they find that their minister does not  
5905 enter into their feelings, that he is far below the  
5906 standard of what he ought to be, and in  
5907 spirituality far below some of the members of  
5908 his church. This is one of the most prominent  
5909 and deeply to be deplored evils of the present  
5910 day. The piety of the ministry, though real, is so  
5911 superficial, in many instances, that the spiritual  
5912 part of the church feel that ministers cannot, do  
5913 not, sympathize with them. Their preaching does  
5914 not meet their wants, it does not feed them, it  
5915 does not meet their experience. The minister has  
5916 not depth enough of religious experience to  
5917 know how to search and wake up the church; to  
5918 help those under temptation, to support the  
5919 weak, to direct the strong, and lead them through  
5920 all the labyrinths and mazes with which their  
5921 path may be beset. When a minister has gone  
5922 with a church as far as his experience in spiritual  
5923 exercise goes, there he stops; and until he has a  
5924 renewed experience, until he is reconverted, his  
5925 heart broken up afresh, and he set forward in the

5926 divine life and Christian experience, he will help  
5927 them no more. He may preach sound doctrine,  
5928 and so may an unconverted minister; but, after  
5929 all, his preaching will want that searching  
5930 pungency, that practical bearing, that unction  
5931 which alone will reach the case of a spiritually-  
5932 minded Christian. It is a fact over which the  
5933 church is groaning, that the piety of young men  
5934 suffers so much in the course of their education,  
5935 that when they enter the ministry, however much  
5936 intellectual furniture they may possess, they are  
5937 in a state of spiritual babyhood. They want  
5938 nursing, and need rather to be fed, than to  
5939 undertake to feed the church of God.

5940

5941 5. If you have much of the Spirit of God, you  
5942 must make up your mind to have much  
5943 opposition, both in the church and the world.  
5944 Very likely the leading men in the church will  
5945 oppose you. There has always been opposition in  
5946 the church. So it was when Christ was on earth.  
5947 If you are far above their state of feeling, church  
5948 members will oppose you. If any man will live  
5949 godly in Christ Jesus, he must expect  
5950 persecution. Often the elders, and even the  
5951 minister, will oppose you, if you are filled with  
5952 the Spirit of God.

5953



5954 6. You must expect very frequent and agonizing  
5955 conflicts with Satan. Satan has very little trouble  
5956 with those Christians who are not spiritual, but  
5957 lukewarm, and slothful, and worldly-minded.  
5958 And such do not understand what is said about  
5959 spiritual conflicts. Perhaps they will smile when  
5960 such things are mentioned. And so the devil lets  
5961 them alone. They do not disturb him, nor he  
5962 them. But spiritual Christians, he understands  
5963 very well, are doing him a vast injury, and,  
5964 therefore, he sets himself against them. Such  
5965 Christians often have terrible conflicts. They  
5966 have temptations that they never thought of  
5967 before, blasphemous thoughts, atheism,  
5968 suggestions to do deeds of wickedness, to  
5969 destroy their own lives, and the like. And if you  
5970 are spiritual, you may expect these terrible  
5971 conflicts.

5972  
5973 7. You will have greater conflicts with yourself  
5974 than you ever thought of. You will sometimes  
5975 find your own corruptions making strange  
5976 headway against the Spirit. “The flesh lusteth  
5977 against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the  
5978 flesh.” Such a Christian is often thrown into  
5979 consternation at the power of his own  
5980 corruptions. One of the Commodores in the  
5981 United States was, as I have been told, a spiritual

5982 man; and his pastor told me he had known that  
5983 man lie on the floor and groan a great part of the  
5984 night, in conflict with his own corruptions, and  
5985 to cry to God in agony that he would break the  
5986 power of the temptation. It seemed as if the devil  
5987 was determined to ruin him; and his own  
5988 feelings, for the time being, was almost in league  
5989 with the devil.

5990  
5991 8. But you will have peace with God. If the  
5992 church, and sinners, and the devil oppose you,  
5993 there will be one with whom you will have  
5994 peace. Let those who are called to these trials,  
5995 and conflicts, and temptations, and who groan,  
5996 and pray, and weep, and break your hearts,  
5997 remember this consideration: your peace, so far  
5998 as your feelings towards God are concerned, will  
5999 flow like a river.

6000  
6001 9. You will likewise have peace of conscience, if  
6002 you are led by the Spirit. You will not be  
6003 constantly goaded and kept on the rack by a  
6004 guilty conscience. Your conscience will be calm  
6005 and quiet, unruffled as the summer's lake.

6006  
6007 10. If filled with the Spirit, you will be useful.  
6008 You cannot help being useful. Even if you were  
6009 sick and unable to go out of your room, or to

6010 converse, and saw nobody, you would be ten  
6011 times more useful than a hundred of those  
6012 common sort of Christians who have no  
6013 spirituality. To give you an idea of this, I will  
6014 relate an anecdote. A pious man in the Western  
6015 part of this State was sick with a consumption.  
6016 He was a poor man, and sick for years. An  
6017 unconverted merchant in the place had a kind  
6018 heart, and used to send him now and then  
6019 something for his comfort, or for his family. He  
6020 felt grateful for the kindness, but could make no  
6021 return, as he wanted to do. At length he  
6022 determined that the best return he could make  
6023 would be to pray for his salvation; he began to  
6024 pray, and his soul kindled, and he got hold of  
6025 God. There was no revival there, but by and by,  
6026 to the astonishment of every body, this merchant  
6027 came right out on the Lord's side. The fire  
6028 kindled all over the place, and a powerful revival  
6029 followed, and multitudes were converted.

6030  
6031 This poor man lingered in this way for several  
6032 years, and died. After his death, I visited the  
6033 place, and his widow put into my hands his  
6034 diary. Among other things, he says in his diary:  
6035 "I am acquainted with about thirty ministers and  
6036 churches." He then goes on to set apart certain  
6037 hours in the day and week to pray for each of

6038 these ministers and churches, and also certain  
6039 seasons for praying for the different missionary  
6040 stations. Then followed, under different dates,  
6041 such facts as these: “To-day,” naming the date,  
6042 “I have been enabled to offer what I call the  
6043 prayer of faith for the outpouring of the Spirit on  
6044 ——— church, and I trust in God there will soon  
6045 be a revival there.” Under another date, “I have  
6046 to-day been able to offer what I call the prayer of  
6047 faith for such a church, and trust there will soon  
6048 be a revival there.” Thus he had gone over a  
6049 great number of churches, recording the fact that  
6050 he had prayed for them in faith that a revival  
6051 might soon prevail among them. Of the  
6052 missionary stations, if I recollect right, he  
6053 mentions in particular the mission at Ceylon. I  
6054 believe the last place mentioned in his diary, for  
6055 which he offered the prayer of faith, was the  
6056 place in which he lived. Not long after noticing  
6057 these facts in his diary, the revival commenced,  
6058 and went over the region of country, nearly, I  
6059 believe, if not quite, in the order in which they  
6060 had been mentioned in his diary; and in due time  
6061 news came from Ceylon that there was a revival  
6062 of religion there. The revival in his own town  
6063 did not commence till after his death. Its  
6064 commencement was at the time when his widow  
6065 put into my hands the document to which I have

6066 referred. She told me that he was so exercised in  
6067 prayer during his sickness that she often feared  
6068 he would pray himself to death. The revival was  
6069 exceedingly great and powerful in all the region;  
6070 and the fact that it was about to prevail had not  
6071 been hidden from this servant of the Lord.  
6072 According to his word, the secret of the Lord is  
6073 with them that fear him. Thus this man, too  
6074 feeble in his body to go out of his house, was yet  
6075 more useful to the world and the church of God  
6076 than all the heartless professors of the country.  
6077 Standing between God and the desolations of  
6078 Zion, and pouring out his heart in believing  
6079 prayer, as a prince he had power with God, and  
6080 prevailed.

6081  
6082 11. If you are filled with the Spirit, you will not  
6083 find yourselves distressed, and galled, and  
6084 worried, when people speak against you. When I  
6085 find people irritated and fretting at any little  
6086 thing that touches them, I am sure they have not  
6087 the Spirit of Christ. Jesus Christ could have  
6088 everything said against him that malice could  
6089 invent, and yet not be in the least disturbed by it.  
6090 If you mean to be meek under persecution, and  
6091 exemplify the temper of the Saviour, and honor  
6092 religion in this way, you need to be filled with  
6093 the Spirit.

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12. You will be wise in using means for the conversion of sinners. If the Spirit of God is in you, he will lead you to use means wisely, in a way adapted to the end, and to avoid doing hurt. No man who is not filled with the Spirit of God, is fit to be employed in directing the measures adopted in a revival. Their hands will be all thumbs, unable to take hold, and they will act as if they had not common sense. But a man who is led by the Spirit of God, will know how to time his measures right, and how to apportion Divine truth, so as to make it tell to the best advantage.

13. You will be calm under affliction; not thrown into confusion or consternation when you see the storm coming over you. People around will be astonished at your calmness and cheerfulness under heavy trials, not knowing the inward supports of those who are filled with the Spirit.

14. You will be resigned in death; you will always feel prepared to die, and not afraid to die, and after death you will be proportionably more happy for ever in heaven.

VI. Consequences of not being filled with the Spirit.

6122

6123 1. You will often doubt, and reasonably doubt,  
6124 whether you are Christians. You will have  
6125 doubts, and you ought to have them. The sons of  
6126 God are led by the Spirit of God. And if you are  
6127 not led by the Spirit what reason have you to  
6128 think you are sons? You will try to make a little  
6129 evidence go a great way to bolster up your  
6130 hopes, but you cannot do it, unless your  
6131 conscience is seared as with a hot iron. You  
6132 cannot help being plunged often into painful  
6133 doubt and uncertainty about your state. Rom.  
6134 viii. 9.—”But ye are not in the flesh, but in the  
6135 Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in  
6136 you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of  
6137 Christ, he is none of his.” 2 Cor. xiii. 5.—  
6138 ”Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith;  
6139 prove your own selves: know ye not your own  
6140 selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye  
6141 be reprobate?”

6142

6143 2. You will always be unsettled in your views  
6144 about the prayer of faith. The prayer of faith is  
6145 something so spiritual, so much a matter of  
6146 experience and not of speculation, that unless  
6147 you are spiritual yourselves, you will not  
6148 understand it fully. You may talk a great deal  
6149 about the prayer of faith, and for the time get

6150 thoroughly convinced of it. But you will never  
6151 feel so settled on it as to retain the same position  
6152 of mind concerning it, and in a little while you  
6153 will be all uncertainty. I knew a curious instance  
6154 in a brother minister. He told me, “When I have  
6155 the Spirit of God, and enjoy his presence, I  
6156 believe firmly in the prayer of faith; but when I  
6157 have it not, I find myself doubting whether there  
6158 is any such thing, and my mind offering  
6159 objections.” I know, from my own experience,  
6160 what this is, and when I hear persons raising  
6161 objections to that view of prayer which I have  
6162 presented in these lectures, I understand very  
6163 well what their difficulty is, and have often  
6164 found it impossible to satisfy their minds, while  
6165 so far from God; when at the same time they  
6166 would understand it themselves, without  
6167 argument, whenever they had experienced it.

6168

6169 3. If you have not the Spirit, you will be very apt  
6170 to stumble at those who have. You will doubt the  
6171 propriety of their conduct. If they seem to feel a  
6172 good deal more than yourself, you will be likely  
6173 to call it animal feeling. You will perhaps doubt  
6174 their sincerity when they say they have such  
6175 feelings. You will say, “I do not know what to  
6176 make of brother such-a-one; he seems to be very  
6177 pious, but I do not understand him, I think he has



6178 a great deal of animal feeling.” Thus you will be  
6179 trying to censure them, for the purpose of  
6180 justifying yourself.

6181

6182 4. You will be had in reputation with the  
6183 impenitent, and with carnal professors. They will  
6184 praise you, as a rational, orthodox, consistent  
6185 Christian. You will be just in the frame of mind  
6186 to walk with them, because you are agreed.

6187

6188 5. You will be much troubled with fears about  
6189 fanaticism. Whenever there are revivals, you  
6190 will see in them a strong tendency to fanaticism,  
6191 and will be full of fears and anxiety, or rather of  
6192 opposition to them.

6193

6194 6. You will be much disturbed by the measures  
6195 that are used in revivals. If any measures are  
6196 adopted, that are decided and direct, you will  
6197 think they are all “new,” and will be stumbled at  
6198 them just in proportion to your want of  
6199 spirituality. You do not see their  
6200 appropriateness. You will stand and cavil at the  
6201 measures, because you are so blind that you  
6202 cannot see their adaptedness, while all heaven is  
6203 rejoicing in them as the means of saving souls.

6204

6205 7. You will be a reproach to religion. The  
6206 impenitent will sometimes praise you because  
6207 you are so much like themselves, and sometimes  
6208 laugh about you because you are such a  
6209 hypocrite.

6210

6211 8. You will know but little about the Bible.

6212

6213 9. If you die without the Spirit, you will fall into  
6214 hell. There can be no doubt of this. Without the  
6215 Spirit you will never be prepared for heaven.

6216

6217 REMARKS.

6218

6219 1. Christians are as guilty for not having the  
6220 Spirit, as sinners are for not repenting.

6221

6222 2. They are even more so. As they have more  
6223 light, they are so much the more guilty.

6224

6225 3. All beings have a right to complain of  
6226 Christians who are not filled with the Spirit. You  
6227 are not doing work for God, and he has a right to  
6228 complain. He has placed his Spirit at your  
6229 disposal, and if you have it not, he has a right to  
6230 look to you and to hold you responsible for all  
6231 the good you might do, did you possess it. You  
6232 are sinning against all heaven, for you ought to

6233 be adding to their happy ranks. Sinners, the  
6234 church, ministers, have a right to complain.

6235

6236 4. You are right in the way of the work of the  
6237 Lord. It is in vain for a minister to try to work  
6238 over your head. Ministers often groan and  
6239 struggle, and wear themselves out in vain, trying  
6240 to do good where there is a church who live so  
6241 that they do not have the Spirit of God. If the  
6242 Spirit is poured out at any time, the church will  
6243 grieve him right away. Thus you may tie the  
6244 hands and break the heart of your minister, and  
6245 break him down, and perhaps kill him, because  
6246 you will not be filled with the Spirit.

6247

6248 5. You see the reason why Christians need the  
6249 Spirit, and the degree of their dependence. This  
6250 cannot be too strongly exhibited.

6251

6252 6. Do not tempt God, by waiting for his Spirit,  
6253 while using no means to procure his presence.

6254

6255 7. If you mean to have the Spirit, you must be  
6256 childlike, and yield to his influences—just as  
6257 yielding as air. If he is drawing you to prayer,  
6258 you must quit everything to yield to his gentle  
6259 strivings. No doubt you have sometimes felt a  
6260 desire to pray for some object, and you have put

6261 it off and resisted, and God left you. If you wish  
6262 him to remain, you must yield to his softest and  
6263 gentlest motions, and watch to learn what he  
6264 would have you do, and yield yourself up to his  
6265 guidance.

6266

6267 8. Christians ought to be willing to make any  
6268 sacrifice to enjoy the presence of the Spirit. Said  
6269 a woman in high life, a professor of religion, “I  
6270 must either give up hearing such a minister  
6271 (naming him) preach, or I must give up my gay  
6272 company.” She gave up the preaching and staid  
6273 away. How different from another case!

6274

6275 A woman in the same rank of life heard the same  
6276 minister preach, and went home resolved to  
6277 abandon her gay and worldly manner of life—  
6278 dismissed most of her attendants—changed her  
6279 whole mode of dress, of equipage, of living, and  
6280 of conversation; so that her gay and worldly  
6281 friends were soon willing to leave her to the  
6282 enjoyment of communion with God, and free to  
6283 spend her time in doing good.

6284

6285 9. You see from this, that it must be very  
6286 difficult for those in fashionable life to go to  
6287 heaven. What a calamity to be in such circles!  
6288 Who can enjoy the presence of God in them?

6289

6290 10. See how crazy those are who are scrambling  
6291 to get up to these circles, enlarging their houses,  
6292 changing their style of living, furniture, etc. It is  
6293 like climbing up mast-head to be thrown off into  
6294 the ocean. To enjoy God, you must come down,  
6295 not go up there. God is not there, among all the  
6296 starch and flattery of high life.

6297

6298 11. Many professors of religion are as ignorant  
6299 of spirituality as Nicodemus was of the new  
6300 birth. They are ignorant, and I fear unconverted.  
6301 If any body talks to them about the spirit of  
6302 prayer, it is all algebra to them. The case of such  
6303 professors is awful. How different was the  
6304 character of the apostles! Read the history of  
6305 their lives, read their letters, and you will see  
6306 that they were always spiritual, and walked daily  
6307 with God. But now how little is there of such  
6308 religion! "When the Son of Man cometh, will he  
6309 find faith on the earth?" Set some of these  
6310 professors to work in a revival, and they do not  
6311 know what to do, have no energy, no skill, and  
6312 make no impression. When will professors of  
6313 religion set themselves to work, filled with the  
6314 Spirit? If I could see this church filled with the  
6315 Spirit, I would ask nothing more to move this  
6316 whole mighty mass of minds. Not two weeks

6317 would pass before the revival would spread all  
6318 over this city.

6319

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6320

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6321

6322 LECTURE VIII.

6323

6324 MEETINGS FOR PRAYER.

6325

6326 Text.—"Again I say unto you, That if two of you  
6327 shall agree on earth as touching any thing that  
6328 they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my  
6329 Father which is in heaven."—Matthew xviii. 19.

6330

6331 HITHERTO, in treating of the subject of Prayer,  
6332 I have confined my remarks to secret prayer. I  
6333 am now to speak of social prayer, or prayer  
6334 offered in company, where two or more are  
6335 united in praying. Such meetings have been  
6336 common from the time of Christ, and even  
6337 hundreds of years before. And it is probable that  
6338 God's people have always been in the habit of  
6339 making united supplication, whenever they had  
6340 the privilege. The propriety of the practice will  
6341 not be questioned here. I need not dwell now on  
6342 the duty of social prayer. Nor is it my design to  
6343 discuss the question, whether any two Christians

6344 agreeing to ask any blessing, will be sure to  
6345 obtain it. My object is to make some remarks on  
6346

## 6347 MEETINGS FOR PRAYER.

6348

6349 I. The design of Prayer Meetings.

6350

6351 II. The manner of conducting them.

6352

6353 III. Mention several things that will defeat the  
6354 design of holding them.

6355

### 6356 I. THE DESIGN OF PRAYER MEETINGS.

6357

6358 1. One design of assembling several persons  
6359 together for united prayer, is to promote union  
6360 among Christians. Nothing tends more to cement  
6361 the hearts of Christians than praying together.  
6362 Never do they love one another so well as when  
6363 they witness the outpouring of each other's  
6364 hearts in prayer. Their spirituality begets a  
6365 feeling of union and confidence, highly  
6366 important to the prosperity of the church. It is  
6367 doubtful whether Christians can ever be  
6368 otherwise than united, if they are in the habit of  
6369 really praying together. And where they have  
6370 had hard feelings and differences among  
6371 themselves, they are all done away, by uniting in

6372 prayer. The great object is gained, if you can  
6373 bring them really to unite in prayer. If this can be  
6374 done, the difficulties vanish.

6375

6376 2. To extend the spirit of prayer. God has so  
6377 constituted us, and such is the economy of his  
6378 grace, that we are sympathetic beings, and  
6379 communicate our feelings to each other. A  
6380 minister, for instance, will often as it were  
6381 breathe his own feelings into his congregation.  
6382 The Spirit of God that inspires his soul, makes  
6383 use of his feelings to influence his hearers, just  
6384 as much as he makes use of the words he  
6385 preaches. So he makes use of the feelings of  
6386 Christians. Nothing is more calculated to beget a  
6387 spirit of prayer, than to unite in social prayer,  
6388 with one who has the spirit himself; unless this  
6389 one should be so far ahead that his prayer will  
6390 repel the rest. His prayer will awaken them, if  
6391 they are not so far behind as to revolt at it and  
6392 resist it. If they are anywhere near the standard  
6393 of his feelings, his spirit will kindle, and burn,  
6394 and spread all around. One individual in a  
6395 church, that obtains a spirit of prayer, will often  
6396 arouse a whole church, and extend the same  
6397 spirit through the whole, and a general revival  
6398 follows.

6399



6400 3. Another grand design of social prayer, is to  
6401 move God. Not that it changes the mind and  
6402 feelings of God. When we speak of moving God,  
6403 as I have said in a former lecture, we do not  
6404 mean that it alters the will of God. But when the  
6405 right kind of prayer is offered by Christians, they  
6406 are in such a state of mind, that it becomes  
6407 proper for God to bestow a blessing. They are  
6408 then prepared to receive it, and he gives because  
6409 he is always the same, and always ready and  
6410 happy to show mercy. When Christians are  
6411 united, and praying as they ought, God opens the  
6412 windows of heaven, and pours out his blessings  
6413 till there is not room to receive them.

6414  
6415 4. Another important design of prayer meetings  
6416 is the conviction and conversion of sinners.  
6417 When properly conducted, they are eminently  
6418 calculated to produce this effect. Sinners are apt  
6419 to be solemn when they hear Christians pray.  
6420 Where there is a spirit of prayer, sinners must  
6421 feel. An ungodly man, a Universalist, once said  
6422 respecting a certain minister, "I can bear his  
6423 preaching very well, but when he prays, I feel  
6424 awfully; I feel as if God was coming down upon  
6425 me." Sinners are often convicted by hearing  
6426 prayer. A young man of distinguished talents,  
6427 known to many of you, said concerning a certain

6428 minister to whom before his conversion he had  
6429 been very much opposed, “As soon as he began  
6430 to pray, I began to be convicted, and if he had  
6431 continued to pray much longer, I should not have  
6432 been able to contain myself.” Just as soon as  
6433 Christians begin to pray as they ought, sinners  
6434 then know that they pray, and they feel awfully.  
6435 They do not understand what spirituality is,  
6436 because they have no experience of it. But when  
6437 such prayer is offered, they know there is  
6438 something in it; they know God is in it, and it  
6439 brings them near to God; it makes them feel  
6440 awfully solemn, and they cannot bear it. And not  
6441 only is it calculated to impress the minds of  
6442 sinners, but when Christians pray in faith, the  
6443 Spirit of God is poured out, and sinners are  
6444 melted down and converted on the spot.

6445

## 6446 II. THE MANNER OF CONDUCTING 6447 PRAYER MEETINGS.

6448

6449 1. It is often well to open a prayer meeting by  
6450 reading a short portion of the word of God;  
6451 especially if the person who takes the lead of the  
6452 meeting, can call to mind any portion that will  
6453 be applicable to the object or occasion, and that  
6454 is impressive, and to the point. If he has no  
6455 passage that is applicable, he had better not read

6456 any at all. Do not drag in the word of God to  
6457 make up part of the meeting as a mere matter of  
6458 form. This is an insult to God. It is not well to  
6459 read any more than is applicable to the subject  
6460 before the meeting, or the occasion. Some  
6461 people think it always necessary to read a whole  
6462 chapter, though it may be ever so long, and have  
6463 a variety of subjects. It is just as impressive and  
6464 judicious to read a whole chapter, as it would be  
6465 for a minister to take a whole chapter for his  
6466 text, when his object was to make some  
6467 particular truth bear on the minds of his  
6468 audience. The design of a prayer meeting should  
6469 be to bring Christians to the point to pray for a  
6470 definite object. Wandering over a large field,  
6471 hinders and destroys this design.

6472  
6473 2. It is proper that the person who leads should  
6474 make some short and appropriate remarks,  
6475 calculated to explain the nature of prayer, and  
6476 the encouragements we have to pray, and to  
6477 bring the object to be prayed for directly before  
6478 the minds of the people.

6479  
6480 A man can no more pray without having his  
6481 thoughts concentrated, than he can do anything  
6482 else. The person leading, should therefore see to  
6483 this, by bringing up before their minds the object

6484 they came to pray for. If they came to pray for  
6485 any object he can do this. And if they did not,  
6486 they had better go home. It is of no use to stay  
6487 there and mock God, by pretending to pray,  
6488 when they have nothing on earth to pray for.

6489  
6490 After stating the object, he should bring up some  
6491 promise or some principle, as the ground of  
6492 encouragement to expect an answer to their  
6493 prayers. If there is any indication of Providence,  
6494 or any promise, or any principle in the Divine  
6495 government that affords a ground of faith, let  
6496 him call it to mind, and not let them be talking  
6497 out of their own hearts at random, without  
6498 knowing any solid reason to expect an answer.  
6499 One reason why prayer meetings mostly  
6500 accomplish so little, is because there is so little  
6501 common sense exercised about them. Instead of  
6502 looking round for some solid footing on which  
6503 to repose their faith, they just come together and  
6504 pour forth their words, and neither know nor  
6505 care whether they have any reason to expect an  
6506 answer. If they are going to pray about anything  
6507 concerning which there can be any doubt or any  
6508 mistake, in regard to the ground of faith, they  
6509 should be shown the reason there is for believing  
6510 that their prayers will be heard and answered. It  
6511 is easy to see, that unless something like this is

6512 done, three-fourths of them will have no idea of  
6513 what they are doing, or of the ground on which  
6514 they should expect to receive what they pray for.

6515

6516 3. In calling on persons to pray, it is always  
6517 desirable to let things take their own course  
6518 wherever it is safe. If it can be left so with  
6519 safety, let those pray who are most inclined to  
6520 pray. It sometimes happens that even those who  
6521 are ordinarily the most spiritual, and most proper  
6522 to be called on, are not at the time in a suitable  
6523 frame; they may be cold and worldly, and only  
6524 freeze the meeting. But if you let those pray who  
6525 desire to pray, you avoid this. But often this  
6526 cannot be done with safety, especially in large  
6527 cities, where a prayer meeting might be liable to  
6528 be interrupted by those who have no business to  
6529 pray; some fanatic or crazy person, some  
6530 hypocrite or enemy, who would only make a  
6531 noise. In most places, however, this course may  
6532 be taken with perfect safety. Give up the meeting  
6533 to the Spirit of God, Those who desire to pray,  
6534 let them pray. If the leader sees any thing that  
6535 needs to be set right, let him remark, freely and  
6536 kindly, and put it right, and then go on again.  
6537 Only, he should be careful to time his remarks,  
6538 so as not to interrupt the flow of feeling, or to

6539 chill the meeting, or turn off the minds from the  
6540 proper subject.

6541

6542 4. If it is necessary to name the individuals who  
6543 are to pray, it is best to call on those who are  
6544 most spiritual first. And if you do not know who  
6545 they are, then those whom you would naturally  
6546 suppose to be most alive. If they pray at the  
6547 outset, they will be likely to spread the spirit of  
6548 prayer through the meeting, and elevate the tone  
6549 of the whole. Otherwise, if you call on those  
6550 who are cold and lifeless at the beginning, they  
6551 will be likely to diffuse a chill throughout the  
6552 meeting. The only hope of having an efficient  
6553 prayer meeting is when at least a part of the  
6554 church is spiritual, and they infuse their spirit  
6555 into the rest. This is the very reason why it is  
6556 often best to let things take their course, for then  
6557 those who have the most feeling are apt to pray  
6558 first, and give character to the meeting.

6559

6560 5. The prayers should always be very short.  
6561 When individuals suffer themselves to pray long,  
6562 they forget where they are, that they are only the  
6563 mouth of the congregation, and that the  
6564 congregation cannot be expected to sympathise  
6565 with them, so as to go along and feel united in  
6566 prayer, if they are long and tedious, and go all

6567 around the world and pray for every thing that  
6568 they can think of. Commonly, those who pray  
6569 long in meeting, do it not because they have the  
6570 spirit of prayer, but because they have not. And  
6571 they go round and round, not because they are  
6572 full of prayer. Some men will spin out a long  
6573 prayer in telling God who and what he is, or they  
6574 exhort God to do so and so. Some pray out a  
6575 whole system of divinity. Some preach, some  
6576 exhort the people, till every body wishes they  
6577 would stop, and God wishes so too,  
6578 undoubtedly. They should keep to the point, and  
6579 pray for what they came to pray for, and not  
6580 follow the imagination of their own foolish  
6581 hearts all over the universe.

6582  
6583 6. Each one should pray for some one object. It  
6584 is well for every individual to have one object  
6585 for prayer: two or more may pray for the same  
6586 thing, or each a separate object. If the meeting is  
6587 convened to pray for some specific thing, let  
6588 them all pray for that. If its object is more  
6589 general, let them select their subjects, according  
6590 as they feel interested in them. If one feels  
6591 particularly disposed to pray for the church, let  
6592 him do it. If the next feels disposed to pray for  
6593 the church, he may do so too. Perhaps the next  
6594 will feel inclined to pray for sinners; for the

6595 youth; to confess sin; let him do it, and as soon  
6596 as he has got through let him stop. Whenever a  
6597 man has deep feeling, he always feels on some  
6598 particular point, and if he prays for that, he will  
6599 speak out of the abundance of his heart, and then  
6600 he will naturally stop when he is done. Those  
6601 who feel most, will be most ready to confine  
6602 their prayers to that point, and stop when they  
6603 have done and not pray all over the world.

6604

6605 7. If in the progress of the meeting it becomes  
6606 necessary to change the object of prayer, let the  
6607 man who leads state the fact, and explain it in a  
6608 few words. If the object is to pray for the church,  
6609 or for backsliders, or sinners, or the heathen, let  
6610 him state it plainly, and then turn it over and  
6611 hold it up before them till he brings them to  
6612 think and feel deeply before they pray. Then  
6613 state to them the grounds on which they may  
6614 repose their faith in regard to obtaining the  
6615 blessings they pray for, if any such statement is  
6616 needed, and so lead them right up to the throne,  
6617 and let them take hold of the hand of God. This  
6618 is according to the philosophy of the mind.  
6619 People always do it for themselves when they  
6620 pray in secret, if they really mean to pray to any  
6621 purpose. And so it should be in prayer meetings.  
6622



6623 8. It is important that the time should be fully  
6624 occupied, so as not to leave long seasons of  
6625 silence. This always makes a bad impression and  
6626 chills the meeting. I know that sometimes  
6627 churches have seasons of silent prayer. But in  
6628 those cases they should be specially requested to  
6629 pray in silence, so that all may know why they  
6630 are silent. This often has a most powerful effect,  
6631 where a few moments are spent by a whole  
6632 congregation in silence, while all lift up their  
6633 thoughts to God. This is very different from  
6634 having long intervals of silence because there is  
6635 nobody to pray. Every one feels that such a  
6636 silence is like the cold damp of death over the  
6637 meeting.

6638  
6639 9. It is exceedingly important that he who leads  
6640 the meeting should press sinners who may be  
6641 present to immediate repentance. He should  
6642 crowd this hard, and urge the Christians present  
6643 to pray in such a way as to make sinners feel that  
6644 they are expected to repent immediately. This  
6645 tends to inspire Christians with compassion and  
6646 love for souls. The remarks made to sinners are  
6647 often like pouring fire upon the hearts of  
6648 Christians, to awaken them to prayer and effort  
6649 for their conversion. Let them see and feel the

6650 guilt and danger of sinners right among them,  
6651 and then they will pray.

6652

6653 III. I am to mention several things which may  
6654 defeat the design of a prayer meeting.

6655

6656 1. When there is an unhappy want of confidence  
6657 in the leader, there is no hope of any good.

6658 Whatever the cause may be, whether he is to

6659 blame or not, the very fact that he leads the

6660 meeting will cast a damp over it and prevent all

6661 good. I have witnessed it in churches, where

6662 there was some offensive elder or deacon,

6663 perhaps justly offensive, and perhaps not, set to

6664 lead the prayer meeting, and the meeting would

6665 all die under his influence. If there is a want of

6666 confidence in regard to his piety, or in his ability,

6667 or in his judgment, or in anything connected

6668 with the meeting, everything he says or does will

6669 fall to the ground. The same thing often takes

6670 place where the church have lost their

6671 confidence in the minister.

6672

6673 2. Where the leader lacks spirituality, there will

6674 be a dryness and coldness in his remarks and

6675 prayers, and every thing will indicate his want of

6676 unction, and his whole influence will be the very

6677 reverse of what it ought to be. I have known

6678 churches where a prayer meeting could not be  
6679 sustained, and the reason was not obvious, but  
6680 those who understood the state of things knew  
6681 that the leader was so notorious for his want of  
6682 spirituality, that he would inevitably freeze a  
6683 prayer meeting to death. In many Presbyterian  
6684 churches the elders are so far from being  
6685 spiritual men that they always freeze a prayer  
6686 meeting. And then they are often amazingly  
6687 jealous for their dignity, and cannot bear to have  
6688 any body else lead the meeting. And if any  
6689 member that is spiritual takes the lead of a  
6690 prayer meeting, they will take him to task for it:  
6691 “Why, you are not an elder, and ought not to  
6692 lead a prayer meeting in presence of an elder.”  
6693 And thus they stand in the way, while the whole  
6694 church is suffering under their blighting  
6695 influence.

6696  
6697 A man who knows he is not in a spiritual frame  
6698 of mind has no business to conduct a prayer  
6699 meeting; he will kill it. There are two reasons:  
6700 First, he will have no spiritual discernment, and  
6701 will not know what to do, or when to do it. A  
6702 person who is spiritual can see the movements of  
6703 Providence, and can feel the Spirit of God, and  
6704 understand what he is leading them to pray for,  
6705 so as to time his subjects, and take advantage of

6706 the state of feeling among Christians. He will not  
6707 overthrow all the feeling in a meeting by  
6708 introducing other things that are incongruous or  
6709 ill-timed. He has spiritual discernment to  
6710 understand the leadings of the Spirit, and his  
6711 workings in those who pray, and to follow on as  
6712 the Spirit leads. Suppose an individual leads who  
6713 is not spiritual, and there are two or three  
6714 prayers, and the spirit of prayer rises, but the  
6715 leader has no spiritual discernment to see it, and  
6716 he makes some remarks on another point, or  
6717 reads a piece out of some book, that is as far  
6718 from the feeling of the meeting as the north pole.  
6719 It may be just as evident to others what they are  
6720 called to pray for, as if the Son of God himself  
6721 had come into the meeting and named the  
6722 subject; but the leader will overthrow it all,  
6723 because he is so stupid that he does not know the  
6724 indications of the meeting.

6725

6726 And then, if the leader is not spiritual, he will  
6727 very likely be dull and dry in his remarks and in  
6728 all his exercises. He will read a long hymn in a  
6729 dreamy manner, and then read a long passage of  
6730 Scripture, in a tone so cold and wintry that he  
6731 will spread a wintry pall over the meeting, and it  
6732 will be dull as long as his cold heart is placed up  
6733 in front of the whole thing.

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3. A want of suitable talents in the leader. If he is wanting in that kind of talents which are fitted to make a meeting useful, he will injure the meeting. If he can say nothing, or if his remarks are so out of the way as to produce levity or contempt, or if they have nothing in them that will impress the mind, or are not guided by good sense, or not appropriate, he will injure the meeting. A man may be pious, but so weak that his prayers do not edify, but rather disgust, the people present. When this is so, he had better keep silence.

4. Sometimes the benefit of a prayer-meeting is defeated by a bad spirit in the leader. For instance when there is a revival, and great opposition, if a leader gets up in a prayer meeting and speaks of instances of opposition, and comments upon them, and thus diverts the meeting away from the object they come to pray for, he knows not what spirit he is of. Its effect is always ruinous to a prayer meeting. Let a minister in a revival come out and preach against the opposition, and he will infallibly destroy the revival, and turn the hearts of Christians away from their proper object. Let the man who is set to lead the church be careful to guard his own

6762 spirit, lest he should mislead the church, and  
6763 diffuse a wrong temper. The same will be true, if  
6764 any one who is called upon to speak or pray,  
6765 introduces in his remarks or prayers anything  
6766 controversial, impertinent, unreasonable,  
6767 unscriptural, ridiculous or irrelevant. Any of  
6768 these things will quench the tender breathings of  
6769 the spirit of prayer, and destroy the meeting.

6770

6771 5. Persons coming late to the meeting. This is a  
6772 very great hindrance to a prayer meeting. When  
6773 people have begun to pray, and their attention is  
6774 fixed, and they have shut their eyes and closed  
6775 their ears, to keep out everything from their  
6776 minds, in the midst of a prayer somebody will  
6777 come bolting in and walk up through the room.  
6778 Some will look up, and all have their minds  
6779 interrupted for the moment. Then they all get  
6780 fixed again, and another comes in, and so on.  
6781 Why, I suppose the devil would not care how  
6782 many Christians went to a prayer-meeting, if  
6783 they will only go after the meeting is begun. He  
6784 would be glad to have ever so many go  
6785 scattering along so, and dodging in very piously  
6786 after the meeting is begun.

6787

6788 6. When persons make cold prayers, and cold  
6789 confessions of sin, they are sure to quench the

6790 spirit of prayer. When the influences of the Spirit  
6791 are enjoyed, in the midst of the warm  
6792 expressions that are flowing forth, let an  
6793 individual come in who is cold, and pour his  
6794 cold breath out, like the damp of death, and it  
6795 will make every Christian that has any feeling  
6796 want to get out of the meeting.

6797

6798 7. In some places it is common to begin a prayer  
6799 meeting by reading a long portion of Scripture.  
6800 Then the deacon or elder gives out a long hymn.  
6801 Next, they sing it. Then he prays a long prayer,  
6802 praying for the Jews and the fullness of the  
6803 Gentiles, and many other objects that have  
6804 nothing to do with the occasion of the meeting.  
6805 After that perhaps he reads a long extract from  
6806 some book or magazine. Then they have another  
6807 long hymn and another long prayer, and then  
6808 they go home. I once heard an elder say, they  
6809 had kept up a prayer meeting so many years, and  
6810 yet there had been no revival in the place. The  
6811 truth was, that the officers of the church had  
6812 been accustomed to carry on the meetings in just  
6813 such a dignified way, and their dignity would not  
6814 allow anything to be altered. No wonder there  
6815 was no revival. Such prayer meetings are enough  
6816 to hinder a revival. And if ever so many revivals  
6817 should commence, the prayer meeting would

6818 destroy them. There was a prayer meeting once  
6819 in this city, as I have been told, where there  
6820 appeared to be some feeling, and some one  
6821 proposed that they should have two or three  
6822 prayers in succession, without rising from their  
6823 knees. One dignified man present opposed it, and  
6824 said that they never had done so, and he hoped  
6825 there would be no innovations. He did not  
6826 approve of innovations. And that was the last of  
6827 the revival. Such persons have their prayer  
6828 meetings stereotyped, and they are determined  
6829 not to turn out of their track, whether they have  
6830 the blessing or not. To allow any such thing  
6831 would be a new measure, and they never like  
6832 new measures.

6833  
6834 8. A great deal of singing often injures a prayer  
6835 meeting. The agonizing spirit of prayer does not  
6836 lead people to sing. There is a time for  
6837 everything; a time to sing, and a time to pray.  
6838 But if I know what it is to travail in birth for  
6839 souls, Christians never feel less like singing,  
6840 than when they have the spirit of prayer for  
6841 sinners. Singing is the natural expression of  
6842 feelings that are joyful and cheerful. The spirit of  
6843 prayer is not a spirit of joy. It is a spirit of  
6844 travail, and agony of soul, supplicating and  
6845 pleading with God with strong cryings, and



6846 groanings that cannot be uttered. This is more  
6847 like any thing else than it is like singing. I have  
6848 known states of feeling, where you could not  
6849 distress the people of God more than to begin to  
6850 sing. It would be so entirely different from their  
6851 feelings. Why, if you knew your house was on  
6852 fire, would you first stop and sing a hymn before  
6853 you put it out? How would it look here in New  
6854 York, when a building was on fire, and the  
6855 firemen are all collected, for the foreman to stop  
6856 and sing a hymn? It is just about as natural for  
6857 the people to sing when exercised with a spirit of  
6858 prayer. When people feel like pulling men out of  
6859 the fire, they do not feel like singing. I never  
6860 knew a singing revival amount to much. Its  
6861 tendency is to do away all deep feeling. It is true  
6862 that singing a hymn has sometimes produced a  
6863 powerful effect upon sinners who are convicted,  
6864 but in general it is the perfect contrast there is  
6865 between their feelings and those of the happy  
6866 souls who sing, that produces the effect. If the  
6867 hymn be of a joyful character it is not directly  
6868 calculated to benefit sinners, and is highly fitted  
6869 to relieve the mental anguish of the Christian, so  
6870 as to destroy that travail of soul which is  
6871 indispensable to his prevailing in prayer.  
6872

6873 When singing is introduced in a prayer-meeting,  
6874 the hymns should be short, and so selected as to  
6875 bring out something solemn; some striking  
6876 words, such as the Judgment Hymn, and others  
6877 calculated to produce an effect on sinners; or  
6878 something that will produce a deep impression  
6879 on the minds of Christians; but not that joyful  
6880 kind of singing, that makes every body feel  
6881 comfortable, and turns off the mind from the  
6882 object of the prayer meeting.

6883

6884 I once heard a celebrated organist produce a  
6885 remarkable effect in a protracted meeting. The  
6886 organ was a powerful one, and the double bass  
6887 pipes were like thunder. The hymn was given  
6888 out that has these lines:

6889

6890

6891 See the storm of vengeance gathering

6892

6893 O'er the path you dare to tread;

6894

6895 "Hear the awful thunder rolling,

6896

6897 Loud and louder o'er your head."

6898

6899 When he came to these words, we first heard the  
6900 distant roar of thunder, then it grew nearer and

6901 louder, till at the word “louder,” there was a  
6902 crash that seemed almost to overpower the  
6903 whole congregation.

6904

6905 Such things in their proper place do good. But  
6906 common singing dissipates feeling. It should  
6907 always be such as not to take away feeling, but  
6908 to deepen it.

6909

6910 Often a prayer meeting is injured by calling on  
6911 the young converts to sing joyful hymns. This is  
6912 highly improper in a prayer meeting. It is no  
6913 time for them to let feeling flow away in joyful  
6914 singing, while so many sinners around them, and  
6915 their own former companions, are going down to  
6916 hell. A revival is often put down by the church  
6917 and minister all giving themselves up to singing  
6918 with young converts. Thus by stopping to  
6919 rejoice, when they ought to feel more and more  
6920 deeply for sinners, they grieve away the Spirit of  
6921 God, and they soon find that their agony and  
6922 travail of soul are all gone.

6923

6924 9. Introducing subjects of controversy into  
6925 prayer will defeat a prayer meeting. Nothing of a  
6926 controversial nature should be introduced into  
6927 prayer, unless it is the object of the meeting to  
6928 settle that thing. Otherwise, let Christians come

6929 together in their prayer-meetings, on the broad  
6930 ground of offering united prayer for a common  
6931 object. And let controversies be settled  
6932 somewhere else.

6933

6934 10. Great pains should be taken, both by the  
6935 leader and others, to watch narrowly the motions  
6936 of the Spirit of God. Let them not pray without  
6937 the Spirit, but follow his leadings. Be sure not to  
6938 quench the Spirit for the sake of praying  
6939 according to the regular custom. Avoid  
6940 everything calculated to divert attention away  
6941 from the object. All affectation of feeling that is  
6942 not real, should be particularly guarded against.  
6943 If there is an affectation of feeling, most  
6944 commonly others see and feel that it is  
6945 affectation, not reality. At any rate, the Spirit of  
6946 God knows it, and will be grieved, and leave the  
6947 place. On the other hand, all resistance to the  
6948 Spirit will equally destroy the meeting. Not  
6949 unfrequently it happens, that there are some so  
6950 cold that if any one should break out in the spirit  
6951 of prayer, they would call it fanaticism, and  
6952 perhaps break out in opposition.

6953

6954 11. If individuals refuse to pray when they are  
6955 called on it injures a prayer meeting. There are  
6956 some people, who always pretend they have no

6957 gifts. Women sometimes refuse to take their turn  
6958 in prayer, and pretend they have no ability to  
6959 pray. But if any one else should say so, they  
6960 would be offended. Suppose they should know  
6961 that any other person had made such a remark as  
6962 this, “Do not ask her to pray; she cannot pray;  
6963 she has not talents enough;” would they like it?  
6964 So with a man who pretends he has no gifts, let  
6965 any one else report that he has not talents enough  
6966 to make a decent prayer, and see if he will like it.  
6967 The pretence is not sincere; it is all a sham.

6968

6969 Some say they cannot pray in their families, they  
6970 have no gift. But a person could not offend them  
6971 more than to say they cannot pray a decent  
6972 prayer before their own families. They would  
6973 say, “Why, the man talks as if he thought  
6974 nobody else had any gifts but himself.” People  
6975 are not apt to have such a low opinion of  
6976 themselves. I have often seen the curse of God  
6977 follow such professors. They have no excuse.  
6978 God will take none. The man has got a tongue to  
6979 talk to his neighbors, and he can talk to God if  
6980 he has any heart for it. You will see their  
6981 children unconverted, their son a curse, their  
6982 daughter—tongue cannot tell. God says he will  
6983 pour out his fury on the families that call not on  
6984 his name. If I had time, I could mention a host of

6985 facts to show that God MARKS those  
6986 individuals with his disapprobation and curse  
6987 who refuse to pray when they ought. Until  
6988 professors of religion will repent of this sin and  
6989 take up the cross (if they choose to call praying a  
6990 cross!) and do their duty, they need not expect a  
6991 blessing.

6992

6993 12. Prayer meetings are often too long. They  
6994 should always be dismissed while Christians  
6995 have feeling, and not be spun out until all feeling  
6996 is exhausted, and the Spirit is gone.

6997

6998 13. Heartless confessions. People confess their  
6999 sins and do not forsake them. Every week they  
7000 will make the same confession over again. A  
7001 long, cold, dull, stupid confession this week, and  
7002 then the next week another just like it, without  
7003 forsaking any sins. Why, they have no intention  
7004 to forsake their sins! It shows plainly that they  
7005 do not mean to reform. All their religion consists  
7006 in these confessions. Instead of getting a  
7007 blessing from God by such confessions they will  
7008 get only a curse.

7009

7010 14. When Christians spend all the time in  
7011 praying for themselves. They should have done  
7012 this in their closets. When they come to a prayer

7013 meeting, they should be prepared to offer  
7014 effectual intercessions for others. If Christians  
7015 pray in their closets as they ought, they will feel  
7016 like praying for sinners. If they pray exclusively  
7017 in their closets for themselves, they will not get  
7018 the spirit of prayer. I have known men shut  
7019 themselves up for days to pray for themselves,  
7020 and never get any life, because their prayers are  
7021 all selfish. But if they will just forget themselves,  
7022 and throw their hearts abroad, and pray for  
7023 others, it will wake up such a feeling, that they  
7024 can pour forth their hearts. And then they can go  
7025 to work for souls. I knew an individual in a  
7026 revival, who shut himself up seventeen days, and  
7027 prayed as if he would have God come to his  
7028 terms, but it would not do, and then he went out  
7029 to work, and immediately he had the Spirit of  
7030 God in his soul. It is well for Christians to pray  
7031 for themselves, and confess their sins, and then  
7032 throw their hearts abroad, till they feel as they  
7033 ought.

7034  
7035 15. Prayer meetings are often defeated by the  
7036 want of appropriate remarks. The things are not  
7037 said which are calculated to lead them to pray.  
7038 Perhaps the leader has not prepared himself; or  
7039 perhaps he has not the requisite talents, to lead  
7040 the church out in prayer, or he does not lead their

7041 minds to dwell on the appropriate topics of  
7042 prayer.

7043

7044 16. When individuals who are justly obnoxious  
7045 for any cause, are forward in speaking and  
7046 praying. Such persons are sometimes very much  
7047 set upon taking a part. They say it is their duty to  
7048 get up and testify for God on all occasions. They  
7049 will say, they know they are not able to edify the  
7050 church, but nobody else can do their duty, and  
7051 they wish to testify. Perhaps the only place they  
7052 ever did testify for God was in a prayer meeting;  
7053 all their lives, out of the meeting, testify against  
7054 God. They had better keep still.

7055

7056 17. Where persons take a part who are so  
7057 illiterate that it is impossible persons of taste  
7058 should not be disgusted. Persons of intelligence  
7059 cannot follow them, and their minds are  
7060 unavoidably diverted. I do not mean that it is  
7061 necessary a person should have a liberal  
7062 education in order to lead in prayer. All persons  
7063 of common education, especially if they are in  
7064 the habit of praying, can lead in prayer, if they  
7065 have the spirit of prayer. But there are some  
7066 persons who use such absurd and illiterate  
7067 expressions, as cannot but disgust every  
7068 intelligent mind. They cannot help being



7069 disgusted. The feeling of disgust is an  
7070 involuntary thing, and when a disgusting object  
7071 is before the mind, the feeling is irresistible.  
7072 Piety will not keep a person from feeling it. The  
7073 only way is to take away the object. If such  
7074 persons mean to do good, they had better remain  
7075 silent, Some of them may feel grieved at not  
7076 being called to take a part. But it is better that  
7077 they should be kindly told the reason than to  
7078 have the prayer meeting regularly injured, and  
7079 rendered ridiculous by their performances.

7080

7081 18. A want of union in prayer. When one leads  
7082 the others do not follow, but are thinking of  
7083 something else. Their hearts do not unite, do not  
7084 say, Amen. It is as bad as if one should make a  
7085 petition and another remonstrate against it. One  
7086 asks God to do a thing, and the others ask him  
7087 not to do it, or to do something else.

7088

7089 Neglect of secret prayer. Christians who do not  
7090 pray in secret, cannot unite with power in a  
7091 prayer meeting, and cannot have the spirit of  
7092 prayer.

7093

7094 REMARKS.

7095

7096 1. An illy conducted prayer meeting often does  
7097 more hurt than good. In many churches, the  
7098 general manner of conducting prayer meetings is  
7099 such that Christians have not the least idea of the  
7100 design or the power of such meetings. It is such  
7101 as tends to keep down rather than to promote  
7102 pious feeling and the spirit of prayer.

7103

7104 2. A prayer meeting is an index to the state of  
7105 religion in a church. If the church neglect the  
7106 prayer meetings, or come and have not the spirit  
7107 of prayer, you know of course that religion is  
7108 low. Let me go into the prayer meeting, and I  
7109 can always see the state of religion there.

7110

7111 3. Every minister ought to know that if the  
7112 prayer meetings are neglected, all his labors are  
7113 in vain. Unless he can get Christians to attend  
7114 the prayer meetings, all he can do will not bring  
7115 up the true religion.

7116

7117 4. A great responsibility rests on him who leads  
7118 a prayer meeting. If the prayer meeting be not  
7119 what it ought to be, if it does not elevate the state  
7120 of religion, he should go seriously to work and  
7121 see what is the matter, and get the spirit of  
7122 prayer, and prepare himself to make such  
7123 remarks as are calculated to do good and set

7124 things right. A leader has no business to lead  
7125 prayer meetings, if he is not prepared, both in  
7126 head and heart, to do this. I wish you, who lead  
7127 the district prayer meetings of this church, to  
7128 notice this point.

7129

7130 5. Prayer meetings are the most difficult  
7131 meetings to sustain as they ought to be. They are  
7132 so spiritual, that unless the leader be peculiarly  
7133 prepared, both in heart and mind, they will  
7134 dwindle. It is in vain for the leader to complain  
7135 that members of the church do not attend. In  
7136 nine cases out of ten, it is the leader's fault, that  
7137 they do not attend. If he felt as he ought, they  
7138 would find the meetings so interesting, that they  
7139 would attend of course. If he is so cold, and dull,  
7140 and without spirituality, as to freeze every thing,  
7141 no wonder people do not come to the meeting.  
7142 Church officers often complain and scold  
7143 because people do not come to the prayer  
7144 meeting, when the truth is, they themselves are  
7145 so cold that they freeze every body to death that  
7146 comes.

7147

7148 6. Prayer meetings are most important meetings  
7149 for the church. It is highly important for  
7150 Christians to sustain the prayer meetings:—

7151

- 7152 (1.) To promote union.  
7153  
7154 (2.) To increase brotherly love.  
7155  
7156 (3.) To cultivate Christian confidence.  
7157  
7158 (4.) To promote their own growth in grace.  
7159  
7160 (5.) To cherish and advance spirituality.  
7161  
7162 7. Prayer meetings should be so numerous in the  
7163 church, and be so arranged, as to exercise the  
7164 gifts of every individual member of the church—  
7165 male and female. Every one should have the  
7166 opportunity to pray, and to express the feelings  
7167 of his heart, if he has any. The sectional prayer  
7168 meetings of this church are designed to do this.  
7169 And if they are too large for this, let them be  
7170 divided, so as to bring the entire mass into the  
7171 work, to exercise all gifts, and diffuse union,  
7172 confidence, and brotherly love through the  
7173 whole.  
7174  
7175 8. It is important that impenitent sinners should  
7176 always attend prayer meetings. If none come of  
7177 their own accord, go out and invite them.  
7178 Christians ought to take great pains to induce  
7179 their impenitent friends and neighbors to come

7180 to prayer meetings. They can pray better for  
7181 impenitent sinners when they have them right  
7182 before their eyes. I have know female prayer  
7183 meetings exclude sinners from the meeting. And  
7184 the reason was, they were so proud they were  
7185 ashamed to pray before sinners. What a spirit!  
7186 Such prayers will do no good. They insult God.  
7187 You have not done enough, by any means, when  
7188 you have gone to the prayer meeting yourself.  
7189 You cannot pray, if you have invited no sinner to  
7190 go. If all the church have neglected their duty so,  
7191 and have gone to the prayer meeting, and taken  
7192 no sinners along with them, no subjects of  
7193 prayer—what have they come for?

7194  
7195 9. The great object of all the means of grace is to  
7196 aim directly at the conversion of sinners. You  
7197 should pray that they may be converted there.  
7198 Not pray that they may be awakened and  
7199 convicted, but pray that they may be converted  
7200 on the spot. No one should either pray or make  
7201 any remarks, as if he expected a single sinner  
7202 would go away without giving his heart to God.  
7203 You should all make the impression on his mind,  
7204 that NOW he must submit. And if you do this,  
7205 while you are yet speaking God will hear. If  
7206 Christians make it manifest that they have really  
7207 set their hearts on the conversions of sinners, and

7208 are bent upon it, and pray as they ought, there  
7209 would rarely be a prayer meeting held without  
7210 souls being converted, and sometimes every  
7211 sinner in the room. That is the very time, if ever,  
7212 that sinners should be converted in answer to  
7213 those prayers. I do not doubt but that you may  
7214 have sinners converted in every sectional prayer  
7215 meeting, if you do your duty. Take them there,  
7216 take your families, your friends, or your  
7217 neighbors there with that design, give them the  
7218 proper instruction, if they need instruction, and  
7219 pray for them as you ought, and you will save  
7220 their souls. Rely upon it, if you do your duty, in  
7221 a right manner, God will not keep back his  
7222 blessing, and the work will be done.

7223

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7224

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7225

7226 LECTURE IX.

7227

7228 MEANS TO BE USED WITH SINNERS.

7229

7230 Text.—Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and  
7231 my servant whom I have chosen.—Isaiah xliii:  
7232 10.

7233

7234 IN the text it is affirmed of the children of God,  
7235 that they are his witnesses. In several preceding

7236 lectures I have been dwelling on the subject of  
7237 Prayer, or that department of means for the  
7238 promotion of a revival, which is intended to  
7239 move God to pour out his Spirit. I am now to  
7240 commence the other department:

7241

7242 MEANS TO BE USED FOR THE  
7243 CONVICTION AND CONVERSION OF  
7244 SINNERS.

7245

7246 It is true, in general, that persons are affected by  
7247 the subject of religion, in proportion to their  
7248 conviction of its truth. Inattention to religion is  
7249 the great reason why so little is felt concerning  
7250 it. No being can look at the great truths of  
7251 religion, as truths, and not feel deeply  
7252 concerning them. The devil cannot. He believes  
7253 and trembles. Angels in heaven feel in view of  
7254 these things. God feels. An intellectual  
7255 conviction of truth is always accompanied with  
7256 feeling of some kind.

7257

7258 One grand design of God in leaving Christians in  
7259 the world after their conversion, is that they may  
7260 be witnesses for God. It is that they may call the  
7261 attention of the thoughtless multitude to the  
7262 subject, and make them see the difference in the  
7263 character and destiny of those who believe and

7264 those who reject the Gospel. This inattention is  
7265 the grand difficulty in the way of promoting  
7266 religion. And what the Spirit of God does is to  
7267 awaken the attention of men to the subject of  
7268 their sin and the plan of salvation. Miracles have  
7269 sometimes been employed to arrest the attention  
7270 of sinners. And in this way, miracles may  
7271 become instrumental in conversion, although  
7272 conversion is not itself a miracle, nor do  
7273 miracles themselves ever convert any body.  
7274 They may be the means of awakening. Miracles  
7275 are not always effectual even in that. And if  
7276 continued or made common, they would soon  
7277 lose their power. What is wanted in the world is  
7278 something that can be a sort of omnipresent  
7279 miracle, able not only to arrest attention but to  
7280 fix it, and keep the mind in warm contact with  
7281 the truth, till it yields.

7282  
7283 Hence we see why God has scattered his  
7284 children everywhere, in families and among the  
7285 nations. He never would suffer them to be all  
7286 together in one place, however agreeable it  
7287 might be to their feelings. He wishes them  
7288 scattered. When the church at Jerusalem herded  
7289 together, neglecting to go forth as Christ had  
7290 commanded, to spread the Gospel all over the  
7291 world, God let loose a persecution upon them



7292 and scattered them abroad, and then “they went  
7293 every where preaching the Gospel.” In  
7294 examining the text, I propose to inquire.

7295

7296 I. To what particular points Christians are to  
7297 testify for God.

7298

7299 II. The manner in which they are to testify.

7300

7301 I. To what points are the children of God  
7302 required to testify?

7303

7304 Generally, they are to testify to the truth of the  
7305 Bible. They are competent witnesses to this, for  
7306 they have experience of its truth. The  
7307 experimental Christian has no more need of  
7308 external evidence to prove the truth of the Bible  
7309 to his mind, than he has to prove his own  
7310 existence. The whole plan of salvation is so fully  
7311 spread out and settled in his conviction, that to  
7312 undertake to reason him out of his belief in the  
7313 Bible would be a thing as impracticable as to  
7314 reason him out of the belief in his own existence.  
7315 Men have tried to awaken a doubt of the  
7316 existence of the material world. But they cannot  
7317 succeed. No man can doubt the existence of a  
7318 material world. To doubt it, is against his own  
7319 consciousness. You may use arguments that he

7320 cannot answer, and may puzzle and perplex him,  
7321 and shut up his mouth; he may be no logician or  
7322 philosopher, and unable to detect your fallacies.  
7323 But what he knows he knows.

7324

7325 So it is in religion. The Christian is conscious  
7326 that the Bible is true. The veriest child in  
7327 religion knows by his experience the truth of the  
7328 Bible. He may hear objections from infidels, that  
7329 he never thought of, and that he cannot answer,  
7330 and he may be confounded, but he cannot be  
7331 driven from his ground. He will say, "I cannot  
7332 answer you, but I know the Bible is true."

7333

7334 As if a man should look in a mirror, and say,  
7335 "That's my face." How do you know it is your  
7336 face? "Why, by its looks." So when a Christian  
7337 sees himself drawn and pictured forth in the  
7338 Bible, he sees the likeness to be so exact, that he  
7339 knows it is true. But more particularly,  
7340 Christians are to testify—

7341

7342 1. To the immortality of the soul. This is clearly  
7343 revealed in the Bible.

7344

7345 2. The vanity and unsatisfying nature of all  
7346 earthly good.

7347

- 7348 3. The satisfying nature and glorious sufficiency  
7349 of religion.  
7350
- 7351 4. The guilt and danger of sinners. On this point  
7352 they can speak from experience as well as the  
7353 word of God. They have seen their own sins, and  
7354 they understand more of the nature of sin, and  
7355 the guilt and danger of sinners.  
7356
- 7357 5. The reality of hell, as a place of eternal  
7358 punishment for the wicked.  
7359
- 7360 6. The love of Christ for sinners.  
7361
- 7362 7. The necessity of a holy life, if we think of  
7363 ever getting to heaven.  
7364
- 7365 8. The necessity of self-denial, and living above  
7366 the world.  
7367
- 7368 9. The necessity of meekness, heavenly-  
7369 mindedness, humility, and integrity.  
7370
- 7371 10. The necessity of an entire renovation of  
7372 character and life, for all who would enter  
7373 heaven. These are the subjects on which they are  
7374 to be witnesses for God. And they are bound to

7375 testify in such a way as to constrain men to  
7376 believe the truth.

7377

7378 II. How are they to testify?

7379

7380 By precept and example, on every proper  
7381 occasion, by their lips, but mainly by their lives.  
7382 Christians have no right to be silent with their  
7383 lips; they should rebuke, exhort, and entreat with  
7384 all long-suffering and doctrine. But their main  
7385 influence as witnesses is by their example.

7386

7387 They are required to be witnesses in this way,  
7388 because example teaches with so much greater  
7389 force than precept. This is universally known.  
7390 Actions speak louder than words. But where  
7391 both precept and example are brought to bear, it  
7392 brings the greatest amount of influence to bear  
7393 upon the mind. As to the manner in which they  
7394 are to testify; the way in which they should bear  
7395 witness to the truth of the points specified; in  
7396 general—they should live in their daily walk and  
7397 conversation, as if they believed the Bible.

7398

7399 1. As if they believed the soul to be immortal,  
7400 and as if they believed that death was not the  
7401 termination of their existence, but the entrance  
7402 into an unchanging state. They ought to live so

7403 as to make this impression full upon all around  
7404 them. It is easy to see that precept without  
7405 example on this point will do no good. All the  
7406 arguments in the world will not convince  
7407 mankind that you really believe this, unless you  
7408 live as if you believed it. Your reasoning may be  
7409 unanswerable, but if you do not live accordingly,  
7410 your practice will defeat your arguments. They  
7411 will say you are an ingenious sophist, or an acute  
7412 reasoner, and perhaps admit that they cannot  
7413 answer you; but then they will say, it is evident  
7414 that your reasoning is all false, and that you  
7415 know it is false, because your life contradicts  
7416 your theory. Or that, if it is true, you do not  
7417 believe it, at any rate. And so all the influence of  
7418 your testimony goes to the other side.

7419

7420 2. The vanity and unsatisfying nature of the  
7421 things of this world. You are to testify this by  
7422 your life. The failure in this is the great  
7423 stumbling block in the way of mankind. Here the  
7424 testimony of God's children is needed more than  
7425 any where else. Men are so struck with the  
7426 objects of sense, and so constantly occupied with  
7427 them, that they are very apt to shut out eternity  
7428 from their minds. A small object, that is held  
7429 close to the eye, may shut out the distant ocean.  
7430 So the things of the world, that are near, magnify

7431 so in their minds, that they overlook every thing  
7432 else. One important design in keeping Christians  
7433 in the world is to teach people on this point,  
7434 practically, not to labor for the meat that  
7435 perisheth. But suppose professors of religion  
7436 teach the vanity of earthly things by precept, and  
7437 contradict it in practice. Suppose the women are  
7438 just as fond of dress, and just as particular in  
7439 observing all the fashions, and the men as eager  
7440 to have fine houses and equipage, as the people  
7441 of the world. Who does not see that it would be  
7442 quite ridiculous for them to testify with their  
7443 lips, that this world is all vanity, and its joys  
7444 unsatisfying and empty? People feel this  
7445 absurdity, and it is this that shuts up the lips of  
7446 Christians. They are ashamed to speak to their  
7447 neighbors, while they cumber themselves with  
7448 these gewgaws, because their daily conduct  
7449 testifies to every body the very reverse. How it  
7450 would look for some of the church members in  
7451 this city, male or female, to go about among the  
7452 common people, and talk to them about the  
7453 vanity of the world! Who would believe what  
7454 they say?

7455

7456 3. The satisfying nature of religion. Christians  
7457 are bound to show by their conduct, that they are  
7458 actually satisfied with the enjoyments of

7459 religion, without the pomps and vanities of the  
7460 world; that the joys of religion and communion  
7461 with God keep them above the world. They are  
7462 to manifest that this world is not their home.  
7463 Their profession is, that heaven is a reality, and  
7464 that they expect to dwell there for ever. But  
7465 suppose they contradict this by their conduct,  
7466 and live in such a way as to prove that they  
7467 cannot be happy unless they have a full share of  
7468 the fashion and show of the world, and that as  
7469 for going to heaven, they had much rather  
7470 remain on earth, than to die and go there! What  
7471 do the world think, when they see a profession  
7472 of religion just as much afraid to die as an  
7473 infidel? Such Christians perjure themselves—  
7474 they swear to a lie, for they testify that there is  
7475 nothing in religion for which a person can afford  
7476 to live above the world.

7477

7478 4. The guilt and danger of sinners. Christians are  
7479 bound to warn sinners of their awful condition,  
7480 and exhort them to flee from the wrath to come,  
7481 and lay hold on everlasting life. But who does  
7482 not know that the manner of doing this is every  
7483 thing? Sinners are often struck under conviction  
7484 by the very manner of doing a thing. There was a  
7485 man once very much opposed to a certain  
7486 preacher. On being asked to specify some

7487 reason, he replied, "I cannot bear to hear him,  
7488 for he says the word HELL in such a way that it  
7489 rings in my ears a long time afterwards." He was  
7490 displeased with the very thing that constituted  
7491 the power of speaking that word. The manner  
7492 may be such as to convey an idea directly  
7493 opposite to the meaning of the words. A man  
7494 may tell you that your house is on fire in such a  
7495 way as to make directly the opposite impression,  
7496 and you will take for granted that it is not your  
7497 house that is on fire. The watchman might sing  
7498 out FIRE, FIRE, in such a way that every body  
7499 would think he was either asleep or drunk. A  
7500 certain manner is so usually connected with the  
7501 announcement of certain things that they cannot  
7502 be expressed without that manner. The words  
7503 themselves never alone convey the meaning,  
7504 because the idea can only be fully expressed by a  
7505 particular manner of speaking. Go to a sinner,  
7506 and talk with him about his guilt and danger; and  
7507 if in your manner you make an impression that  
7508 does not correspond, you in effect bear  
7509 testimony the other way, and tell him he is in no  
7510 danger of hell. If the sinner believes at all that he  
7511 is in danger of hell, it is wholly on other grounds  
7512 than your saying so. If you live in such a way as  
7513 to show that you do not feel compassion for  
7514 sinners around you; if you show no tenderness,



7515 by your eyes, your features, your voice; if your  
7516 manner is not solemn and earnest, how can they  
7517 believe you are sincere?

7518

7519 Woman, suppose you tell your converted  
7520 husband, in an easy, laughing way, “My dear, I  
7521 believe you are going to hell;” will he believe  
7522 you? If your life is gay and trifling, you show  
7523 that either you do not believe there is a hell, or  
7524 that you wish to have him go there, and are  
7525 trying to keep off every serious impression from  
7526 his mind. Have you children that are  
7527 unconverted? Suppose you never say any thing  
7528 to them about religion, or when you do talk to  
7529 them it is in such a cold, hard, dry way as shows  
7530 you have no feeling; do you suppose they  
7531 believe you? They don’t see the same coldness  
7532 in you in regard to other things. They are in the  
7533 habit of seeing all the mother in your eye, and in  
7534 the tones of your voice, your emphasis, and the  
7535 like, and feeling the warmth of a mother’s heart  
7536 as it flows out from your lips on all that concerns  
7537 them. If, then, when you talk to them on the  
7538 subject of religion, you are cold and trifling, can  
7539 they suppose you believe it? If your deportment  
7540 holds up before your child this careless,  
7541 heartless, prayerless spirit, and then you talk to  
7542 him about the importance of religion, the child

7543 will go away and laugh, to think you should try  
7544 to persuade him there is a hell.

7545

7546 5. The love of Christ. You are to bear witness to  
7547 the reality of the love of Christ, by the regard  
7548 you show for his precepts, his honor, his  
7549 kingdom. You should act as if you believed that  
7550 he died for the sins of the whole world, and as if  
7551 you blamed sinners for rejecting his great  
7552 salvation. This is the only legitimate way in  
7553 which you can impress sinners with the love of  
7554 Christ. Christians, instead of this, often live so as  
7555 to make the impression on sinners that Christ is  
7556 so compassionate that they have very little to  
7557 fear from him. I have been amazed to see how a  
7558 certain class of professors want ministers to be  
7559 always preaching about the love of Christ. If a  
7560 minister preaches up duty, and urges Christians  
7561 to be holy, and to labor for Christ, they call it all  
7562 legal preaching. They say they want to hear the  
7563 Gospel. Well, suppose you present the love of  
7564 Christ. How will they bear testimony in their  
7565 lives? How will they show that they believe it?  
7566 Why, by conformity to the world, they will  
7567 testify point blank, that they do not believe a  
7568 word of it, and that they care nothing at all for  
7569 the love of Christ, only to have it for a cloak,  
7570 that they can talk about it, and so cover up their

7571 sins. They have no sympathy with his  
7572 compassion, and no belief in it as a reality, and  
7573 no concern for the feelings of Christ, which fill  
7574 his mind when he sees the condition of sinners.  
7575

7576 6. The necessity of holiness in order to enter  
7577 heaven. It will not do to depend on talking about  
7578 this. They must live holy, and thus testify that  
7579 men need not expect to be saved, unless they are  
7580 holy. The idea has so long prevailed that we  
7581 cannot be perfect here, that many professors do  
7582 not so much as seriously aim at a sinless life.  
7583 They cannot honestly say that they ever so much  
7584 as really meant to live without sin. They drift  
7585 along before the tide, in a loose, sinful, unhappy  
7586 and abominable manner, at which, doubtless, the  
7587 devil laughs, because it is, of all others, the  
7588 surest way to hell.

7589  
7590 7. The necessity of self-denial, humility, and  
7591 heavenly-mindedness. Christians ought to show  
7592 by their own example what the religion is which  
7593 is expected of men. That is the most powerful  
7594 preaching, after all, and the most likely to have  
7595 influence on the impenitent, by showing them  
7596 the great difference between them and  
7597 Christians. Many people are trying to make men  
7598 Christians by a different course, by copying as

7599 near as possible their present manner of life, and  
7600 conforming to them as much as will possibly do.  
7601 They seem to think they can make men fall in  
7602 with religion best by bringing religion down to  
7603 their standard. As if the nearer you bring religion  
7604 to the world, the more likely the world would be  
7605 to embrace it. Now all this is as wide as the  
7606 poles from the true philosophy of making  
7607 Christians. But it is always the policy of carnal  
7608 professors. And they think they are displaying  
7609 wonderful sagacity and prudence by taking so  
7610 much pains not to scare people at the mighty  
7611 strictness and holiness of the Gospel. They argue  
7612 that if you exhibit religion to mankind as  
7613 requiring such a great change in their manner of  
7614 life, such innovations upon their habits, such a  
7615 separation from their old associates, why, you  
7616 will drive them all away. This seems plausible at  
7617 first sight. But it is not true. Let professors live  
7618 in this lax and easy way, and sinners say, “Why,  
7619 I do not see but I am about right, or at least so  
7620 near right, that it is impossible God should send  
7621 me to hell for the difference between me and  
7622 these professors. It is true, they do a little more  
7623 than I do, they go to the communion table, and  
7624 pray in their families, and a few such like little  
7625 things, but they cannot make any such great  
7626 difference as heaven and hell.” No, the true way

7627 is, to exhibit religion and the world in strong  
7628 contrast, or you never can make sinners feel the  
7629 necessity of a change. Until the necessity of this  
7630 fundamental change is embodied and held forth  
7631 in a strong light by example, how can you make  
7632 men believe they are going to be sent to hell if  
7633 they are not wholly transformed in heart and  
7634 life?

7635

7636 This is not only true in philosophy, but it has  
7637 been proved by the history of the world. Look at  
7638 the missions of the Jesuits in Japan, by Francis  
7639 Xavier and his associates. How they lived, what  
7640 a contrast they showed between their religion  
7641 and the heathen, and what results followed! Now  
7642 I was reading a letter from one of our  
7643 missionaries in the East, who writes, I believe, to  
7644 this effect, that a missionary must be able to rank  
7645 with the English nobility, and so recommend his  
7646 religion to the respect of the natives. He must get  
7647 away up above them, so as to show a superiority,  
7648 and thus impress them with respect! Is this  
7649 philosophy? Is this the way to convert the world.  
7650 You can no more convert the world in this way  
7651 than by blowing a ram's horn. It has no tendency  
7652 that way. What did the Jesuits do? They went  
7653 about among the people in the daily practice of  
7654 self-denial before their eyes, teaching, and

7655 preaching, and praying, and laboring, unwearied  
7656 and unawed, mingling with every caste and  
7657 grade, bringing down their instructions to the  
7658 capacity of every individual. And in that way the  
7659 mission carried idolatry before it like a wave of  
7660 the sea, and all at once their religion spread over  
7661 the vast empire of Japan. And if they had not  
7662 meddled with politics and brought themselves in  
7663 needless collision with the government, no doubt  
7664 they would have held their ground till this day. I  
7665 am not saying anything in regard to the religion  
7666 they taught, for I am not sure how much truth  
7667 they preached with it. I speak only of their  
7668 following the true policy of missions, by  
7669 showing, by their lives, the religion they taught  
7670 in wide contrast with a worldly spirit and the  
7671 fooleries of idolatry. This one feature of their  
7672 policy so commended itself to the consciences of  
7673 the people that it was irresistible. If Christians  
7674 contradict this one point, and attempt to  
7675 accommodate their religion to the worldliness of  
7676 men, they render the salvation of the world  
7677 impossible. How can you make people believe  
7678 that self-denial and separation from the world  
7679 are necessary, unless you practise them?  
7680  
7681 8. Meekness, humility, and heavenly-  
7682 mindedness. The people of God should always

7683 show a temper like the Son of God, who when  
7684 he was reviled, reviled not again. If a professor  
7685 of religion is irritable, and ready to resent an  
7686 injury, and fly in a passion, and take the same  
7687 measures as the world do to get redress, by  
7688 going to law and the like, how is he to make  
7689 people believe there is any reality in a change of  
7690 heart? They cannot recommend religion while  
7691 they have such a spirit. If you are in the habit of  
7692 resenting injurious conduct; if you do not bear it  
7693 meekly, and put the best construction that can be  
7694 on it, you contradict the Gospel. Some people  
7695 always show a bad spirit, ever ready to put the  
7696 worst construction on what is done, and take fire  
7697 at any little thing. This shows a great want of  
7698 that charity which “hopeth all things, believeth  
7699 all things, endureth all things,” But if a man  
7700 always shows meekness under injuries, it will  
7701 confound gainsaying. Nothing makes so solemn  
7702 an impression upon sinners, and bears down  
7703 with such a tremendous weight on their  
7704 consciences, as to see a Christian, Christ-like  
7705 bearing affronts and injuries with the meekness  
7706 of a lamb. It cuts like a two-edged sword.

7707

7708 I will mention a case to show this. A young man  
7709 abused a minister to his face, and reviled him in  
7710 an unprecedented manner. The minister

7711 possessed his soul in patience, and spoke mildly  
7712 in reply, telling him the truth pointedly, but yet  
7713 in a very kind manner. This only made him the  
7714 more angry, and at length he went away in a  
7715 rage, declaring that he was not going to stay and  
7716 bear this vituperation. As if it was the minister,  
7717 instead of himself, that had been scolding. The  
7718 sinner went away, but with the arrows of the  
7719 Almighty in his heart, and in less than half an  
7720 hour he followed the minister to his lodgings in  
7721 intolerable agony, wept, and begged forgiveness,  
7722 and broke down before God, and yielded up his  
7723 heart to Christ. This calm and mild manner was  
7724 more overwhelming to him than a thousand  
7725 arguments. Now if that minister had been thrown  
7726 off his guard, and answered harshly, no doubt he  
7727 would have ruined the soul of that young man.  
7728 How many of you have defeated every future  
7729 effort you may make with your impenitent  
7730 friends or neighbors, in some such way as this.  
7731 On some occasion you have showed yourself so  
7732 irascible, that you have sealed up your own lips,  
7733 and laid a stumbling block over which that  
7734 sinner will stumble into hell. If you have done it  
7735 in any instance, do not sleep till you have done  
7736 all you can to retrieve the mischief; till you have  
7737 confessed the sin and done every thing to  
7738 counteract it as far as possible.



7739

7740

9. The necessity of entire honesty in a Christian.

7741

Oh what a field opens here for remark! But I

7742

cannot go over it fully now. It extends to all the

7743

departments of life. Christians need to show the

7744

strictest regard to integrity in every department

7745

of business, and in all their intercourse with their

7746

fellow-men. If every Christian would pay a

7747

scrupulous regard to honesty, and always be

7748

conscientious to do exactly right, it would make

7749

a powerful impression on the minds of people of

7750

the reality of religious principle.

7751

7752

A lady was once buying some eggs in a store,

7753

and the clerk made a miscount and gave her one

7754

more than the number. She saw it at the time, but

7755

said nothing, and after she got home it troubled

7756

her. She felt that she had acted wrong, soon

7757

hurried back to the young man and confessed it

7758

and paid the difference. The impression of her

7759

conscientious integrity went to his heart like a

7760

sword. It was a great sin in her to conceal the

7761

miscount, because the temptation was so small;

7762

for if she would cheat him out of an egg, it

7763

showed that she would cheat him out of his

7764

whole store, if she could do it and not be found

7765

out. But her prompt and humble confession

7766

showed an honest conscience.

7767

7768 I am happy to say, there are some men who deal  
7769 on this principle of integrity. And the wicked  
7770 hate them for it. They rail against them, and  
7771 vociferate in bar-rooms, that they never will buy  
7772 goods of such and such individuals, that such a  
7773 hypocrite shall never touch a dollar of their  
7774 money, and all that, and then they will go right  
7775 away and buy of them, because they know they  
7776 shall be honestly dealt with. This is a testimony  
7777 to the truth of religion, that is heard from  
7778 Georgia to Maine. Suppose all Christians did so,  
7779 what would be the consequence? Christians  
7780 would run away with the business of the city.  
7781 The Christians would soon do the business of the  
7782 world. The great argument which some  
7783 Christians urge, that if they do not do business  
7784 upon the common principle, of stating one price  
7785 and taking another, they cannot compete with  
7786 men of the world, is all false—false in  
7787 philosophy and false in history. Only make it  
7788 your invariable rule to do right, and do business  
7789 upon principle, and you control the market. The  
7790 ungodly will be obliged to conform to your  
7791 standard. It is perfectly in the power of the  
7792 church to regulate the commerce of the world, if  
7793 they will only themselves maintain perfect  
7794 integrity.

7795

7796 And if Christians will do the same in politics,  
7797 they will sway the destinies of nations, without  
7798 involving themselves at all in the base and  
7799 corrupting strife of parties. Only let Christians  
7800 generally determine to vote for no man for any  
7801 office, that is not an honest man and a man of  
7802 pure morals, and let it be known that Christians  
7803 are united in this, whatever may be their  
7804 difference in political sentiments, and no man  
7805 would be put up who is not such a character. In  
7806 three years it would be talked about in taverns  
7807 and published in newspapers, when any man is  
7808 set up as a candidate for office, “What a good  
7809 man he is, how moral, how pious!” and the like.  
7810 And any political party would no more set up a  
7811 known Sabbath-breaker, or a gambler, or a  
7812 profane swearer, or a whoremonger, or a rum-  
7813 seller, as their candidate for office, than they  
7814 would set up the devil himself for president. The  
7815 carnal policy of many professors, who undertake  
7816 to correct politics by such means as wicked men  
7817 employ, and who are determined to vote with a  
7818 party, let the candidate be ever so profligate, is  
7819 all wrong—wrong in principle, contrary to  
7820 philosophy and common sense, and ruinous to  
7821 the best interests of mankind. The dishonesty of  
7822 the church is cursing the world. I am not going

7823 to preach a political sermon, I assure you. But I  
7824 want to show you, that if you mean in impress  
7825 men favorably to your religion by your lives,  
7826 you must be honest, strictly honest, in business,  
7827 politics, and every thing you do. What do you  
7828 suppose those ungodly politicians, who know  
7829 themselves to be playing a dishonest game in  
7830 carrying an election, think of your religion when  
7831 they see you uniting with them? They know you  
7832 are a hypocrite!

7833

7834 REMARKS.

7835

7836 1. It is unreasonable for professors of religion to  
7837 wonder at the thoughtlessness of sinners.—  
7838 Every thing considered, the carelessness of  
7839 sinners is not wonderful. We are affected by  
7840 testimony, and only by that testimony which is  
7841 received by our minds. Sinners are so taken up  
7842 with business, pleasure, and the things of the  
7843 world, that they will not examine the Bible to  
7844 find out what religion is. Their feelings are  
7845 excited only on worldly subjects, because these  
7846 only are brought into warm contact with their  
7847 minds. The things of the world make therefore a  
7848 strong impression. But there is so little to make  
7849 an impression on their minds in respect to  
7850 eternity, and to bring religion home to them, that

7851 they do not feel on the subject. If they examined  
7852 the subject they would feel. But they do not  
7853 examine it, nor think upon it, nor care for it. And  
7854 they never will, unless God's witnesses rise up  
7855 and testify. But inasmuch as the great body of  
7856 Christians in fact live so as to testify on the other  
7857 side by their conduct, how can we expect that  
7858 sinners will feel right on the subject? Nearly all  
7859 the testimony and all the influence that comes to  
7860 their minds tends to make them feel the other  
7861 way. God has left his cause here before the  
7862 human race, and left his witnesses to testify in  
7863 his behalf, and behold, they turn round and  
7864 testify the other way! Is it any wonder that  
7865 sinners are careless?

7866  
7867 2. We see why it is that preaching does so little  
7868 good; and how it is that so many sinners get  
7869 Gospel-hardened. Sinners that live under the  
7870 Gospel are often supposed to be Gospel-  
7871 hardened; but only let the church wake up, and  
7872 act consistently, and they will feel. If the church  
7873 were to live only one week as if they believed  
7874 the Bible, sinners would melt down before them.  
7875 Suppose I were a lawyer, and should go into  
7876 court and spread out my client's case, the issue  
7877 is joined, and I make my statements, and tell  
7878 what I expect to prove, and then call in my

7879 witnesses. The first witness takes his oath, and  
7880 then rises up and contradicts me to my face.  
7881 What good will all my pleading do? I might  
7882 address the jury a month, and be as eloquent as  
7883 Cicero, but so long as my witnesses contradicted  
7884 me, all my pleading would do no good. Just so it  
7885 is with a minister who is preaching in the midst  
7886 of a cold, stupid, and God-dishonoring church.  
7887 In vain does he hold up to view the great truths  
7888 of religion, when every member of the church is  
7889 ready to swear he lies. Why, in such a church,  
7890 their very manner of going out of the aisles  
7891 contradicts the sermon. They press out as  
7892 cheerful and as easy, bowing to one another, and  
7893 whispering together, as if nothing was the  
7894 matter. Let the minister warn every man daily  
7895 with tears, it will produce no effect. If the devil  
7896 should come in and see the state of things, he  
7897 would think he could not better the business for  
7898 his interest.

7899  
7900 Yet there are ministers who will go on in this  
7901 way for years, preaching over the heads of such  
7902 a people, that by their lives contradict every  
7903 word they say, and they think it their duty to do  
7904 so. Duty! To preach to a church that are undoing  
7905 all his work, and contradicting all his testimony,  
7906 and that will not alter! No. Let him shake off the

7907 dust from his feet for a testimony, and go to the  
7908 heathen, or to the new settlements. The man is  
7909 wasting his energies, and wearing out his life,  
7910 and just rocking the cradle for a sleepy church,  
7911 all testifying to sinners, there is no danger. Their  
7912 whole lives are a practical testimony that the  
7913 Bible is not true. Shall ministers continue to  
7914 wear themselves out so? Probably not less than  
7915 ninety-nine-hundredths of the preaching in this  
7916 country is lost, because it is contradicted by the  
7917 church. Not one truth in a hundred that is  
7918 preached takes effect, because the lives of  
7919 professors testify that it is not so.

7920

7921 3. It is evident that the standard of Christian  
7922 living must be raised, or the world will never be  
7923 converted. If we had as many church members  
7924 now as there are families, and scattered all over  
7925 the world, and a minister to every five hundred  
7926 souls, and every child in a Sabbath-school, and  
7927 every young person in a Bible-class, you would  
7928 have all the machinery you want, but if the  
7929 church contradict the truth by their lives, it never  
7930 would produce a revival.

7931

7932 They never will have a revival in any place  
7933 while the whole church in effect testify against  
7934 the minister. Often it is the case that where there

7935 is the most preaching, there is the least religion,  
7936 because the church contradict the preaching. I  
7937 never knew means fail of a revival where  
7938 Christians live consistently. One of the first  
7939 things is to raise the standard of religion, so as to  
7940 embody and hang out in the sight of all men, the  
7941 truth of the Gospel. Unless ministers can get the  
7942 church to wake up and act as if religion was true,  
7943 and back their testimony by their lives, in vain  
7944 will they attempt to promote a revival.

7945

7946 Many churches are depending on their minister  
7947 to do everything. When he preaches, they will  
7948 say, “What a great sermon that was. He’s an  
7949 excellent minister. Such preaching must do  
7950 good. We shall have a revival soon, I do not  
7951 doubt.” And all the while they are contradicting  
7952 the preaching by their lives. I tell you, if they are  
7953 depending on preaching alone to carry on the  
7954 work, they must fail. If Jesus Christ were to  
7955 come and preach, and the church contradict it, he  
7956 would fail. It has been tried once. Let an apostle  
7957 rise from the dead, or an angel come down from  
7958 heaven and preach, without the church to  
7959 witness for God, and it would have no effect.  
7960 The novelty might produce a certain kind of  
7961 effect for a time, but as soon as the novelty was



7962 gone, the preaching would have no saving effect,  
7963 while contradicted by the witnesses.

7964

7965 4. Every Christian makes an impression by his  
7966 conduct, and witnesses either for one side or the  
7967 other. His looks, dress, whole demeanor, make a  
7968 constant impression on one side or the other. He  
7969 cannot help testifying for or against religion. He  
7970 is either gathering with Christ, or scattering  
7971 abroad. Every step you take, you tread on chords  
7972 that will vibrate to all eternity. Every time you  
7973 move, you touch keys whose sound will re-echo  
7974 over all the hills and dales in heaven, and  
7975 through all the dark caverns and vaults of hell.  
7976 Every movement of your lives, you are exerting  
7977 a tremendous influence, that will tell on the  
7978 immortal interests of souls all around you. Are  
7979 you asleep, while all your conduct is exerting  
7980 such an influence?

7981

7982 Are you going to walk in the street? Take care  
7983 how you dress. What is that on your head? What  
7984 does that gaudy ribbon, and those ornaments  
7985 upon your dress, say to every one that meets  
7986 you? It makes the impression that you wish to be  
7987 thought pretty. Take care! You might just as well  
7988 write on your clothes, "NO TRUTH IN  
7989 RELIGION." It says, "GIVE ME DRESS, GIVE

7990 ME FASHION, GIVE ME FLATTERY, AND I  
7991 AM HAPPY.” The world understand this  
7992 testimony as you walk the streets. You are  
7993 “living epistles, known and read of all men.” If  
7994 you show pride, levity, bad temper, and the like,  
7995 it is like tearing open the wounds of the Saviour.  
7996 How Christ might weep to see professors of  
7997 religion going about hanging up his cause to  
7998 contempt at the comers of streets. Only “let the  
7999 women adorn themselves in modest apparel,  
8000 with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with  
8001 broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array,  
8002 but (which becometh women professing  
8003 godliness) with good works;” only let them act  
8004 consistently, and their conduct will tell on the  
8005 world, heaven will rejoice and hell groan at their  
8006 influence. But oh, let them display vanity, try to  
8007 be pretty, bow down to the goddess of fashion,  
8008 fill their ears with ornaments, and their fingers  
8009 with rings. Let them put feathers in their hats,  
8010 and clasps upon their arms, lace themselves up  
8011 till they can hardly breathe. Let them put on their  
8012 “round tires and walk mincing as they go,” and  
8013 their influence is reversed. Heaven puts on the  
8014 robes of mourning, and hell may hold a jubilee.  
8015  
8016 5. It is easy to see why revivals do not prevail in  
8017 a great city. How can they? Just look at God’s

8018 witnesses, and see what they are testifying to.  
8019 They seem to be agreed together to tempt the  
8020 Spirit of the Lord, and lie to the Holy Ghost.  
8021 They make their vows to God, to consecrate  
8022 themselves wholly to him, and then go bowing  
8023 down at the shrine of fashion, and then wonder  
8024 there are no revivals. It would be more than a  
8025 miracle to have a revival under such  
8026 circumstances. How can a revival prevail in this  
8027 church? Do you suppose I have such a vain  
8028 imagination of my own ability, as to think I can  
8029 promote a revival by preaching over your heads,  
8030 while you live on as some of you do? Do you not  
8031 know that so far as your influence goes, many of  
8032 you are right in the way of a revival? Your spirit  
8033 and deportment produce an influence on the  
8034 world against religion. How shall the world  
8035 believe religion, when the witnesses are not  
8036 agreed among themselves? You contradict  
8037 yourselves, you contradict one another, and you  
8038 contradict your minister, and the sum of the  
8039 whole testimony is, there is no need of being  
8040 pious.

8041  
8042 Do you believe the things I have been preaching  
8043 are true, or are they the ravings of a disturbed  
8044 mind? If they are true, do you recognize the fact  
8045 that they have reference to you? You say,

8046 perhaps, "I wish some of the rich churches could  
8047 hear it!" Why, I am not preaching to them, I am  
8048 preaching to you. My responsibility is to you,  
8049 and my fruits must come from you. Now are you  
8050 contradicting it? What is the testimony on the  
8051 leaf of the record that is now sealed for the  
8052 judgment concerning this day? Have you  
8053 manifested a sympathy with the Son of God,  
8054 when his heart is bleeding in view of the  
8055 desolations of Zion? Have your children, clerks,  
8056 servants, seen it to be so? Have they seen a  
8057 solemnity on your countenance, and tears in  
8058 your eyes, in view of perishing souls?

8059

8060 Finally.—I must close by remarking, that God  
8061 and all moral beings have great reason to  
8062 complain of this false testimony. There is ground  
8063 to complain that God's witnesses turn and testify  
8064 point-blank against him. They declare by their  
8065 conduct that there is no truth in the Gospel.  
8066 Heaven might weep and hell rejoice to see this.  
8067 Oh, how guilty! Here you are, going to the  
8068 judgment, red all over with blood. Sinners are to  
8069 meet you there, those who have seen how you  
8070 live, many of them already dead, and many  
8071 others you will never see again. What an  
8072 influence you have exerted! Perhaps hundreds of  
8073 souls will meet you in the judgment, and curse

8074 you (if they are allowed to speak) for leading  
8075 them to hell, by practically denying the truth of  
8076 the Gospel. What will become of this city, and of  
8077 the world, when the church is united in  
8078 practically testifying that God is a liar? They  
8079 testify by their lives, that if they make a  
8080 profession and live a moral life, that is religion  
8081 enough. Oh, what a doctrine of devils is that!  
8082 Enough to ruin the whole human race.

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## LECTURE X.

8087

8088

### TO WIN SOULS REQUIRES WISDOM.

8089

8090

Text.—He that winneth souls is wise.—Proverbs

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xi. 30.

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THE most common definition of wisdom is, that it is the choice of the best end and the selection of the most appropriate means for the accomplishment of that end—the best adaptation of means to secure a desired end. “He that winneth souls,” God says, “is wise.” The object of this evening’s lecture is to direct Christians in the use of means for accomplishing their infinitely desirable end, the salvation of souls.

8102 To-night I shall confine my attention to the  
8103 private efforts of individuals for the conversion  
8104 and salvation of men. On another occasion,  
8105 perhaps I shall use the same text in speaking of  
8106 what is wise in the public preaching of the  
8107 Gospel, and the labors of ministers. In giving  
8108 some directions to aid private Christians in this  
8109 work, I propose,  
8110  
8111 I. To show Christians how they should deal with  
8112 careless sinners.  
8113  
8114 II. How they should deal with awakened sinners.  
8115  
8116 III. How they should deal with convicted  
8117 sinners.  
8118  
8119 I. The manner of dealing with careless sinners.  
8120  
8121 1. In regard to the time. It is important that you  
8122 should select a proper time to try to make a  
8123 serious impression on the mind of a careless  
8124 sinner. Much depends on timing your efforts  
8125 right. For if you fail of selecting the most proper  
8126 time, very probably you will be defeated. True,  
8127 you may say, it is your duty at all times to warn  
8128 sinners, and try to awaken them to think of their  
8129 souls. And so it is; yet if you do not pay due

8130 regard to the time and opportunity, your hope of  
8131 success may be very doubtful.

8132

8133 (1.) It is desirable, if possible, to address a  
8134 person that is careless, when he is disengaged  
8135 from other employments. In proportion as his  
8136 attention is taken up with something else, it will  
8137 be difficult to awaken him to religion. People  
8138 who are careless and indifferent to religion are  
8139 often offended, rather than benefited, by being  
8140 called off from important and lawful business.  
8141 For instance, a minister perhaps goes to visit the  
8142 family of a merchant, or mechanic, or farmer,  
8143 and finds the man absorbed in his business;  
8144 perhaps he calls him off from his work when it is  
8145 urgent, and the man is uneasy and irritable, and  
8146 feels as if it was an intrusion. In such a case,  
8147 there is little room to expect any good.

8148 Notwithstanding it is true that religion is  
8149 infinitely more important than all his worldly  
8150 business, and he ought to postpone everything to  
8151 the salvation of his soul, yet he does not feel it,  
8152 for if he did he would no longer be a careless  
8153 sinner, and therefore he regards it as  
8154 unjustifiable, and gets offended. You must take  
8155 him as you find him, a careless, impenitent  
8156 sinner, and deal with him accordingly. He is  
8157 absorbed in other things, and very apt to be

8158 offended if you take such a time to interfere and  
8159 call his attention to religion.

8160

8161 (2.) It is important to take a person, if possible,  
8162 at a time when he is not strongly excited with  
8163 any other subject. If that is the case, he is in an  
8164 unfit frame to be addressed on the subject of  
8165 religion. In proportion to the strength of that  
8166 excitement, would be the probability that you  
8167 would do no good. You may possibly reach him;  
8168 persons have had their minds arrested and turned  
8169 to religion in the midst of a powerful excitement  
8170 on other subjects. But it is not likely.

8171

8172 (3.) Be sure that the person is perfectly sober. It  
8173 used to be more common that it is now for  
8174 people to drink spirits every day, and become  
8175 more or less intoxicated. Precisely in proportion  
8176 as they are so, they are rendered unfit to be  
8177 approached on the subject of religion. If they  
8178 have been drinking beer, or cider, or wine, so  
8179 that you can smell their breath, you may know  
8180 there is but little chance of producing any lasting  
8181 effect on them. I have had professors of religion  
8182 bring persons to me, pretending they were under  
8183 conviction; for you know that people in liquor  
8184 are often very fond of talking upon religion; but  
8185 as soon as I came near them, so as to smell their



8186 breath, I have asked, Why do you bring this  
8187 drunken man to me? Why, they say, he is not  
8188 drunk, he has only drank a little. Well, that little  
8189 has made him a little drunk. He is drunk if you  
8190 can smell his breath, The cases are exceedingly  
8191 rare where a person has been truly convicted,  
8192 who had any intoxicating liquor in him.

8193

8194 (4.) If possible, where you wish to converse with  
8195 a man on the subject of salvation, take him when  
8196 he is in a good temper. If you find him out of  
8197 humor, very probably he will get angry and  
8198 abuse you. Better let him alone for that time, or  
8199 you will be likely to quench the Spirit. It is  
8200 possible you may be able to talk in such a way as  
8201 to cool his temper, but it is not likely. The truth  
8202 is, men hate God, and though their hatred may  
8203 be dormant, it is easily excited, and if you bring  
8204 God fully before their minds when they are  
8205 already excited with anger, it will be so much  
8206 the easier to arouse their enmity to open  
8207 violence.

8208

8209 (5.) If possible, always take an opportunity to  
8210 converse with careless sinners when they are  
8211 alone. Most men are too proud to be conversed  
8212 with freely respecting themselves in the presence  
8213 of others, even their own family. A man in such

8214 circumstances will brace up all his powers to  
8215 defend himself, while if he was alone he would  
8216 melt down under the truth. He will resist the  
8217 truth, or try to laugh it off, for fear that if he  
8218 should manifest any feeling somebody will go  
8219 and report that he is serious.

8220

8221 In visiting families, instead of calling the family  
8222 together at the same time to be talked to, the  
8223 better way is to see them all, one at a time. There  
8224 was a case of this kind. Several young ladies, of  
8225 a proud, gay, and fashionable character, lived  
8226 together in a fashionable family. Two men were  
8227 strongly desirous to get the subject of religion  
8228 before them, but were at a loss how to  
8229 accomplish it, for fear they would all combine,  
8230 and counteract or resist every serious  
8231 impression. At length they took this course.  
8232 They called and sent up their card to one of the  
8233 young ladies by name. She came down and they  
8234 conversed with her on the subject of her  
8235 salvation, and as she was alone, she not only  
8236 treated them politely, but seemed to receive the  
8237 truth with seriousness. A day or two after, they  
8238 called in like manner on another, and then  
8239 another, and so on, till they had conversed with  
8240 every one separately. In a little time they were  
8241 all, I believe, every one, hopefully converted.

8242 This was as it should be, for then they could not  
8243 keep each other in countenance. And then the  
8244 impression made on one was followed up with  
8245 the others, so that one was not left to exert a bad  
8246 influence over the rest.

8247

8248 There was a pious woman who kept a boarding  
8249 house for young gentlemen; she had twenty-one  
8250 or two of them in her family, and at length she  
8251 became very anxious for their salvation; she  
8252 made it a subject of prayer, but saw no  
8253 seriousness among them. At length she saw that  
8254 there must be something done besides praying,  
8255 and yet she did not know what to do. One  
8256 morning after breakfast, as they were retiring,  
8257 she asked one of them to stop a few minutes. She  
8258 took him to her room, and conversed with him  
8259 tenderly on the subject of religion, and prayed  
8260 with him. She followed up the impression made,  
8261 and pretty soon he was hopefully converted.

8262 Then there were two, and they addressed  
8263 another, and prayed with him, and soon he was  
8264 prepared to join them. Then another, and so on,  
8265 taking one at a time, and letting none of the rest  
8266 know what was going on, so as not to alarm  
8267 them, till every one of these young men was  
8268 converted to God. Now if she had brought the  
8269 subject before the whole of them together, very

8270 likely they would have turned it all into ridicule;  
8271 or perhaps they would have been offended and  
8272 left the house, and then she could have had no  
8273 further influence over them. But taking one  
8274 alone, and treating him respectfully and kindly,  
8275 he had no such motive for resistance as arises  
8276 out of the presence of others.

8277

8278 (6.) Try to seize an opportunity to converse with  
8279 a careless sinner, when the events of Providence  
8280 seem to favor your design. If any particular  
8281 event should occur, calculated to make a serious  
8282 impression, be sure to improve the occasion  
8283 faithfully.

8284

8285 (7.) Seize the earliest opportunity to converse  
8286 with those around you who are careless. Do not  
8287 put it off from day to day, thinking a better  
8288 opportunity will come. You must seek an  
8289 opportunity, and if none offers make one.  
8290 Appoint a time and place, and get an interview  
8291 with your friend or neighbor, where you can  
8292 speak to him freely. Send him a note, go to him  
8293 on purpose, make it look like a matter of  
8294 business, as if you were in earnest in  
8295 endeavoring to promote his soul's salvation.  
8296 Then he will feel that it is a matter of  
8297 importance, at least in your eyes. Follow it up till

8298 you succeed, or become convinced nothing can  
8299 now be done.

8300

8301 (8.) If you have any feeling for a particular  
8302 individual, take an opportunity to converse with  
8303 that individual while this feeling continues. If it  
8304 is a truly benevolent feeling, you have reason to  
8305 believe the Spirit of God is moving you to desire  
8306 the salvation of his soul, and that God is ready to  
8307 bless your efforts for his conversion. In such a  
8308 case, make it the subject of special and  
8309 importunate prayer, and seek an early  
8310 opportunity to pour out all your heart to him and  
8311 bring him to Christ.

8312

8313 2. In regard to the manner of doing all this.

8314

8315 (1.) When you approach a careless individual to  
8316 endeavor to awaken him to his soul's concerns,  
8317 be sure to treat him kindly. Let him see that you  
8318 address him, not because you seek a quarrel with  
8319 him, but because you love his soul, and desire  
8320 his best good in time and eternity. If you are  
8321 harsh and overbearing in your manner, you will  
8322 probably offend him and drive him farther off  
8323 from the way of life.

8324

8325 (2.) Be solemn. Avoid all lightness of manner or  
8326 language. Levity will produce any thing but a  
8327 right impression. You ought to feel that you are  
8328 engaged in a very solemn work, which is going  
8329 to affect the character of your friend or neighbor,  
8330 and probably determine his destiny for eternity.  
8331 Who could trifle and use levity in such  
8332 circumstances if his heart was sincere?

8333

8334 (3.) Be respectful. Some seem to suppose it  
8335 necessary to be abrupt, and rude, and coarse in  
8336 their intercourse with the careless and  
8337 impenitent. Nothing can be a greater mistake.  
8338 The Apostle Paul has given us a better rule on  
8339 the subject, where he says, "Be pitiful, be  
8340 courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing  
8341 for railing, but contrariwise blessing." A rude  
8342 and coarse address is only calculated to give an  
8343 unfavorable opinion both of you and your  
8344 religion.

8345

8346 (4.) Be sure to be very plain. Do not suffer  
8347 yourself to cover up any circumstance of the  
8348 person's character, and his relations to God. Lay  
8349 it all open, not for the purpose of offending or  
8350 wounding him, but because it is necessary.  
8351 Before you can cure a wound, you must probe it

8352 to the bottom. Keep back none of the truth, but  
8353 let it come out plainly before him.

8354

8355 (5.) Be sure to address his conscience. In public  
8356 addresses, ministers often get hold of the  
8357 feelings only, and thus awaken the mind. But in  
8358 private conversation you cannot do so. You  
8359 cannot pour out the truth in an impassioned and  
8360 rousing manner. And unless you address the  
8361 conscience pointedly, you get no hold of the  
8362 mind at all.

8363

8364 (6.) Bring the great and fundamental truths to  
8365 bear upon the person's mind. Sinners are very  
8366 apt to run off upon some pretext or some  
8367 subordinate point, especially some point of  
8368 sectarianism. For instance, if the man is a  
8369 Presbyterian, he will try to turn the conversation  
8370 on the points of difference between  
8371 Presbyterians and Methodists. Or he will fall  
8372 foul of old school divinity. Do not yield to him,  
8373 or talk with him on any such point; it will do  
8374 more hurt than good. Tell him the present  
8375 business is to save his soul, and not to settle  
8376 controverted questions in theology. Hold him to  
8377 the great fundamental points, by which he must  
8378 be saved or lost.

8379

8380 (7.) Be very patient. If he has a real difficulty in  
8381 his mind, be very patient till you find out what it  
8382 is, and then clear it up. If what he alleges is a  
8383 mere cavil, make him see that it is a cavil. Do  
8384 not try to answer it by argument, but show him  
8385 that he is not sincere in advancing it. It is not  
8386 worth while to spend your time in arguing  
8387 against a cavil, but make him feel that he is  
8388 committing sin to plead it, and thus enlist his  
8389 conscience on your side.

8390

8391 (8.) Be careful to guard your own spirit. There  
8392 are many people who have not good temper  
8393 enough to converse with those who are much  
8394 opposed to religion. And such a person wants no  
8395 better triumph than to see you angry. He will go  
8396 away exulting because he has made one of these  
8397 saints mad.

8398

8399 (9.) If the sinner is inclined to intrench himself  
8400 against God, be careful not to take his part in  
8401 anything. If he says he cannot do his duty, do not  
8402 take sides with him, or say any thing to  
8403 countenance his falsehood. Do not tell him he  
8404 cannot, or help him maintain himself in the  
8405 controversy against his Maker. Sometimes a  
8406 careless sinner will go to finding fault with  
8407 Christians. Do not take his part or side with him



8408 against Christians. Just tell him he has not got  
8409 their sins to answer for, and he had better see to  
8410 his own concerns. If you fall in with him, he  
8411 feels that he has you on his side. Show him that  
8412 it is a censorious and wicked spirit that prompts  
8413 him to make these remarks, and not a regard for  
8414 the honor of religion or the laws of Jesus Christ.

8415

8416 (10.) Bring up the individual's particular sins.  
8417 Talking in general terms against sin will produce  
8418 no results. You must make a man feel that you  
8419 mean him. A minister who cannot make his  
8420 hearers feel that he means them, cannot expect to  
8421 accomplish much. Some people are very careful  
8422 to avoid mentioning the particular sins of which  
8423 they know the individual to be guilty, for fear of  
8424 hurting his feelings. This is wrong. If you know  
8425 his history, bring up his particular sins, kindly  
8426 but plainly, not to give offence, but to awaken  
8427 conscience, and give full force to the truth.

8428

8429 (11.) It is generally best to be short, and not spin  
8430 out what we have to say. Get the attention as  
8431 soon as you can to the very point, say a few  
8432 things and press them home, and bring the  
8433 matter to an issue. If possible, get them to repent  
8434 and give themselves to Christ at the time. This is  
8435 the proper issue. Carefully avoid making an

8436 impression that you do not expect them to repent  
8437 NOW.

8438

8439 (12.) If possible, when you converse with  
8440 sinners, be sure to pray with them. If you  
8441 converse with them, and leave them without  
8442 praying, you leave your work undone.

8443

8444 II. The manner of dealing with awakened  
8445 sinners.

8446

8447 1. You should be careful to distinguish between  
8448 an awakened sinner, and one who is under  
8449 conviction. When you find a person who feels a  
8450 little on the subject of religion, do not take it for  
8451 granted that he is convicted of sin, and thus omit  
8452 to use means to show him his sin. Persons are  
8453 often awakened by some providential  
8454 circumstance, as sickness, a thunderstorm,  
8455 pestilence, death in the family, disappointment,  
8456 or the like, or by the Spirit of God, so that their  
8457 ears are open, and they are ready to hear on the  
8458 subject of religion with attention and  
8459 seriousness, and some feeling. If you find a  
8460 person awakened, no matter by what means, lose  
8461 no time in pouring light upon his mind, Do not  
8462 be afraid, but show him the breadth of the  
8463 Divine law, and the exceeding strictness of its

8464 precepts. Make him see how it condemns his  
8465 thoughts and life. Search out his heart, find what  
8466 is there, and bring it up before his mind, as far as  
8467 you can. If possible, melt him down on the spot.  
8468 When once you have got a sinner's attention,  
8469 very often his conviction and conversion is the  
8470 work of a few moments. You can sometimes do  
8471 more in five minutes, than in years or a whole  
8472 life while he is careless or indifferent.

8473

8474 I have been amazed at the conduct of those cruel  
8475 parents, and other heads of families, who will let  
8476 an awakened sinner be in their families for days  
8477 and weeks, and not say a word to him on the  
8478 subject. Why, they say, if the Spirit of God has  
8479 begun a work in him, he will certainly carry it  
8480 on! Perhaps the person is anxious to converse,  
8481 and puts himself in the way of Christians, as  
8482 often as possible, expecting they will converse  
8483 with him, and they do not say a word. Amazing!  
8484 Such a person ought to be looked out  
8485 immediately, as soon as he is awakened, and let  
8486 a blaze of light be poured into his mind without  
8487 delay. Whenever you have reason to believe that  
8488 a person within your reach is awakened, do not  
8489 sleep till you have poured in the light upon his  
8490 mind, and tried to bring him to immediate  
8491 repentance. Then is the time to press the subject

8492 with effect. If that favorable moment is lost, it  
8493 can never be recovered.

8494

8495 I have often seen Christians in revivals, who  
8496 were constantly on the look-out to see if any  
8497 persons appeared to be awakened. And as soon  
8498 as they saw any one begin to manifest feeling  
8499 under preaching, they would mark him, and as  
8500 soon as the meeting was out, invite him to a  
8501 room and converse and pray with him, and if  
8502 possible not leave him till he was converted. A  
8503 remarkable case of this kind occurred in a town  
8504 at the West. A merchant came to the place from  
8505 a distance to buy goods. It was a time of  
8506 powerful revival, but he was determined to keep  
8507 out of its influence, and so he would not go to  
8508 any meeting at all. At length he found everybody  
8509 so much engaged in religion that it met him at  
8510 every turn, and he got vexed, and swore he  
8511 would go home. There was so much religion  
8512 there, he said, he could not do any business, and  
8513 he would not stay. Accordingly he took his seat  
8514 for the stage, which was to leave at four o'clock  
8515 the next morning. As he spoke of going away, a  
8516 gentleman belonging to the house, who was one  
8517 of the young converts, asked him if he would not  
8518 go to a meeting once before he left town. He  
8519 finally consented, and went to the meeting. The

8520 sermon took hold of his mind, but not with  
8521 sufficient power to bring him into the kingdom.  
8522 He returned to his lodgings, and called the  
8523 landlord to pay his bill. The landlord, who had  
8524 himself recently experienced religion, saw that  
8525 he was agitated. He accordingly spoke to him on  
8526 the subject of religion, and the man burst into  
8527 tears. The landlord immediately called in three  
8528 or four young converts, and they prayed and  
8529 exhorted him, and at four o'clock in the  
8530 morning, when the stage called, he went on his  
8531 way rejoicing in God! When he got home, he  
8532 called his family together, confessed to them his  
8533 past sins, and avowed his determination to live  
8534 differently, and prayed with them for the first  
8535 time. It was so unexpected that it was soon  
8536 noised abroad, people began to inquire, and a  
8537 revival broke out in the place. Now, suppose  
8538 these Christians had done as some do, been  
8539 careless, and let the man go off, slightly  
8540 impressed? It is not probable he ever could have  
8541 been saved. Such opportunities are often lost for  
8542 ever, when once the favorable moment is passed.  
8543  
8544 III. The manner of dealing with convicted  
8545 sinners.  
8546

8547 By a convicted sinner I mean one who feels  
8548 himself condemned by the law of God, as a  
8549 guilty sinner. He has so much instruction as to  
8550 understand something of the extent of God's  
8551 law, and he sees and feels his guilty state, and  
8552 knows what his remedy is. To deal with these  
8553 often requires great wisdom. There are some  
8554 most trying cases occur, when it is extremely  
8555 difficult to know what to do with them.

8556

8557 1. When a person is convicted and not  
8558 converted, but remains in an anxious state, there  
8559 is generally some specific reason for it. In such  
8560 cases, it does no good to exhort him to repent, or  
8561 to explain the law to him. He knows all that, he  
8562 understands all these general points. But still he  
8563 does not repent. Now there must be some  
8564 particular difficulty to overcome. You may  
8565 preach and pray, and exhort till doomsday, and  
8566 not gain anything.

8567

8568 You must then set yourself to inquire what is  
8569 that particular difficulty. A physician, when he is  
8570 called to a patient, and finds him sick with a  
8571 particular disease, first administers the general  
8572 remedies that are applicable to that disease. If  
8573 they produce no effect, and the disease still  
8574 continues, he must examine the case, and learn

8575 the constitution of the individual, and his habits,  
8576 diet, manner of living, etc., and see what the  
8577 matter is that the medicine does not take effect.  
8578 So it is with the case of a sinner convicted but  
8579 not converted. If your ordinary instructions and  
8580 exhortations fail, there must be a difficulty. The  
8581 particular difficulty is often known to the  
8582 individual himself, though he keeps it concealed.  
8583 Sometimes it is something that has escaped even  
8584 his own observations.

8585

8586 (1.) Sometimes the individual has some idol,  
8587 something which he loves more than God, which  
8588 prevents him from giving himself up. You must  
8589 search out and see what it is that he will not give  
8590 up. Perhaps it is wealth, perhaps some earthly  
8591 friend, perhaps gay dress, or gay company, or  
8592 some favorite amusement. At any rate there is  
8593 something on which his heart is so set that he  
8594 will not yield to God.

8595

8596 (2.) Perhaps he has done an injury to some  
8597 individual, that calls for redress, and he is  
8598 unwilling to confess it or to make a just  
8599 recompense. Now, until he will confess and  
8600 forsake this sin, he can find no mercy. If he has  
8601 injured the person in property, or character, or  
8602 has abused him, he must make it up. If you can it

8603 find out, tell him plainly and frankly, that there is  
8604 no hope for him till he is willing to confess it,  
8605 and to do what is right.

8606

8607 (3.) Sometimes there is some particular sin,  
8608 which he will not forsake. He pretends it is only  
8609 a small one, or tries to persuade himself it is no  
8610 sin. No matter how small it is, he can never get  
8611 into the kingdom of God till he gives it up.

8612 Sometimes an individual has seen it to be a sin  
8613 to use tobacco, and he never can find true peace  
8614 till he gives it up. Perhaps he is looking upon it  
8615 as a small sin.

8616

8617 But God knows nothing about small sins in such  
8618 a case. What is the sin? Why it is injuring your  
8619 health, setting a bad example, and taking God's  
8620 money, which you are bound to employ in his  
8621 service, and spending it for tobacco. What would  
8622 a merchant say, if he found one of his clerks in  
8623 the habit of going to the money drawer, and  
8624 taking money enough to keep him in cigars?  
8625 Would he call it a small offence? No, he would  
8626 say he deserved to be sent to the State prison. I  
8627 mention this particular sin, because I have found  
8628 it to be one of the things to which men who are  
8629 convicted will hold on when they know it is



8630 wrong, and then wonder why they do not find  
8631 peace.

8632

8633 (4.) See if there is not some work of  
8634 remuneration, which he is bound to do. Perhaps  
8635 he has defrauded somebody in trade, or taken  
8636 some unfair advantage, contrary to the golden  
8637 rule of doing as you would be done by, and is  
8638 unwilling to make satisfaction. This is a very  
8639 common sin among merchants and men of  
8640 business. I have known many melancholy  
8641 instances, where men have grieved away the  
8642 Spirit of God, or else have been driven well nigh  
8643 to absolute despair because they were unwilling  
8644 to give satisfaction where they have done such  
8645 things. Now it is plain that such persons never  
8646 can have forgiveness until they do it.

8647

8648 (5.) They may have intrenched themselves  
8649 somewhere, and fortified their minds in regard to  
8650 some particular point, which they are determined  
8651 not to yield. For instance, they may have taken  
8652 strong ground that they will not do a particular  
8653 thing. I knew a man who was determined not to  
8654 go into a certain grove to pray. Several other  
8655 persons during the revival had gone into the  
8656 grove, and there, by prayer and meditation,  
8657 given themselves to God. His own clerk had

8658 been converted there. The lawyer himself was  
8659 awakened, but he was determined that he would  
8660 not go into the grove. He had powerful  
8661 convictions, and went on for weeks in this way,  
8662 with no relief. He tried to make God believe that  
8663 it was not pride that kept him from Christ; and  
8664 so, when he was going home from meeting, he  
8665 would kneel down in the street and pray. And  
8666 not only that, but he would look round for a  
8667 mud-puddle in the street, in which he might  
8668 kneel, to show that he was not proud. He once  
8669 prayed all night in his parlor, but he would not  
8670 go into the grove. His distress was so great, and  
8671 he was so angry with God, that he was strongly  
8672 tempted to make way with himself, and actually  
8673 threw away his knife for fear he should cut his  
8674 throat. At length he concluded he would go into  
8675 the grove and pray, and as soon as he got there  
8676 he was converted, and went and poured out his  
8677 full heart to God.

8678  
8679 So individuals are sometimes intrenched in a  
8680 determination that they will not go to a particular  
8681 meeting, perhaps the inquiry meeting, or some  
8682 prayer meeting, or they will not have a certain  
8683 person pray with them, or they will not take a  
8684 particular seat, such as the anxious seat. They  
8685 say that they can be converted just as well

8686 without yielding this point, for religion does not  
8687 consist in this, going to a particular meeting, or  
8688 taking a particular attitude in prayer, or a  
8689 particular seat. This is true, but by taking this  
8690 ground they make it the material point. And so  
8691 long as they are intrenched there, and determined  
8692 to bring God to their terms, they never can be  
8693 converted. Sinners will often yield any thing  
8694 else, and do any thing in the world, but yield the  
8695 point upon which they have committed  
8696 themselves, and taken a stand against God. They  
8697 cannot be humbled until they yield this point,  
8698 whatever it is. And if without yielding it they get  
8699 a hope, it will be a false hope.

8700

8701 (6.) Perhaps he has a prejudice against some one,  
8702 a member of the church perhaps, on account of  
8703 some faithful dealing with his soul, or something  
8704 in his business that he did not like, and he hangs  
8705 on this and will never be converted till he gives  
8706 it up. Whatever it be, you should search it out  
8707 and tell him the truth plainly and faithfully.

8708

8709 (7.) He may feel ill will towards some one, or be  
8710 angry, and cherish strong feelings of resentment,  
8711 which prevent him from obtaining mercy from  
8712 God. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye  
8713 have aught against any: that your Father also

8714 which is in heaven may forgive you your  
8715 trespasses. But, if ye do not forgive, neither will  
8716 your Father which is in heaven forgive your  
8717 trespasses.”

8718

8719 (8.) Perhaps he entertains some errors in  
8720 doctrine, or some wrong notions respecting the  
8721 thing to be done, or the way of doing it, which  
8722 may be keeping him out of the kingdom. Perhaps  
8723 he is waiting for God. He is convinced that he  
8724 deserves to go to hell, and that unless he is  
8725 converted he must go there, but he is waiting for  
8726 God to do something to him before he submits.  
8727 He is in fact waiting for God to do for him what  
8728 he has required the sinner to do.

8729

8730 He may be waiting for more conviction. People  
8731 often do not know what conviction is, and think  
8732 they are not under conviction, when in fact they  
8733 are under powerful conviction. They often think  
8734 nothing is conviction unless they have great  
8735 fears of hell. But the fact is, individuals often  
8736 have strong convictions, who have very little  
8737 fear of hell. Show them what is the truth, and let  
8738 them see they have no need to wait.

8739

8740 Perhaps he may be waiting for certain feelings,  
8741 which somebody else has had before he obtained

8742 mercy. This is very common in revivals, where  
8743 some one of the first converts has told of  
8744 remarkable experiences. Others who are  
8745 awakened are very apt to think they must wait  
8746 for just such feelings. I knew a young man thus  
8747 awakened; his companion had been converted in  
8748 a remarkable way, and this one was waiting for  
8749 just such feelings. He said he was using the  
8750 means, and praying for them, but finally found  
8751 that he was a Christian, although he had not been  
8752 through the course of feeling he expected.

8753

8754 Sinners often lay out a plan of the way they  
8755 expect to feel, and how they expect to be  
8756 converted and in fact lay out the work for God,  
8757 determined that they will go in that path or not at  
8758 all. Tell them this is all wrong, they must not lay  
8759 out any such path beforehand, but let God lead  
8760 them as he sees to be best. God always leads the  
8761 blind by a way they know not. There never was a  
8762 sinner brought into the kingdom through such a  
8763 course of feeling as he expected. Very often they  
8764 are amazed to find that they are in, and have had  
8765 no such exercises as they expected.

8766

8767 It is very common for persons to be waiting to  
8768 be made subjects of prayer, or for some  
8769 particular means to be used, or to see if they

8770 cannot make themselves better. They are so  
8771 wicked, they say, that they cannot come to  
8772 Christ. They want to try, by humiliation, and  
8773 suffering, and prayer, to fit themselves to come.  
8774 You will have to hunt them out of all these  
8775 refuges. It is astonishing into how many corners  
8776 they will often run before they will go to Christ.  
8777 I have known persons almost deranged for the  
8778 want of a little correct instruction.

8779  
8780 Sometimes such people think their sins are too  
8781 great to be forgiven, or that they have grieved  
8782 the Spirit of God away, when that Spirit is all the  
8783 while convicting them. They pretend their sins  
8784 are greater than Christ's mercies, thus actually  
8785 insulting the Lord Jesus Christ.

8786  
8787 Sometimes sinners get the idea that they are  
8788 given up of God, and that now they cannot be  
8789 saved. It is often very difficult to beat persons  
8790 off from this ground. Many of the most  
8791 distressing cases I have ever met with have been  
8792 of this character, where persons would insist  
8793 upon it that they were given up and nothing  
8794 would change them.

8795  
8796 In a place where I was laboring in a revival I  
8797 went one day into the meeting, and before the

8798 exercises commenced I heard a low moaning,  
8799 distressing, unearthly noise. I looked and saw  
8800 several women gathered round the person who  
8801 made it. They said it was a woman in despair.  
8802 She had been a long time in that state. Her  
8803 husband was a drunkard. He had brought her to  
8804 meeting and gone himself to the tavern. I  
8805 conversed with her and saw her state, and that it  
8806 was very difficult to reach her case. As I was  
8807 going away to commence the exercises she said  
8808 she must go out, for she could not hear praying  
8809 or singing. I told her she must not go, and told  
8810 the ladies to detain her, if necessary, by force. I  
8811 felt that if the devil had hold of her, God was  
8812 stronger than the devil, and could deliver her.  
8813 The exercises began, and she made some noise  
8814 at first. But by and by she looked up. The subject  
8815 was chosen with special reference to her case,  
8816 and as it proceeded, her attention was gained,  
8817 her eyes were fixed—I never shall forget how  
8818 she looked—her eyes and mouth open, her head  
8819 up, and she almost rose from her seat as the truth  
8820 poured in upon her mind. Finally, as the truth  
8821 knocked away every foundation on which her  
8822 despair had rested, she shrieked out, put her head  
8823 down, and sat perfectly still till the meeting was  
8824 out. I went to her, and found her perfectly calm  
8825 and happy in God. I saw her long afterwards,

8826 and she remained so. Thus Providence threw her  
8827 where she never expected to be, and compelled  
8828 her to hear instruction adapted to her case. You  
8829 may often do incalculable good by finding out  
8830 precisely where the difficulty lies, and then bring  
8831 the truth to bear right on that point.

8832

8833 Sometimes persons will strenuously maintain  
8834 that they have committed the unpardonable sin.  
8835 When they get that idea into their minds, they  
8836 will turn every thing you say against themselves.  
8837 In some such cases, it is a good way to take them  
8838 on their own ground, and reason with them in  
8839 this way; “Suppose you have committed the  
8840 unpardonable sin, what then? It is reasonable  
8841 that you should submit to God, and be sorry for  
8842 your sins, and break off from them, and do all  
8843 the good you can, even if God will not forgive  
8844 you. Even if you go to hell you ought to do this.”  
8845 Press this thought and turn it over until you find  
8846 they understand and consent to it,

8847

8848 It is common for persons in such cases to keep  
8849 their eyes on themselves; they will shut  
8850 themselves up and keep looking at their own  
8851 darkness, instead of looking away to Christ.  
8852 Now if you can take their minds off from  
8853 themselves, and get them to think of Christ, you



8854 may draw them away from brooding over their  
8855 own present feelings, and get them to lay hold  
8856 on the hope set before them in the Gospel.

8857

8858 2. Be careful, in conversing with convicted  
8859 sinners, not to make any compromise with them  
8860 on any point where they have a difficulty. If you  
8861 do, they will be sure to take advantage of it, and  
8862 thus get a false hope. Convicted sinners often get  
8863 into a difficulty, in regard to giving up some  
8864 darling sin, or yielding some point where  
8865 conscience and the Holy Ghost are at war with  
8866 them. And if they come across an individual who  
8867 will yield the point, they feel better and are  
8868 happy, and think they are converted. The young  
8869 man who came to Christ was of this character.  
8870 He had one difficulty, and Jesus Christ knew just  
8871 what it was. He knew he loved his money, and  
8872 instead of compromising the matter and thus  
8873 trying to comfort him, he just put his finger on  
8874 the very place and told him, "Go sell all that  
8875 thou hast, and give to the poor, and come follow  
8876 me." What was the effect? Why the young man  
8877 went away sorrowful. Very likely, if Christ had  
8878 told him to do any thing else, he would have felt  
8879 relieved, and would have got a hope; would have  
8880 professed himself a disciple, joined the church,  
8881 and gone to hell.

8882

8883 People are often amazingly anxious to make a  
8884 compromise. They will ask such questions as  
8885 this, Whether you do not think a person may be a  
8886 Christian and yet do such and such things; or if  
8887 he may not be a Christian and not do such and  
8888 such things? Now, do not yield an inch to any  
8889 such questions. These questions themselves may  
8890 often show you the very point that is laboring in  
8891 their minds. They will show you that it is pride,  
8892 or love of the world, or something of the kind,  
8893 which prevents their becoming Christians.

8894

8895 Be careful to make thorough work on this point,  
8896 the love of the world. I believe there have been  
8897 more false hopes built on wrong instructions  
8898 here, than in any other way. I once heard a  
8899 Doctor of Divinity trying to persuade his hearers  
8900 to give up the world; and he told them “if they  
8901 would only give it up, God would give it right  
8902 back to them again. He is willing you should  
8903 enjoy the world.” Miserable! God never gives  
8904 back the world to the Christian, in the same  
8905 sense that he requires a convicted sinner to give  
8906 it up. He requires us to give up the ownership of  
8907 everything to him, so that we shall never again  
8908 for a moment consider it as our own. A man  
8909 must not think he has a right to judge for himself

8910 how much of his property he shall lay out for  
8911 God. One man thinks he may spend twenty  
8912 thousand dollars a year to support his family; he  
8913 has a right to do it, because he has the means of  
8914 his own. Another thinks he may lay up five  
8915 hundred thousand dollars. One man said the  
8916 other day, that he had promised he never would  
8917 give any of his property to educate young men  
8918 for the ministry. When he is applied to, he just  
8919 answers, "I have said I never will give to any  
8920 such object, and I never will." Man! did Jesus  
8921 Christ ever tell you to do so with his money?  
8922 Has he laid down any such rule? Remember it is  
8923 his money you are talking about, and if he wants  
8924 it to educate ministers, you withhold it at your  
8925 peril. That man has yet to learn the first principle  
8926 of religion, that he is not his own, and that the  
8927 money which he possesses is Jesus Christ's.

8928

8929 Here is the great reason why the church is so full  
8930 of false hopes. Men have been left to suppose  
8931 they could be Christians while holding on to  
8932 their money. And this has served as a clog to  
8933 every enterprise. It is an undoubted fact that the  
8934 church has funds enough to supply the world  
8935 with Bibles, and tracts, and missionaries,  
8936 immediately. But the truth is, that professors of  
8937 religion do not believe that the "earth is the

8938 Lord's, and the fullness thereof." Every man  
8939 supposes he has a right to decide what  
8940 appropriation he shall make of his own money.  
8941 And they have no idea that Jesus Christ shall  
8942 dictate to them on the subject.

8943

8944 Be sure to deal thoroughly on this point. The  
8945 church is now filled up with hypocrites, because  
8946 they were never made to give up the world. They  
8947 never were made to see that unless they made an  
8948 entire consecration of all to Christ, all their time,  
8949 all their talents, all their influence, all their  
8950 possessions, they would never get to heaven.

8951 Many think they can be Christians, and yet  
8952 dream along through life, and use all their time  
8953 and property for themselves, only giving a little  
8954 now and then, to save appearances, when they  
8955 can do it with perfect convenience. But it is a sad  
8956 mistake, and they will find it so, if they do not  
8957 employ their energies for God. And when they  
8958 die, instead of finding heaven at the end of the  
8959 path they are pursuing, they will find hell there.

8960

8961 In dealing with a convicted sinner, be sure to  
8962 drive him away from every refuge, and not leave  
8963 him an inch of ground to stand on, so long as he  
8964 resists God. This need not take a long time to do.  
8965 When the Spirit of God is at work striving with a

8966 sinner, it is easy to drive him from his refuges.  
8967 You will find the truth will be like a hammer,  
8968 crushing wherever it strikes. Make clean work  
8969 with it, so that he shall give up all for God.

8970

8971 Make the sinner see clearly the nature and extent  
8972 of the Divine law, and press the main question of  
8973 entire submission to God. Bear down on that  
8974 point as soon as you have made him clearly  
8975 understand what you aim at, and do not turn off  
8976 upon anything else.

8977

8978 Be careful in illustrating the subject, not to  
8979 mislead the mind so as to leave the impression  
8980 that a selfish submission will answer, or a selfish  
8981 acceptance of the atonement, or a selfish giving  
8982 up to Christ and receiving him, as if a man was  
8983 making a good bargain, giving up his sins and  
8984 receiving salvation in exchange. This is mere  
8985 barter, and not submission to God. Leave no  
8986 ground in your explanations or illustrations, for  
8987 such a view of the matter. Man's selfish heart  
8988 will eagerly seize such a view of religion, if it be  
8989 presented, and very likely close in with it, and  
8990 thus get a false hope.

8991

8992 Another time I shall call your attention to certain  
8993 things that are to be avoided in dealing with  
8994 sinners.

8995

8996 REMARKS.

8997

8998 1. Make it an object of constant study and of  
8999 daily reflection and prayer, to learn how to deal  
9000 with sinners, so as to promote their conversion.

9001 It is the great business on earth of every  
9002 Christian, to save souls. People often complain  
9003 that they do not know how to take hold of this  
9004 matter. Why, the reason is plain enough; they  
9005 have never studied it. They never took the proper  
9006 pains to qualify themselves for the work of  
9007 saving souls. If people made it no more a matter  
9008 of attention and thought to qualify themselves  
9009 for their worldly business, than they do to save  
9010 souls, how do you think they would succeed?  
9011 Now, if you are thus neglecting the main  
9012 business of life, what are you living for? If you  
9013 do not make it a matter of study, how you may  
9014 most successfully act in building up the kingdom  
9015 of Christ, you are acting a very wicked and  
9016 absurd part as a Christian.

9017

9018 2. Many professors of religion do more hurt than  
9019 good, when they attempt to talk to impenitent

9020 sinners. They have so little knowledge and skill,  
9021 that their remarks rather divert attention than  
9022 increase it.

9023

9024 3. Be careful to find the point where the Spirit of  
9025 God is pressing a sinner, and press the same  
9026 point in all your remarks. If you divert his  
9027 attention from that point, you will be in great  
9028 danger of destroying his convictions. Take pains  
9029 to learn the state of his mind, what he is thinking  
9030 of, how he feels, and what he feels most deeply  
9031 upon, and then press that thoroughly, and do not  
9032 divert his mind by talking about anything else.  
9033 Do not fear to press that point, for fear of driving  
9034 him to distraction. Some people fear to press a  
9035 point to which the mind is tremblingly alive, lest  
9036 they should injure the mind, notwithstanding the  
9037 Spirit of God is evidently debating that point  
9038 with the sinner. This is an attempt to be wiser  
9039 than God. You should clear up the point, throw  
9040 the light of truth all around it, and bring the soul  
9041 to yield, and then the mind is at rest.

9042

9043 4. Great evils have arisen, and many false hopes  
9044 have been created, by not discriminating  
9045 between an awakened and a convicted sinner.  
9046 For the want of this, persons who are only  
9047 awakened are immediately pressed to submit;

9048 “you must repent,” “submit to God,” when they  
9049 are not in fact convinced of their guilt, nor  
9050 instructed so far as even to know what  
9051 submission means. This is one way in which  
9052 revivals have been greatly injured by  
9053 indiscriminate exhortations to repent,  
9054 unaccompanied with proper instruction.  
9055

9056 5. Anxious sinners are to be regarded as being in  
9057 a very solemn and critical state. They have in  
9058 fact come to a turning point. It is a time when  
9059 their destiny is likely to be settled for ever. The  
9060 Spirit of God will not strive always. Christians  
9061 ought to feel deeply for them. In many respects  
9062 their circumstances are more solemn than the  
9063 judgment day. Here their destiny is settled. The  
9064 judgment day reveals it. And the particular time  
9065 when it is done is when the Spirit is striving with  
9066 them. Christians should remember their awful  
9067 responsibility at such times. The physician, if he  
9068 knows any thing of his duty, sometimes feels  
9069 himself under a very solemn responsibility. His  
9070 patient is in a critical state, where a little error  
9071 will destroy life, and he hangs quivering  
9072 between life and death. If such responsibility is  
9073 felt in relation to the body, what awful  
9074 responsibility should be felt in relation to the  
9075 soul, when it is seen to hang trembling on a



9076 point, and its destiny is now to be decided. One  
9077 false impression, one indiscreet remark, one  
9078 sentence misunderstood, a slight diversion of  
9079 mind may wear him the wrong way, and his soul  
9080 is lost. Never was an angel employed in a more  
9081 solemn work than that of dealing with sinners  
9082 who are under conviction. How solemnly and  
9083 carefully then should Christians walk, how  
9084 wisely and skillfully work, if they do not mean  
9085 to be the means of damning a soul!

9086

9087 Finally.—If there is a sinner in this house, let me  
9088 say to him, Abandon all your excuses. You have  
9089 been told to-night that they are all vain. To-night  
9090 it will be told in hell, and told in heaven, and  
9091 echoed from the ends of the universe, what you  
9092 decide to do. This very hour may seal your  
9093 eternal destiny. Will you submit to God to-  
9094 night—NOW?

9095

9096

9097

9098 LECTURE XI.

9099

9100 A WISE MINISTER WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

9101

9102 Text.—He that winneth souls is wise.—Proverbs  
9103 xi. 30.

9104

9105 I PREACHED last Friday evening from the  
9106 same text, on the method of dealing with sinners  
9107 by private Christians. My object at this time is to  
9108 take up the more public means of grace, with  
9109 particular reference to the

9110

9111 DUTIES OF MINISTERS.

9112

9113 As I observed in my last lecture, wisdom is the  
9114 choice and pursuit of the best end by the most  
9115 appropriate means. The great end for which the  
9116 Christian Ministry was appointed, is to glorify  
9117 God in the salvation of souls. In speaking on this  
9118 subject I propose to show,

9119

9120 I. That a right discharge of the duties of a  
9121 minister requires great wisdom.

9122

9123 II. That the amount of success in the discharge  
9124 of his duties (other things being equal) decides  
9125 the amount of wisdom employed by him in the  
9126 exercise of his office.

9127

9128 I. I am to show that a right discharge of the  
9129 duties of a minister requires great wisdom.

9130

9131 1. On account of the opposition it encounters.  
9132 The very end for which the ministry is appointed  
9133 is one against which is arrayed the most  
9134 powerful opposition of sinners themselves. If  
9135 men were willing to receive the Gospel, and  
9136 there were nothing needed to be done but to tell  
9137 the story of redemption, a child might convey  
9138 the news. But men are opposed to the Gospel.  
9139 They are opposed to their own salvation, in this  
9140 way. Their opposition is often violent and  
9141 determined. I once saw a maniac who had  
9142 formed designs against his own life, and he  
9143 would exercise the utmost sagacity and cunning  
9144 to effect his purpose. He would be as artful and  
9145 make his keepers believe he had no such design,  
9146 that he had given it all up, and would appear as  
9147 mild and sober, and at the instant the keeper was  
9148 off his guard he would lay hands on himself. So  
9149 sinners often exercise great cunning in evading  
9150 all the efforts that are made to save them. And to  
9151 meet this dreadful cunning, and overcome it so  
9152 as to save men, ministers need a great amount of  
9153 wisdom.

9154  
9155 2. The particular means appointed to be  
9156 employed in the work show the necessity of  
9157 great wisdom in ministers. If men were  
9158 converted by an act of physical omnipotence,

9159 creating some new taste, or something like that,  
9160 and if sanctification were nothing but the same  
9161 physical omnipotence rooting out the remaining  
9162 roots of sin from the soul, it would not require so  
9163 much sagacity and skill to win souls. Nor would  
9164 there then be any meaning in the text. But the  
9165 truth is that regeneration and sanctification are to  
9166 be effected by moral means—by argument and  
9167 not by force. There never was and never will be  
9168 any one saved by any thing but truth as the  
9169 means. Truth is the outward means, the outward  
9170 motive, presented first by man and then by the  
9171 Holy Spirit. Take into view the opposition of the  
9172 sinner himself, and you see that nothing, after  
9173 all, short of the wisdom of God and the moral  
9174 power of the Holy Spirit, can break down this  
9175 opposition, and bring him to submit to God. Still  
9176 the means are to be used by men, and means  
9177 adapted to the end, skillfully used. God has  
9178 provided that the work of conversion and  
9179 sanctification shall in all cases be done by means  
9180 of that kind of truth, applied in that connection  
9181 and relation, which is fitted to produce such a  
9182 result.

9183

9184 3. He has the powers of earth and hell to  
9185 overcome, and that calls for wisdom. The devil  
9186 is constantly at work, trying to prevent the

9187 success of ministers, laboring to divert the  
9188 attention from the subject of religion, and to get  
9189 the sinner away from God and lead him down to  
9190 hell. The whole framework of society, almost, is  
9191 hostile to religion. Nearly all the influences  
9192 which surround a man from his cradle to his  
9193 grave, in the present state of society, are  
9194 calculated to defeat the design of the ministry.  
9195 Does not a minister then need great wisdom to  
9196 conflict with the powers of darkness, and the  
9197 whole influence of the world, in addition to the  
9198 sinner's own opposition?

9199

9200 4. The same is seen from the infinite importance  
9201 of the end itself. The end of the ministry is the  
9202 salvation of the soul. When we consider the  
9203 importance of the end, and the difficulties of the  
9204 work, who will not say with the apostle, "Who is  
9205 sufficient for these things?"

9206

9207 5. He must understand how to wake up the  
9208 church, and get them out of the way of the  
9209 conversion of sinners. This is often the most  
9210 difficult part of a minister's work, and requires  
9211 more wisdom and patience than any thing else.  
9212 Indeed, to do this successfully, is a most rare  
9213 qualification in the Christian ministry. It is a  
9214 point where almost all ministers fail. They know

9215 not how to wake up the church, and raise the  
9216 tone of piety to a high standard, and thus clear  
9217 the way for the work of conversion. Many  
9218 ministers can preach to sinners very well, but  
9219 gain little success, while the counteracting  
9220 influence of the church resists it all, and they  
9221 have not skill enough to remove the difficulty.  
9222 There is only here and there a minister in the  
9223 country who knows how to probe the church  
9224 when they are in a cold, backslidden state, so as  
9225 effectually to wake them up and keep them  
9226 awake. The members of the church sin against  
9227 such light, that when they become cold it is very  
9228 difficult to rouse them up. They have a form of  
9229 piety which wards off the truth, while at the  
9230 same time it is just that kind of piety which has  
9231 no power nor efficiency. Such professors are the  
9232 most difficult individuals to arouse from their  
9233 slumbers. I do not mean that they are always  
9234 more wicked than the impenitent. They are often  
9235 employed about the machinery of religion, and  
9236 pass for very good Christians, but are of no use  
9237 in a revival.

9238  
9239 I know ministers are sometimes amazed to hear  
9240 it said that churches are not awake. No wonder  
9241 such ministers do not know how to wake a  
9242 sleeping church. There was a young licentiate

9243 heard brother Foote the other day, in this city,  
9244 pouring out truth, and trying to wake up the  
9245 churches, and he knew so little about it that he  
9246 thought it was abusing the churches. So perfectly  
9247 blind was he that he really thought the churches  
9248 in New York were all awake on the subject of  
9249 religion. So some years ago there was a great  
9250 controversy and opposition raised, because so  
9251 much was said about the churches being asleep.  
9252 It was all truth, yet many ministers knew nothing  
9253 about it, and were astonished to hear such things  
9254 said about the churches. When it has come to  
9255 this, that ministers do not know when the church  
9256 is asleep, no wonder that we have no revivals. I  
9257 was invited once to preach at a certain place. I  
9258 asked the minister what was the state of the  
9259 church. "Oh," says he, "to a man they are  
9260 awake." I was delighted at the idea of laboring in  
9261 such a church, for it was a sight I had never yet  
9262 seen, to see every single member awake in a  
9263 revival. But when I got there I found the church  
9264 sleepy and cold, and I doubt whether one of  
9265 them was awake.

9266  
9267 Here is the great difficulty in keeping up  
9268 revivals, to keep the church thoroughly awake  
9269 and engaged. It is one thing for a church to get  
9270 up in their sleep and bluster about and run over

9271 each other, and a widely different thing for them  
9272 to have their eyes open, and their senses about  
9273 them, and be wide awake, so as to know how to  
9274 find God and how to work for Christ.

9275

9276 5. He must know how to set the church to work  
9277 when they are awake. If a minister attempts to  
9278 go to work alone, calculating to do it all himself,  
9279 it is like attempting to roll a great stone up a hill  
9280 alone. The church can do much to help forward a  
9281 revival. Churches have sometimes had powerful  
9282 revivals without any minister. But when a  
9283 minister has a church who are awake, and knows  
9284 how to set them to work, and how to sit at the  
9285 helm and guide them, he may feel strong, and  
9286 oftentimes may find that they do more than he  
9287 does himself, in the conversion of sinners.

9288

9289 6. In order to be successful, a minister needs  
9290 great wisdom to know how to keep the church to  
9291 the work. Often the church seem just like  
9292 children. You set children to work, and they  
9293 appear to be all engaged, but as soon as your  
9294 back is turned they will stop and go to play. The  
9295 great difficulty in continuing a revival lies here.  
9296 And to meet it requires great wisdom. To know  
9297 how to break them down again, when their heart  
9298 gets lifted up because they have had such a great



9299 revival; to wake them up afresh when their zeal  
9300 begins to flag; to keep their hearts full of zeal for  
9301 the work; these are some of the most difficult  
9302 things in the world. Yet if a minister would be  
9303 successful in winning souls, he must know when  
9304 they first begin to grow proud, or to lose the  
9305 spirit of prayer, and when to probe them and  
9306 how to search them over again, how to keep the  
9307 church in the field gathering the harvest of the  
9308 Lord.

9309

9310 7. He must understand the Gospel. But you will  
9311 ask, Do not all ministers understand the Gospel?  
9312 I answer, that they certainly do not all  
9313 understand it alike, for they do not all preach  
9314 alike.

9315

9316 8. He must know how to divide it, so as to bring  
9317 forward the particular truths, in that order, and to  
9318 make them bear upon those points and at such  
9319 times as are calculated to produce a given result.  
9320 A minister should understand the philosophy of  
9321 the human mind, so as to know how to plan and  
9322 arrange his labors wisely. Truth, when brought  
9323 to bear upon the mind, is in itself calculated to  
9324 produce corresponding feelings. The minister  
9325 must know what feelings he wishes to produce,  
9326 and how to bring such truth to bear as is

9327 calculated to produce these feelings. He must  
9328 know how to present truth calculated to humble  
9329 Christians, or to make them feel for sinners, or to  
9330 awaken sinners, or to convert them.

9331

9332 Often, when sinners are awakened, the ground is  
9333 lost for the want of wisdom in following up the  
9334 blow. Perhaps a rousing sermon is preached,  
9335 Christians are moved, and sinners begin to feel,  
9336 and the next Sabbath something will be brought  
9337 forward that has no connection with the state of  
9338 feeling in the congregation, and that is not  
9339 calculated to lead the mind on to the exercise of  
9340 repentance, faith or love. It shows how important  
9341 it is that a minister should understand how to  
9342 produce a given impression, at what time it may  
9343 and should be done, and by what truth, and how  
9344 to follow it up, till the sinner is broken down and  
9345 brought in.

9346

9347 A great many good sermons preached are all lost  
9348 for the want of a little wisdom here. They are  
9349 good sermons, and calculated, if well timed, to  
9350 do great good; but they have so little connection  
9351 with the actual state of feeling in the  
9352 congregation, that it would be more than a  
9353 miracle if they should produce a revival. A  
9354 minister may preach in this random way till he

9355 has preached himself to death, and never  
9356 produce any great results. He may convert here  
9357 and there a scattering soul; but he will not move  
9358 the mass of the congregation unless he knows  
9359 how to follow up his impressions, to carry out a  
9360 plan of operations and execute it, so as to carry  
9361 on the work when it is begun. He must not only  
9362 be able to blow the trumpet so loud as to start the  
9363 sinner from his lethargy, but when he is waked,  
9364 he must lead him by the shortest way to Jesus  
9365 Christ. And not as soon as sinners are roused by  
9366 a sermon, immediately begin to preach about  
9367 some remote subject that has no tendency to  
9368 carry on the work.

9369  
9370 10. To reach different classes of sinners  
9371 successfully requires great wisdom on the part of  
9372 a minister. For instance, a sermon on a particular  
9373 subject may start a particular class of persons  
9374 among his hearers. Perhaps they will begin to  
9375 look serious, or perhaps talk about it, or perhaps  
9376 they will begin to cavil about it. Now, if the  
9377 minister is wise, he will know how to observe  
9378 those indications, and to follow right on with  
9379 sermons adapted to this class, until he leads them  
9380 into the kingdom of God. Then let him go back  
9381 and take another class, find out where they are  
9382 hid, break down their refuges, and follow them

9383 up, till he leads them into the kingdom of God.  
9384 He should thus beat about every bush where  
9385 sinners hide themselves, as the voice of God  
9386 followed Adam in the garden—"ADAM,  
9387 WHERE ART THOU?" till one class of hearers  
9388 after another are brought in, and so the whole  
9389 community converted. Now a minister must be  
9390 very wise to do this. It never will be done so, till  
9391 a minister sets himself to hunt out and bring in  
9392 every class of sinners in his congregation, the  
9393 old and young, male and female, rich and poor.

9394

9395 11. A minister needs great wisdom to get sinners  
9396 away from their present refuges of lies, without  
9397 forming new hiding places for them. I once sat  
9398 under the ministry of a man who had contracted  
9399 a great alarm about heresies, and was constantly  
9400 employed in confuting them. And he used to  
9401 bring up many such heresies as his people never  
9402 heard of. He got his ideas chiefly from books,  
9403 and mingled very little among the people to  
9404 know what they thought. And the result of his  
9405 labors often was, that the people would be taken  
9406 with the heresy, more than with the argument  
9407 against it. The novelty of the error attracted their  
9408 attention so much that they forgot the answer.  
9409 And in that way he gave many of his people new  
9410 objections against religion, such as they never

9411 thought of before. If a man does not mingle  
9412 enough with mankind to know how people think  
9413 now-a-days he cannot expect to be wise to meet  
9414 their objections and difficulties.

9415

9416 I have heard a great deal of preaching against  
9417 Universalists, that did more hurt than good,  
9418 because the preachers did not understand how  
9419 Universalists of the present day reason. They  
9420 have never mingled with Universalists, and  
9421 know not what they believe and how they argue,  
9422 now, but have got all they know of Universalism  
9423 from books that were written long ago, and are  
9424 now out of date among Universalists themselves.  
9425 And the consequence is that when they attempt  
9426 to preach against Universalism they oppose a  
9427 man of straw, and not Universalist sentiments as  
9428 they are now found in the community. And  
9429 people either laugh at them, or say it is all lies,  
9430 for they know Universalists do not hold such  
9431 sentiments as are ascribed to them by the  
9432 preacher.

9433

9434 When ministers undertake to oppose a present  
9435 heresy, they ought to know what it is at present.  
9436 For instance, almost all those who write and  
9437 preach against Universalism think they are  
9438 called upon to oppose the idea that God is all

9439 mercy. They suppose Universalists hold the  
9440 doctrine that God is all mercy, and that when  
9441 they have refuted this doctrine, they have got  
9442 Universalists down. But this is not true. They do  
9443 not hold such doctrine. They deny it altogether.  
9444 They reject the idea of mercy in the salvation of  
9445 men, for they hold that every man is punished in  
9446 full according to his just deserts. Of what use is  
9447 it, then, to argue against Universalists, that God  
9448 is a God of justice and not a God all mercy,  
9449 when they hold to the justice of God alone as the  
9450 ground of salvation, and do not admit the idea of  
9451 mercy at all? In like manner, I have heard men  
9452 preach against the idea that men are saved in  
9453 their sins, and they supposed they were  
9454 preaching down Universalist doctrine.  
9455 Universalists believe no such thing. They believe  
9456 that all men will be made holy and saved in that  
9457 way. This shows the importance of knowing  
9458 what people actually hold, before you try to  
9459 reason them out of their errors. It is of no use to  
9460 misrepresent a man's doctrines to his face, and  
9461 then try to reason him out of them. You must  
9462 state his doctrine just as he holds it, and state his  
9463 arguments fairly. Otherwise, if you state them  
9464 wrong, you either make him angry, or he laughs  
9465 in his sleeve at the advantage you give him. He  
9466 will say, That man cannot argue with me on fair

9467 grounds; he has to misrepresent our doctrines in  
9468 order to confute me. Great hurt is done in this  
9469 way. Ministers do not intend to misrepresent  
9470 their opponents; but the effect of it is, that the  
9471 poor miserable creatures who hold these errors  
9472 go to hell because ministers do not take care to  
9473 inform themselves what are their real errors.  
9474 Errors are never torn away by such a process. I  
9475 mention these cases to show how much wisdom  
9476 a minister must have to meet the cases that  
9477 occur. He must be acquainted with the real views  
9478 of men in order to meet them, and do away their  
9479 errors and mistakes.

9480

9481 12. Ministers ought to know what measures are  
9482 best calculated to aid in accomplishing the great  
9483 end of their office, the salvation of souls. Some  
9484 measures are plainly necessary. By measures, I  
9485 mean what things should be done to get the  
9486 attention of the people and bring them to listen  
9487 to the truth. Building houses for worship, and  
9488 visiting from house to house, etc., are all  
9489 “measures,” the object of which is to get the  
9490 attention of people to the Gospel. Much wisdom  
9491 is requisite to devise and carry forward all the  
9492 various measures that are adapted to favor the  
9493 success of the Gospel.

9494

9495 What do the politicians do? They get up  
9496 meetings; circulate handbills and pamphlets;  
9497 blaze away in the newspapers; send their ships  
9498 about the streets on wheels with flags and  
9499 sailors; send coaches all over town, with  
9500 handbills, to bring people up to the polls—all to  
9501 gain attention to their cause and elect their  
9502 candidate. All these are their “measures,” and for  
9503 their end they are wisely calculated. The object  
9504 is to get up an excitement, and bring the people  
9505 out. They know that unless there can be an  
9506 excitement it is in vain to push their end, I do not  
9507 mean to say that their measures are pious, or  
9508 right, but only that they are wise, in the sense  
9509 that they are the appropriate application of  
9510 means to the end.

9511

9512 The object of the ministry is to get all the people  
9513 to feel that the devil has no right to rule this  
9514 world, but that they ought all to give themselves  
9515 to God, and vote in the Lord Jesus Christ as the  
9516 governor of the universe. Now what shall be  
9517 done? What measures shall we take? Says one,  
9518 “Be sure and have nothing that is new.” Strange!  
9519 The object of our measures is to gain attention,  
9520 and you must have something new. As sure as  
9521 the effect of a measure becomes stereotyped, it  
9522 ceases to gain attention, and then you must try



9523 something new. You need not make innovations  
9524 in everything. But whenever the state of things is  
9525 such that anything more is needed, it must be  
9526 something new, otherwise it will fail. A minister  
9527 should never introduce innovations that are not  
9528 called for. If he does they will embarrass him.  
9529 He cannot alter the Gospel; that remains the  
9530 same. But new measures are necessary, from  
9531 time to time, to awaken attention and bring the  
9532 Gospel to bear upon the public mind. And then a  
9533 minister ought to know how to introduce new  
9534 things, so as to create the least possible  
9535 resistance or reaction. Mankind are fond of form  
9536 in religion. They love to have their religious  
9537 duties stereotyped, so as to leave them at ease;  
9538 and they are therefore inclined to resist any new  
9539 movement designed to rouse them up to action  
9540 and feeling. Hence it is all-important to  
9541 introduce new things wisely, so as not to give  
9542 needless occasion or apology for resistance.

9543  
9544 13. Not a little wisdom is sometimes needed by a  
9545 minister to know when to put a stop to new  
9546 measures. When a measure has novelty enough  
9547 to secure attention to the truth, ordinarily no  
9548 other new measure should be introduced. You  
9549 have secured the great object of novelty.  
9550 Anything more will be in danger of diverting the

9551 public mind away from the great object, and  
9552 fixing it on the measures themselves. And then,  
9553 if you introduce novelties when they are not  
9554 called for, you will go over so large a field, that  
9555 by and by when you really want something new,  
9556 you will have nothing else to introduce, without  
9557 doing something that will give too great a shock  
9558 to the public mind. The Bible has laid down no  
9559 specific course of measures to promote revivals  
9560 of religion, but has left it to ministers to adopt  
9561 such as are wisely calculated to secure the end.  
9562 And the more sparing we are of our new things,  
9563 the longer we can use them, to keep public  
9564 attention awake to the great subject of religion.  
9565 By a wise course this may undoubtedly be done  
9566 for a long series of years, until our present  
9567 measures will by and by have sufficient novelty  
9568 in them again to attract and fix public attention.  
9569 And so we shall never want for something new.

9570

9571 14. A minister, to win souls, must know how to  
9572 deal with careless, with awakened, and with  
9573 anxious sinners, so as to lead them right to  
9574 Christ in the shortest and most direct way. It is  
9575 amazing to see how many ministers there are  
9576 who do not know how to deal with sinners, or  
9577 what to say to them in their various states of  
9578 mind. A good woman in Albany told me, that

9579 when she was under concern she went to her  
9580 minister and asked him to tell her what she must  
9581 do to get relief. And he said God had not given  
9582 him much experience on the subject, and advised  
9583 her to go to such a deacon, who perhaps could  
9584 tell her what to do. The truth was, he did not  
9585 know what to say to a sinner under conviction,  
9586 although there was nothing peculiar in her case.  
9587 Now if you think this minister a rare case, you  
9588 are quite deceived. There are many ministers  
9589 who do not know what to say to sinners.

9590  
9591 A minister once appointed an anxious meeting,  
9592 and went to attend it, and instead of going round  
9593 to the individuals, he began to ask them the  
9594 catechism, "Wherein doth Christ execute the  
9595 office of a priest?" About as much in point to a  
9596 great many of their minds as anything else.  
9597

9598 I know a minister who held an anxious meeting,  
9599 and went to attend it with a written discourse  
9600 which he had prepared for the occasion. Just as  
9601 wise as it would be if a physician, going out to  
9602 visit his patients, should sit down at leisure and  
9603 write all the prescriptions before he had seen  
9604 them. A minister needs to know the state of  
9605 mind of the individuals, before he can know  
9606 what truth will be proper and useful to

9607 administer. I say these things, not because I love  
9608 to do it, but because truth, and the object before  
9609 me, requires them to be said. And such instances  
9610 as I have mentioned are by no means rare.

9611

9612 A minister should know how to apply truth to all  
9613 the situations in which he may find dying sinners  
9614 going down to hell. He should know how to  
9615 preach, how to pray, how to conduct prayer-  
9616 meetings, and how to use all the means for  
9617 bringing the truth of God to bear upon the  
9618 kingdom of darkness. Does not this require  
9619 wisdom? And who is sufficient for these things?

9620

9621 II. The amount of a minister's success in  
9622 winning souls (other things being equal)  
9623 invariably decides the amount of wisdom he has  
9624 exercised in the discharge of his office.

9625

9626 1. This is plainly asserted in the text. "He that  
9627 winneth souls is wise." That is, if a man wins  
9628 souls, he does skillfully adapt means to the end,  
9629 which is, to exercise wisdom. He is the more  
9630 wise, by how much the greater is the number of  
9631 sinners that he saves. A blockhead may, indeed,  
9632 now and then stumble on such truth or such a  
9633 manner of exhibiting it, as to save a soul. It  
9634 would be a wonder indeed if any minister did not

9635 sometimes have something in his sermons that  
9636 would meet the case of some individual. But the  
9637 amount of wisdom is to be decided, “other things  
9638 being equal,” by the number of cases in which  
9639 he is successful in converting sinners.

9640

9641 Take the case of a physician. The greatest quack  
9642 in New York may now and then stumble upon a  
9643 remarkable cure, and so get his name up with the  
9644 ignorant. But sober and judicious people judge  
9645 of the skill of a physician by the uniformity of  
9646 his success in overcoming disease, the variety of  
9647 diseases he can manage, and the number of cases  
9648 in which he is successful in saving his patients.

9649 The most skillful saves the most. This is  
9650 common sense. It is truth. And it is just as true in  
9651 regard to success in saving souls, and true in just  
9652 the same sense.

9653

9654 2. This principle is not only asserted in the text,  
9655 but it is a matter of fact, a historical truth, that  
9656 “He that winneth souls is wise.” He has actually  
9657 employed means adapted to the end, in such a  
9658 way as to secure the end.

9659

9660 3. Success in saving souls is evidence that a man  
9661 understands the Gospel, and understands human  
9662 nature, that he knows how to adapt means to his

9663 end, that he has common sense, and that he has  
9664 that kind of tact, that practical discernment, to  
9665 know how to get at people. And if his success is  
9666 extensive, it shows that he knows how to deal  
9667 with a great variety of characters, in a great  
9668 variety of circumstances, who are yet all the  
9669 enemies of God, and to bring them to Christ. To  
9670 do this requires great wisdom. And the minister  
9671 who does it shows that he is wise.

9672

9673 4. Success in winning souls shows that a  
9674 minister not only knows how to labor wisely for  
9675 that end, but also that he knows where his  
9676 dependence is. You know that fears are often  
9677 expressed respecting those ministers who are  
9678 aiming most directly and earnestly at the  
9679 conversion of sinners. People say, "Why, this  
9680 man is going to work in his own strength; one  
9681 would imagine he thinks he can convert  
9682 himself." How often has the event showed that  
9683 the man knows what he is about, very well, and  
9684 knows where his strength is too. He went to  
9685 work to convert sinners so earnestly, just as if he  
9686 could do it all himself; but that was the very way  
9687 he should do. He ought to reason with sinners,  
9688 and plead with them, as faithfully and fully as if  
9689 he did not expect any interposition of the Spirit  
9690 of God, or as if he knew there was no Holy

9691 Ghost. But whenever a man does this  
9692 successfully, it shows that, after all, he knows he  
9693 must depend on the Spirit of God alone for  
9694 success.

9695

9696 Objection.—There are many who feel an  
9697 objection against this subject, arising out of the  
9698 view they have taken of the ministry of Jesus  
9699 Christ. They ask us, “What will you say about  
9700 the ministry of Jesus Christ, was not he wise?” I  
9701 answer, Yes, infinitely wise. But in regard to his  
9702 alleged want of success in the conversion of  
9703 sinners, you will observe the following things:

9704

9705 (1.) That his ministry was vastly more successful  
9706 than is generally supposed. We read in one of  
9707 the sacred writers, that after his resurrection and  
9708 before his ascension “he was seen by above five  
9709 hundred brethren at once.” If so many as five  
9710 hundred brethren were found assembled together  
9711 at one place, we see there must have been a vast  
9712 number of them scattered over the country.

9713

9714 (2.) Another circumstance to be observed is, that  
9715 his public ministry was very short, less than  
9716 three years.

9717

9718 (3.) Consider the peculiar design of his ministry.  
9719 His main object was to make atonement for the  
9720 sins of the world. It was not aimed so much at  
9721 promoting revivals. The “dispensation of the  
9722 Spirit” was not yet given. He did not preach the  
9723 Gospel so fully as his apostles did afterwards.  
9724 The prejudices of the people were so fixed and  
9725 violent that they would not bear it. That he did  
9726 not, is plain from the fact that even his apostles,  
9727 who were constantly with him, did not  
9728 understand the atonement. They did not get the  
9729 idea that he was going to die, and consequently,  
9730 when they heard he was actually dead, they were  
9731 driven to despair, and thought the thing was all  
9732 gone by, and their hopes blown to the winds.  
9733 The fact was, that he had another object in view,  
9734 to which every thing else was made to yield, and  
9735 the perverted state of the public mind, and the  
9736 obstinate prejudices prevailing, showed why  
9737 results were not seen any more in the conversion  
9738 of sinners. The state of public opinion was such,  
9739 that they finally murdered him for what he did  
9740 preach.  
9741  
9742 Many ministers who have little or no success,  
9743 are hiding themselves behind the ministry of  
9744 Jesus Christ, as if he was an unsuccessful  
9745 preacher. Whereas, in fact, he was eminently



9746 successful, considering the circumstances in  
9747 which he labored. This is the last place in all the  
9748 world where a minister who has no success  
9749 should think of hiding himself.

9750

9751 REMARKS.

9752

9753 1. A minister may be very learned and not wise.  
9754 There are many ministers possessed of great  
9755 learning; they understand all the sciences,  
9756 physical, moral, and theological; they may know  
9757 the dead languages, and possess all learning, and  
9758 yet not be wise, in relation to the great end about  
9759 which they are chiefly employed. Facts clearly  
9760 demonstrate this. “He that winneth souls is  
9761 wise.”

9762

9763 2. An unsuccessful minister may be pious as  
9764 well as learned, and yet not wise. It is unfair to  
9765 infer because a minister is unsuccessful, that  
9766 therefore he is a hypocrite. There may be  
9767 something defective in his education, or in his  
9768 mode of viewing a subject, or of exhibiting it, or  
9769 such a want of common sense, as will defeat his  
9770 labors, and prevent his success in winning souls,  
9771 while he himself may be saved—”yet so as by  
9772 fire.”

9773

9774 3. A minister may be very wise, though he is not  
9775 learned. He may not understand the dead  
9776 languages, or theology in its common  
9777 acceptation; and yet he may know just what a  
9778 minister of the Gospel wants most to know,  
9779 without knowing many other things. A learned  
9780 minister and a wise minister are different things.  
9781 Facts in the history of the church in all ages  
9782 prove this. It is very common for churches, when  
9783 looking out for a minister, to aim at getting a  
9784 very learned man. Do not understand me to  
9785 disparage learning. The more learning the better,  
9786 if he is also wise in the great matter he is  
9787 employed about. If a minister knows how to win  
9788 souls, the more learning he has the better. But if  
9789 he has any other kind of learning, and not this,  
9790 he will infallibly fail of the end of his ministry.

9791  
9792 4. Want of success in a minister (other things  
9793 being equal) proves, (1.) either that he was never  
9794 called to preach, and has taken it up out of his  
9795 own head; or (2.) that he was badly educated,  
9796 and was never taught the very things he wants  
9797 most to know; or (3.) if he was called to preach,  
9798 and knows how to do his duty, he is too indolent  
9799 and too wicked to do it.  
9800

9801 5. Those are the best educated ministers, who  
9802 win the most souls. Ministers are sometimes  
9803 looked down upon, and called very ignorant,  
9804 because they do not know sciences and  
9805 languages; although they are very far from being  
9806 ignorant of the great thing for which the ministry  
9807 is appointed. This is wrong. Learning is  
9808 important, and always useful. But after all, a  
9809 minister may know how to win souls to Christ,  
9810 without great learning, and he has the best  
9811 education for a minister, who can win the most  
9812 souls to Christ.

9813  
9814 6. There is evidently a great defect in the present  
9815 mode of educating ministers. This is a SOLEMN  
9816 FACT, to which the attention of the whole  
9817 church should be distinctly called; that the great  
9818 mass of young ministers who are educated  
9819 accomplish very little.

9820  
9821 When young men come out from the seminaries,  
9822 are they fit to go into a revival? Look at a place  
9823 where there has been a revival in progress, and a  
9824 minister is wanted. Let them send to a  
9825 theological seminary for a minister. Will he  
9826 enter into the work, and sustain it, and carry it  
9827 on? Seldom. Like David with Saul's armor, he  
9828 comes in with such a load of theological

9829 trumpery, that he knows nothing what to do.  
9830 Leave him there for two weeks, and the revival  
9831 is at an end. The churches know and feel, that  
9832 the greater part of these young men do not know  
9833 how to do anything that needs to be done for a  
9834 revival, and they are complaining that the young  
9835 ministers are so far behind the church. You may  
9836 send all over the United States, to theological  
9837 seminaries, and find but few young ministers  
9838 fitted to carry forward the work. What a state of  
9839 things!

9840  
9841 There is a grand defect in educating ministers.  
9842 Education ought to be such, as to prepare young  
9843 men for the peculiar work to which they are  
9844 destined. But instead of this, they are educated  
9845 for any thing else. The grand mistake is this.  
9846 They direct the mind too much to irrelevant  
9847 matters, which are not necessary to be attended  
9848 to. In their courses of study, they carry the mind  
9849 over too wide a field, which diverts their  
9850 attention from the main thing, and so they get  
9851 cold in religion, and when they get through,  
9852 instead of being fitted for their work, they are  
9853 unfitted for it. Under pretence of disciplining the  
9854 mind, they in fact scatter the attention, so that  
9855 when they come to their work, they are  
9856 awkward, and know nothing how to take hold, or

9857 how to act, to win souls. This is not universally  
9858 the case, but too often it is so.

9859

9860 It is common for people to talk loudly and  
9861 largely about an educated ministry. God forbid  
9862 that I should say a word against an educated  
9863 ministry. But what do we mean by an education  
9864 for the ministry? Do we mean that they should  
9865 be so educated, as to be fitted for the work? If  
9866 they are so educated, the more education the  
9867 better. Let education be of the right kind,  
9868 teaching a young man the things he needs to  
9869 know, and not the very things he does not need  
9870 to know. Let them be educated for the work. Do  
9871 not let education be such, that when young men  
9872 come out, after spending six, eight, or ten years  
9873 in study, they are not worth half as much as they  
9874 were before they went. I have known young men  
9875 come out after what they call “a thorough  
9876 course,” who were not fit to take charge of a  
9877 prayer meeting, and who could not manage a  
9878 prayer meeting, so as to make it profitable or  
9879 interesting. An elder of a church in a  
9880 neighboring city, informed me recently of a case  
9881 in point. A young man, before he went to the  
9882 seminary, had labored as a layman with them,  
9883 conducted their prayer meetings, and had been  
9884 exceedingly useful among them. After he had

9885 been to the seminary, they sent for him and  
9886 desired his help; but oh, how changed! he was so  
9887 completely transformed, that he made no  
9888 impression; the church soon began to complain  
9889 that they should die under his influences, and he  
9890 left, because he was not prepared for the work.

9891

9892 It is common for those ministers who have been  
9893 to the seminaries, and are now useful, to affirm  
9894 that their course of studies there did them little  
9895 or no good, and that they had to unlearn what  
9896 they had there learned, before they could effect  
9897 much. I do not say this censoriously, but it is a  
9898 solemn fact, and I must say it in love.

9899

9900 Suppose you were going to make a man a  
9901 surgeon in the navy. Instead of sending him to  
9902 the medical school to learn surgery, would you  
9903 send him to the nautical school to learn  
9904 navigation? In this way, you might qualify him  
9905 to navigate a ship, but he is no surgeon.  
9906 Ministers should be educated to know what the  
9907 Bible is, and what the human mind is, and know  
9908 how to bring one to bear on the other. They  
9909 should be brought into contact with mind, and  
9910 made familiar with all the aspects of society.  
9911 They should have the Bible in one hand, and the

9912 map of the human mind in the other, and know  
9913 how to use the truth for the salvation of men.

9914

9915 7. A want of common sense often defeats the  
9916 ends of the Christian ministry. There are many  
9917 good men in the ministry, who have learning,  
9918 and talents of a certain sort, but they have no  
9919 common sense to win souls.

9920

9921 8. We see one great defect in our theological  
9922 schools.—Young men are shut up in their  
9923 schools, confined to books and shut out from  
9924 intercourse with the common people, or contact  
9925 with the common mind, Hence they are not  
9926 familiar with the mode in which common people  
9927 think. This accounts for the fact that some plain  
9928 men, that have been brought up to business, and  
9929 acquainted with human nature, are ten times  
9930 better qualified to win souls than those who are  
9931 educated on the present principle, and are in fact  
9932 ten times as well acquainted with the proper  
9933 business of the ministry. These are called  
9934 “uneducated men.” This is a grand mistake.  
9935 They are not learned in science, but they are  
9936 learned in the very things which they need to  
9937 know as ministers. They are not ignorant  
9938 ministers, for they know exactly how to reach  
9939 the mind with truth. They understand the minds

9940 of men, and how to adapt the Gospel to their  
9941 case. They are better furnished for their work,  
9942 than if they had all the machinery of the schools.

9943

9944 I wish to be understood. I do not say that I would  
9945 not have a young man go to school. Nor would I  
9946 discourage him from going over the field of  
9947 science. The more the better, if together with it  
9948 he learns also the things that the minister needs  
9949 to know, in order to win souls—if he  
9950 understands his Bible, and understands human  
9951 nature, and knows how to bring the truth to bear,  
9952 and how to guide and manage minds, and to lead  
9953 them away from sin and lead them to God.

9954

9955 9. The success of any measure designed to  
9956 promote a revival of religion, demonstrates its  
9957 wisdom with the following exceptions:

9958

9959 (1.) A measure may be introduced for effect to  
9960 produce excitement, and be such that when it is  
9961 looked back upon afterwards, it will look  
9962 nonsensical, and appear to have been a mere  
9963 trick. In that case, it will react, and its  
9964 introduction will do more hurt than good.

9965

9966 (2.) Measures may be introduced, and the revival  
9967 be very powerful, and the success be attributed



9968 to the measures, when in fact other things made  
9969 the revival powerful, and these very measures  
9970 may have been a hinderance. The prayers of  
9971 Christians, and the preaching, and other things  
9972 may have been so well calculated to carry on the  
9973 work, that it has succeeded in spite of these  
9974 measures.

9975

9976 But when the blessing evidently follows the  
9977 introduction of the measure itself, the proof is  
9978 unanswerable, that the measure is wise. It is  
9979 profane to say that such a measure will do more  
9980 hurt than good. God knows about that. His  
9981 object is, to do the greatest amount of good  
9982 possible. And of course he will not add his  
9983 blessing to a measure that will do more hurt than  
9984 good. He may sometimes withhold his blessing  
9985 from a measure that is calculated to do some  
9986 good because it will be at the expense of a  
9987 greater good. But he never will bless a  
9988 pernicious proceeding. There is no such thing as  
9989 deceiving God in the matter. He knows whether  
9990 a given measure is, on the whole, wise, or not.  
9991 He may bless a course of labours  
9992 notwithstanding some unwise or injurious  
9993 measures. But if he blesses the measure itself, it  
9994 is rebuking God to pronounce it unwise. He who  
9995 undertakes to do this, let him look to the matter.

9996  
9997 10. It is evident that much fault has been found  
9998 with measures, which have been pre-eminently  
9999 and continually blessed of God for the  
10000 promotion of revivals. We know it is said that  
10001 the horrid oaths of a profane swearer have been  
10002 the means of awakening another less hardened  
10003 sinner. But this is a rare case. God does not  
10004 usually make such a use of profanity. But if a  
10005 measure is continually or usually blessed, let the  
10006 man who thinks he is wiser than God, call it in  
10007 question. TAKE CARE how you find fault with  
10008 God!

10009  
10010 11. Christians should pray for ministers.  
10011 Brethren, if you felt how much ministers need  
10012 wisdom to perform the duties of their great  
10013 office with success, and how ignorant they all  
10014 are, and how insufficient they are of themselves,  
10015 to think anything as of themselves, you would  
10016 pray for them a great deal more than you do; that  
10017 is, if you cared anything for the success of their  
10018 labors. People often find fault with ministers,  
10019 when they do not pray for them. Brethren, this is  
10020 tempting God, for you ought not to expect any  
10021 better ministers, unless you pray for them. And  
10022 you ought not to expect a blessing on the labors  
10023 of your minister, or to have your families

10024 converted by his preaching, where you do not  
10025 pray for him. And so for others, the waste  
10026 places, and the heathen, instead of praying all  
10027 the time, only that God would sent out more  
10028 laborers, you have need to pray that God would  
10029 make ministers wise to win souls, and that those  
10030 he sends out may be properly educated, so that  
10031 they shall be scribes well instructed in the  
10032 kingdom of God.

10033

10034 12. Those laymen in the church who know how  
10035 to win souls are to be counted wise. They should  
10036 not be called “Ignorant laymen.” And those  
10037 church members who do not know how to  
10038 convert sinners, and who cannot win souls,  
10039 should not be called wise—as Christians. They  
10040 are not wise Christians; only “he that winneth  
10041 souls is wise.” They may be learned in politics,  
10042 in all sciences, or they may be skilled in the  
10043 management of business, or other things, and  
10044 they may look down on those who win souls, as  
10045 nothing but plain, simple-hearted and ignorant  
10046 men. If any of you are inclined to do this, and to  
10047 undervalue those brethren who win souls, as  
10048 being not so wise and cunning as you are, you  
10049 deceive yourselves. They may not know some  
10050 things which you know. But they know those

10051 things which a Christian is most concerned to  
10052 know, and you do not.

10053

10054 It may be illustrated by the case of a minister  
10055 that goes to sea. He may be learned in science,  
10056 but he knows nothing how to sail a ship. And he  
10057 begins to ask the sailors about this thing and  
10058 that, and what is this rope for, and the like.  
10059 “Why,” say the sailors, “these are not ropes, we  
10060 have only one rope in a ship, these are the  
10061 rigging, the man talks like a fool.” And so this  
10062 learned man becomes a laughing-stock, perhaps,  
10063 to the sailors, because he does not know how to  
10064 sail a ship. But if he were to tell them one half of  
10065 what he knows about science, perhaps they  
10066 would think him a conjurer, to know so much.  
10067 So learned students may understand their hic, hc,  
10068 hoc, very well, and may laugh at the humble  
10069 Christian, and call him ignorant, although he  
10070 may know how to win more souls than five  
10071 hundred of them.

10072

10073 I was once distressed and grieved at hearing a  
10074 minister bearing down upon a young preacher,  
10075 who had been converted under remarkable  
10076 circumstances, and who was licensed to preach  
10077 without pursuing a regular course of study. This  
10078 minister, who was never, or at least rarely,

10079 known to convert a soul, bore down upon the  
10080 young man in a very lordly, censorious manner,  
10081 depreciating him because he had not had the  
10082 advantage of a liberal education, when in fact he  
10083 was instrumental in converting more souls than  
10084 any five hundred ministers like himself.

10085  
10086 I would say nothing to undervalue, or lead you  
10087 to undervalue a thorough education for  
10088 ministers. But I do not call that a thorough  
10089 education, which they get in our colleges and  
10090 seminaries. It does not fit them for their work. I  
10091 appeal to all experience, whether our young men  
10092 in seminaries are thoroughly educated for the  
10093 purpose of winning souls. Do THEY DO IT?  
10094 Everybody knows they do not. Look at the  
10095 reports of the Home Missionary Society. If I  
10096 recollect right, in 1830, the number of  
10097 conversions in connection with the labors of the  
10098 missionaries of that society did not exceed five  
10099 to each missionary. I believe the number has  
10100 increased since, but is still exceedingly small to  
10101 what it would have been had they been fitted by  
10102 a right course of training for their work. I do not  
10103 say this to reproach them, for from my heart I  
10104 pity them, and I pity the church for being under  
10105 the necessity of supporting ministers so trained,  
10106 or none at all. They are the best men the

10107 Missionary Society can obtain. I suppose, of  
10108 course, that I shall be reproached for saying this.  
10109 But it is too true and too painful to be concealed.  
10110 Those fathers who have the training of our  
10111 young ministers are good men, but they are  
10112 ancient men, men of another age and stamp,  
10113 from what is needed in these days of excitement,  
10114 when the church and world are rising to new  
10115 thought and action. Those dear fathers will not, I  
10116 suppose, see this; and will perhaps think hard of  
10117 me for saying it; but it is the cause of Christ.  
10118 Some of them are getting back toward second  
10119 childhood, and ought to resign, and give place to  
10120 younger men, who are not rendered physically  
10121 incapable, by age, of keeping pace with the  
10122 onward movements of the church. And here I  
10123 would say, that to my own mind, it appears  
10124 evident, that unless our theological professors  
10125 preach a good deal, mingle much with the  
10126 church, and sympathize with her in all her  
10127 movements, it is morally, if not naturally,  
10128 impossible, that they should succeed in training  
10129 young men to the spirit of the age. It is a shame  
10130 and a sin, that theological professors, who  
10131 preach but seldom, who are withdrawn from the  
10132 active duties of the ministry, should sit in their  
10133 studies and write their letters, advisory, or  
10134 dictatorial, to ministers and churches who are in

10135 the field, and who are in circumstances to judge  
10136 what needs to be done. The men who spend all  
10137 or at least a portion of their time in the active  
10138 duties of the ministry, are the only men who are  
10139 able to judge of what is expedient or  
10140 inexpedient, prudent or imprudent, as to  
10141 measures from time to time. It is as dangerous  
10142 and ridiculous for our theological professors,  
10143 who are withdrawn from the field of conflict, to  
10144 be allowed to dictate, in regard to the measures  
10145 and movements of the church, as it would be for  
10146 a general to sit in his bed-chamber and attempt  
10147 to order a battle. [3]

10148  
10149 Two ministers were one day conversing about  
10150 another minister whose labors were greatly  
10151 blessed in the conversion of some thousands of  
10152 souls. One of them said, "That man ought not to  
10153 preach any more; he should stop and go to" a  
10154 particular theological seminary which he named,  
10155 "and go through a regular course of study." He  
10156 said the man had "a good mind, and if he was  
10157 thoroughly educated, he might be very useful,"  
10158 The other replied, "Do you think he would be  
10159 more useful for going to that seminary? I  
10160 challenge you to show by facts that any are more  
10161 useful who have been there. No, sir, the fact is,  
10162 that since this man has been in the ministry, he

10163 has been instrumental in converting more souls  
10164 than all the young men who have come from that  
10165 seminary in the time.” This is logic! Stop, and go  
10166 to a seminary, to prepare himself for converting  
10167 souls, when he is now converting more than all  
10168 who come from the seminary!

10169  
10170 Finally.—I wish to ask you, before I sit down,  
10171 who among you can lay any claim to the  
10172 possession of this Divine wisdom? Who among  
10173 you, laymen? Who among you, ministers? Can  
10174 any of you? Can I? Are we at work, wisely, to  
10175 win souls? Or are we trying to make ourselves  
10176 believe that success is no criterion of wisdom? It  
10177 is a criterion. It is a safe criterion for every  
10178 minister to try himself by. The amount of his  
10179 success, other things being equal, measures the  
10180 amount of wisdom he has exercised in the  
10181 discharge of his office.

10182  
10183 How few of you have ever had wisdom enough  
10184 to convert so much as a single sinner!

10185  
10186 Do not say now, “I cannot convert sinners; how  
10187 can I convert sinners? God alone can convert  
10188 sinners.” Look at the text, “He that winneth  
10189 souls is wise,” and do not think you can escape  
10190 the sentence. It is true that God converts sinners.



10191 But there is a sense, too, in which ministers  
10192 convert them. And you have something to do;  
10193 something that requires wisdom; something  
10194 which, if you do it wisely, will insure the  
10195 conversion of sinners in proportion to the  
10196 wisdom employed. If you never have done this,  
10197 it is high time to think about yourselves, and see  
10198 whether you have wisdom enough to save even  
10199 your own souls.

10200  
10201 Men—women—you are bound to be wise in  
10202 winning souls. Perhaps already souls have  
10203 perished; perhaps a friend, or a child is in hell,  
10204 because you have not put forth the wisdom  
10205 which you might, in saving them. The city is  
10206 going to hell. Yes, the world is going to hell, and  
10207 must go on, till the church finds out what to do,  
10208 to win souls. Politicians are wise. The children  
10209 of this world are wise, they know what to do to  
10210 accomplish their ends, while we are prosing  
10211 about, not knowing what to do, or where to take  
10212 hold of the work, and sinners are going to hell.

10213

10214

10215

10216 [3] This was said in 1833.

10217

10218

10219

10220 LECTURE XII.

10221

10222 HOW TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

10223

10224 Text.—He that winneth souls is wise.—Proverbs

10225 xi. 30.

10226

10227 ONE of the last remarks in my last lecture, was

10228 this, that the text ascribes conversion to men.

10229 Winning souls is converting men. This evening I

10230 design to show,

10231

10232 I. That several passages of Scripture ascribe

10233 conversion to men.

10234

10235 II. That this is consistent with other passages

10236 which ascribe conversion to God.

10237

10238 III. I purpose to discuss several further

10239 particulars which are deemed important, in

10240 regard to the preaching of the Gospel, and which

10241 show that great practical wisdom is necessary to

10242 win souls to Christ.

10243

10244 I. I am to show that the Bible ascribes

10245 conversion to men.

10246

10247 There are many passages which represent the  
10248 conversion of sinners as the work of men. In  
10249 Daniel xii. 3, it is said, “And they that be wise,  
10250 shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;  
10251 and they that turn many to righteousness as stars  
10252 for ever and ever.” Here the work is ascribed to  
10253 men. So also in 1 Cor. iv. 15. “For though ye  
10254 have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have  
10255 ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have  
10256 begotten you through the Gospel.” Here the  
10257 apostle explicitly tells the Corinthians that he  
10258 made them Christians, with the Gospel or truth  
10259 which he preached. Again, in James, v. 19, 20,  
10260 we are taught the same thing. “Brethren, if any  
10261 of you do err from the truth, and one convert  
10262 him; let him know that he which converteth the  
10263 sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul  
10264 from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” I  
10265 might quote many other passages, equally  
10266 explicit. But these are sufficient abundantly to  
10267 establish the fact, that the Bible does actually  
10268 ascribe conversion to men.

10269

10270 II. I proceed to show that this is not inconsistent  
10271 with those passages in which conversion is  
10272 ascribed to God.

10273

10274 And here let me remark, that to my mind it often  
10275 appears very strange that men should ever  
10276 suppose there was an inconsistency here, or that  
10277 they should ever have overlooked the plain  
10278 common sense of the matter. How easy it is to  
10279 see, that there is a sense in which God converts  
10280 them, and another sense in which men convert  
10281 them.

10282  
10283 The Scriptures ascribe the conversion of a sinner  
10284 to four different agencies—to men, to God, to  
10285 the truth, and to the sinner himself. The passages  
10286 which ascribe it to the truth are the largest class.  
10287 That men should ever have overlooked this  
10288 distinction, and should have regarded conversion  
10289 as a work performed exclusively by God, is  
10290 surprising. So it is that any difficulty should ever  
10291 have been felt on the subject, or that people  
10292 should ever have professed themselves unable to  
10293 reconcile these several classes of passages.

10294  
10295 Why, the Bible speaks on this subject, precisely  
10296 as we speak on common subjects. There is a man  
10297 who has been very sick. How natural it is for  
10298 him to say of his physician, “That man saved my  
10299 life.” Does he mean to say that the physician  
10300 saved his life without reference to God?  
10301 Certainly not, unless he is an infidel. God made

10302 the physician, and he made the medicine too.  
10303 And it never can be shown but that the agency of  
10304 God is just as truly concerned in making the  
10305 medicine take effect to save life, as it is in  
10306 making the truth take effect to save a soul. To  
10307 affirm the contrary is downright atheism. It is  
10308 true then, that the physician saved him, and it is  
10309 also true that God saved him. It is equally true  
10310 that the medicine saved his life, and that he  
10311 saved his own life by taking the medicine; for  
10312 the medicine would have done no good if he had  
10313 not voluntarily taken it, or yielded his body to its  
10314 power.

10315  
10316 In the conversion of a sinner, it is true that God  
10317 gives the truth efficiency to turn the sinner to  
10318 God. He is an active, voluntary, powerful agent  
10319 in changing the mind. But he is not the only  
10320 agent. The one that brings the truth to his notice  
10321 is also an agent. We are apt to speak of ministers  
10322 and other men as only instruments in converting  
10323 sinners. This is not exactly correct. Man is  
10324 something more than an instrument. Truth is the  
10325 mere unconscious instrument. But man is more,  
10326 he is a voluntary, responsible agent in the  
10327 business. In my printed sermon, No. 1., which  
10328 some of you may have seen, I have illustrated

10329 this idea by the case of an individual standing on  
10330 the banks of Niagara.  
10331  
10332 “Suppose yourself to be standing on the banks of  
10333 the Falls of Niagara. As you stand upon the  
10334 verge of the precipice, you behold a man lost in  
10335 deep reverie, approaching its verge unconscious  
10336 of his danger. He approaches nearer and nearer,  
10337 until he actually lifts his foot to take the final  
10338 step that shall plunge him in destruction. At this  
10339 moment you lift your warning voice above the  
10340 roar of the foaming waters, and cry out, Stop.  
10341 The voice pierces his ear, and breaks the charm  
10342 that binds him; he turns instantly upon his heel,  
10343 all pale and aghast he retires, quivering, from the  
10344 verge of death. He reels and almost swoons with  
10345 horror; turns and walks slowly to the public  
10346 house; you follow him; the manifest agitation in  
10347 his countenance calls numbers around him; and  
10348 on your approach, he points to you, and says,  
10349 That man saved my life. Here he ascribes the  
10350 work to you; and certainly there is a sense in  
10351 which you had saved him. But, on being further  
10352 questioned, he says, Stop! how that word rings  
10353 in my ears. Oh, that was to me the word of life!  
10354 Here he ascribes it to the word that aroused him,  
10355 and caused him to turn. But, on conversing still  
10356 further, he says, Had I not turned at that instant, I

10357 should have been a dead man. Here he speaks of  
10358 it, and truly, as his own act; but directly you hear  
10359 him say, Oh the mercy of God! if God had not  
10360 interposed, I should have been lost. Now the  
10361 only defect in this illustration is this: In the case  
10362 supposed, the only interference on the part of  
10363 God, was a providential one; and the only sense  
10364 in which the saving of the man's life is ascribed  
10365 to him, is in a providential sense. But in the  
10366 conversion of a sinner, there is something more  
10367 than the providence of God employed; for here  
10368 not only does the providence of God so order it,  
10369 that the preacher cries, Stop, but the Spirit of  
10370 God urges the truth home upon him with such  
10371 tremendous power as to induce him to turn.”

10372  
10373 Not only does the preacher cry, Stop, but  
10374 through the living voice of the preacher, the  
10375 Spirit cries, Stop. The preacher cries, “Turn ye,  
10376 why will ye die.” The Spirit pours the  
10377 expostulation home with such power, that the  
10378 sinner turns. Now in speaking of this change, it  
10379 is perfectly proper to say, that the Spirit turned  
10380 him, just as you would say of a man, who had  
10381 persuaded another to change his mind on the  
10382 subject of politics, that he had converted him,  
10383 and brought him over. It is also proper to say  
10384 that the truth converted him; as in a case when

10385 the political sentiments of a man were changed  
10386 by a certain argument, we should say that  
10387 argument brought him over. So also with perfect  
10388 propriety may we ascribe the change to the  
10389 living preacher, or to him who had presented the  
10390 motives; just as we should say of a lawyer who  
10391 had prevailed in his argument with a jury; he has  
10392 got his case, he has converted the jury. It is also  
10393 with the same propriety ascribed to the  
10394 individual himself whose heart is changed; we  
10395 should say that he had changed his mind, he has  
10396 come over, he has repented. Now it is strictly  
10397 true, and true in the most absolute and highest  
10398 sense; the act is his own act, the turning is his  
10399 own turning, while God by the truth has induced  
10400 him to turn; still it is strictly true that he has  
10401 turned and has done it himself. Thus you see the  
10402 sense in which it is the work of God, and also  
10403 the sense in which it is the sinner's own work.  
10404 The Spirit of God, by the truth, influences the  
10405 sinner to change, and in this sense is the efficient  
10406 cause of the change. But the sinner actually  
10407 changes, and is therefore himself, in the most  
10408 proper sense, the author of the change. There are  
10409 some who, on reading their Bibles, fasten their  
10410 eyes upon those passages that ascribe the work  
10411 to the Spirit of God, and seem to overlook those  
10412 that ascribe it to man, and speak of it as the



10413 sinner's own act. When they have quoted  
10414 Scripture to prove it is the work of God, they  
10415 seem to think they have proved that it is that in  
10416 which man is passive, and that it can in no sense  
10417 be the work of man. Some months since a tract  
10418 was written, the title of which was,  
10419 "Regeneration, the effect of Divine Power." The  
10420 writer goes on to prove that the work is wrought  
10421 by the Spirit of God, and there stops. Now it had  
10422 been just as true, just as philosophical, and just  
10423 as scriptural, if he had said, that conversion was  
10424 the work of man. It was easy to prove that it was  
10425 the work of God, in the sense in which I have  
10426 explained it. The writer, therefore, tells the truth,  
10427 so far as he goes; but he has told only half the  
10428 truth. For while there is a sense in which it is the  
10429 work of God, as he has shown, there is also a  
10430 sense in which it is the work of man, as we have  
10431 just seen. The very title to this tract is a  
10432 stumbling block. It tells the truth, but it does not  
10433 tell the whole truth. And a tract might be written  
10434 upon this proposition, that "Conversion or  
10435 regeneration is the work of man;" which would  
10436 be just as true, just as scriptural, and just as  
10437 philosophical, as the one to which I have  
10438 alluded. Thus the writer, in his zeal to recognise  
10439 and honor God as concerned in this work, by  
10440 leaving out the fact that a change of heart is the

10441 sinner's own act, has left the sinner strongly  
10442 intrenched, with his weapons in his rebellious  
10443 hands, stoutly resisting the claims of his Maker,  
10444 and waiting passively for God to make him a  
10445 new heart. Thus you see the consistency between  
10446 the requirement of the text, and the declared fact  
10447 that God is the author of the new heart. God  
10448 commands you to make you a new heart, expects  
10449 you to do it, and if it ever is done, you must do  
10450 it.

10451

10452 And let me tell you, sinner, if you do not do it  
10453 you will go to hell, and to all eternity you will  
10454 feel that you deserved to be sent there for not  
10455 having done it.

10456

10457 III. As proposed, I shall now advert to several  
10458 important particulars growing out of this subject,  
10459 as connected with preaching the Gospel, and  
10460 which show that great practical wisdom is  
10461 indispensable to win souls to Christ.

10462

10463 And FIRST, in regard to the MATTER OF  
10464 PREACHING.

10465

10466 1. All preaching should be practical.

10467

10468 The proper end of all doctrine is practice.  
10469 Anything brought forward as doctrine, which  
10470 cannot be made use of as practical, is not  
10471 preaching the Gospel. There is none of that sort  
10472 of preaching in the Bible. That is all practical.  
10473 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,  
10474 and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for  
10475 correction, for instruction in righteousness: that  
10476 the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly  
10477 furnished unto all good works.” A vast deal of  
10478 preaching in the present day, as well as in past  
10479 ages, is called doctrinal, as opposed to practical  
10480 preaching. The very idea of making this  
10481 distinction is a device of the devil. And a more  
10482 abominable device Satan himself never devised.  
10483 You sometimes hear certain men tell a  
10484 wonderful deal about the necessity of  
10485 “indoctrinating the people.” By which they mean  
10486 something different from practical preaching;  
10487 teaching them certain doctrines, as abstract  
10488 truths, without any particular reference to  
10489 practice. And I have known a minister in the  
10490 midst of a revival, while surrounded with  
10491 anxious sinners, leave off laboring to convert  
10492 souls, for the purpose of “Indoctrinating” the  
10493 young converts, for fear somebody else should  
10494 indoctrinate them before him. And there the  
10495 revival stops! Either his doctrine was not true, or

10496 it was not preached in the right way. To preach  
10497 doctrines in an abstract way, and not in reference  
10498 to practice, is absurd. God always brings in  
10499 doctrine to regulate practice. To bring forward  
10500 doctrinal views for any other object is not only  
10501 nonsense, but it is wicked.

10502

10503 Some people are opposed to doctrinal preaching.  
10504 If they have been used to hear doctrines  
10505 preached in a cold, abstract way, no wonder they  
10506 are opposed to it. They ought to be opposed to  
10507 such preaching. But what can a man preach, who  
10508 preaches no doctrine? If he preaches no doctrine,  
10509 he preaches no Gospel. And if he does not  
10510 preach it in a practical way, he does not preach  
10511 the Gospel. All preaching should be doctrinal,  
10512 and all preaching should be practical. The very  
10513 design of doctrine is to regulate practice. Any  
10514 preaching that has not this tendency is not the  
10515 Gospel. A loose, exhortatory style of preaching  
10516 may affect the passions, and may produce  
10517 excitement, but will never sufficiently instruct  
10518 the people to secure sound conversions. On the  
10519 other hand, preaching doctrine in an abstract  
10520 manner, may fill the head with notions, but will  
10521 never sanctify the heart or life.

10522

10523 2. Preaching should be direct. The Gospel should  
10524 be preached to men, and not about them. The  
10525 minister must address his hearers. He must  
10526 preach to them about themselves, and not leave  
10527 the impression that he is preaching to them about  
10528 others. He will never do them any good, farther  
10529 than he succeeds in convincing each individual  
10530 that he means him. Many preachers seem very  
10531 much afraid of making the impression that they  
10532 mean any body in particular. They are preaching  
10533 against certain sins, not that have anything to do  
10534 with the sinner. It is the sin, and not the sinner,  
10535 that they are rebuking; and they would by no  
10536 means speak as if they supposed any of their  
10537 hearers were guilty of these abominable  
10538 practices. Now this is anything but preaching the  
10539 Gospel. Thus did not the prophets, nor Christ,  
10540 nor the apostles. Nor do those ministers do this,  
10541 who are successful in winning souls to Christ.

10542

10543 3. Another very important thing to be regarded  
10544 in preaching is, that the minister should hunt  
10545 after sinners and Christians, wherever they may  
10546 have intrenched themselves in inaction. It is not  
10547 the design of preaching, to make men easy and  
10548 quiet, but to make them ACT. It is not the design  
10549 of calling in a physician to have him give  
10550 opiates, and so cover up the disease and let it run

10551 on till it works death; but to search out the  
10552 disease wherever it may be hidden, and to  
10553 remove it. So if a professor of religion has  
10554 backslidden, and is full of doubts and fears, it is  
10555 not the minister's duty to quiet him in his sins,  
10556 and comfort him, but to hunt him out of his  
10557 errors and backslidings, and show him just  
10558 where he stands, and what it is that makes him  
10559 full of doubts and fears.

10560

10561 A minister ought to know the religious opinions  
10562 of every sinner in his congregation. Indeed, a  
10563 minister in the country is generally inexcusable  
10564 if he does not. He has no excuse for not knowing  
10565 the religious views of all his congregation, and  
10566 of all that may come under his influence if he  
10567 has had opportunity to know them. How  
10568 otherwise can he preach to them? How can he  
10569 know how to bring forth things new and old, and  
10570 adapt truth to their case? How can he hunt them  
10571 out unless he knows where they hide  
10572 themselves? He may ring changes on a few  
10573 fundamental doctrines, Repentance and Faith,  
10574 and Faith and Repentance, till the day of  
10575 judgment, and never make any impression on  
10576 many minds. Every sinner has some hiding-  
10577 place, some intrenchment where he lingers. He is  
10578 in possession of some darling LIE, with which

10579 he is quieting himself. Let the minister find it out  
10580 and get it away, either in the pulpit or in private,  
10581 or the man will go to hell in his sins, and his  
10582 blood will be found in the minister's skirts.

10583

10584 4. Another important thing to observe is, that a  
10585 minister should dwell most on those particular  
10586 points which are most needed. I will explain  
10587 what I mean.

10588

10589 Sometimes he may find a people who have been  
10590 led to place great reliance on their own  
10591 resolutions. They think they can consult their  
10592 own convenience, and by and by they will  
10593 repent, when they get ready, without any  
10594 concern about the Spirit of God. Let him take up  
10595 these notions, and show that they are entirely  
10596 contrary to the Scriptures. Let him show that if  
10597 the Spirit of God is grieved away, however able  
10598 he may be, it is certain he never will repent, and  
10599 that by and by, when it shall be convenient for  
10600 him to do it, he will have no inclination. The  
10601 minister who finds these errors prevailing,  
10602 should expose them. He should hunt them out,  
10603 and understand just how they are held, and then  
10604 preach the class of truths which will show the  
10605 fallacy, the folly, and the danger of these  
10606 notions.

10607

10608 So on the other hand. He may find a people who  
10609 have got such views of Election and  
10610 Sovereignty, as to think they have nothing to do  
10611 but to wait for the moving of the waters. Let him  
10612 go right over against them, and crowd upon them  
10613 their ability to obey God, and to show their  
10614 obligation and duty, and press them with that  
10615 until he brings them to submit and be saved.  
10616 They have got behind a perverted view of these  
10617 doctrines, and there is no way to drive them out  
10618 of the hiding-place but to set them right on these  
10619 points. Wherever a sinner is intrenched, unless  
10620 you pour light upon him there, you will never  
10621 move him. It is of no use to press him with those  
10622 truths which he admits, however plainly they  
10623 may in fact contradict his wrong notions. He  
10624 supposes them to be perfectly consistent, and  
10625 does not see the inconsistency, and therefore it  
10626 will not move him, or bring him to repentance.

10627

10628 I have been informed of a minister in New  
10629 England, who was settled in a congregation  
10630 which had long enjoyed little else than Arminian  
10631 preaching, and the congregation themselves  
10632 were chiefly Arminians. Well, this minister, in  
10633 his preaching, strongly insisted on the opposite  
10634 points, the doctrine of election, Divine



10635 sovereignty, predestination, etc. The  
10636 consequence was, as might have been expected  
10637 where this was done with ability, there was a  
10638 powerful revival. Some time afterwards this  
10639 same minister was called to labor in another  
10640 field, in this State, where the people were all on  
10641 the other side, and strongly tainted with  
10642 Antinomianism. They had got such perverted  
10643 views of election, and Divine sovereignty, that  
10644 they were continually saying they had no power  
10645 to do anything, but must wait God's time. Now,  
10646 what does this minister do but immediately go to  
10647 preaching the doctrine of election. And when he  
10648 was asked, how he could think of preaching the  
10649 doctrine of election so much to that people,  
10650 when it was the very thing that lulled them to a  
10651 deeper slumber, he replied. "Why, that's the  
10652 very class of truths by which I had such a great  
10653 revival in ——;" not considering the difference  
10654 in the views of the people. And if I am correctly  
10655 informed, there he is to this day, preaching away  
10656 at the doctrine of election, and wondering that it  
10657 does not produce as powerful a revival as it did  
10658 in the other place. Probably those sinners never  
10659 will be converted. You must take things as they  
10660 are, find out where sinners lie, and pour in truth  
10661 upon them there, and START THEM OUT from  
10662 their refuges of lies. It is of vast importance that

10663 a minister should find out where the  
10664 congregation are, and preach accordingly.

10665

10666 I have been in many places in times of revival,  
10667 and I have never been able to employ precisely  
10668 the same course of preaching in one as in  
10669 another. Some are intrenched behind one refuge,  
10670 and some behind another. In one place, the  
10671 church will need to be instructed, in another,  
10672 sinners. In one place, one set of truths, in  
10673 another, another set. A minister must find out  
10674 where they are, and preach accordingly. I believe  
10675 this is the experience of all preachers who are  
10676 called to labor from field to field.

10677

10678 5. If a minister means to promote a revival, he  
10679 should be very careful not to introduce  
10680 controversy. He will grieve away the Spirit of  
10681 God. In this way probably more revivals are put  
10682 down, than in any other. Look back upon the  
10683 history of the church from the beginning, and  
10684 you will see that ministers are generally  
10685 responsible for grieving away the Spirit and  
10686 causing declensions by controversy. It is the  
10687 ministers who bring forward controversial  
10688 subjects for discussion, and by and by they get  
10689 very zealous on the subject, and then get the

10690 church into a controversial spirit, and so the  
10691 Spirit of God is grieved away.  
10692  
10693 If I had time to go over the history of the church  
10694 from the days of the Apostles, I could show that  
10695 all the controversies that have taken place, and  
10696 all the great declensions in religion, too, were  
10697 chargeable upon ministers. I believe the  
10698 ministers of the present day are responsible for  
10699 the present state of the church, and it will be  
10700 seen to be true at the judgment. Who does not  
10701 know that ministers have been crying out  
10702 “Heresy,” and “New Measures,” and talking  
10703 about the “Evils of Revivals,” until they have got  
10704 the church all in confusion? Look at the poor  
10705 Presbyterian church, and see ministers getting up  
10706 their Act and Testimony, and keeping up a  
10707 continual war! O God, have mercy on ministers.  
10708 They talk about their days of fasting and prayer,  
10709 but are these the men to call on others to fast and  
10710 pray? They ought to fast and pray themselves. It  
10711 is time that ministers should assemble together,  
10712 and fast and pray over the evil of controversy,  
10713 for they have caused it. The church itself never  
10714 would get into a controversial spirit unless led  
10715 into it by ministers. The body of the church are  
10716 always averse to controversy, and will keep out  
10717 of it, only as they are dragged into it by

10718 ministers. When Christians are revived they are  
10719 not inclined to meddle with controversy, either  
10720 to read or hear it. But they may be told of such  
10721 and such “damnable heresies,” that are afloat, till  
10722 they get their feelings enlisted in controversy,  
10723 and then farewell to the revival. If a minister, in  
10724 preaching, finds it necessary to discuss particular  
10725 points, about which Christians differ in opinion,  
10726 let him BY ALL MEANS avoid a controversial  
10727 spirit and manner of doing it. [4]  
10728

10729 6. The Gospel should be preached in those  
10730 proportions, that the whole Gospel may be  
10731 brought before the minds of the people, and  
10732 produce its proper influence. If too much stress  
10733 is laid on one class of truths, the Christian  
10734 character will not have its due proportions. Its  
10735 symmetry will not be perfect. If that class of  
10736 truths be almost exclusively dwelt upon, that  
10737 requires great exertion of intellect, without being  
10738 brought home to the heart and conscience, it will  
10739 be found that the church will be indoctrinated in  
10740 those views, will have their heads filled with  
10741 notions, but will not be awake, and active, and  
10742 efficient in the promotion of religion. If, on the  
10743 other hand, the preaching be loose, indefinite,  
10744 exhortatory, and highly impassioned, the church  
10745 will be like a ship, with too much sail for her

10746 ballast. It will be in danger of being swept away  
10747 by a tempest of feeling, where there is not  
10748 sufficient knowledge to prevent their being  
10749 carried away with every wind of doctrine. If  
10750 election and sovereignty are too much preached,  
10751 there will be Antinomianism in the church, and  
10752 sinners will hide themselves behind the delusion  
10753 that they can do nothing. If the other doctrines of  
10754 ability and obligation are too prominent, they  
10755 will produce Arminianism in the church, and  
10756 sinners will be blustering and self-confident.

10757  
10758 When I entered the ministry, there had been so  
10759 much said about the doctrine of election and  
10760 sovereignty, that I found it was the universal  
10761 hiding place, both of sinners and of the church,  
10762 that they could not do anything, or could not  
10763 obey the Gospel. And wherever I went, I found it  
10764 indispensable to demolish these refuges of lies.  
10765 And a revival would in no way be produced or  
10766 carried on, but by dwelling on that class of  
10767 truths, which holds up man's ability, and  
10768 obligation, and responsibility. This was the only  
10769 class of truths that would bring sinners to  
10770 submission.

10771  
10772 It was not so in the days when President  
10773 Edwards and Whitefield labored. Then the

10774 churches in New England had enjoyed little else  
10775 than Arminian preaching, and were all resting in  
10776 themselves and their own strength. These bold  
10777 and devoted servants of God came out and  
10778 declared those particular doctrines of grace,  
10779 Divine sovereignty, and election, and they were  
10780 greatly blessed. They did not dwell on these  
10781 doctrines exclusively, but they preached them  
10782 very fully. The consequence was, that because in  
10783 those circumstances revivals followed from such  
10784 preaching, the ministers who followed,  
10785 continued to preach these doctrines almost  
10786 exclusively. And they dwelt on them so long,  
10787 that the church and the world got intrenched  
10788 behind them, waiting for God to come and do  
10789 what he required them to do, and so revivals  
10790 ceased for many years.

10791  
10792 Now, and for years past, ministers have been  
10793 engaged in hunting them out from these refuges.  
10794 And here it is all important for the ministers of  
10795 this day to bear in mind, that if they dwell  
10796 exclusively on ability and obligation, they will  
10797 get their hearers back on the old Arminian  
10798 ground, and then they will cease to promote  
10799 revivals. Here are a body of ministers who have  
10800 preached a great deal of truth, and have had great  
10801 revivals, under God. Now let it be known and

10802 remarked, that the reason is, they have hunted  
10803 sinners out from their hiding places. But if they  
10804 continue to dwell on the same class of truths till  
10805 sinners hide themselves behind their preaching,  
10806 another class of truths must be preached. And  
10807 then if they do not change their mode, another  
10808 pall will hang over the church, until another  
10809 class of ministers shall arise and hunt sinners out  
10810 of those new retreats.

10811  
10812 A right view of both classes of truths, election  
10813 and free-agency, will do no hurt. They are  
10814 eminently calculated to convert sinners and  
10815 strengthen saints. It is a perverted view which  
10816 chills the heart of the church, and closes the eyes  
10817 of sinners in sleep, till they sink down to hell. If  
10818 I had time I would remark on the manner in  
10819 which I have sometimes heard the doctrines of  
10820 Divine sovereignty, election, and ability  
10821 preached. They have been exhibited in  
10822 irreconcilable contradiction, the one against the  
10823 other. Such exhibitions are anything but the  
10824 Gospel, and are calculated to make a sinner feel  
10825 anything else rather than his responsibility to  
10826 God.

10827  
10828 By preaching truth in proper proportions, I do  
10829 not mean mingling all things together in the

10830 same sermon, in such a way that sinners will not  
10831 see their connection or consistency. A minister  
10832 once asked another, Why do you not preach the  
10833 doctrine of election? Because, said the other, I  
10834 find sinners here are intrenched behind inability.  
10835 The first then said he once knew a minister who  
10836 used to preach election in the forenoon, and  
10837 repentance in the afternoon. Marvellous grace it  
10838 must be, that would produce a revival under such  
10839 preaching! What connection is there in this?  
10840 Instead of exhibiting to the sinner his sins in the  
10841 morning, and then and in the afternoon calling  
10842 on him to repent, he is first turned to the doctrine  
10843 of election, and then commanded to repent.  
10844 What is he to repent of? The doctrine of  
10845 election? This is not what I mean by preaching  
10846 truth in its proportion. Bringing things together,  
10847 that only confound the sinner's mind, and  
10848 overwhelm him with a fog of metaphysics, is not  
10849 wise preaching. When talking of election, the  
10850 preacher is not talking of the sinner's duty. It has  
10851 no relation to the sinner's duty. Election belongs  
10852 to the government of God. It is a part of the  
10853 exceeding richness of the grace of God. It shows  
10854 the love of God, not the duty of the sinner. And  
10855 to bring election and repentance together in this  
10856 way is diverting the sinner's mind away from his  
10857 duty. It has been customary, in many places, for



10858 a long time, to bring the doctrine of election into  
10859 every sermon. Sinners have been commanded to  
10860 repent, and told that they could not repent, in the  
10861 same sermon. A great deal of ingenuity has been  
10862 exercised in endeavoring to reconcile a sinner's  
10863 "inability" with his obligation to obey God.  
10864 Election, predestination, free-agency, inability,  
10865 and duty, have all been thrown together in one  
10866 promiscuous jumble. And with regard to many  
10867 sermons, it has been too true, as has been  
10868 objected, that ministers have preached, "You can  
10869 and you can't, You shall and you sha'n't, You  
10870 will and you won't, And you'll be damned if you  
10871 don't." Such a mixture of truth and error, of light  
10872 and darkness, has confounded the congregation,  
10873 and been the fruitful source of Universalism and  
10874 every species of infidelity and error.  
10875  
10876 7. It is of great importance that the sinner should  
10877 be made to feel his guilt, and not left to the  
10878 impression that he is unfortunate. I think this is a  
10879 very prevailing fault, particularly with printed  
10880 books on the subject. They are calculated to  
10881 make the sinner think more of his sorrows than  
10882 of his sins, and feel that his state is rather  
10883 unfortunate than criminal. Perhaps most of you  
10884 have seen a very lovely little book recently  
10885 published, entitled "Todd's Lectures to

10886 Children.” It is very fine, exquisitely fine, and  
10887 happy in some of its illustrations of truth. But it  
10888 has one very serious fault. Many of its  
10889 illustrations, I may say most of them, are not  
10890 calculated to make a correct impression  
10891 respecting the guilt of sinners, or to make them  
10892 feel how much they have been to blame. This is  
10893 very unfortunate. If the writer had guarded his  
10894 illustrations on this point, so as to make them  
10895 impress sinners with a sense of their guilt, I do  
10896 not see how a child could read through that book  
10897 and not be converted.

10898  
10899 Multitudes of the books written for children, and  
10900 for adults too, within the last twenty years, have  
10901 run into this mistake to an alarming degree. Mrs.  
10902 Sherwood’s writings have this fault standing out  
10903 upon almost every page. They are not calculated  
10904 to make the sinner blame and condemn himself.  
10905 Until you can do this, the Gospel will never take  
10906 effect.

10907  
10908 8. A prime object with the preacher must be to  
10909 make present obligation felt. I have talked, I  
10910 suppose, with many thousands of anxious  
10911 sinners. And I have found that they had never  
10912 before felt the pressure of present obligation.  
10913 The impression is not commonly made by

10914 ministers in their preaching that sinners are  
10915 expected to repent NOW. And if ministers  
10916 suppose they make this impression, they deceive  
10917 themselves. Most commonly any other  
10918 impression is made upon the minds of sinners by  
10919 the preacher, than that they are expected now to  
10920 submit. But what sort of a Gospel is this? Does  
10921 God authorize such an impression? Is this  
10922 according to the preaching of Jesus Christ? Does  
10923 the Holy Spirit, when striving with the sinner,  
10924 make the impression upon his mind that he is not  
10925 expected to obey now?—Was any such  
10926 impression produced by the preaching of the  
10927 apostles? How does it happen that so many  
10928 ministers now preach, so as in fact to make an  
10929 impression on their hearers, that they are not  
10930 expected to repent now? Until the sinner's  
10931 conscience is reached on this subject, you preach  
10932 to him in vain. And until ministers learn how to  
10933 preach so as to make the right impression, the  
10934 world never can be converted. Oh, to what an  
10935 alarming extent does the impression now prevail  
10936 among the impenitent, that they are not expected  
10937 to repent now, but must wait God's time!

10938

10939 9. Sinners ought to be made to feel that they  
10940 have something to do, and that is to repent; that  
10941 it is something which no other being can do for

10942 them, neither God nor man, and something  
10943 which they can do, and do now. Religion is  
10944 something to do, not something to wait for. And  
10945 they must do it now, or they are in danger of  
10946 eternal death.

10947

10948 10. Ministers should never rest satisfied, until  
10949 they have ANNIHILATED every excuse of  
10950 sinners. The plea of “inability” is the worst of all  
10951 excuses. It slanders God so, charging him with  
10952 infinite tyranny, in commanding men to do that  
10953 which they have no power to do. Make the  
10954 sinner see and feel that this is the very nature of  
10955 his excuse. Make the sinner see that all pleas in  
10956 excuse for not submitting to God, are an act of  
10957 rebellion against him. Tear away the last LIE  
10958 which he grasps in his hand, and make him feel  
10959 that he is absolutely condemned before God.

10960

10961 11. Sinners should be made to feel that if they  
10962 now grieve away the Spirit of God, it is very  
10963 probable that they will be lost for ever. There is  
10964 infinite danger of this. They should be made to  
10965 understand why they are dependent on the Spirit,  
10966 and that it is not because they cannot do what  
10967 God commands, but because they are unwilling;  
10968 but that they are so unwilling that it is just as  
10969 certain they will not repent without the Holy

10970 Ghost, as if they were now in hell, or as if they  
10971 were actually unable. They are so opposed and  
10972 so unwilling, that they never will repent in the  
10973 world, unless God sends his Holy Spirit upon  
10974 them.  
10975  
10976 Show them, too, that a sinner under the Gospel,  
10977 who hears the truth preached, if converted at all,  
10978 is generally converted young. And if not  
10979 converted while young, he is commonly given  
10980 up of God. Where the truth is preached, sinners  
10981 are either Gospel-hardened or converted. I know  
10982 some old sinners are converted, but they are  
10983 rather exceptions, and by no means common.  
10984  
10985 I wish now, **SECONDLY**, to make a few  
10986 remarks on the **MANNER OF PREACHING**.  
10987  
10988 1. It should be conversational. Preaching, to be  
10989 understood, should be colloquial in its style. A  
10990 minister must preach just as he would talk, if he  
10991 wishes to be fully understood. Nothing is more  
10992 calculated to make a sinner feel that religion is  
10993 some mysterious thing that he cannot  
10994 understand, than this mouthing, formal, lofty  
10995 style of speaking, so generally employed in the  
10996 pulpit. The minister ought to do as the lawyer  
10997 does when he wants to make a jury understand

10998 him perfectly. He uses a style perfectly  
10999 colloquial. This lofty, swelling style will do no  
11000 good. The Gospel will never produce any great  
11001 effects, until ministers talk to their hearers, in the  
11002 pulpit, as they talk in private conversation.

11003

11004 2. It must be in the language of common life.  
11005 Not only should it be colloquial in its style, but  
11006 the words should be such as are in common use.  
11007 Otherwise they will not be understood. In the  
11008 New Testament you will observe that Jesus  
11009 Christ invariably uses words of the most  
11010 common kind. You scarcely find a word of his  
11011 instructions, that any child cannot understand.  
11012 The language of the Gospels is the plainest,  
11013 simplest, and most easily understood of any  
11014 language in the world.

11015

11016 For a minister to neglect this principle, is  
11017 wicked. Some ministers use language that is  
11018 purely technical in preaching. They think to  
11019 avoid the mischief by explaining the meaning  
11020 fully at the outset; but this will not answer. It  
11021 will not effect the object in making the people  
11022 understand what he means. If he uses a word that  
11023 is not in common use, and that people do not  
11024 understand, his explanation may be very full, but  
11025 the difficulty is that people will forget his

11026 explanations and then his words are all Greek to  
11027 them. Or if he uses a word in common use, but  
11028 employs it in an uncommon sense, giving his  
11029 special explanations, it is no better; for the  
11030 people will soon forget his special explanations,  
11031 and then the impression actually conveyed to  
11032 their minds will be according to their common  
11033 understanding of the word. And thus he will  
11034 never convey the right idea to his congregation.  
11035 It is amazing how many men of thinking minds  
11036 there are in congregations, who do not  
11037 understand the most common technical  
11038 expressions employed by ministers, such as  
11039 regeneration, sanctification, etc.

11040  
11041 Use words that can be perfectly understood. Do  
11042 not, for fear of appearing unlearned, use  
11043 language half Latin and half Greek, which the  
11044 people do not understand. The apostle says the  
11045 man is a barbarian, who uses language that the  
11046 people do not understand. And “if the trumpet  
11047 give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare  
11048 himself for the battle?” In the apostles’ days  
11049 there were some preachers, who were  
11050 marvellously proud of displaying their command  
11051 of language, and showing off the variety of  
11052 tongues they could speak, which the common  
11053 people could not understand. The apostle

11054 rebukes this spirit sharply, and says, “I had  
11055 rather speak five words with my understanding,  
11056 that by my voice I might teach others also, than  
11057 ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

11058

11059 I have sometimes heard ministers preach, even  
11060 when there was a revival, when I have wondered  
11061 what that part of the congregation would do,  
11062 who had no dictionary. So many phrases were  
11063 brought in, manifestly to adorn the discourse,  
11064 rather than to instruct the people, that I have felt  
11065 as if I wanted to tell the man, “Sit down, and not  
11066 confound the people’s minds with your  
11067 barbarian preaching, that they cannot  
11068 understand.”

11069

11070 3. Preaching should be parabolical. That is,  
11071 illustrations should be constantly used, drawn  
11072 from incidents, real or supposed. Jesus Christ  
11073 constantly illustrated his instructions in this way.  
11074 He would either advance a principle and then  
11075 illustrate it by a parable, that is, a short story of  
11076 some event real or imaginary, or else he would  
11077 bring out the principle in the parable. There are  
11078 millions of facts that can be used to advantage,  
11079 and yet very few ministers dare to use them, for  
11080 fear somebody will reproach them. “Oh,” says  
11081 somebody, “he tells stories.” Tells stories! Why,



11082 that is the way Jesus Christ preached. And it is  
11083 the only way to preach. Facts, real or supposed,  
11084 should be used to show the truth. Truths not  
11085 illustrated, are generally just as well calculated  
11086 to convert sinners as a mathematical  
11087 demonstration. Is it always to be so? Shall it  
11088 always be matter of reproach, that ministers  
11089 follow the example of Jesus Christ, in  
11090 illustrating truths by facts? Let them do it, and  
11091 let fools reproach them as story-telling ministers.  
11092 They have Jesus Christ and common sense on  
11093 their side.

11094  
11095 4. The illustrations should be drawn from  
11096 common life, and the common business of  
11097 society. I once heard a minister illustrate his  
11098 ideas by the manner in which merchants transact  
11099 business in their stores. Another minister who  
11100 was present made some remarks to him  
11101 afterwards. He objected to this illustration  
11102 particularly, because, he said, it was too familiar,  
11103 and was letting down the dignity of the pulpit.  
11104 He said all illustrations in preaching should be  
11105 drawn from ancient history, or from some  
11106 elevated source, that would keep up the dignity  
11107 of the pulpit. Dignity indeed! Just the language  
11108 of the devil. He rejoices in it. Why, the object of  
11109 an illustration is, to make people see the truth,

11110 not to bolster up pulpit dignity. A minister  
11111 whose heart is in the work, does not use an  
11112 illustration to make people stare, but to make  
11113 them see the truth. If he brought forward his  
11114 illustrations from ancient history, it could not  
11115 make the people see, it would not illustrate  
11116 anything. The novelty of the thing might awaken  
11117 their attention, but then they would lose the truth  
11118 itself. For if the illustration itself be a novelty,  
11119 the attention will be directed to this fact as a  
11120 matter of history, and the truth itself, which it  
11121 was designed to illustrate, will be lost sight of.  
11122 The illustration should, if possible, be a matter  
11123 of common occurrence, and the more common  
11124 the occurrence the more sure it will be, not to fix  
11125 attention upon itself, but it serves as a medium  
11126 through which the truth is conveyed. I have been  
11127 pained at the very heart, at hearing illustrations  
11128 drawn from ancient history, of which not one in  
11129 a hundred of the congregation had ever heard.  
11130 The very manner in which they were adverted to,  
11131 was strongly tinctured, to say the least, with the  
11132 appearance of vanity, and an attempt to surprise  
11133 the people with an exhibition of learning.  
11134  
11135 The Saviour always illustrated his instructions  
11136 by things that were taking place among the  
11137 people to whom he preached, and with which

11138 their minds were familiar. He descended often  
11139 very far below what is now supposed to be  
11140 essential to support the dignity of the pulpit. He  
11141 talked about the hens and chickens, and children  
11142 in market-places, and sheep and lambs,  
11143 shepherds and farmers, and husbandmen and  
11144 merchants. And when he talked about kings, as  
11145 in the marriage of the king's son, and the  
11146 nobleman that went into a far country to receive  
11147 a kingdom, he had reference to historical facts,  
11148 that were well known among the people at the  
11149 time. The illustration should always be drawn  
11150 from things so common that the illustration itself  
11151 will not attract attention away from the subject,  
11152 but that people may see through it the truth  
11153 illustrated.

11154

11155 5. Preaching should be repetitious. If a minister  
11156 wishes to preach with effect, he must not be  
11157 afraid of repeating whatever he sees is not  
11158 perfectly understood by his hearers. Here is the  
11159 evil of using notes. The preacher preaches right  
11160 along just as he has it written down, and cannot  
11161 observe whether he is understood or not. If he  
11162 interrupts his reading, and attempts to catch the  
11163 countenances of his audience, and to explain  
11164 where he sees they do not understand, he gets  
11165 lost and confused, and gives it up. If a minister

11166 has his eyes on the people he is preaching to, he  
11167 can commonly tell by their looks whether they  
11168 understand him. And if he sees they do not  
11169 understand any particular point, let him stop and  
11170 illustrate it. If they do not understand one  
11171 illustration, let him give another, and make it all  
11172 clear to their minds, before he goes on. But those  
11173 who write their sermons go right on, in a regular  
11174 consecutive train, just as in any essay or a book,  
11175 and do not repeat their thoughts till the audience  
11176 fully comprehend them.

11177  
11178 I was conversing with one of the first advocates  
11179 in this country. He said the difficulty which  
11180 preachers find in making themselves understood,  
11181 is, that they do not repeat enough, Says he, “In  
11182 addressing a jury, I always expect that whatever  
11183 I wish to impress upon their minds, I shall have  
11184 to repeat at least twice, and often I repeat it three  
11185 or four times, and even as many times as there  
11186 are jurymen before me. Otherwise, I do not carry  
11187 their minds along with me, so that they can feel  
11188 the force of what comes afterwards.” If a jury  
11189 under oath, called to decide on the common  
11190 affairs of this world, cannot apprehend an  
11191 argument unless there is so much repetition, how  
11192 is it to be expected that men will understand the  
11193 preaching of the Gospel without it.

11194

11195 In like manner the minister ought to turn an  
11196 important thought over and over before his  
11197 audience, till even the children understand it  
11198 perfectly. Do not say that so much repetition will  
11199 create disgust in cultivated minds. It will not  
11200 disgust. This is not what disgusts thinking men.  
11201 They are not weary of the efforts a minister  
11202 makes to be understood. The fact is, the more  
11203 simple a preacher's illustrations are, and the  
11204 more plain he makes everything, the more men  
11205 of mind are interested. I know that men of the  
11206 first minds often get ideas they never had before,  
11207 from illustrations which were designed to bring  
11208 the Gospel down to the comprehension of a  
11209 child. Such men are commonly so occupied with  
11210 the affairs of this world, that they do not think  
11211 much on the subject of religion, and they  
11212 therefore need the plainest preaching, and they  
11213 will like it.

11214

11215 6. A minister should always feel deeply his  
11216 subject, and then he will suit the action to the  
11217 word and the word to the action, so as to make  
11218 the full impression which the truth is calculated  
11219 to make. He should be in solemn earnest in what  
11220 he says. I heard lately a most judicious criticism  
11221 on this subject. "How important it is that a

11222 minister should feel what he says. Then his  
11223 actions will of course correspond to his words. If  
11224 he undertakes to make gestures, his arms may go  
11225 like a windmill, and yet make no impression.” It  
11226 requires the utmost stretch of art on the stage for  
11227 the actors to make their hearers feel. The design  
11228 of elocution is to teach this skill. But if a man  
11229 feels his subject fully, he will naturally do it. He  
11230 will naturally do the very thing that elocution  
11231 laboriously teaches. See any common man in the  
11232 streets, who is earnest in talking. See with what  
11233 force he gestures. See a woman or a child in  
11234 earnest. How natural. To gesture with their  
11235 hands is as natural as it is to move their tongue  
11236 and lips. It is the perfection of eloquence.

11237  
11238 Let a minister, then, only feel what he says, and  
11239 not be tied to his notes, to read an essay, or to  
11240 speak a piece, like a school-boy, first on one foot  
11241 and then on the other, put out first one hand and  
11242 then the other. Let him speak as he feels, and act  
11243 as he feels, and he will be eloquent.

11244  
11245 No wonder that a great deal of preaching  
11246 produces so little effect. Gestures are of more  
11247 importance than is generally supposed. Mere  
11248 words will never express the full meaning of the  
11249 Gospel. The manner of saying it is almost

11250 everything. Suppose one of you, that is a mother,  
11251 goes home to-night, and as soon as you get into  
11252 the door, the nurse comes rushing up to you,  
11253 with her whole soul in her countenance, and tells  
11254 you that your child is burnt to death. You would  
11255 believe it, and you would feel it too, at once. But  
11256 suppose she comes and tells it in a cold and  
11257 careless manner. Would that arouse you? No. It  
11258 is the earnestness of her manner, and the distress  
11259 of her looks, that tells the story. You know  
11260 something is the matter, before she speaks a  
11261 word.

11262  
11263 I once heard a remark made, respecting a young  
11264 minister's preaching, which was instructive. He  
11265 was uneducated, in the common sense of the  
11266 term, but well educated to win souls. It was said  
11267 of him, "The manner in which he comes in, and  
11268 sits in the pulpit, and rises to speak, is a sermon  
11269 of itself. It shows that he has something to say  
11270 that is important and solemn." That man's  
11271 manner of saying some things I have known to  
11272 move the feelings of a whole congregation,  
11273 when the same things said in a prosing way  
11274 would have produced no effect at all.

11275  
11276 A fact which was stated by one of the most  
11277 distinguished professors of elocution in the

11278 United States, ought to impress ministers on this  
11279 subject, That man was an infidel. He said, “I  
11280 have been fourteen years employed in teaching  
11281 elocution to ministers, and I know they do not  
11282 believe the Christian religion. The Bible may be  
11283 true. I do not pretend to know as to that, but I  
11284 know these ministers do not believe it. I can  
11285 demonstrate that they do not. The perfection of  
11286 my art is to teach them to speak naturally on this  
11287 subject. I go to their studies, and converse with  
11288 them, and they speak eloquently. I say to them,  
11289 Gentlemen, if you will preach just as you  
11290 yourselves naturally speak on any other subject  
11291 in which you are interested, you do not need to  
11292 be taught. That is just what I am trying to teach  
11293 you. I hear you talk on other subjects with  
11294 admirable force and eloquence. I see you go into  
11295 the pulpit, and you speak and act as if you did  
11296 not believe what you are saying. I have told  
11297 them, again and again, to talk in the pulpit as  
11298 they naturally talk to me. And I cannot make  
11299 them do it, and so I know they do not believe the  
11300 Christian religion.”

11301  
11302 I have mentioned this to show how universal it  
11303 is, that men will gesture right if they feel right.  
11304 The only thing in the way of ministers being  
11305 natural speakers is, that they do not DEEPLY



11306 FEEL. How can they be natural in elocution,  
11307 when they do not feel?

11308

11309 7. A minister should aim to convert his  
11310 congregation. But you will ask, Does not all  
11311 preaching aim at this? No. A minister always has  
11312 some aim in preaching, but most sermons were  
11313 never aimed at converting sinners. And if sinners  
11314 were converted under them, the preacher himself  
11315 would be amazed. I once heard a fact on this  
11316 point. There were two young ministers who had  
11317 entered the ministry at the same time. One of  
11318 them had great success in converting sinners, the  
11319 other none. The latter inquired of the other, one  
11320 day, what was the reason of this difference.  
11321 “Why,” replied the other, “the reason is, that I  
11322 aim at a different end from you, in preaching.  
11323 My object is to convert sinners, but you aim at  
11324 no such thing. And then you go and lay it to  
11325 sovereignty in God, that you do not produce the  
11326 same effect, when you never aim at it. Here, take  
11327 one of my sermons, and preach it to your people,  
11328 and see what the effect will be.” The man did so,  
11329 and preached the sermon, and it did produce  
11330 effect. He was frightened when sinners began to  
11331 weep; and when one came to him after meeting  
11332 to ask what he should do, the minister  
11333 apologized to him, and said, “I did not aim to

11334 wound you, I am sorry if I have hurt your  
11335 feelings.” Oh, horrible!

11336

11337 8. A minister must anticipate the objections of  
11338 sinners, and answer them. What does the lawyer  
11339 do when pleading before a jury? Oh, how  
11340 differently is the cause of Jesus Christ pleaded  
11341 from human causes! It was remarked by a  
11342 lawyer, that the cause of Jesus Christ had the  
11343 fewest able advocates of any cause in the world.  
11344 And I partly believe it. Does a lawyer go along  
11345 in his argument in a regular train, and not  
11346 explain any thing obscure, or anticipate the  
11347 arguments of his antagonist? If he did so, he  
11348 would lose his case to a certainty. But, no. The  
11349 lawyer, who is pleading for money, anticipates  
11350 every objection, which may be made by his  
11351 antagonist, and carefully removes or explains  
11352 them, so as to leave the ground all clear as he  
11353 goes along, that the jury may be settled on every  
11354 point. But ministers often leave one difficulty  
11355 and another untouched. Sinners who hear them  
11356 feel the difficulty, and it is never got over in their  
11357 minds, and they never know how to remove it,  
11358 and perhaps the minister never takes the trouble  
11359 to know that such difficulties exist, and yet he  
11360 wonders why his congregation is not converted,  
11361 and why there is no revival. How can he wonder

11362 at it, when he has never hunted up the difficulties  
11363 and objections that sinners feel, and removed  
11364 them?

11365

11366 9. If a minister means to preach the Gospel with  
11367 effect he must be sure not to be monotonous. If  
11368 he preaches in a monotonous way, he will preach  
11369 the people to sleep. Any monotonous sound,  
11370 great or small, if continued, disposes people to  
11371 sleep. The falls of Niagara, the roaring of the  
11372 ocean, or any sound ever so great or small, has  
11373 this effect naturally on the nervous system. You  
11374 never hear this monotonous manner from people  
11375 in conversation. And a minister cannot be  
11376 monotonous in preaching, if he feels what he  
11377 says.

11378

11379 10. A minister should address the feelings  
11380 enough to secure attention, and then deal with  
11381 the conscience, and probe to the quick. Appeals  
11382 to the feelings alone will never convert sinners.  
11383 If the preacher deals too much in these, he may  
11384 get up an excitement, and have wave after wave  
11385 of feeling flow over the congregation, and  
11386 people may be carried away as with a flood, and  
11387 rest in false hopes. The only way to secure sound  
11388 conversions is to deal faithfully with the  
11389 conscience. If attention flags at any time, appeal

11390 to the feelings again, and rouse it up; but do your  
11391 work with conscience.

11392

11393 11. If he can, it is desirable that a minister  
11394 should learn the effect of one sermon, before he  
11395 preaches another. Let him learn if it is  
11396 understood, if it has produced any impression, if  
11397 any difficulties are felt in regard to the subject  
11398 which need clearing up, if any objections are  
11399 raised, and the like. When he knows it all, then  
11400 he knows what to preach next, What would be  
11401 thought of the physician who should give  
11402 medicine to his patient, and then give it again  
11403 and again, without trying to learn the effect of  
11404 the first, or whether it had produced any effect or  
11405 not? A minister never will be able to deal with  
11406 sinners as he ought, till he can find out whether  
11407 his instruction has been received and understood,  
11408 and whether the difficulties in sinners' minds are  
11409 cleared away, and their path open to the Saviour,  
11410 so that they need not stumble and stumble till  
11411 their souls are lost.

11412

11413 I had designed to notice several other points, but  
11414 time does not admit. I wish to close with a few

11415

11416 REMARKS.

11417

11418 1. We see why so few of the leading minds in  
11419 many communities are converted.

11420

11421 Until the late revivals, professional men were  
11422 rarely reached by preaching, and they were  
11423 almost all infidels at heart. People almost  
11424 understood the Bible to warrant the idea, that  
11425 they could not be converted. The reason is  
11426 obvious. The Gospel had not been commended  
11427 to the consciences of such men. Ministers had  
11428 not grappled with mind, and reasoned so as to  
11429 make that class of mind see the truth of the  
11430 Gospel, and feel its power, and consequently  
11431 such persons had come to regard religion as  
11432 something unworthy their notice.

11433

11434 But of late years the case is altered, and in some  
11435 places there have been more of this class of  
11436 persons converted, in proportion to their  
11437 numbers, than of any others. That is because  
11438 they were made to understand the claims of the  
11439 Gospel. The preacher grappled with their minds,  
11440 and showed them the reasonableness of religion.  
11441 And when this is done, it is found that that class  
11442 of minds are more easily converted than any  
11443 other. They have so much better capacity to  
11444 receive an argument, and are so much more in  
11445 the habit of yielding to the force of reason, that

11446 as soon as the Gospel gets a fair hold of their  
11447 minds, it breaks them right down, and melts  
11448 them at the feet of Christ.

11449

11450 2. Before the Gospel can take general effect, we  
11451 must have a class of extempore preachers, for  
11452 the following reasons:

11453

11454 (1.) No set of men can stand the labor of writing  
11455 sermons and doing all the preaching which will  
11456 be requisite.

11457

11458 (2.) Written preaching is not calculated to  
11459 produce the requisite effect. Such preaching does  
11460 not present truth in the right shape.

11461

11462 (3.) It is impossible for a man who writes his  
11463 sermons to arrange his matter, and turn and  
11464 choose his thoughts, so as to produce the same  
11465 effect as when he addresses the people directly,  
11466 and makes them feel that he means them.  
11467 Writing sermons had its origin in times of  
11468 political difficulty. The practice was unknown in  
11469 the apostles' days. No doubt written sermons  
11470 have done a great deal of good, but they can  
11471 never give to the Gospel its great power. Perhaps  
11472 many ministers have been so long trained in the  
11473 use of notes, that they had better not throw them

11474 away. Perhaps they would make bad work  
11475 without them. The difficulty would not be for the  
11476 want of mind, but from wrong training. The bad  
11477 habit is begun with the school boy, who is called  
11478 to “speak his piece.” Instead of being set to  
11479 express his own thoughts and feelings in his own  
11480 language, and with his own natural manner, such  
11481 as nature herself prompts, he is made to commit  
11482 another person’s writing to memory, and then  
11483 mouths it out in a stiff and formal way. And so  
11484 when he goes to college, and to the seminary,  
11485 instead of being trained to extempore speaking,  
11486 he is set to writing his piece, and commit it to  
11487 memory. I would pursue the opposite course  
11488 from the beginning. I would give him a subject,  
11489 and let him first think, and then speak his  
11490 thoughts. Perhaps he will make mistakes. Very  
11491 well, that is to be expected—in a beginner. But  
11492 he will learn. Suppose he is not eloquent, at first.  
11493 Very well, he can improve. And he is in the very  
11494 way to improve. This kind of training alone will  
11495 ever raise up a class of ministers who can  
11496 convert the world.

11497  
11498 But it is objected to extemporaneous preaching,  
11499 that if ministers do not write, they will not think.  
11500 This objection will have weight with those men  
11501 whose habit has always been to write down their

11502 thoughts. But to a man of a different habit, it will  
11503 have no weight at all. Writing is not thinking.  
11504 And if I should judge from many of the written  
11505 sermons I have heard preached, the makers of  
11506 them had been doing anything rather than  
11507 thinking. The mechanical labor of writing is  
11508 really a hinderance to close and rapid thought. It  
11509 is true that some extempore preachers have not  
11510 been men of thought. And so it is true that many  
11511 men who write sermons, are not men of thought.  
11512 A man whose habits have always been such, that  
11513 he has thought only when he has put his mind on  
11514 the end of his pen, will of course, if he lays aside  
11515 his pen, at first find it difficult to think; and if he  
11516 attempts to preach without writing, will, until his  
11517 habits are thoroughly changed, find it difficult to  
11518 throw into his sermons the same amount of  
11519 thought, as if he conformed to his old habits of  
11520 writing. But it should be remembered that this is  
11521 only on account of his having been trained to  
11522 write, and having always habituated himself to  
11523 it. It is the training and habit that renders it so  
11524 difficult for him to think without writing. Will  
11525 any body pretend to say that lawyers are not men  
11526 of thought? That their arguments before a court  
11527 and jury, are not profound and well digested?  
11528 And yet every one knows that they do not write  
11529 their speeches. It should be understood, too, that



11530 in college, they have the same training with  
11531 ministers, and have the same disadvantage of  
11532 having been trained to write their thoughts; and  
11533 it is only after they enter upon their profession,  
11534 that they change their habit. Were they educated,  
11535 as they should be, to extempore habits in the  
11536 schools, they would be vastly more eloquent and  
11537 powerful in argument than they are.

11538

11539 I have heard much of this objection to extempore  
11540 preaching ever since I entered the ministry. It  
11541 was often said to me then, in answer to my views  
11542 of extempore preaching, that ministers who  
11543 preached extemporaneously, would not instruct  
11544 the churches, that there would be a great deal of  
11545 sameness in their preaching, and they would  
11546 soon become insipid and repetitious for want of  
11547 thought. But every year's experience has ripened  
11548 the conviction on my mind, that the reverse of  
11549 this objection is true. The man who writes least  
11550 may, if he pleases, think most, and will say what  
11551 he does think in a manner that will be better  
11552 understood than if it were written; and that, just  
11553 in the proportion that he lays aside the labor of  
11554 writing, his body will be left free to exercise, and  
11555 his mind to vigorous and consecutive thought.

11556

11557 The great reason why it is supposed that  
11558 extempore preachers more frequently repeat the  
11559 same thoughts in their preaching, is because  
11560 what they say is, in a general way, more  
11561 perfectly remembered by the congregation, than  
11562 if it had been read. I have often known  
11563 preachers, who could repeat their written  
11564 sermons once in a few months, without its being  
11565 recognised by the congregation. But the manner  
11566 in which extempore sermons are generally  
11567 delivered is so much more impressive, that the  
11568 thoughts cannot in general be soon repeated,  
11569 without being remembered. We shall never have  
11570 a set of men in our halls of legislation, in our  
11571 courts of justice, and in our pulpits, that are  
11572 powerful and overwhelming speakers, and can  
11573 carry the world before them, till our system of  
11574 education teaches them to think, closely, rapidly,  
11575 consecutively, and till all their habits of speaking  
11576 in the schools are extemporaneous. The very  
11577 style of communicating thought, in what is  
11578 commonly called a good style of writing, is not  
11579 calculated to leave a deep impression on the  
11580 mind, or to communicate thought in a clear and  
11581 impressive manner. It is not laconic, direct,  
11582 pertinent. It is not the language of nature. It is  
11583 impossible that gestures should be suited to the  
11584 common style of writing. And consequently,

11585 when they attempt to gesture in reading an essay,  
11586 or delivering a written sermon, their gestures are  
11587 a burlesque upon all public speaking.

11588

11589 In delivering a sermon in this essay style of  
11590 writing, it is impossible that nearly all the fire of  
11591 meaning and power of gesture, and looks, and  
11592 attitude, and emphasis should not be lost. We  
11593 can never have the full meaning of the Gospel,  
11594 till we throw away our notes.

11595

11596 3. A minister's course of study and training for  
11597 his work should be exclusively theological.

11598

11599 I mean just as I say. I am not now going to  
11600 discuss the question whether all education ought  
11601 not to be theological. But I say education for the  
11602 ministry should be exclusively so. But you will  
11603 ask, Should not a minister understand science? I  
11604 would answer, Yes, the more the better. I would  
11605 that ministers might understand all science. But  
11606 it should all be in connection with theology.  
11607 Studying science is studying the works of God.  
11608 And studying theology is studying God.

11609

11610 Let a scholar be asked, for instance, this  
11611 question: "Is there a God?" To answer it, let him  
11612 ransack the universe, let him go out into every

11613 department of science, to find the proofs of  
11614 design, and in this way to learn the existence of  
11615 God. Let him next inquire how many gods there  
11616 are, and let him again ransack creation to see  
11617 whether there is such a unity of design as  
11618 evinces that there is one God. In like manner, let  
11619 him inquire concerning the attributes of God,  
11620 and his character. He will learn science here, but  
11621 will learn it as a part of theology. Let him search  
11622 every field of knowledge, to bring forward his  
11623 proofs. What was the design of this plan? What  
11624 was the end of that arrangement? See whether  
11625 everything you find in the universe is not  
11626 calculated to produce happiness, unless  
11627 perverted.

11628  
11629 Would the student's heart get hard and cold in  
11630 study, as cold and hard as the college walls, if  
11631 science was pursued in this way? Every lesson  
11632 brings him right up before God, and is in fact  
11633 communion with God, and warms his heart, and  
11634 makes him more pious, more solemn, more holy.  
11635 The very distinction between classical and  
11636 theological study is a curse to the church, and a  
11637 curse to the world. The student spends four years  
11638 in college at classical studies, and no God in  
11639 them, and then three years in the seminary, at  
11640 theological studies; and what then? Poor young

11641 man. Set him to work, and you will find that he  
11642 is not educated for the ministry at all. The  
11643 church groans under his preaching, because he  
11644 does not preach with unction, nor with power.  
11645 He has been spoiled in training.

11646

11647 4. We learn what is revival preaching. All  
11648 ministers should be revival ministers, and all  
11649 preaching should be revival preaching; that is, it  
11650 should be calculated to promote holiness. People  
11651 say, "It is very well to have some men in the  
11652 church, who are revival preachers, and who can  
11653 go about and promote revivals; but then you  
11654 must have others to indoctrinate the church."  
11655 Strange! Do they not know that a revival  
11656 indoctrinates the church faster than anything  
11657 else! And a minister will never produce a  
11658 revival, if he does not indoctrinate his hearers.  
11659 The preaching I have described, is full of  
11660 doctrine, but it is doctrine to be practised. And  
11661 that is revival preaching.

11662

11663 5. There are two objections sometimes brought  
11664 against the kind of preaching which I have  
11665 recommended.

11666

11667 (1.) That it is letting down the dignity of the  
11668 pulpit to preach in this colloquial, lawyer-like

11669 style. They are shocked at it. But it is only on  
11670 account of its novelty, and not for any  
11671 impropriety there is in the thing itself. I heard a  
11672 remark made by a leading layman in the centre  
11673 of this State, in regard to the preaching of a  
11674 certain minister. He said it was the first  
11675 preaching he ever heard, that he understood, and  
11676 the first minister he ever heard that spoke as if he  
11677 believed his own doctrine, or meant what he  
11678 said. And when he first heard him preach as if he  
11679 was saying something that he meant, he thought  
11680 he was crazy. But eventually, he was made to  
11681 see that it was all true, and he submitted to the  
11682 truth, as the power of God for the salvation of  
11683 his soul.

11684  
11685 What is the dignity of the pulpit? To see a  
11686 minister go into the pulpit to sustain its dignity!  
11687 Alas, alas! During my foreign tour, I heard an  
11688 English missionary preach exactly in that way. I  
11689 believe he was a good man, and out of the pulpit  
11690 he would talk like a man that meant what he  
11691 said. But no sooner was he in the pulpit, than he  
11692 appeared like a perfect automaton—swelling,  
11693 mouthing, and singing, enough to put all the  
11694 people to sleep. And the difficulty seemed to be,  
11695 that he wanted to maintain the dignity of the  
11696 pulpit.

11697  
11698 (2.) It is objected that this preaching is theatrical.  
11699 The bishop of London once asked Garrick, the  
11700 celebrated play-actor, why it was that actors, in  
11701 representing a mere fiction, should move an  
11702 assembly, even to tears, while ministers, in  
11703 representing the most solemn realities, could  
11704 scarcely obtain a hearing. The philosophical  
11705 Garrick well replied, “It is because we represent  
11706 fiction as reality, and you represent reality as a  
11707 fiction.” This is telling the whole story. Now  
11708 what is the design of the actor in a theatrical  
11709 representation? It is so to throw himself into the  
11710 spirit and meaning of the writer, as to adopt his  
11711 sentiments, make them his own, feel them,  
11712 embody them, throw them out upon the audience  
11713 as living reality. And now, what is the objection  
11714 to all this in preaching? The actor suits the action  
11715 to the word, and the word to the action. His  
11716 looks, his hands, his attitudes, and everything are  
11717 designed to express the full meaning of the  
11718 writer. Now this should be the aim of the  
11719 preacher. And if by “theatrical” be meant the  
11720 strongest possible representation of the  
11721 sentiments expressed, then the more theatrical a  
11722 sermon is, the better. And if ministers are too  
11723 stiff, and the people too fastidious, to learn even  
11724 from an actor, or from the stage, the best method

11725 of swaying mind, of enforcing sentiment, and  
11726 diffusing the warmth of burning thought over a  
11727 congregation, then they must go on with their  
11728 prosing, and reading, and sanctimonious starch.  
11729 But let them remember, that while they are thus  
11730 turning away and decrying the art of the actor,  
11731 and attempting to support “the dignity of the  
11732 pulpit,” the theatres can be thronged every night.  
11733 The common-sense people will be entertained  
11734 with that manner of speaking, and sinners will  
11735 go down to hell.

11736  
11737 6. A congregation may learn how to choose a  
11738 minister.

11739  
11740 When a vacant church are looking out for a  
11741 minister, there are two leading points on which  
11742 they commonly fix their attention. (1.) That he  
11743 should be popular. (2.) That he should be  
11744 learned. That is very well. But this point should  
11745 be the first in their inquiries—”Is he wise to win  
11746 souls?” No matter how eloquent a minister is, or  
11747 how learned. No matter how pleasing and  
11748 popular in his manners. If it is a matter of fact  
11749 that sinners are not converted under his  
11750 preaching, it shows that he has not this wisdom,  
11751 and your children and neighbors will go down to  
11752 hell under his preaching.



11753

11754 I am happy to know that many churches will ask  
11755 this question about ministers. And if they find  
11756 that a minister is destitute of this vital quality,  
11757 they will not have him. And if ministers can be  
11758 found who are wise to win souls, the churches  
11759 will have such ministers. It is in vain to contend  
11760 against it, or to pretend that they are not well  
11761 educated, or not learned, or the like. It is in vain  
11762 for the schools to try to force down the throats of  
11763 the churches a race of ministers who are learned  
11764 in everything but what they most need to know.  
11765 The churches have pronounced them not made  
11766 right, and they will not sustain that which is  
11767 notoriously so inadequate as the present system  
11768 of theological education.

11769

11770 It is very difficult to say what needs to be said on  
11771 this subject, without being in danger of begetting  
11772 a wrong spirit in the church, towards ministers.  
11773 Many professors of religion are ready to find  
11774 fault with ministers when they have no reason;  
11775 insomuch, that it becomes very difficult to say of  
11776 ministers what is true, and what needs to be said,  
11777 without its being perverted and abused by this  
11778 class of professors. I would not for the world say  
11779 anything to injure the influence of a minister of  
11780 Christ, who is really endeavoring to do good. I

11781 would that they deserved a hundred times more  
11782 influence than they now deserve or have. But, to  
11783 tell the truth will not injure the influence of those  
11784 ministers, who by their lives and preaching give  
11785 evidence to the church, that their object is to do  
11786 good, and win souls to Christ. This class of  
11787 ministers will recognise the truth of all that I  
11788 have said, or wish to say. They see it all, and  
11789 deplore it. But if there be ministers who are  
11790 doing no good, who are feeding themselves and  
11791 not the flock, such ministers deserve no  
11792 influence. If they are doing no good, it is time  
11793 for them to betake themselves to some other  
11794 profession. They are but leeches on the very  
11795 vitals of the church, sucking out its heart's  
11796 blood. They are useless, and worse than useless.  
11797 And the sooner they are laid aside, and their  
11798 places filled with those who will exert  
11799 themselves for Christ the better.

11800

11801 Finally—It is the duty of the church to pray for  
11802 us, ministers. Not one of us is such as we ought  
11803 to be. Like Paul, we can say, “Who is sufficient  
11804 for these things?” But who of us is like Paul?  
11805 Where will you find such a minister as Paul?  
11806 They are not here. We have been wrongly  
11807 educated, all of us. Pray for the schools, and  
11808 colleges, and seminaries. And pray for young

11809 men who are preparing for the ministry. Pray for  
11810 ministers, that God would give them this  
11811 wisdom to win souls. And pray that God would  
11812 bestow upon the church the wisdom and the  
11813 means to educate a generation of ministers who  
11814 will go forward and convert the world. The  
11815 church must travail in prayer, and groan and  
11816 agonize for this. This is now the pearl of price to  
11817 the church, to have a supply of the right sort of  
11818 ministers. The coming of the millennium  
11819 depends on having a different sort of ministers,  
11820 who are more thoroughly educated for their  
11821 work. And this we shall have so sure as the  
11822 promise of the Lord holds good. Such a ministry  
11823 as is now in the church will never convert the  
11824 world. But the world is to be converted, and  
11825 therefore God intends to have ministers who will  
11826 do it. "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest  
11827 that he would send forth laborers into his  
11828 harvest."

11829

11830

11831

11832 [4] This was said with pain in 1833-34.

11833

11834

11835

11836 LECTURE XIII.

11837

11838 HOW CHURCHES CAN HELP MINISTERS.

11839

11840 Text.—And it came to pass, when Moses held  
11841 up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he  
11842 let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But  
11843 Moses's hands were heavy, and they took a  
11844 stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon:  
11845 and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one  
11846 on the one side and the other on the other side:  
11847 and his hands were steady until the going down  
11848 of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and  
11849 his people with the edge of the sword.—Exodus  
11850 xvii. 11-13.

11851

11852 You who read your Bibles will recollect the  
11853 connection in which these verses stand. The  
11854 people of God in subduing their enemies came to  
11855 battle against the Amalekites, and these incidents  
11856 took place. It is difficult to conceive why  
11857 importance should be attached to the  
11858 circumstance of Moses holding up his hands,  
11859 unless the expression is understood to denote the  
11860 attitude of prayer. And then his holding up his  
11861 hands, and the success attending it, will teach us  
11862 the importance of prayer to God, for his aid in all  
11863 our conflicts with the enemies of God. The co-  
11864 operation and support of Aaron and Hur have

11865 been generally understood to represent the duty  
11866 of churches to sustain and assist ministers in  
11867 their work, and the importance of this co-  
11868 operation to the success of the preached Gospel.  
11869 I shall make this use of it on the present  
11870 occasion. As I have spoken of the duty of  
11871 ministers to labor for revivals, I shall now  
11872 consider,

11873

11874 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CO-  
11875 OPERATION OF THE CHURCH IN  
11876 PRODUCING AND CARRYING ON A  
11877 REVIVAL.

11878

11879 There are a number of things whose importance  
11880 in promoting a revival has not been duly  
11881 considered by churches and ministers, which if  
11882 not attended to will make it impossible that  
11883 revivals should extend, or even continue for any  
11884 considerable time. In my last two lectures, I have  
11885 been dwelling on the duties of ministers, as it  
11886 was impossible for me to preach a course of  
11887 lectures on revivals without entering more or  
11888 less extensively into that department of means. I  
11889 have not done with that part of the subject, but  
11890 have thought it important here to step aside and  
11891 discuss some points in which the church must  
11892 stand by and aid their minister, if they expect to

11893 enjoy a revival. In discussing the subject, I  
11894 propose,  
11895  
11896 I. To mention several things which Christians  
11897 must avoid, if they would support ministers.  
11898  
11899 II. Some things to which they must attend.  
11900  
11901 I. I am to mention several things that must be  
11902 avoided.  
11903  
11904 1. By all means keep clear of the idea, both in  
11905 theory and practice, that a minister is to promote  
11906 revivals alone. Many people are inclined to take  
11907 a passive attitude on this subject, and feel as if  
11908 they had nothing to do. They have employed a  
11909 minister and paid him, to feed them with  
11910 instruction and comfort, and now they have  
11911 nothing to do but to sit and swallow the food he  
11912 gives. They are to pay his salary, and attend on  
11913 his preaching, and they think that is doing a  
11914 great deal. And he on his part is expected to  
11915 preach good, sound, comfortable doctrine, to  
11916 bolster them up, and make them feel  
11917 comfortable, and so they expect to go to heaven.  
11918 I tell you, **THEY WILL GO TO HELL**, if this is  
11919 their religion. That is not the way to heaven.  
11920

11921 Rest assured that where this spirit prevails in the  
11922 church, however good the minister may be, the  
11923 church have taken the course to prevent a  
11924 revival. If he is ever so faithful, ever so much  
11925 engaged, ever so talented and eloquent, he may  
11926 wear himself out, and perhaps destroy his life,  
11927 but he will have little or no revival.

11928

11929 Where there is no church, or very few members  
11930 in the church, a revival may be promoted  
11931 without any organized effort of the church,  
11932 because it is not there, and in such a case, God  
11933 accommodates his grace to the circumstances, as  
11934 he did when the apostles went out, single-  
11935 handed, to plant the Gospel in the world. I have  
11936 seen instances of powerful revivals where such  
11937 was the case. But where there are means, God  
11938 will have them used. I had rather have no church  
11939 in a place, than attempt to promote a revival in a  
11940 place where there is a church which will not  
11941 work. God will be inquired of by his people to  
11942 bestow blessings. The counteracting influence of  
11943 a church that will not work is worse than  
11944 infidelity. There is no possibility of occupying  
11945 neutral ground, in regard to a revival, though  
11946 some professors imagine they are neutral. If a  
11947 professor will not lay himself out in the work, he  
11948 opposes it. Let such a one attempt to take middle

11949 ground, and say he is going to wait and see how  
11950 they come out—why, that is the very ground the  
11951 devil wants him to take. Professors can in this  
11952 way do his work a great deal more effectually  
11953 than by open opposition. If they take open  
11954 ground in opposition, everybody will say they  
11955 have no religion. But by this middle course they  
11956 retain their influence, and thus do the devil's  
11957 work more effectually.

11958  
11959 In employing a minister, a church must  
11960 remember that they have only employed a leader  
11961 to lead them on to action in the cause of Christ.  
11962 People would think it strange if any body should  
11963 propose to support a general and then let him go  
11964 and fight alone! This is no more absurd, or  
11965 destructive, than for a minister to attempt to go  
11966 forward alone. The church misconceive the  
11967 design of the ministry, if they leave their  
11968 minister to work alone. It is not enough that they  
11969 should hear the sermons. That is only the word  
11970 of command, which the church are bound to  
11971 follow.

11972  
11973 2. Do not complain of your minister because  
11974 there is no revival, if you are not doing your  
11975 duty. It is of no use to complain of there being  
11976 no revival, if you are not doing your duty. That



11977 alone is a sufficient reason why there should be  
11978 no revival. It is a most cruel and abominable  
11979 thing for a church to complain of their minister,  
11980 when they themselves are fast asleep. It is very  
11981 common for professors of religion to take great  
11982 credit to themselves, and quiet their own  
11983 consciences by complaining of their ministers.  
11984 And when the importance of ministers being  
11985 awake is spoken of, this sort of people are ready  
11986 to say, We never shall have a revival with such a  
11987 minister, when the fact is that their minister is  
11988 much more awake than they are themselves.

11989  
11990 Another thing is true in regard to this point, and  
11991 worthy of notice. When the church is sunk down  
11992 in a low state, professors of religion are very apt  
11993 to complain of the church, and of the low state of  
11994 religion among them. That intangible and  
11995 irresponsible being, the “church,” is greatly  
11996 complained of by them, for being asleep. Their  
11997 complaints of the low state of religion, and of  
11998 the coldness of the church or of the minister, are  
11999 poured out dolefully, without their seeming to  
12000 realize that the church is composed of  
12001 individuals, and that until each one will take his  
12002 own case in hand, complain of himself, and  
12003 humble himself before God, and repent, and  
12004 wake up, the church can never have any

12005 efficiency, and there never can be a revival. If  
12006 instead of complaining of your minister, or of  
12007 the church, you would wake up as individuals,  
12008 and not complain of him or them until you can  
12009 say you are pure from the blood of all men, and  
12010 are doing your duty to save sinners, he would be  
12011 apt to feel the justice of your complaints, and if  
12012 he would not God would, and would either wake  
12013 him up or remove him.

12014  
12015 3. Do not let your minister kill himself by  
12016 attempting to carry on the work alone, while you  
12017 refuse to help him. It sometimes happens that a  
12018 minister finds the ark of the Lord will not move  
12019 unless he lays out his utmost strength, and he has  
12020 been so desirous of a revival that he has done  
12021 this, and has died. And he was willing to die for  
12022 it. I could mention some cases in this State,  
12023 where ministers have died, and no doubt in  
12024 consequence of their labors to promote a revival  
12025 where the church hung back from the work.

12026  
12027 I will mention one case. A minister, some years  
12028 since, was laboring where there was a revival;  
12029 and was visited by an elder of a church at some  
12030 distance who wanted him to go and preach there.  
12031 There was no revival there, and never had been,  
12032 and the elder complained about their state, said

12033 they had had two excellent ministers, one had  
12034 worn himself completely out and died, and the  
12035 other had exhausted himself, and got  
12036 discouraged, and left them, and they were a poor  
12037 and feeble church, and their prospects very dark  
12038 unless they could have a revival, and so he  
12039 begged this minister to go and help them. He  
12040 seemed to be very sorrowful, and the minister  
12041 heard his whining, and at last replied by asking,  
12042 Why did you never have a revival? I do not  
12043 know, said the elder. Our minister labored hard,  
12044 but the church did not seem to wake up, and  
12045 somehow there seemed to be no revival. “Well,  
12046 now,” said the minister, “I see what you want;  
12047 you have killed one of God’s ministers, and  
12048 broke down another so that he had to leave you,  
12049 and now you want to get another there and kill  
12050 him, and the devil has sent you here to get me to  
12051 go and rock your cradle for you. You had one  
12052 good minister to preach to you, but you slept on,  
12053 and he exerted himself till he absolutely died in  
12054 the work. Then the Lord let you have another,  
12055 and still you lay and slept, and would not wake  
12056 up to your duty. And now you have come here in  
12057 despair, and want another minister, do you? God  
12058 forbid that you should ever have another while  
12059 you do as you have done. God forbid that you  
12060 should ever have a minister, till the church will

12061 wake up to duty.” The elder was affected, for he  
12062 was a good man. The tears came in his eyes, and  
12063 he said it was no more than they deserved. “And  
12064 now,” said the minister, “will you be faithful,  
12065 and go home and tell the church what I say? If  
12066 you will, and they will be faithful and wake up  
12067 to duty, they shall have a minister, I will warrant  
12068 them that.” The elder said he would, and he was  
12069 true to his word; he went home and told the  
12070 church how cruel it was for them to ask another  
12071 minister to come among them, unless they would  
12072 wake up. They felt it, and confessed their sins,  
12073 and waked up to duty, and a minister was sent to  
12074 them, and a precious and powerful revival  
12075 followed.

12076  
12077 Churches do not realize how often their coldness  
12078 and backwardness may be absolutely the cause  
12079 of the death of ministers. The state of the people,  
12080 and of sinners, rests upon their mind, they travail  
12081 in soul night and day, and they labor in season  
12082 and out of season, beyond the power of the  
12083 human constitution to bear, till they wear out and  
12084 die. The church know not the agony of a  
12085 minister’s heart, when he travails for souls, and  
12086 labors to wake up the church to help, and still  
12087 sees them in the slumbers of death. Perhaps  
12088 sometimes they will rouse up to spasmodic effort

12089 for a few days, and then all is cold again. And so  
12090 many a faithful minister wears himself out and  
12091 dies, and then these heartless professors are the  
12092 first to blame him for doing so much.

12093

12094 I recollect a case of a good minister, who went to  
12095 a place where there was a revival, and while  
12096 there heard a pointed sermon to ministers. He  
12097 received it like a man of God; he did not rebel  
12098 against God's truth, but he vowed to God that he  
12099 never would rest until he saw a revival among  
12100 his people. He returned home and went to work;  
12101 the church would not wake up, except a few  
12102 members, and the Lord blessed them, and poured  
12103 out his Spirit, but the minister laid himself down  
12104 on his bed and died, in the midst of the revival.

12105

12106 4. Be careful not to complain of plain, pointed  
12107 preaching, even when its reproofs fasten on  
12108 yourselves. Churches are apt to forget that a  
12109 minister is responsible only to God. They want  
12110 to make rules for a minister to preach by, so as  
12111 not to have it fit them. If he bears down on the  
12112 church, and exposes the sins that prevail among  
12113 them, they call it personal, and rebel against the  
12114 truth. Or they say, he should not preach so  
12115 plainly to the church before the world; it exposes  
12116 religion, they say, and he ought to take them by

12117 themselves and preach to the church alone, and  
12118 not tell sinners how bad Christians are. But there  
12119 are cases where a minister can do no less than to  
12120 show the house of Jacob their sins. If you ask,  
12121 Why not do it when we are by ourselves? I  
12122 answer, Just as if sinners did not know you did  
12123 wrong. I will preach to you by yourselves, about  
12124 your own sins, when you will get together by  
12125 yourselves to sin. But as the Lord liveth, if you  
12126 sin before the world, you shall be rebuked before  
12127 the world. Is it not a fact that sinners do know  
12128 how you live, and that they stumble over you  
12129 into hell? Then do not blame ministers, when  
12130 they see it their duty to rebuke the church  
12131 openly, before the world. If you are so proud you  
12132 cannot bear this, you need not expect a revival.  
12133 Do not call preaching too plain because it  
12134 exposes the faults of the church. There is no  
12135 such thing as preaching too plain.

12136

12137 5. Sometimes professors take alarm, lest the  
12138 minister should offend the ungodly by plain  
12139 preaching. And they will begin to caution him  
12140 against it, and ask him if he had not better alter a  
12141 little to avoid giving offence, and the like. This  
12142 fear is excited especially if some of the more  
12143 wealthy and influential members of the  
12144 congregation are offended, lest they should

12145 withdraw their support from the church, and no  
12146 longer give their money to help to pay the  
12147 minister's salary, and so the burden will come  
12148 the heavier on the church. They never can have a  
12149 revival in such a church. Why, the church ought  
12150 to pray, above all things, that the truth may come  
12151 on the ungodly like fire. What if they are  
12152 offended? Christ can get along very well without  
12153 their money. Do not blame your minister, nor  
12154 ask him to change his mode of preaching to  
12155 please and conciliate the ungodly. It is of no use  
12156 for a minister to preach to the impenitent, unless  
12157 he can preach the truth to them. And it will do  
12158 no good for them to pay for the support of the  
12159 Gospel, unless it is preached in such a way that  
12160 they may be searched and saved.

12161

12162 Sometimes church members will talk among  
12163 themselves about the minister's imprudence, and  
12164 create a party, and get into a very wrong spirit,  
12165 because the wicked are displeased. There was a  
12166 place where there was a powerful revival, and  
12167 great opposition. The church were alarmed, for  
12168 fear that if the minister was not less plain and  
12169 pointed, some of the impenitent would go and  
12170 join some other congregation. And one of the  
12171 leading men in the church was appointed to go to  
12172 the minister and ask him not to preach quite so

12173 hard, for if he continued to do so, such and such  
12174 persons would leave the congregation. The  
12175 minister asked, Is not the preaching true? “Yes.”  
12176 Does not God bless it? “Yes.” Did you ever see  
12177 the like of this work before in this place? “No, I  
12178 never did.” “Get thee behind me, Satan, the devil  
12179 has sent you here on this errand; you see God is  
12180 blessing the preaching, the work is going on, and  
12181 sinners are converted every day, and now you  
12182 come to get me to let down the tone of  
12183 preaching, so as to ease the minds of the  
12184 ungodly.” The man felt the rebuke, and took it  
12185 like a Christian; he saw his error and submitted,  
12186 and never again was heard to find fault with the  
12187 plainness of preaching.

12188  
12189 In another town, where there was a revival, a  
12190 woman who had some influence, (not pious),  
12191 complained very much about plain, pointed,  
12192 personal preaching, as she called it. But by and  
12193 by she herself became a subject of the work.  
12194 After this some of her impenitent friends  
12195 reminded her of what she used to say against the  
12196 preacher for “preaching it out so hot.” She now  
12197 said her views were altered, and she did not care  
12198 how hot the truth was preached, if it was red hot.  
12199



12200 6. Do not take part with the wicked in any way.  
12201 If you do it at all, you will strengthen their  
12202 hands. If the wicked accuse the minister of being  
12203 imprudent, or of being personal, and if the  
12204 church members, without admitting that the  
12205 minister does so, only admit that personal  
12206 preaching is wrong, and talk about the  
12207 impropriety of personal preaching, the wicked  
12208 will feel themselves strengthened by such  
12209 remarks. Do not unite with them at all, for they  
12210 will feel that they have you on their side against  
12211 their minister. You adopt their principles, and  
12212 use their language, and are understood as  
12213 sympathizing with them. What is personal  
12214 preaching? No individual is ever benefited by  
12215 preaching unless he is made to feel that it means  
12216 him. Now such preaching is always personal. It  
12217 often appears so personal, to wicked men, that  
12218 they feel as if they were just going to be called  
12219 out by name before the congregation. A minister  
12220 was once preaching to a congregation, and when  
12221 describing certain characters, he said, "If I was  
12222 omniscient, I could call out by name the very  
12223 persons that answer to this picture." A man cried  
12224 out, "Name me!" and he looked as if he was  
12225 going to sink into the earth. He afterwards said  
12226 that he had no idea of speaking out, but the  
12227 minister described him so perfectly, that he

12228 really thought he was going to call him by name.  
12229 The minister did not know there was such a man  
12230 in the world. It is common for men to think their  
12231 own conduct is described, and they complain,  
12232 “Who has been telling him about me? Somebody  
12233 has been talking to him about me, and getting  
12234 him to preach at me.” I suppose I have heard of  
12235 five hundred or a thousand just such cases. Now  
12236 if the church members will just admit that it is  
12237 wrong for a minister to mean anybody in his  
12238 preaching, how can he do any good If you are  
12239 not willing your minister should mean anybody,  
12240 or preach to anybody, you had better dismiss  
12241 him. Whom must he preach to, if not to the  
12242 persons, the individuals before him? And how  
12243 can he preach to them, when he does not mean  
12244 them?

12245  
12246 7. If you wish to stand by your minister in  
12247 promoting a revival, do not by your lives  
12248 contradict his preaching. If he preaches that  
12249 sinners are going to hell, do not give the lie to it,  
12250 and smile it all away, by your levity and  
12251 unconcern. I have heard sinners speak of the  
12252 effect produced on their minds, by levity in  
12253 Christians, after a solemn and searching  
12254 discourse. They feel solemn and tender, and  
12255 begin to be alarmed at their condition, and they

12256 see these professors, instead of weeping over  
12257 them, all light and easy, as much as to say, “Do  
12258 not be afraid, sinners, it is not so bad, after all;  
12259 keep cool and you will do well; do you think we  
12260 would laugh and joke if you were going to hell  
12261 so fast? We should not laugh if only your house  
12262 was on fire, still less if we saw you burning in  
12263 it.” Of what use is it for a minister to preach to  
12264 sinners, in such a state of things?

12265  
12266 8. Do not needlessly take up the time of your  
12267 minister. Ministers often lose a great deal of time  
12268 by individuals calling on them to talk, when they  
12269 have nothing of importance to talk about, and no  
12270 particular errand. The minister of course is glad  
12271 to see his friends, and often too willing to spend  
12272 time in conversation with his people, as he loves  
12273 and esteems them. Professors of religion should  
12274 remember that a minister’s time is worth more  
12275 than gold, for it can be employed in that which  
12276 gold can never buy. If the minister is kept from  
12277 his knees, or from his Bible, or his study, that  
12278 they may indulge themselves in his conversation,  
12279 they do a great injury. When you have a good  
12280 reason for it, you should never be backward to  
12281 call on him, and even take up all the time that is  
12282 necessary. But if you have nothing in particular  
12283 to say that is important, keep away. I knew a

12284 man in one of our cities, who was out of  
12285 business, and he used to take up months of the  
12286 minister's time. He would come to his study, and  
12287 sit for three hours at a time, and talk, because he  
12288 had nothing else to do, till finally, the minister  
12289 had to rebuke him plainly, and tell him how  
12290 much sin he was committing.

12291

12292 9. Be sure not to sanction any thing that is  
12293 calculated to divert public attention from the  
12294 subject of religion. Often when it comes the time  
12295 of year to work, when the evenings are long, and  
12296 business is light, and the very time to make an  
12297 extra effort, at this moment, somebody in the  
12298 church will give a party, and invite some  
12299 Christian friends, so as to have it a religious  
12300 party. And then some other family must do the  
12301 same, to return the compliment. Then another  
12302 and another, till it grows into an organized  
12303 system of parties, that consume the whole  
12304 winter. Abominable! This is the grand device of  
12305 the devil, because it appears so innocent, and so  
12306 proper, to promote good feeling, and increase the  
12307 acquaintance of Christians with each other. And  
12308 so, instead of prayer meetings they will have  
12309 these parties.

12310

12311 The evils of these parties are very great. They  
12312 are often got up at great expense, and the most  
12313 abominable gluttony is practised in them. It is  
12314 said that the expense is from one hundred to two  
12315 thousand dollars. I have been told that in some  
12316 instances, professed Christians have given great  
12317 parties, and made great entertainments, and  
12318 excused their ungodly prodigality in the use of  
12319 Jesus Christ's money, by giving what was left,  
12320 after the feast was ended, to the poor! Thus  
12321 making it a virtue to feast and riot, even to  
12322 surfeiting, on the bounties of God's providence,  
12323 under pretence of benefiting the poor. This is the  
12324 same in principle, with a splendid ball which  
12325 was given some years since, in a neighboring  
12326 city. The ball was got up for the benefit of the  
12327 poor, and each gentleman was to pay a certain  
12328 sum, and after the ball was ended, whatever  
12329 remained of the funds thus raised, was to be  
12330 given to the poor. Truly this is strange charity, to  
12331 eat and drink and dance, and when they have  
12332 rioted and feasted until they can enjoy it no  
12333 longer, they deal out to the poor the crumbs that  
12334 have fallen from the table. I do not see why such  
12335 a ball is not quite as pious as such Christian  
12336 parties. The evil of balls does not consist simply  
12337 in the exercise of dancing, but in the dissipation,

12338 and surfeiting, and temptations connected with  
12339 them.  
12340  
12341 But it is said they are Christian parties, and that  
12342 they are all, or nearly all, professors of religion  
12343 who attend them. And furthermore, that they are  
12344 concluded, often, with prayer. Now I regard this  
12345 as one of the worst features about them; that  
12346 after the waste of time and money, the excess in  
12347 eating and drinking, the vain conversation, and  
12348 nameless fooleries, with which such a season is  
12349 filled up, an attempt should be made to sanctify  
12350 it, and palm it off upon God, by concluding it  
12351 with prayer. Say what you will, it would not be  
12352 more absurd or incongruous, or impious, to close  
12353 a ball, or a theatre, or a card party with prayer.  
12354  
12355 Has it come to this, that professors of religion,  
12356 professing to desire the salvation of the world,  
12357 when such calls are made upon them, from the  
12358 four winds of heaven, to send the Gospel, to  
12359 furnish Bibles, and tracts, and missionaries, to  
12360 save the world from death, that they should  
12361 spend hundreds of dollars in an evening, and  
12362 then go to the monthly concert and pray for the  
12363 heathen!  
12364

12365 In some instances, I have been told, they find a  
12366 salve for their consciences, in the fact that their  
12367 minister attends their parties. This, of course,  
12368 would give weight to such an example, and if  
12369 one professor of religion made a party and  
12370 invited their minister, others must do the same.  
12371 The next step they take may be for each to give a  
12372 ball, and appoint their minister a manager! Why  
12373 not? And perhaps, by and by, he will do them  
12374 the favor to play the fiddle. In my estimation he  
12375 might quite as well do it, as to go and conclude  
12376 such a party with prayer.

12377  
12378 I have heard with pain, that a circle of parties, I  
12379 know not to what extent, has been held in  
12380 Rochester—that place so highly favored of the  
12381 Lord. I know not through whose influence they  
12382 have been got up, or by what particular persons  
12383 they have been patronized and attended. But I  
12384 should advise any congregation who are  
12385 calculating to have a circle of parties, in the  
12386 mean time to dismiss their minister, and let him  
12387 go and preach where the people would be ready  
12388 to receive the word and profit by it, and not have  
12389 him stay and be distressed, and grieved, and  
12390 killed, by attempting to promote religion among  
12391 them, while they are engaged heart and hand in  
12392 the service of the devil.

12393

12394 Professors of religion should never get up  
12395 anything that may divert public attention from  
12396 religion, without first having consulted their  
12397 minister, and made it a subject of special prayer.  
12398 And if they find it will have this effect, they  
12399 ought never to do it. Subjects will often come up  
12400 before the public which have this tendency;  
12401 some course of lectures, or show, or the like.  
12402 Professors ought to be wise, and understand  
12403 what they are about, and not give countenance to  
12404 any such thing, until they see what influence it  
12405 will have, and whether it will hinder a revival. If  
12406 it will do that, let them have nothing to do with  
12407 it. Every such thing should be estimated by its  
12408 bearing upon Christ's kingdom.

12409

12410 In relation to parties, say what you please about  
12411 their being an innocent recreation, I appeal to  
12412 any of you who have ever attended them, to say  
12413 whether they fit you for prayer, or increase your  
12414 spirituality, or whether sinners are ever  
12415 converted in them, or Christians made to agonize  
12416 in prayer for souls?

12417

12418 II. I am to mention several things which  
12419 churches must DO, if they would promote a  
12420 revival and aid their minister.



12421

12422 1. They must attend to his temporal wants. A  
12423 minister, who gives himself wholly to the work,  
12424 cannot be engaged in worldly employments, and  
12425 of course is entirely dependent on his people for  
12426 the supply of his temporal wants, including the  
12427 support of his family. I need not argue this point  
12428 here, for you all understand this perfectly. It is  
12429 the command of God, that “they which preach  
12430 the Gospel should live of the Gospel.” But now  
12431 look around and see how many churches do in  
12432 this matter. For instance, when they want a  
12433 minister, they will cast about and see how cheap  
12434 they can get one. They will calculate to a  
12435 farthing how much his salt will cost, and how  
12436 much his meal, and then set his salary so low as  
12437 to subject him to extreme inconvenience to get  
12438 along and keep his family. A minister must have  
12439 his mind at ease, to study and labor with effect,  
12440 and he cannot screw down prices, and banter,  
12441 and look out for the best chances to buy to  
12442 advantage what he needs. If he is obliged to do  
12443 this, his mind is embarrassed. Unless his  
12444 temporal wants are so supplied, that his thoughts  
12445 may be abstracted from them, how can he do his  
12446 duty?

12447

12448 2. Be honest with your minister.

12449

12450 Do not measure out and calculate with how  
12451 much salt and how many bushels of grain he can  
12452 possibly get along. Remember, you are dealing  
12453 with Christ. And he calls you to place his  
12454 ministers in such a situation that with ordinary  
12455 prudence temporal embarrassment is out of the  
12456 question.

12457

12458 3. Be punctual with him.

12459

12460 Sometimes churches, when they are about  
12461 settling a minister, have a great deal of pride  
12462 about giving a salary, and they will get up a  
12463 subscription, and make out an amount which  
12464 they never pay, and very likely never expected to  
12465 pay. And so, after one, two, three, or four years,  
12466 the society gets three or four hundred dollars in  
12467 arrears to their minister, and then they expect he  
12468 will give it to them. And all the while they  
12469 wonder why there is no revival! This may be the  
12470 very reason, because the church have LIED; they  
12471 have faithfully promised to pay so much, and  
12472 have not done it. God cannot consistently pour  
12473 out his Spirit on such a church.

12474

12475 4. Pay him his salary without asking.

12476

12477 Nothing is so embarrassing, often, to a minister  
12478 as to be obliged to dun his people for his salary.  
12479 Often he gets enemies, and gives offence, by  
12480 being obliged to call, and call, and call for his  
12481 money, and then not get it as they promised.  
12482 They would have paid it if their credit had been  
12483 at stake, but when it is nothing but conscience  
12484 and the blessing of God, they let it lie along. if  
12485 any one of them had a note at the bank, you  
12486 would see him careful and prompt to be on the  
12487 ground before three o'clock. That is because the  
12488 note will be protested, and they shall lose their  
12489 character. But they know the minister will not  
12490 sue them for his salary, and they are careless and  
12491 let it run along, and he must suffer the  
12492 inconvenience. This is not so common in the city  
12493 as it is in the country. But in the country, I have  
12494 known some heart-rending cases of distress and  
12495 misery, by the negligence and cruelty of  
12496 congregations in WITHHOLDING that which is  
12497 due. Churches live in habitual lying and  
12498 cheating, and then wonder why they have no  
12499 revival. How can they wonder?

12500

12501 5. Pray for your minister.

12502

12503 I mean something by this. And what do you  
12504 suppose I mean? Even the apostles used to urge

12505 the churches to pray for them. This is more  
12506 important than you imagine. Ministers do not  
12507 ask people to pray for them simply as men, nor  
12508 that they may be filled with an abundance of the  
12509 Spirit's influences, merely to promote their  
12510 personal enjoyment. But they know that unless  
12511 the church greatly desires a blessing upon the  
12512 labors of a minister, it is tempting God for him  
12513 to expect it. How often does a minister go into  
12514 his pulpit, feeling that his heart is ready to break  
12515 for the blessing of God, while he also feels that  
12516 there is no room to expect it, for there is no  
12517 reason to believe the church desire it! Perhaps he  
12518 has been two hours on his knees in supplication,  
12519 and yet because that the church do not desire a  
12520 blessing, he feels as if his words would bound  
12521 back in his face.

12522  
12523 I have seen Christians who would be in an  
12524 agony, when the minister was going into the  
12525 pulpit, for fear his mind should be in a cloud, or  
12526 his heart cold, or he should have no unction, and  
12527 so a blessing should not come. I have labored  
12528 with a man of this sort. He would pray until he  
12529 got assurance in his mind that God would be  
12530 with me in preaching, and sometimes he would  
12531 pray himself sick. I have known the time, when  
12532 he has been in darkness for a season, while the

12533 people were gathering, and his mind was full of  
12534 anxiety, and he would go again and again to  
12535 pray, till finally he would come into the room  
12536 with a placid face, and say, “The Lord has come,  
12537 and he will be with us.” And I do not know that I  
12538 ever found him mistaken.

12539  
12540 I have known a church bear their minister on  
12541 their arms in prayer from day to day, and watch  
12542 with anxiety unutterable, to see that he has the  
12543 Holy Ghost with him in his labors! When they  
12544 feel and pray thus, Oh, what feelings and what  
12545 looks are manifest in the congregation! They  
12546 have felt anxiety unutterable to have the word  
12547 come with power, and take effect, and when they  
12548 see their prayer answered, and they hear a word  
12549 or a sentence come WARM from the heart, and  
12550 taking effect among the people, you can see their  
12551 whole souls look out of their eyes. How different  
12552 is the case, where the church feel that the  
12553 minister is praying, and so there is no need of  
12554 their praying! They are mistaken. The church  
12555 must desire and pray for the blessing. God says  
12556 he will be inquired of by the house of Israel. I  
12557 wish you to feel that there can be no substitute  
12558 for this.

12559

12560 I have seen cases in revivals, where the church  
12561 was kept in the back ground in regard to prayer,  
12562 and persons from abroad were called on to pray  
12563 in all the meetings. This is always unhappy, even  
12564 if there should be a revival, for the revival must  
12565 be less powerful and less salutary in its  
12566 influences upon the church. I do not know but I  
12567 have sometimes offended Christians and  
12568 ministers from abroad, by continuing to call on  
12569 members of the church in the place to pray, and  
12570 not on those from abroad. It was not from any  
12571 disrespect to them, but because the object was to  
12572 get that church which was chiefly concerned, to  
12573 desire, and pray, and agonize for a blessing.

12574  
12575 In a certain place, a protracted meeting was held,  
12576 with no good results, and great evils produced. I  
12577 was led to make inquiry for the reason. And it  
12578 came out, that in all their meetings, not one  
12579 member of their own church was called on to  
12580 pray, but all the prayers were made by persons  
12581 from abroad. No wonder there was no good  
12582 done. The church was not interested. The leader  
12583 of the meeting meant well, but he undertook to  
12584 promote a revival without getting the church  
12585 there into the work. He let a lazy church lie still  
12586 and do nothing, and so there could be no good.  
12587

12588 Churches should pray for ministers as the agents  
12589 of breaking down sinners with the word of truth.  
12590 Prayer for a minister is often done in a set and  
12591 formal way, and confined to the prayer meetings.  
12592 They will say their prayers in the old way, as  
12593 they have always done: “Lord, bless thy  
12594 ministering servant, whom thou hast stationed on  
12595 this part of Zion’s walls,” and so on, and it  
12596 amounts to nothing, because there is no heart in  
12597 it. And the proof often is, that they never thought  
12598 of praying for him in secret, they never have  
12599 agonized in their closets for a blessing on his  
12600 labors. They may not omit it wholly in their  
12601 meetings. If they do that, it is evident that they  
12602 care very little indeed about the labors of their  
12603 minister. But that is not the most important  
12604 place. The way to present effectual prayer for  
12605 your minister is to take it to your closet, and  
12606 when you are in secret, wrestle with God for  
12607 success to attend his labors.

12608  
12609 I knew a case of a minister in ill health, who  
12610 became depressed and sunk down in his mind,  
12611 and was very much in darkness, so that he did  
12612 not feel as if he could preach any longer. An  
12613 individual of the church was waked up to feel for  
12614 the minister’s situation, and to pray that he might  
12615 have the Holy Ghost to attend his preaching.

12616 One Sabbath morning, this person's mind was  
12617 very much exercised, and he began to pray as  
12618 soon as it was light, and prayed again and again  
12619 for a blessing that day. And the Lord in some  
12620 way directed the minister within hearing of his  
12621 prayer. The person was telling the Lord just what  
12622 he thought of the minister's situation and state of  
12623 mind, and pleading, as if he would not be  
12624 denied, for a blessing. The minister went into the  
12625 pulpit and preached, and the light broke in upon  
12626 him, and the word was with power, and a revival  
12627 commenced that very day.

12628  
12629 6. A minister should be provided for by the  
12630 church, and his support guaranteed, irrespective  
12631 of the ungodly. Otherwise he may be obliged  
12632 either to starve his family, or to keep back a part  
12633 of the truth so as not to offend sinners. I once  
12634 expostulated with a minister who I found was  
12635 afraid to come out fully with the truth. I told him  
12636 I was surprised he did not bear down on certain  
12637 points. He told me he was so situated that he  
12638 must please certain men, who would be touched  
12639 there. It was the ungodly that chiefly supported  
12640 him, and that made him dependent and  
12641 temporizing. And yet perhaps that very church  
12642 which left their minister dependent on the  
12643 ungodly for his bread, will turn round and abuse



12644 him for his want of faith, and his fear of men.  
12645 The church ought always to say to their minister,  
12646 “We will support you; go to work; let the truth  
12647 pour down on the people, and we will stand by  
12648 you.”

12649

12650 7. See that everything is so arranged, that people  
12651 can sit comfortably in meeting. If people do not  
12652 sit easy, it is difficult to get or to keep their  
12653 attention. And if they are not attentive, they can  
12654 not be converted. They have come to hear for  
12655 their lives, and they ought to be so situated that  
12656 they can hear with all their souls, and have  
12657 nothing in their bodily position to call for  
12658 attention. Churches do not realize how important  
12659 it is that the place of meeting should be made  
12660 comfortable. I do not mean showy. All your  
12661 glare and glory of rich chandeliers, and rich  
12662 carpets, and splendid pulpits, is the opposite  
12663 extreme, and takes off the attention just as badly,  
12664 and defeats every object for which a sinner  
12665 should come to meeting. You need not expect a  
12666 revival there.

12667

12668 8. See that the house of God is kept cleanly. The  
12669 house of God should be kept as clean as you  
12670 would want your own house to be kept.  
12671 Churches are often kept excessively slovenly. I

12672 have seen them, where people used so much  
12673 tobacco, and took so little care about neatness,  
12674 that it was impossible to preach with comfort.  
12675 Once in a protracted meeting, the thing was  
12676 charged upon the church, and they had to  
12677 acknowledge it, that they paid more money for  
12678 tobacco than they did for the cause of missions.  
12679 They could not kneel in their pews, and ladies  
12680 could not sit without all the time watching their  
12681 clothes, and they had to be careful where they  
12682 stepped, because the house was so dirty, and  
12683 there was so much tobacco juice running all  
12684 about the floor. If people cannot go where they  
12685 can hear without being annoyed with offensive  
12686 sights and smells, and where they can kneel in  
12687 prayer, what good will a protracted meeting do?  
12688 There is an importance in these things, which is  
12689 not realized. See that man! What is he doing? I  
12690 am preaching to him about eternal life, and he is  
12691 thinking about the dirty pew. And that woman is  
12692 asking for a footstool to keep her feet out of the  
12693 tobacco juice. Shame!

12694  
12695 9. It is important that the house should be just  
12696 warm enough, and not too warm. Suppose a  
12697 minister comes into a house, and finds it cold; he  
12698 sees as soon as he gets in, that he might as well  
12699 have staid home; the people are shivering, their

12700 feet cold, they feel as if they should take cold,  
12701 they are uneasy, and he wishes he was at home,  
12702 for he knows he cannot do anything, but he must  
12703 preach, or they will be disappointed.

12704

12705 Or he may find the house too warm, and the  
12706 people, instead of listening to the truth, are  
12707 fanning, and panting for breath, and by and by a  
12708 woman faints, and makes a stir, and the train of  
12709 thought and feeling is all lost, and so a whole  
12710 sermon is wasted to no good end. These little  
12711 things take off the attention of people from the  
12712 words of eternal life. And very often it is so, that  
12713 if you drop a single link in the chain of  
12714 argument, you lose the whole, and the people are  
12715 damned, just because the careless church do not  
12716 see to the proper regulation of these little  
12717 matters.

12718

12719 10. The house should be well ventilated. Of all  
12720 houses, a church should be the most perfectly  
12721 ventilated. If there is no change of the air, it  
12722 passes through so many lungs it becomes bad,  
12723 and its vitality is exhausted, and the people pant,  
12724 they know not why, and feel an almost  
12725 irresistible desire to sleep, and the minister  
12726 preaches in vain. The sermon is lost, and worse  
12727 than lost. I have often wondered that this matter

12728 should be so little the subject of thought. The  
12729 elders and trustees will sit and hear a whole  
12730 sermon, while the people are all but ready to die  
12731 for the want of air, and the minister is wasting  
12732 his strength in preaching where the room is just  
12733 like an exhausted receiver, and there they sit and  
12734 never think to do any thing to help the matter.  
12735 They should take it upon themselves to see that  
12736 this is regulated right, that the house is just warm  
12737 enough, and the air kept pure. How important it  
12738 is that the church should be awake to this  
12739 subject, that the minister may labor to the best  
12740 advantage, and the people give their undivided  
12741 attention to the truth, which is to save their souls.

12742  
12743 It is very common, when things are wrong, to  
12744 have it all laid to the sexton. This is not so. Often  
12745 the sexton is not to blame. If the house is cold  
12746 and uncomfortable, very often it is because the  
12747 fuel is not good, or the stoves not suitable, or the  
12748 house is so open it cannot be warmed. If it is too  
12749 warm, perhaps somebody has intermeddled  
12750 when he was out, and heaped on fuel without  
12751 discretion. Or, if the sexton is in fault, perhaps it  
12752 is because the church do not pay him enough for  
12753 his services, and he cannot afford to give the  
12754 attention necessary to keep the church in order.  
12755 Churches sometimes screw down the sexton's

12756 salary, to the lowest point, so that he is obliged  
12757 to slight his work. Or they will select one who is  
12758 incompetent, for the sake of getting him cheap,  
12759 and then the thing is not done. The fault is in the  
12760 church. Let them give an adequate compensation  
12761 for the work, and it can be done, and done  
12762 faithfully. If one sexton will not do right, another  
12763 will, and the church are bound to see it done  
12764 right, or else let them dismiss their minister, and  
12765 not keep him, and at the same time have other  
12766 things in a state so out of order that he loses all  
12767 his work. What economy! To pay the minister's  
12768 salary, and then for the want of fifty dollars  
12769 added to the sexton's wages, every thing is so  
12770 out of order that the minister's labors are all lost,  
12771 souls are lost, and your children and neighbors  
12772 go down to hell!

12773  
12774 Sometimes this uncleanness, and negligence,  
12775 and confusion are chargeable to the minister.  
12776 Perhaps he uses tobacco, and sets the example of  
12777 defiling the house of God. Perhaps the pulpit will  
12778 be the filthiest place in the house. I have  
12779 sometimes been in pulpits that were to  
12780 loathesome to be occupied by human beings. If a  
12781 minister has no more piety and decency than  
12782 this, no wonder things are at loose ends in the  
12783 congregation. And generally it is even so.

12784

12785 11. People should leave their dogs, and very  
12786 young children at home. I have often known  
12787 contentions arise among dogs, and children to  
12788 cry, just at that stage of the services, that would  
12789 most effectually destroy the effect of the  
12790 meeting. If children are present and weep, they  
12791 should instantly be removed. I have sometimes  
12792 known a mother or a nurse sit and toss her child,  
12793 while its cries were diverting the attention of the  
12794 whole congregation. This is cruel. And as for  
12795 dogs, they had infinitely better be dead, than to  
12796 divert attention from the word of God. See that  
12797 deacon; perhaps his dog has in this way  
12798 destroyed more souls than the deacon will ever  
12799 be instrumental in saving.

12800

12801 12. The members of the church should aid the  
12802 minister by visiting from house to house, and  
12803 trying to save souls. Do not leave all this to the  
12804 minister. It is impossible he should do it, even if  
12805 he gives all his time, and neglects his study and  
12806 his closet. Church members should take pains  
12807 and qualify themselves for this duty, so that they  
12808 can be useful in it.

12809

12810 13. They should hold Bible classes. Suitable  
12811 individuals should be selected to hold Bible

12812 classes, for the instruction of the young people,  
12813 and where those who are awakened or affected  
12814 by the preaching, can be received and be  
12815 converted. As soon as any one is seen to be  
12816 touched, let them be invited to join the Bible  
12817 class, where they will be properly treated, and  
12818 probably they will be converted. The church  
12819 should select the best men for this service, and  
12820 should all be on the look out to fill up the Bible  
12821 classes. It has been done in this congregation,  
12822 and it is a very common thing, when persons are  
12823 impressed, that they are observed by somebody,  
12824 and invited to join the Bible class, and they will  
12825 do it, and there they are converted. I do not mean  
12826 that we are doing all we ought to do in this way,  
12827 or all we might do. We want more teachers, able  
12828 and willing to take charge of such classes.

12829  
12830 14. Churches should sustain Sabbath schools,  
12831 and in this way aid their ministers in saving  
12832 souls, How can a minister attend to this and  
12833 preach? Unless the church will take off these  
12834 responsibilities, and cares, and labors, he must  
12835 either neglect them, or be crushed. Let the  
12836 church be WIDE AWAKE, watch and bring in  
12837 children to the school, and teach them faithfully,  
12838 and lay themselves out to promote a revival in  
12839 the school.

12840

12841 15. They should watch over the members of the  
12842 church. They should visit each other, in order to  
12843 stir each other up, know each other's spiritual  
12844 state, and provoke one another to love and good  
12845 works. The minister cannot do it, he has not  
12846 time; it is impossible he should study and  
12847 prepare sermons, and at the same time visit  
12848 every member of the church as often as it needs  
12849 to be done to keep them advancing. The church  
12850 are bound to do it. They are under oath to watch  
12851 over each other's spiritual welfare. But how is  
12852 this done? Many do not know each other. They  
12853 meet and pass each other as strangers, and never  
12854 ask about their spiritual condition. But if they  
12855 hear anything bad of one, they go and tell it to  
12856 others. Instead of watching over each other for  
12857 their good, they watch for their halting. How can  
12858 they watch for good when they are not even  
12859 acquainted with each other?

12860

12861 16. The church should watch for the effect of  
12862 preaching. If they are praying for the success of  
12863 the preached word, they will watch for it of  
12864 course. They should keep a look out, and when  
12865 any in the congregation give evidence that the  
12866 word of God has taken hold of them, they should  
12867 follow it up. Wherever there are any exhibitions



12868 of feeling, those persons should be attended to  
12869 instantly, and not left till their impressions wear  
12870 off. They should talk to them, or get them  
12871 visited, or get them into the anxious meeting, or  
12872 into the Bible class, or bring them to the  
12873 minister. If the members of the church do not  
12874 attend to this, they neglect their duty. If they  
12875 attend to it, they may do incalculable good.

12876  
12877 There was a pious young woman, who lived in a  
12878 very cold and wicked place. She alone had the  
12879 spirit of prayer, and she had been praying for a  
12880 blessing upon the word. At length she saw one  
12881 individual in the congregation who seemed to be  
12882 affected by the preaching, and as soon as the  
12883 minister came from the pulpit, she came  
12884 forward, agitated and trembling, and begged him  
12885 to go and converse with the person immediately.  
12886 He did so, and the individual was soon  
12887 converted, and a revival followed. Now one of  
12888 your stupid professors would not have seen that  
12889 individual awakened, and would have stumbled  
12890 over half a dozen of them without notice, and let  
12891 them go to hell. Professors should watch every  
12892 sermon, and see how it affects the congregation.  
12893 I do not mean that they should be stretching their  
12894 necks and staring about the house, but they  
12895 should observe, as they may, and if they find any

12896 person affected by preaching, throw themselves  
12897 in his way, and guide him to the Saviour.

12898

12899 17. Beware and not give away all the preaching  
12900 to others. If you do not take your portion, you  
12901 will starve, and become like spiritual skeletons.  
12902 Christians should take their portion to  
12903 themselves. If the word should be quite  
12904 searching to them, they should make the honest  
12905 application, and lay it along side their heart and  
12906 practise it, and live by it. Otherwise preaching  
12907 will do them no good.

12908

12909 18. Be ready to aid your minister in effecting his  
12910 plans for doing good. When the minister is wise  
12911 to devise plans for usefulness, and the church  
12912 ready to execute them, they may carry all before  
12913 them. But when the church hang back from  
12914 every enterprise until they are actually dragged  
12915 into it, when they are opposing every proposal,  
12916 because it will cost something, they are a dead  
12917 weight upon a minister. If stoves are needed, Oh,  
12918 no, they will cost something. If lamps are called  
12919 for, to prevent preaching in the dark, Oh, no,  
12920 they will cost something. And so they will stick  
12921 up candles on the posts, or do without evening  
12922 meetings altogether. If they stick up candles, it  
12923 soon comes to pass that they either give no light,

12924 or some one must run round and snuff them.  
12925 And so the whole congregation are disturbed by  
12926 the candle-snuffer, their attention taken off, and  
12927 the sermon lost.  
12928  
12929 I was once attending a protracted meeting, where  
12930 we were embarrassed because there were no  
12931 lamps to the house. I urged the people to get  
12932 them, but they thought it would cost too much. I  
12933 then proposed to get them myself, and was about  
12934 to do it, but found it would give offence, and we  
12935 went on without. But the blessing did not come,  
12936 to any great extent. How could it? The church  
12937 began by calculating to a cent how much it  
12938 would cost, and they would not go beyond, to  
12939 save souls from hell.  
12940  
12941 So where a minister appoints a meeting, such  
12942 people cannot have it, because it will cost  
12943 something. If they can offer unto the Lord that  
12944 which costs nothing, they will do it. Miserable  
12945 helpers they are! Such a church can have no  
12946 revival. A minister might as well have a  
12947 millstone about his neck as such a church. He  
12948 had better leave them, if he cannot learn them  
12949 better, and go where he will not be so hampered.  
12950

12951 19. Church members should make it a point to  
12952 attend prayer meetings, and attend in time. Some  
12953 church members will always attend on  
12954 preaching, because there they have nothing to  
12955 do, but to sit and hear, and be entertained, but  
12956 they will not attend prayer meetings, for fear  
12957 they shall be called on to do something. Such  
12958 members tie up the hands of the minister, and  
12959 discourage his heart. Why do they employ a  
12960 minister? Is it to amuse them by preaching? or is  
12961 it that he may teach them the will of God that  
12962 they may do it?

12963  
12964 20. Church members ought to study and inquire  
12965 what they can do, and then do it. Christians  
12966 should be trained like a band of soldiers. It is the  
12967 duty and office of a minister to train them for  
12968 usefulness, to teach them and direct them, and  
12969 lead them on in such a way as to produce the  
12970 greatest amount of moral influence. And then  
12971 they should stand their ground and do their duty,  
12972 otherwise they will be right in the way.

12973  
12974 There are many other points which I noted, and  
12975 intended to touch upon, but there is not time. I  
12976 could write a book as big as this Bible, in  
12977 detailing the various particulars that ought to be  
12978 attended to. I must close with a few

12979

12980 REMARKS.

12981

12982 1. You see that a minister's want of success may  
12983 not be wholly on account of a want of wisdom in  
12984 the exercise of his office. I am not going to plead  
12985 for negligent ministers. I never will spare  
12986 ministers from the naked truth, nor apply  
12987 flattering tides to men. If they are blameworthy,  
12988 let them be blamed. And no doubt they are  
12989 always more or less to blame when the word  
12990 produces no effect. But it is far from being true  
12991 that they are always the principal persons to  
12992 blame. Sometimes the church is much more to  
12993 blame than the minister, and if an apostle or an  
12994 angel from heaven were to preach, he could not  
12995 produce a revival of religion in that church.  
12996 Perhaps they are dishonest to their minister, or  
12997 covetous, or careless about the conveniences of  
12998 public worship. Alas! what a state many country  
12999 churches are in, where, for the want of a hundred  
13000 dollars, everything is inconvenient and  
13001 uncomfortable, and the labors of the preacher are  
13002 lost. They live in ceiled houses themselves, and  
13003 let the house of God lie waste. Or the church  
13004 counteract all the influence of preaching by their  
13005 ungodly lives. Or perhaps their parties, their

13006 worldly show, as in most of the churches in this  
13007 city, annihilate the influence of the Gospel.

13008

13009 2. Churches should remember that they are  
13010 exceedingly guilty to employ a minister, and  
13011 then not aid him in his work. The Lord Jesus  
13012 Christ has sent an ambassador to sinners, to turn  
13013 them from their evil ways, and he fails of his  
13014 errand, because the church refuse to do their  
13015 duty. Instead of recommending his message, and  
13016 seconding his entreaties, and holding up his  
13017 hands in all the ways that are proper, they stand  
13018 right in the way, and contradict his message, and  
13019 counteract his influence, and souls perish. No  
13020 doubt in most of the congregations in the United  
13021 States, the minister is often hindered so much  
13022 that he might as well be on a foreign mission a  
13023 great part of the time, as to be there, for any  
13024 effect of his preaching in the conversion of  
13025 sinners, while he has to preach over the heads of  
13026 an inactive, stupid church.

13027

13028 And yet these very churches are not willing to  
13029 have their minister absent a few days to attend a  
13030 protracted meeting. "We cannot spare him; why  
13031 he is our minister, and we like to have our  
13032 minister here;" while at the same time they  
13033 hinder all he can do. If he could, he would tear

13034 himself right away, and go where there is no  
13035 minister, and where the people would be willing  
13036 to receive the Gospel. But there he must stay,  
13037 though he cannot get the church into a state to  
13038 have a revival once in three years, to last three  
13039 months at a time. It might be well for him to say  
13040 to the church, “Whenever you are determined to  
13041 take one of these long naps, I wish you to let me  
13042 know it, so that I can go and labor somewhere  
13043 else in the mean time, till you are ready to wake  
13044 again.”

13045  
13046 3. Many churches cannot be blessed with a  
13047 revival, because they are spunging out of other  
13048 churches, and out of the treasury of the Lord for  
13049 the support of their minister, when they are  
13050 abundantly able to support him themselves.  
13051 Perhaps they are depending on the Home  
13052 Missionary Society, or on other churches, while  
13053 they are not exercising any self-denial for the  
13054 sake of the Gospel. I have been amazed to see  
13055 how some churches live. One church that I was  
13056 acquainted with actually confessed that they  
13057 spent more money for tobacco than they gave for  
13058 missions. And yet they had no minister, because  
13059 they were not able to support one. And they have  
13060 none now. And yet there is one man in that

13061 church who is able to support a minister. And  
13062 still they have no minister, and no preaching.  
13063  
13064 The churches have not been instructed in their  
13065 duty on this subject. I stopped in one place last  
13066 summer, where there was no preaching. I  
13067 inquired of an elder in the church why it was so,  
13068 and he said it was because they were so poor. I  
13069 asked him how much he was worth. He did not  
13070 give me a direct answer, but said that another  
13071 elder's income was about \$5,000 a year, and I  
13072 finally found out that this man's was about the  
13073 same. Here, said I, are two elders, each of you  
13074 able to support a minister, and because you  
13075 cannot get help from abroad, you have no  
13076 preaching. Why, if you had preaching, it would  
13077 not be blessed, while you were thus spunging out  
13078 of the Lord's treasury. Finally, he confessed that  
13079 he was able to support a minister, and the two  
13080 together agreed that they would do it.  
13081  
13082 It is common for churches to ask help, when in  
13083 fact they do not need any help, and when it  
13084 would be a great deal better for them to support  
13085 their own minister. If they get funds from the  
13086 Home Missionary Society, when they ought to  
13087 raise them themselves, they may expect the  
13088 curse of the Lord upon them, and this will be a



13089 sufficient reason for the Gospel's proving to  
13090 them a curse rather than a blessing. Of how  
13091 many churches might it be said, "Ye have  
13092 robbed God, even this whole church."

13093

13094 I know a church who employed a minister but  
13095 half the time, and felt unable to pay his salary for  
13096 that. A female working society in a neighboring  
13097 town appropriated their funds to this object, and  
13098 assisted this church in paying their minister's  
13099 salary. The result was as might be expected. He  
13100 did them little or no good. They had no revival  
13101 under his preaching, nor could they ever expect  
13102 any, while acting on such a principle. There was  
13103 one man in that congregation who could support  
13104 a minister all the time. I was informed by a  
13105 member that the church members were supposed  
13106 to be worth TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND  
13107 DOLLARS. Now if this is true, here is a church  
13108 with an income, at seven per cent., of \$14,000 a  
13109 year, who felt themselves too poor to pay \$200  
13110 for support of a minister to preach half the time,  
13111 and would suffer the females of a neighboring  
13112 town to work with their own hands to aid them  
13113 in paying this sum. Among the elders of this  
13114 church, I found that several of them used  
13115 tobacco, and two of them who lived together  
13116 signed a covenant written on the blank leaf of

13117 their Bible, in which they pledged themselves to  
13118 abandon that sin for ever.

13119

13120 It was in a great measure for want of right  
13121 instruction that this church was pursuing such a  
13122 course. For when the subject was taken up, and  
13123 their duty laid before them, the wealthy man of  
13124 whom I am speaking said that he would pay the  
13125 whole salary himself, if he thought it would not  
13126 be resented by the congregation, and do more  
13127 hurt than good; and that if the church would  
13128 procure a minister, and go ahead and raise a part  
13129 of his salary, he would make up the remainder.  
13130 They can now not only support a minister half  
13131 the time, but all the time, and pay his salary  
13132 themselves. And they will find it good and  
13133 profitable to do so.

13134

13135 As I have gone from place to place laboring in  
13136 revivals, I have always found that churches were  
13137 blessed in proportion to their liberality. Where  
13138 they have manifested a disposition to support the  
13139 Gospel, and to pour their substance liberally into  
13140 the treasury of the Lord, they have been blessed  
13141 both in spiritual and temporal things. But where  
13142 they have been parsimonious, and let the  
13143 minister preach for them for little or nothing,  
13144 these churches have been cursed instead of

13145 blessed. And as a general thing, in revivals of  
13146 religion, I have found it to be true that young  
13147 converts are most inclined to join those churches  
13148 which are most liberal in making efforts to  
13149 support the Gospel.

13150

13151 The churches are very much in the dark on this  
13152 subject. They have not been taught their duty. I  
13153 have, in many instances, found an exceeding  
13154 readiness to do it when the subject was laid  
13155 before them. I knew an elder in a church who  
13156 was talking about getting a minister for half the  
13157 time, because the church were poor, although his  
13158 own income was considerable. I asked him if his  
13159 income was not sufficient to support a minister  
13160 all the time himself. He said it was. And on  
13161 being asked what other use he could make of the  
13162 Lord's money which he possessed, that would  
13163 prove so beneficial to the interest of Christ's  
13164 kingdom, as to employ a minister not only half  
13165 but all the time in his own town, he concluded to  
13166 set himself about it. A minister has been  
13167 accordingly obtained, and I believe they find no  
13168 difficulty in paying him his full salary.

13169

13170 The fact is, that a minister can do but little by  
13171 preaching only half the time. If on one Sabbath  
13172 an impression is made, it is lost before a

13173 fortnight comes round. As a matter of economy,  
13174 a church should lay themselves out to support  
13175 the Gospel all the time. If they get the right sort  
13176 of a minister, and keep him steadily at work,  
13177 they may have a revival, and thus the ungodly  
13178 will be converted and come in and help them.  
13179 And thus in one year they may have a great  
13180 accession to their strength. But if they employ a  
13181 minister but half the time, year after year may  
13182 roll away, while sinners are going to hell, and no  
13183 accession is made to their strength from the  
13184 ranks of the ungodly.

13185  
13186 The fact is, that professors of religion have not  
13187 been made to feel that all their possessions are  
13188 the Lord's. Hence they have talked about giving  
13189 their property for the support of the Gospel. As  
13190 if the Lord Jesus Christ was a beggar, and they  
13191 called upon to support his Gospel as an act of  
13192 almsgiving! A merchant in one of the towns in  
13193 this State, was paying a large part of his  
13194 minister's salary. One of the members of the  
13195 church was relating the fact to a minister from  
13196 abroad, and speaking of the sacrifice which this  
13197 merchant was making. At this moment the  
13198 merchant came in. "Brother," said the minister,  
13199 "you are a merchant. Suppose you employ a  
13200 clerk to sell goods, and a schoolmaster to teach

13201 your children. You order your clerk to pay your  
13202 schoolmaster out of the store such an amount,  
13203 for his services in teaching. Now suppose your  
13204 clerk should give out that he had to pay this  
13205 schoolmaster his salary, and should speak of the  
13206 sacrifices that he was making to do it, what  
13207 would you say to this?" "Why," said the  
13208 merchant, "I should say it was ridiculous."  
13209 "Well," says the minister, "God employs you to  
13210 sell goods as his clerk, and your minister he  
13211 employs to teach his children, and requires you  
13212 to pay his salary out of the income of the store.  
13213 Now, do you call this your sacrifice, and say that  
13214 you are making a great sacrifice, to pay this  
13215 minister's salary? No, you are just as much  
13216 bound to sell goods for God as he is to preach  
13217 for God. You have no more right to sell goods  
13218 for the purpose of laying up money, than he has  
13219 to preach the Gospel for the same purpose. You  
13220 are bound to be just as pious, and to aim as  
13221 singly at the glory of God, in selling goods, as he  
13222 is in preaching the Gospel. And thus you are as  
13223 absolutely to give up your whole time for the  
13224 service of God as he does. You and your family  
13225 may lawfully live out of the avails of this store,  
13226 and so may the minister and his family, just as  
13227 lawfully. If you sell goods from these motives,  
13228 selling goods is just as much serving God as

13229 preaching. And a man who sells goods upon  
13230 these principles, and acts in conformity to them,  
13231 is just as pious, just as much in the service of  
13232 God, as he is who preaches the Gospel. Every  
13233 man is bound to serve God in his calling, the  
13234 minister by teaching, the merchant by selling  
13235 goods, the farmer by tilling his fields, the lawyer  
13236 and physician by plying the duties of their  
13237 profession.

13238  
13239 “It is equally unlawful for any one of these to  
13240 labor for the meat that perisheth. All they do is  
13241 to be for God, and all they can earn, after  
13242 comfortably supporting their families, is to be  
13243 dedicated to the spread of the Gospel and the  
13244 salvation of the world.”

13245  
13246 It has long enough been supposed that ministers  
13247 must be more pious than other men, that they  
13248 must not love the world, that they must labor for  
13249 God: they must live as frugally as possible, and  
13250 lay out their whole time, and health, and  
13251 strength, and life, to build up the kingdom of  
13252 Jesus Christ. This is true. But although other  
13253 men are not called to labor in the same field, and  
13254 to give up their time to public instruction, yet  
13255 they are just as absolutely bound to consider  
13256 their whole time as God’s, and have no more

13257 right to love the world, or accumulate wealth, or  
13258 lay it up for their children, or spend it upon their  
13259 lusts, than ministers have.

13260

13261 It is high time the church was acquainted with  
13262 these principles; and the Home Missionary  
13263 Society may labor till the day of judgment to  
13264 convert the people, and they will never succeed,  
13265 till the churches are led to understand and feel  
13266 their duty in this respect. Why, the very fact that  
13267 they are asking and receiving aid in supporting  
13268 their minister from the Home Missionary  
13269 Society while they are able to support him  
13270 themselves, is probably the very reason why his  
13271 labors among them are not more blessed.

13272

13273 I would that the American Home Missionary  
13274 Society possessed a hundred times the means  
13275 that it now does, of aiding feeble churches, that  
13276 are unable to help themselves. But it is neither  
13277 good economy nor piety, to give their funds to  
13278 those who are able but unwilling to support the  
13279 Gospel. For it is in vain to attempt to help them,  
13280 while they are able but unwilling to help  
13281 themselves.

13282

13283 If the Missionary Society had a ton of gold, it  
13284 would be no charity to give it to such a church.

13285 But let the church bring in all the tithes to God's  
13286 storehouse, and God will open the windows of  
13287 heaven and pour down a blessing. But let the  
13288 churches know assuredly that if they are  
13289 unwilling to help themselves to the extent of  
13290 their ability, they will know the reason why such  
13291 small success attends the labors of their  
13292 ministers. Here they are spunging their support  
13293 from the Lord's treasury. How many churches  
13294 are laying out their money for tea and coffee and  
13295 tobacco, and then come and ask aid from the  
13296 Home Missionary Society! I will protest against  
13297 aiding a church who use tea and tobacco, and  
13298 live without the least self-denial, and who want  
13299 to offer God only that which costs nothing.

13300  
13301 Finally—If they mean to be blessed, let them do  
13302 their duty, do all their duty, put shoulder to the  
13303 wheel, gird on the Gospel armor, and come up to  
13304 the work. Then, if the church is in the field, the  
13305 car of salvation will move on, though all hell  
13306 oppose, and sinners will be converted and saved.  
13307 But if a church will give up all the labor to the  
13308 minister, and sit still and look on, while he is  
13309 laboring, and themselves do nothing but  
13310 complain of him, they will not only fail of a  
13311 revival of religion, but if they continue slothful  
13312 and censorious, will by and by find themselves



13313 in hell for their disobedience and  
13314 unprofitableness in the service of Christ.

13315

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13316

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13317

13318 LECTURE XIV.

13319

13320 MEASURES TO PROMOTE REVIVALS.

13321

13322 Text.—These men, being Jews, do exceedingly  
13323 trouble our city and teach customs which are not  
13324 lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being  
13325 Romans.—Acts xvi. 20, 21.

13326

13327 “THESE men,” here spoken of, were Paul and  
13328 Silas, who went to Philippi to preach the Gospel,  
13329 and very much disturbed the people of that city,  
13330 because they supposed the preaching would  
13331 interfere with their worldly gains. And so they  
13332 arranged the preachers of the Gospel before the  
13333 magistrates of the city, as culprits, and charged  
13334 them with teaching doctrines, and especially  
13335 employing measures, that were not lawful.

13336

13337 In discoursing from these words I design to  
13338 show,

13339

13340 I. That under the Gospel dispensation, God has  
13341 established no particular system of measures to  
13342 be employed and invariably adhered to in  
13343 promoting religion.  
13344

13345 II. To show that our present forms of public  
13346 worship, and everything, so far as measures are  
13347 concerned, have been arrived at by degrees, and  
13348 by a succession of New Measures.  
13349

13350 I. I am to show that under the Gospel, God has  
13351 established no particular measures to be used.  
13352

13353 Under the Jewish dispensation, there were  
13354 particular forms enjoined and prescribed by God  
13355 himself, from which it was not lawful to depart.  
13356 But these forms were all typical, and were  
13357 designed to shadow forth Christ, or something  
13358 connected with the new dispensation that Christ  
13359 was to introduce. And therefore they were fixed,  
13360 and all their details particularly prescribed by  
13361 Divine authority. But it was never so under the  
13362 Gospel. When Christ came, the ceremonial or  
13363 typical dispensation was abrogated, because the  
13364 design of those forms was fulfilled, and therefore  
13365 themselves of no further use. He, being the anti-  
13366 type, the types were of course done away at his  
13367 coming. THE GOSPEL was then preached as the

13368 appointed means of promoting religion; and it  
13369 was left to the discretion of the church to  
13370 determine, from time to time, what measures  
13371 shall be adopted, and what forms pursued, in  
13372 giving the Gospel its power. We are left in the  
13373 dark as to the measures which were pursued by  
13374 the apostles and primitive preachers, except so  
13375 far as we can gather it from occasional hints in  
13376 the book of Acts. We do not know how many  
13377 times they sung and how many times they  
13378 prayed in public worship, nor even whether they  
13379 sung or prayed at all in their ordinary meetings  
13380 for preaching. When Jesus Christ was on earth,  
13381 laboring among his disciples, he had nothing to  
13382 do with forms or measures. He did from time to  
13383 time in this respect just as it would be natural for  
13384 any man to do in such cases, without anything  
13385 like a set form or mode of doing it. The Jews  
13386 accused him of disregarding their forms. His  
13387 object was to preach and teach mankind the true  
13388 religion. And when the apostles preached  
13389 afterwards, with the Holy Ghost sent down from  
13390 heaven, we hear nothing about their having a  
13391 particular system of measures to carry on their  
13392 work, or one apostle doing a thing in a particular  
13393 way because others did it in that way. Their  
13394 commission was, "Go and preach the Gospel,  
13395 and disciple all nations." It did not prescribe any

13396 forms. It did not admit any. No person can  
13397 pretend to get any set of forms or particular  
13398 directions as to measures, out of this  
13399 commission. Do it—the best way you can—ask  
13400 wisdom from God—use the faculties he has  
13401 given you—seek the direction of the Holy  
13402 Ghost—go forward and do it. This was their  
13403 commission. And their object was to make  
13404 known the Gospel in the most effectual way, to  
13405 make the truth stand out strikingly, so as to  
13406 obtain the attention and secure the obedience of  
13407 the greatest number possible. No person can find  
13408 any form of doing this laid down in the Bible. It  
13409 is preaching the Gospel that stands out  
13410 prominently there as the great thing. The form is  
13411 left out of the question.

13412

13413 It is manifest, that, in preaching the Gospel,  
13414 there must be some kind of measures adopted.  
13415 The Gospel must be gotten before the minds of  
13416 the people, and measures must be taken so that  
13417 they can hear it, and to induce them to attend to  
13418 it. This is done by building churches, holding  
13419 stated or other meetings, and so on. Without  
13420 some measures, it can never be made to take  
13421 effect among men.

13422

13423 II. I am to show that our present forms of public  
13424 worship, and everything, so far as measures are  
13425 concerned, have been arrived at by degrees, and  
13426 by a succession of New Measures.

13427

13428 1. I will mention some things in regard to the  
13429 ministry.

13430

13431 Many years ago, ministers were accustomed to  
13432 wear a peculiar habit. It is so now in Catholic  
13433 countries. It used to be so here. Ministers had a  
13434 peculiar dress as much as soldiers. They used to  
13435 wear a cocked hat, and bands instead of a cravat  
13436 or stock, and small clothes, and a wig. No matter  
13437 how much hair a man had on his head, he must  
13438 cut it off and wear a wig. And then he must wear  
13439 a gown. All these things were customary, and  
13440 every clergyman was held bound to wear them,  
13441 and it was not considered proper for him to  
13442 officiate without them. All these had doubtless  
13443 been introduced by a succession of innovations,  
13444 for we have no good reason for believing that the  
13445 apostles and primitive ministers dressed  
13446 differently from other men.

13447

13448 But now all these things have been given up, one  
13449 by one, by a succession of innovations or new  
13450 measures, until now in many churches a minister

13451 can go into the pulpit and preach without being  
13452 noticed, although dressed like any other man.  
13453 And when it was done in regard to each one of  
13454 them, the church complained as much as if it had  
13455 been a Divine institution given up. It was  
13456 denounced as an innovation. When ministers  
13457 began to lay aside their cocked hats, and wear  
13458 hats like other men, it grieved the elderly people  
13459 very much; it looked so “undignified,” they said,  
13460 for a minister to wear a round hat. When, in  
13461 1827 I wore a fur cap, a minister said, “that was  
13462 too bad for a minister.”

13463  
13464 When ministers first began, a few years since, to  
13465 wear white hats, it was thought by many to be a  
13466 sad and very undignified innovation. And even  
13467 now, they are so bigoted in some places, that a  
13468 clergyman told me but a few days since, in  
13469 travelling through New England last summer  
13470 with a white hat, he could perceive that it injured  
13471 his influence. This spirit should not be looked  
13472 upon as harmless; I have good reason to know  
13473 that it is not harmless. Thinking men see it to be  
13474 mere bigotry, and are exceedingly in danger of  
13475 viewing everything about religion in the same  
13476 light on this account. This has been the result in  
13477 many instances. There is at this day scarcely a  
13478 minister in the land who does not feel himself

13479 obliged to wear a black coat, as much as if it  
13480 were a divine institution. The church is yet filled  
13481 with a kind of superstitious reverence for such  
13482 things. This is a great stumbling block to many  
13483 minds.

13484

13485 So, in like manner, when ministers laid aside  
13486 their bands, and wore cravats or stocks, it was  
13487 said they were becoming secular, and many  
13488 found fault. Even now, in some places, a  
13489 minister would not dare to be seen in the pulpit  
13490 in a cravat or stock. The people would feel as if  
13491 they had no clergyman, if he had no bands. A  
13492 minister in this city asked another, but a few  
13493 days since, if it would do to wear a black stock  
13494 in the pulpit. He wore one in his ordinary  
13495 intercourse with his people, but doubted whether  
13496 it would do to wear it in the pulpit.

13497

13498 So in regard to short clothes; they used to be  
13499 thought essential to the ministerial character.  
13500 Even now, in Catholic countries, every priest  
13501 wears small clothes. Even the little boys there,  
13502 who are training for the priest's office, wear their  
13503 cocked hats, and black stockings, and small  
13504 clothes. This would look ridiculous amongst us.  
13505 But it used to be practised in this country. The  
13506 time was when good people would have been

13507 shocked if a minister had gone into the pulpit  
13508 with pantaloons on. They would have thought he  
13509 was certainly going to ruin the church by his  
13510 innovations. I have been told that some years  
13511 ago, in New England, a certain elderly  
13512 clergyman was so opposed to the new measure  
13513 of a minister's wearing pantaloons, that he  
13514 would on no account allow them in his pulpit. A  
13515 young man was going to preach for him, who  
13516 had no small clothes, and the old minister would  
13517 not let him officiate in pantaloons. "Why," said  
13518 he, "my people would think I had brought a fop  
13519 into the pulpit, to see a man there with  
13520 pantaloons on, and it would produce an  
13521 excitement among them." And so, finally, the  
13522 young man was obliged to borrow a pair of the  
13523 old gentleman's clothes, and they were too short  
13524 for him, and made a ridiculous figure enough.  
13525 But any thing was better than such a terrible  
13526 innovation as preaching in pantaloons. But  
13527 reason has triumphed.

13528  
13529 Just so it was in regard to wigs. I remember one  
13530 minister, who, though quite a young man, used  
13531 to wear an enormous white wig. And the people  
13532 talked as if there was a divine right about it, and  
13533 it was as hard to give it up, almost, as to give up  
13534 the Bible itself. Gowns also were considered



13535 essential to the ministerial character. And even  
13536 now, in many congregations in this country, the  
13537 people will not tolerate a minister in the pulpit,  
13538 unless he has a flowing silk gown, with  
13539 enormous sleeves as big as his body. Even in  
13540 some of the Congregational Churches in New  
13541 England, they cannot bear to give it up. Now,  
13542 how came people to suppose a minister must  
13543 have a gown or a wig, in order to preach with  
13544 effect? Why was it that every clergyman was  
13545 held obliged to use these things? How is it that  
13546 not one of these things have been given up in the  
13547 churches, without producing a shock among  
13548 them? They have all been given up, one by one,  
13549 and many congregations have been distracted for  
13550 a time by the innovation. But will any one  
13551 pretend that the cause of religion has been  
13552 injured by it? People felt as if they could hardly  
13553 worship God without them, but plainly their  
13554 attachment to them was no part of their religion,  
13555 that is, no part of the Christian religion. It was  
13556 mere superstition. And when these things were  
13557 taken away they complained, as Micah did, “Ye  
13558 have taken away my gods.” But no doubt their  
13559 religious character was improved, by removing  
13560 these objects of superstitious reverence. So that  
13561 the church, on the whole, has been greatly the  
13562 gainer by the innovations. Thus you see that the

13563 present mode of a minister's dress has been  
13564 gained by a series of new measures.  
13565  
13566 2. In regard to the order of public worship.  
13567  
13568 The same difficulties have been met in effecting  
13569 every change, because the church have felt as if  
13570 God had established just the mode which they  
13571 were used to.  
13572  
13573 (1.) Psalm Books. Formerly it was customary to  
13574 sing David's Psalms. By and by there was  
13575 introduced a version of the Psalms in rhyme.  
13576 This was very bad, to be sure. When ministers  
13577 tried to introduce them, the churches were  
13578 distracted, people violently opposed, and great  
13579 trouble was created by the innovation. But the  
13580 new measure triumphed.  
13581  
13582 Afterwards another version was brought forward  
13583 in a better style of poetry, and its introduction  
13584 was opposed with much contention, as a new  
13585 measure. And finally Watt's version, which is  
13586 still opposed in many churches. No longer ago  
13587 than 1828, when I was in Philadelphia, I was  
13588 told that a minister there was preaching a course  
13589 of lectures on psalmody to his congregation, for  
13590 the purpose of bringing them to use a better

13591 version of psalms and hymns than the one they  
13592 were accustomed to. And even now, in a great  
13593 many congregations, there are people who will  
13594 go out of church, if a psalm or hymn is given out  
13595 from a new book. And if Watt's Psalms should  
13596 be adopted, they would secede and form a new  
13597 congregation, rather than tolerate such an  
13598 innovation. The same sort of feeling has been  
13599 excited by introducing the "Village Hymns" in  
13600 prayer meetings. In one Presbyterian  
13601 congregation in this city, within a few years, the  
13602 minister's wife wished to introduce the Village  
13603 Hymns into the female prayer meetings, not  
13604 daring to go any further. She thought she was  
13605 going to succeed. But some of the careful souls  
13606 found out that it was made in New England, and  
13607 refused to admit it. "It is a Hopkinsian thing, I  
13608 dare say."

13609  
13610 (2.) Lining the Hymns. Formerly, when there  
13611 were but few books, it was the custom to line the  
13612 hymns, as it was called. The deacon used to  
13613 stand up before the pulpit, and read off the psalm  
13614 or hymn, a line at a time, or two lines at a time,  
13615 and then sing, and the rest would all fall in. By  
13616 and by, they began to introduce books, and let  
13617 every one sing from his book. And what an  
13618 innovation! Alas, what confusion and disorder it

13619 made! How could the good people worship God  
13620 in singing, without having the deacon to line off  
13621 the hymn in his holy tone, for the holiness of it  
13622 seemed to consist very much in the tone, which  
13623 was such that you could hardly tell whether he  
13624 was reading or singing.

13625  
13626 (3.) Choirs. Afterwards another innovation was  
13627 carried. It was thought best to have a select choir  
13628 of singers sit by themselves and sing, so as to  
13629 give an opportunity to improve the music. But  
13630 this was bitterly opposed. Oh, how many  
13631 congregations were torn and rent in sunder, by  
13632 the desire of ministers and some leading  
13633 individuals to bring about an improvement in the  
13634 cultivation of music, by forming choirs of  
13635 singers. People talked about innovations and  
13636 new measures, and thought great evils were  
13637 coming to the churches, because the singers  
13638 were seated by themselves, and cultivated music,  
13639 and learned new tunes that the old people could  
13640 not sing. It did not use to be so when they were  
13641 young, and they would not tolerate such new  
13642 lights and novelties in the church.

13643  
13644 (4.) Pitchpipes. When music was cultivated, and  
13645 choirs seated together, then the singers wanted a  
13646 pitchpipe. Formerly, when the lines were given

13647 out by the deacon or clerk, he would strike off  
13648 into the tune, and the rest would follow as well  
13649 as they could. But when the leaders of choirs  
13650 begun to use pitchpipes for the purpose of  
13651 pitching all their voices on precisely the same  
13652 key, what vast confusion it made! I heard a  
13653 clergyman say that an elder in the town where he  
13654 used to live, would get up and leave the house  
13655 whenever he heard the chorister blow his pipe.  
13656 “Away with your whistle,” said he. “What!  
13657 whistle in the house of God!” He thought it a  
13658 profanation.

13659  
13660 (5.) Instrumental Music. By and by, in some  
13661 congregations, various instruments were  
13662 introduced for the purpose of aiding the singers,  
13663 and improving the music. When the bass viol  
13664 was first introduced, it made a great commotion.  
13665 People insisted they might just as well have a  
13666 fiddle in the house of God. “Why, it is a fiddle, it  
13667 is made just like a fiddle, only a little larger, and  
13668 who can worship where there is a fiddle? By and  
13669 by you will want to dance in the meeting house.”  
13670 Who has not heard these things talked of, as  
13671 matters of the most vital importance to the cause  
13672 of religion and the purity of the church?  
13673 Ministers, in grave ecclesiastical assemblies,  
13674 have spent days in discussing them. In a synod

13675 in the Presbyterian church, only a few years ago,  
13676 it was seriously talked of by some, as a matter  
13677 worthy of discipline in a certain church, that they  
13678 had an organ in the house of God. This within a  
13679 few years. And there are many churches now  
13680 who would not tolerate an organ. They would  
13681 not be half so much excited to be told that  
13682 sinners are going to hell, as to be told that there  
13683 is going to be an organ in the meeting house. Oh,  
13684 in how many places can you get the church to do  
13685 anything else, easier than to come along in an  
13686 easy and natural way to do what is needed, and  
13687 wisest, and best, for promoting religion and  
13688 saving souls! They act as if they had a “Thus  
13689 saith the Lord,” for every custom and practice  
13690 that has been handed down to them, or that they  
13691 have long followed themselves, however absurd  
13692 or injurious.

13693

13694 (6.) Extemporary Prayers. How many people are  
13695 there, who talk just as if the Prayer Book was of  
13696 divine institution! And I suppose multitudes  
13697 believe it is. And in some parts of the church a  
13698 man would not be allowed to pray without his  
13699 book before him.

13700

13701 (7.) Preaching without notes. A few years since,  
13702 a lady in Philadelphia was invited to hear a

13703 certain minister preach, and she refused, because  
13704 he did not read his sermons. She seemed to think  
13705 it would be profane for a man to go into the  
13706 pulpit and talk, just as if he was talking to the  
13707 people about some interesting and important  
13708 subject. Just as if God had enjoined the use of  
13709 notes and written sermons. They do not know  
13710 that notes themselves are an innovation, and a  
13711 modern one too. They were introduced in a time  
13712 of political difficulties in England. The ministers  
13713 were afraid they should be accused of preaching  
13714 something against the government, unless they  
13715 could show what they had preached, by having  
13716 all written down beforehand. And with a time-  
13717 serving spirit, they yielded to political  
13718 considerations, and imposed a yoke of bondage  
13719 upon the church. And, now in many places, they  
13720 cannot tolerate extempore preaching.

13721  
13722 (8.) Kneeling in Prayer. This has made a great  
13723 disturbance in many parts of the country. The  
13724 time has been in the Congregational churches in  
13725 New England, when a man or woman would be  
13726 ashamed to be seen kneeling at a prayer meeting,  
13727 for fear of being taken for a Methodist. I have  
13728 prayed in families where I was the only person  
13729 that would kneel. The others all stood, lest they  
13730 should imitate the Methodists, I suppose, and

13731 thus countenance innovations upon the  
13732 established form. Others, again, talk as if there  
13733 was no other posture but kneeling, that could be  
13734 acceptable in prayer.

13735

13736 3. Labors of Laymen.

13737

13738 (1.) Lay Prayers. Much objection was formerly  
13739 made against allowing any man to pray or to  
13740 take a part in managing a prayer meeting, unless  
13741 he was a clergyman. It used to be said that for a  
13742 layman to pray in public, was interfering with  
13743 the dignity of ministers, and was not to be  
13744 tolerated. A minister in Pennsylvania told me  
13745 that, a few years ago, he appointed a prayer  
13746 meeting in the church, and the elders opposed it  
13747 and turned it out of the house. They said they  
13748 would not have such work, they had hired a  
13749 minister to do the praying, and he should do it,  
13750 and they were not going to have common men  
13751 praying.

13752

13753 Ministers and many others have very extensively  
13754 objected against a layman's praying in public,  
13755 and especially in the presence of a minister. That  
13756 would let down the authority of the clergy, and  
13757 was not to be tolerated. At a synod held in this  
13758 State, there was a synodical prayer meeting



13759 appointed. The committee of arrangements, as it  
13760 was to be a formal thing, designated beforehand  
13761 the persons who were to take part, and named  
13762 two clergymen and one layman. The layman was  
13763 a man of talents and information equal to most  
13764 ministers. But one doctor of divinity got up and  
13765 seriously objected to a layman's being asked to  
13766 pray before that synod. It was not usual, he said;  
13767 it infringed upon the rights of the clergy, and he  
13768 wished no innovations. What a state of things!

13769

13770 (2.) Lay exhortation. This has been made a  
13771 question of vast importance, one which has  
13772 agitated all New England, and many other parts  
13773 of the country, whether laymen ought to be  
13774 allowed to exhort in public meetings. Many  
13775 ministers have labored to shut up the mouths of  
13776 laymen entirely. They overlooked the practice of  
13777 the primitive churches. So much opposition was  
13778 made to this practice nearly a hundred years ago,  
13779 that President Edwards actually had to take up  
13780 the subject, and write a labored defence of the  
13781 rights and duties of laymen. But the opposition  
13782 has not entirely ceased to this day. "What! A  
13783 man that is not a minister, to talk in public! it  
13784 will create confusion, it will let down the  
13785 ministry; what will people think of us, ministers,

13786 if we allow common men to do the same things  
13787 that we do?" Astonishing!

13788

13789 But now, all these things are gone by, in most  
13790 places, and laymen can pray and exhort without  
13791 the least objection. The evils that were feared,  
13792 from the labors of laymen, have not been  
13793 realized, and many ministers are glad to have  
13794 them exercise their gifts in doing good.

13795

13796 4. Female Prayer Meetings. Within the last few  
13797 years, female prayer meetings have been  
13798 extensively opposed in this State. What dreadful  
13799 things! A minister, now dead, said that when he  
13800 first attempted to establish these meetings, he  
13801 had all the clergy around opposed to him. "Set  
13802 women to praying? Why, the next thing, I  
13803 suppose, will be to set them to preaching." And  
13804 serious apprehensions were entertained for the  
13805 safety of Zion, if women should be allowed to  
13806 get together to pray. And even now, they are not  
13807 tolerated in some churches.

13808

13809 So it has been in regard to all the active  
13810 movements of the church. Missions, Sunday  
13811 Schools, and everything of the kind, have been  
13812 opposed, and have gained their present hold in  
13813 the church only by a succession of struggles and

13814 a series of innovations. A Baptist Association in  
13815 Pennsylvania, some years since, disclaimed all  
13816 fellowship with any minister that had been  
13817 liberally educated, or that supported Missions,  
13818 Bible Societies, Sabbath Schools, Temperance  
13819 Societies, etc. All these were denounced as New  
13820 Measures, not found in the Bible, and that would  
13821 necessarily lead to distraction and confusion in  
13822 the churches. The same thing has been done by  
13823 some among the German churches. And in many  
13824 Presbyterian churches, there are found those who  
13825 will take the same ground, and denounce all  
13826 these things, with the exception, perhaps, of an  
13827 educated ministry, as innovations, new  
13828 measures, new lights, going in their own  
13829 strength, and the like, and as calculated to do  
13830 great evil.

13831  
13832 5. I will mention several men who have in  
13833 Divine providence been set forward as  
13834 prominent in introducing these innovations.

13835  
13836 (1.) The apostles were great innovators, as you  
13837 all know. After the resurrection, and after the  
13838 Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, they set  
13839 out to remodel the church. They broke down the  
13840 Jewish system of measures and rooted it out, so  
13841 as to leave scarcely a vestige.

13842

13843 (2.) Luther and the Reformers. You all know  
13844 what difficulties they had to contend with, and  
13845 the reason was, that they were trying to  
13846 introduce new measures—new modes of  
13847 performing the public duties of religion, and new  
13848 expedients to bring the Gospel with power to the  
13849 hearts of men. All the strange and ridiculous  
13850 things of the Roman Catholics were held to in  
13851 the church with pertinacious obstinacy, as if they  
13852 were of Divine authority. And such an  
13853 excitement was raised by the attempt to change  
13854 them, as well nigh involved all Europe in blood.

13855

13856 (3.) Wesley and his coadjutors. Wesley did not  
13857 at first tear off from the Established Church in  
13858 England, but formed little classes everywhere,  
13859 that grew into a church within a church. He  
13860 remained in the Episcopal church, but he  
13861 introduced so much of new measures, as to fill  
13862 all England with excitement and uproar and  
13863 opposition, and he was everywhere denounced  
13864 as an innovator and a stirrer up of sedition, and a  
13865 teacher of new things which it was not lawful to  
13866 receive.

13867

13868 Whitefield was a man of the same school, and  
13869 like Wesley was an innovator. I believe he and

13870 several individuals of his associates were  
13871 expelled from college for getting up such a new  
13872 measure, as a social prayer meeting. They would  
13873 pray together and expound the Scriptures, and  
13874 this was such a daring novelty that it could not  
13875 be borne. When Whitefield came to this country,  
13876 what an astonishing opposition was raised!  
13877 Often he well nigh lost his life, and barely  
13878 escaped by the skin of his teeth. Now, everybody  
13879 looks upon him as the glory of the age in which  
13880 he lived. And many of our own denomination  
13881 have so far divested themselves of prejudice as  
13882 to think Wesley not only a good but a wise and  
13883 pre-eminently useful man. Then almost the  
13884 entire church viewed them with animosity,  
13885 fearing that the innovations he introduced would  
13886 destroy the church.

13887  
13888 (4.) President Edwards. This great man was  
13889 famous in his day for new measures. Among  
13890 other innovations, he refused to baptize the  
13891 children of impenitent parents. The practice of  
13892 baptizing the children of the ungodly had been  
13893 introduced in the New England churches in the  
13894 preceding century, and had become nearly  
13895 universal, President Edwards saw that the  
13896 practice was wrong, and he refused to do it, and  
13897 the refusal shook all the churches of New

13898 England. A hundred ministers joined and  
13899 determined to put him down. He wrote a book  
13900 on the subject, and defeated them all. It  
13901 produced one of the greatest excitements there  
13902 ever was in New England. Nothing, unless it was  
13903 the Revolutionary War, ever produced an equal  
13904 excitement.

13905

13906 The General Association of Connecticut refused  
13907 to countenance Whitefield, he was such an  
13908 innovator. "Why, he will preach out of doors and  
13909 anywhere!" Awful! What a terrible thing, that a  
13910 man should preach in the fields or in the streets.  
13911 Cast him out.

13912

13913 All these were devoted men, seeking out ways to  
13914 do good and save souls. And precisely the same  
13915 kind of opposition was experienced by all the  
13916 ecclesiastical bodies, obstructing their path and  
13917 trying to destroy their character and influence. A  
13918 book, now extant, was written in President  
13919 Edwards' time, by a doctor of divinity, and  
13920 signed by a multitude of ministers, against  
13921 Whitefield and Edwards, their associates and  
13922 their measures. A letter was published in this  
13923 city by a minister against Whitefield, which  
13924 brought up the same objections against  
13925 innovations that we hear now. In the time of the

13926 late opposition to revivals in the State of New  
13927 York, a copy of this letter was taken to the editor  
13928 of a religious periodical with a request that he  
13929 would publish it. He refused, and gave for a  
13930 reason, that if published, many would apply it to  
13931 the controversy that is going on now. I mention  
13932 it merely to show how identical is the opposition  
13933 that is raised in different ages against all new  
13934 measures designed to advance the cause of  
13935 religion.

13936

13937 6. In the present generation, many things have  
13938 been introduced which have proved useful, but  
13939 have been opposed on the ground that they were  
13940 innovations. And as many are still unsettled in  
13941 regard to them, I have thought it best to make  
13942 some remarks concerning them. There are three  
13943 things in particular which have chiefly attracted  
13944 remark, and therefore I shall speak of them.

13945 They are Anxious Meetings, Protracted  
13946 Meetings, and the Anxious Seat. These are all  
13947 opposed, and are called new measures.

13948

13949 (1.) Anxious Meetings. The first that I ever heard  
13950 of under that name, was in New England, where  
13951 they were appointed for the purpose of holding  
13952 personal conversation with anxious sinners, and  
13953 to adapt instruction to the cases of individuals,

13954 so as to lead them immediately to Christ. The  
13955 design of them is evidently philosophical, but  
13956 they have been opposed because they were new.  
13957 There are two modes of conducting an anxious  
13958 meeting, either of which may effect the object of  
13959 them.

13960  
13961 (a.) By spending a few moments in personal  
13962 conversation and learning the state of mind of  
13963 each individual, and then in a address to the  
13964 whole, take up all their errors and remove their  
13965 difficulties together.

13966  
13967 (b.) By going round to each, and taking up each  
13968 individual case, and going over the whole  
13969 ground with each one separately, and getting  
13970 them to promise to give up their hearts to God.  
13971 Either way they are important, and have been  
13972 found most successful in practice. But  
13973 multitudes have objected to them because they  
13974 were new.

13975  
13976 (2.) Protracted Meetings. These are not new, but  
13977 have always been practised, in some form or  
13978 other, ever since there was a church on earth.  
13979 The Jewish festivals were nothing else but  
13980 protracted meetings. In regard to the manner,  
13981 they were conducted differently from what they



13982 are now. But the design was the same, to devote  
13983 a series of days to religious services, in order to  
13984 make a more powerful impression of divine  
13985 things upon the minds of the people. All  
13986 denominations of Christians, when religion  
13987 prospers among them, hold protracted meetings.  
13988 In Scotland they used to begin on Thursday at all  
13989 their communion seasons, and continue until  
13990 after the Sabbath. The Episcopalians, Baptists,  
13991 and Methodists all hold protracted meetings. Yet  
13992 now in our day they have been opposed,  
13993 particularly among Presbyterians, and called  
13994 new measures, and regarded as fraught with all  
13995 manner of evil, notwithstanding they have been  
13996 so manifestly and so extensively blessed. I will  
13997 suggest a few things that ought to be considered  
13998 in regard to them.

13999  
14000 (a.) In appointing them, regard should be had to  
14001 the circumstances of the people; whether the  
14002 church are able to give their attention and devote  
14003 their time to carry on the meeting. In some  
14004 instances this rule has been neglected. Some  
14005 have thought it right to break in upon the  
14006 necessary business of the community. In the  
14007 country, they would appoint the meeting in  
14008 harvest time, and in the city in the height of the  
14009 business season, when all the men were

14010 necessarily occupied and pressed with their  
14011 temporal labors. In defence of this course it is  
14012 said that our business should always be made to  
14013 yield to God's business; that eternal things are of  
14014 so much more importance than temporal things,  
14015 that worldly business of any kind, and at any  
14016 time, should be made to yield and give place to a  
14017 protracted meeting. But the worldly business in  
14018 which we are engaged is not our business. It is as  
14019 much God's business, and as much our duty, as  
14020 our prayers and protracted meetings are. If we do  
14021 not consider our business in this light, we have  
14022 not yet taken the first lesson in religion; we have  
14023 not learned to do all things to the glory of God.  
14024 With this view of the subject, separating our  
14025 business from religion, we are living six days for  
14026 ourselves, and the seventh for God. Real duties  
14027 never interfere with each other. Week days have  
14028 their appropriate duties, and the Sabbath its  
14029 appropriate duties, and we are to be equally  
14030 pious on every day in the week, and in the  
14031 performance of the duties of every day. We are  
14032 to plough, and sow, and sell our goods, and  
14033 attend to our various callings, with the same  
14034 singleness of view to the glory of God, that we  
14035 go to church on the Sabbath, and pray in our  
14036 families, and read our Bibles. This is a first  
14037 principle in religion. He that does not know and

14038 act on this principle has not learned the A B C of  
14039 piety as yet. Now there are particular seasons of  
14040 the year in which God in his providence calls  
14041 upon men to attend to business, because worldly  
14042 business at the time is particularly urgent, and  
14043 must be done at that season, if done at all; seed  
14044 time and harvest for the farmer, and the business  
14045 seasons for the merchant. And we have no right  
14046 to say, in those particular seasons, that we will  
14047 quit our business and have a protracted meeting.  
14048 The fact is, the business is not ours. And unless  
14049 God, by some special indication of his  
14050 providence, shown it to be his pleasure that we  
14051 should turn aside and have a protracted meeting  
14052 at such times, I look upon it as tempting God to  
14053 appoint them. It is saying, “O God, this worldly  
14054 business is our business, and we are willing to  
14055 lay it aside for thy business.” Unless God has  
14056 indicated it to be his pleasure to pour out his  
14057 Spirit, and revive his work at such a season, and  
14058 has thus called upon his people to quit, for the  
14059 time being, their ordinary employments, and  
14060 attend especially to a protracted meeting, it  
14061 appears to me that God might say to us in such  
14062 circumstances, “Who hath required this of your  
14063 hand?”  
14064

14065 God has a right to dispose of our time as he  
14066 pleases, to require us to give up any portion of  
14067 our time, or all our time, to duties of instruction  
14068 and devotion. And when circumstances plainly  
14069 call for it, it is our duty to lay aside every other  
14070 business, and make direct and continuous efforts  
14071 for the salvation of souls. If we transact our  
14072 business upon right principles, and from right  
14073 motives, and wholly for the glory of God, we  
14074 shall never object to go aside to attend a  
14075 protracted meeting whenever there appears to be  
14076 a call for it in the providence of God. A man  
14077 who considers himself a steward or a clerk, does  
14078 not consider it a hardship to rest from his labors  
14079 on the Sabbath, but a privilege. The selfish  
14080 owner may feel unwilling to suspend his  
14081 business on the Sabbath. But the clerk, who  
14082 transacts business not for himself but for his  
14083 employer, considers it a privilege to rest upon  
14084 the Sabbath. So we, if we do our business for  
14085 God, shall not think it hard if he makes it our  
14086 duty to suspend our worldly business and attend  
14087 a protracted meeting. We should rather consider  
14088 it in the light of a holiday. Whenever, therefore,  
14089 you hear a man pleading that he cannot leave his  
14090 business to attend a protracted meeting—that it  
14091 is his duty to attend to business, there is reason  
14092 to fear that he considers the business as his own,

14093 and the meeting as God's business. If he felt that  
14094 the business of the store or farm was as much  
14095 God's business as attending a protracted  
14096 meeting, he would doubtless be very willing to  
14097 rest from his worldly toils, and go up to the  
14098 house of God and be refreshed whenever there  
14099 was an indication, on the part of God, that the  
14100 community was called to that work. It is highly  
14101 worthy of remark, that the Jewish festivals were  
14102 appointed at those seasons of the year when  
14103 there was the least pressure of indispensable  
14104 worldly business.

14105  
14106 In some instances, such meetings have been  
14107 appointed in the very pressure of the business  
14108 seasons, and have been followed with no good  
14109 results, evidently for the want of attention to the  
14110 rule here laid down. In other cases, meetings  
14111 have been appointed in seasons when there was  
14112 a great pressure of worldly business, and have  
14113 been signally blessed. But in those cases the  
14114 blessing followed because the meeting was  
14115 appointed in obedience to the indications of the  
14116 will of God, by those who had spiritual  
14117 discernment, and understood the signs of the  
14118 times. And in many cases, doubtless, individuals  
14119 have attended who really supposed themselves  
14120 to be giving up their own business, to attend to

14121 God's business, and in such cases they made  
14122 what they supposed to be a real sacrifice, and  
14123 God in mercy granted them the blessing.

14124

14125 (b.) Ordinarily, a protracted meeting should be  
14126 conducted through, and the labor chiefly  
14127 performed by, the same minister, if possible.  
14128 Sometimes protracted meetings have been held  
14129 and dependence placed on ministers coming in  
14130 from day to day. And they would have no  
14131 blessing. And the reason was obvious. They did  
14132 not come in a state of mind to enter into the  
14133 work, and they did not know the state of  
14134 people's minds, so as to know what to preach.  
14135 Suppose a person who was sick should call in a  
14136 different physician every day. He would not  
14137 know what the symptoms had been, nor what  
14138 was the course of the disease or of the treatment,  
14139 nor what remedies had been tried, nor what the  
14140 patient could bear. Why, he would certainly kill  
14141 the patient. Just so in a protracted meeting,  
14142 carried on by a succession of ministers. None of  
14143 them get into the spirit of it, and generally they  
14144 do more hurt than good.

14145

14146 A protracted meeting should not, ordinarily, be  
14147 appointed, unless they can secure the right kind  
14148 of help, and get a minister or two who will agree

14149 to stay on the ground till the meeting is done.  
14150 Then they will probably secure a rich blessing.  
14151  
14152 (c.) There should not be so many public  
14153 meetings as to interfere with the duties of the  
14154 closet and of the family. Otherwise Christians  
14155 will lose their spirituality and let go their hold of  
14156 God, and the meeting will run down.  
14157  
14158 (d.) Families should not put themselves out so  
14159 much in entertaining strangers as to neglect  
14160 prayer and other duties. It is often the case that  
14161 when a protracted meeting is held, some of the  
14162 principal families in the church, I mean those  
14163 who are principally relied on to sustain the  
14164 meetings, do not get into the work at all. And the  
14165 reason is, that they are encumbered with much  
14166 serving. They often take needless trouble to  
14167 provide for guests who come from a distance to  
14168 the meeting, and lay themselves out very  
14169 foolishly to make an entertainment, not only  
14170 comfortable but sumptuous. It should always be  
14171 understood that it is the duty of families to have  
14172 as little working and parade as possible, and to  
14173 get along with their hospitality in the easiest  
14174 way, so that they may all have time to pray, and  
14175 go to the meeting, and to attend to the things of  
14176 the kingdom.

14177

14178 (e.) By all means guard against unnecessarily  
14179 keeping late hours. If people keep late hours,  
14180 night after night, they will inevitably wear out  
14181 the body, and their health will fail, and there will  
14182 be a reaction. They sometimes allow themselves  
14183 to get so excited as to lose their sleep, and  
14184 become irregular in their meals, till they break  
14185 down, and a reaction must come. Unless there is  
14186 the greatest pains taken to keep regular, the  
14187 excitement will get so great that nature will give  
14188 way, and they run down, and the work stops.

14189

14190 (f.) All sectarianism should be carefully avoided.  
14191 If a sectarian spirit breaks out either in the  
14192 preaching, or praying, or conversation, it will  
14193 counteract all the good of the meeting.

14194

14195 (g.) Be watchful against placing dependence on  
14196 a protracted meeting, as if that of itself would  
14197 produce a revival. This is a point of great danger,  
14198 and has always been so. This is the great reason  
14199 why the church in successive generations has  
14200 always had to give up her measures—because  
14201 Christians had come to rely on them for success.  
14202 So it has been in some places, in regard to  
14203 Protracted Meetings. They have been so blessed  
14204 that in some places the people have thought that



14205 if they should only have a protracted meeting,  
14206 they would have a blessing, and sinners would  
14207 be converted of course. And so they have  
14208 appointed their meeting, without any preparation  
14209 in the church, and just sent abroad for some  
14210 minister of note, and set him to preaching, as if  
14211 that would convert sinners. It is obvious that the  
14212 blessing would be withheld from a meeting got  
14213 up in this way.

14214  
14215 (h.) Avoid adopting the idea that a revival cannot  
14216 be enjoyed without a Protracted Meeting. Some  
14217 churches have got into a morbid state of feeling  
14218 on this subject. Their zeal has become all  
14219 spasmodic and feverish, so that they never think  
14220 of doing anything to promote a revival, only in  
14221 that way. When a protracted meeting is held,  
14222 they will seem to be wonderfully zealous, and  
14223 then sink down to a torpid state till another  
14224 protracted meeting produces another spasm. And  
14225 now multitudes in the church think it is  
14226 necessary to give up protracted meetings  
14227 because they are abused in this way. This ought  
14228 to be guarded against, in every church, so that  
14229 they may not be driven to give them up, and lose  
14230 all the benefits that protracted meetings are  
14231 calculated to produce.

14233 (3.) The Anxious Seat.

14234

14235 By this I mean the appointment of some  
14236 particular seat in the place of meeting, where the  
14237 anxious may come and be addressed particularly,  
14238 and be made subjects of prayer, and sometimes  
14239 be conversed with individually. Of late this  
14240 measure has met with more opposition than any  
14241 of the others. What is the great objection? I  
14242 cannot see it. The design of the anxious seat is  
14243 undoubtedly philosophical, and according to the  
14244 laws of mind. It has two bearings:

14245

14246 1. When a person is seriously troubled in mind,  
14247 everybody knows that there is a powerful  
14248 tendency to conceal it. When a person is borne  
14249 down with a sense of his condition, if you can  
14250 get him willing to have it known, if you can get  
14251 him to break away from the chains of pride, you  
14252 have gained an important point towards his  
14253 conversion. This is agreeable to the philosophy  
14254 of the human mind. How many thousands are  
14255 there who will bless God to eternity, that when  
14256 pressed by the truth they were ever brought to  
14257 take this step, by which they threw off the idea  
14258 that it was a dreadful thing to have anybody  
14259 know that they were serious about their souls.

14260

14261 2. Another bearing of the anxious seat, is to  
14262 detect deception and delusion, and thus prevent  
14263 false hopes. It has been opposed on the ground,  
14264 that it was calculated to create delusion and false  
14265 hopes. But this objection is unreasonable. The  
14266 truth is the other way. Suppose I were preaching  
14267 on the subject of Temperance, and that I should  
14268 first show the evils of intemperance, and bring  
14269 up the drunkard and his family, and show the  
14270 various evils produced, till every heart is beating  
14271 with emotion. Then I portray the great danger of  
14272 moderate drinking, and show how it leads to  
14273 intoxication and ruin, and that there is no safety  
14274 but in TOTAL ABSTINENCE, till a hundred  
14275 hearts are ready to say, "I will never drink  
14276 another drop of ardent spirit in the world; if I do,  
14277 I shall expect to find a drunkard's grave." Now, I  
14278 stop short, and let the pledge be circulated, and  
14279 everyone that is fully resolved is ready to sign it.  
14280 But how many will begin to draw back and  
14281 hesitate, when you begin to call on them to sign  
14282 a pledge of total abstinence. One says to himself  
14283 "Shall I sign it, or not? I thought my mind was  
14284 made up, but this signing a pledge never to drink  
14285 again, I do not know about that." Thus you see  
14286 that when a person is called upon to give a  
14287 pledge, if he is found not to be decided, he  
14288 makes it manifest that he was not sincere. That

14289 is, he never came to that resolution on the  
14290 subject, which could be relied on to control his  
14291 future life. Just so with the awakened sinner.  
14292 Preach to him, and at the moment he thinks he is  
14293 willing to do anything; he thinks he is  
14294 determined to serve the Lord; but bring him to  
14295 the test, call on him to do one thing, to take one  
14296 step that shall identify him with the people of  
14297 God, or cross his pride—his pride comes up, and  
14298 he refuses; his delusion is brought out, and he  
14299 finds himself a lost sinner still; whereas, if you  
14300 had not done it, he might have gone away  
14301 flattering himself that he was a Christian. If you  
14302 say to him, “There is the anxious seat, come out  
14303 and avow your determination to be on the Lord’s  
14304 side,” and if he is not willing to do so small a  
14305 thing as that, then he is not willing to do  
14306 anything, and there he is, brought out before his  
14307 own conscience. It uncovers the delusion of the  
14308 human heart, and prevents a great many spurious  
14309 conversions, by showing those who might  
14310 otherwise imagine themselves willing to do  
14311 anything for Christ, that in fact they are willing  
14312 to do nothing.

14313

14314 The church has always felt it necessary to have  
14315 something of the kind to answer this very  
14316 purpose. In the days of the apostles baptism

14317 answered this purpose. The Gospel was preached  
14318 to the people, and then all those who were  
14319 willing to be on the side of Christ were called on  
14320 to be baptized. It held the precise place that the  
14321 anxious seat does now, as a public manifestation  
14322 of their determination to be Christians. And in  
14323 modern times, those who have been violently  
14324 opposed to the anxious seat have been obliged to  
14325 adopt some substitute, or they could not get  
14326 along in promoting a revival. Some have  
14327 adopted the expedient of inviting the people who  
14328 were anxious for their souls to stay for  
14329 conversation after the rest of the congregation  
14330 had retired. But what is the difference? This is as  
14331 much setting up a test as the other. Others, who  
14332 would be much ashamed to employ the anxious  
14333 seat, have asked those who have any feeling on  
14334 the subject to sit still in their seats when the rest  
14335 retire. Others have called the anxious to retire  
14336 into the lecture room. The object of all these is  
14337 the same, and the principle is the same, to bring  
14338 people out from the refuge of false shame. One  
14339 man I heard of who was very far gone in his  
14340 opposition to new measures, in one of his  
14341 meetings requested all those who were willing to  
14342 submit to God, or desired to be made subjects of  
14343 prayer, to signify it by leaning forward and  
14344 putting their heads down upon the pew before

14345 them. Who does not see that this was a mere  
14346 evasion of the anxious seat, and that it was  
14347 designed to answer the purpose in its place, and  
14348 he adopted this because he felt that something of  
14349 the kind was important?

14350

14351 Now what objection is there against taking a  
14352 particular seat, or rising up, or going into the  
14353 lecture-room? They all mean the same thing,  
14354 when properly conducted. And they are not  
14355 novelties in principle at all. The thing has always  
14356 been done in substance. In Joshua's day, he  
14357 called on the people to decide what they would  
14358 do, and they spoke right out in the meeting, "We  
14359 will serve the Lord; the Lord our God will we  
14360 serve, and his voice will we obey."

14361

14362 REMARKS.

14363

14364 1. If we examine the history of the church we  
14365 shall find that there never has been an extensive  
14366 reformation, except by new measures. Whenever  
14367 the churches get settled down into a form of  
14368 doing things, they soon get to rely upon the  
14369 outward doing of it, and so retain the form of  
14370 religion while they lose the substance. And then  
14371 it has always been found impossible to arouse  
14372 them so as to bring about a reformation of the

14373 evils, and produce a revival of religion, by  
14374 simply pursuing that established form. Perhaps it  
14375 is not too much to say, that it is impossible for  
14376 God himself to bring about reformations but by  
14377 new measures. At least, it is a fact that God has  
14378 always chosen this way, as the wisest and best  
14379 that he could devise or adopt. And although it  
14380 has always been the case, that the very measures  
14381 which God has chosen to employ, and which he  
14382 has blessed in reviving his work, have been  
14383 opposed as new measures, and have been  
14384 denounced, yet he has continued to act upon the  
14385 same principle. When he has found that a certain  
14386 mode has lost its influence by having become a  
14387 form, he brings up some new measure, which  
14388 will BREAK IN upon their lazy habits, and  
14389 WAKE UP a slumbering church. And great good  
14390 has resulted.

14391  
14392 2. The same distinctions, in substance, that now  
14393 exist, have always existed, in all seasons of  
14394 reformation and revival of religion. There have  
14395 always been those who particularly adhered to  
14396 their forms and notions, and precise way of  
14397 doing things, as if they had a “Thus saith the  
14398 Lord” for every one of them. They have called  
14399 those that differed from them, who were trying  
14400 to roll the ark of salvation forward, Methodists,

14401 New Lights, Radicals, New School, New  
14402 Divinity, and various other opprobrious names.  
14403 And the declensions that have followed have  
14404 been uniformly owing to two causes, which  
14405 should by no means be overlooked by the  
14406 church.  
14407  
14408 (1.) The Old School, or Old Measure party, have  
14409 persevered in their opposition, and eagerly  
14410 seized hold of any real or apparent indiscretion  
14411 in the friends of the work.  
14412  
14413 In such cases, the churches have gradually lost  
14414 their confidence in the opposition to new  
14415 measures, and the cry of “New Divinity,” and  
14416 “Innovation” has ceased to alarm them. They see  
14417 that the blessing of God is with those that are  
14418 thus accused of new measures and innovation,  
14419 and the continued opposition of the Old School,  
14420 together with the continued success of the New  
14421 School, have destroyed their confidence in the  
14422 opposition, and they get tired of hearing the  
14423 incessant cry of “New Lights,” and “New  
14424 Divinity,” and “New Measures.” Thus the scale  
14425 has turned, and the churches have pronounced a  
14426 verdict in favor of the New School, and of  
14427 condemnation against the Old School.  
14428



14429 (2.) But now, mark me: right here in this state of  
14430 things, the devil has, again and again, taken the  
14431 advantage, and individuals have risen up, and  
14432 being sustained by the confidence of the  
14433 churches in the New Measure party, and finding  
14434 them sick of opposition, and ready to do  
14435 anything that would promote the interests of  
14436 Christ's kingdom, they have driven headlong  
14437 themselves, and in some instances have carried  
14438 the churches into the very vortex of those  
14439 difficulties which have been predicted by their  
14440 opposers. Thus, when the battle had been fought,  
14441 and the victory gained, the rash zeal of some  
14442 well-meaning but headlong individuals, has  
14443 brought about a reaction that has spread a pall  
14444 over the churches for years. This was the case, as  
14445 is well known, in the days of President Edwards.  
14446 Here is a rock, upon which a light-house is now  
14447 built, and upon which if the church now run  
14448 aground, both parties are entirely without  
14449 excuse. It is now well known, or ought to be  
14450 known, that the declension which followed the  
14451 revivals in those days, together with the  
14452 declensions which have repeatedly occurred,  
14453 were owing to the combined influence of the  
14454 continued and pertinacious opposition of the Old  
14455 School, and the ultimate bad spirit and

14456 recklessnes of some individuals of the New  
14457 School.

14458

14459 And here the note of alarm should be distinctly  
14460 sounded to both parties, lest the devil should  
14461 prevail against us, at the very point, and under  
14462 the very circumstances, where he has so often  
14463 prevailed. Shall the church never learn wisdom  
14464 from experience? How often, Oh, how often  
14465 must these scenes be acted over before the  
14466 millennium shall come! When will it once be,  
14467 that the church may be revived, and religion  
14468 prevail, without exciting such opposition in the  
14469 church, as eventually to bring about a reaction?

14470

14471 3. The present cry against new measures is  
14472 highly ridiculous, when we consider the quarter  
14473 from which it comes, and all the circumstances  
14474 in the case. It is truly astonishing that grave  
14475 ministers should really feel alarmed at the new  
14476 measures of the present day, as if new measures  
14477 were something new under the sun, and as if the  
14478 present form and manner of doing things had  
14479 descended from the apostles, and were  
14480 established by a "Thus saith the Lord:" when the  
14481 truth is, that every step of the church's advance  
14482 from the gross darkness of Popery, has been  
14483 through the introduction of one new measure

14484 after another. We now look with astonishment,  
14485 and are inclined to look almost with contempt,  
14486 upon the cry of “Innovation,” that has preceded  
14487 our day; and as we review the fears that  
14488 multitudes in the church have entertained in by-  
14489 gone days with respect to innovation, we find it  
14490 difficult to account for what appear to us the  
14491 groundless and absurd, at least, if not ridiculous  
14492 objections and difficulties which they made. But,  
14493 my hearers, is it not wonderful, that at this late  
14494 day, after the church has had so much experience  
14495 in these matters, that grave and pious men  
14496 should seriously feel alarmed at the introduction  
14497 of the simple, the philosophical, and greatly  
14498 prospered measures of the last ten years? As if  
14499 new measures were something not to be  
14500 tolerated, of highly disastrous tendency, and that  
14501 should wake the notes and echoes of alarm in  
14502 every nook and corner of the church.

14503

14504 4. We see why it is that those who have been  
14505 making the ado about new measures have not  
14506 been successful in promoting revivals.

14507

14508 They have been taken up with the evils, real or  
14509 imaginary, which have attended this great and  
14510 blessed work of God. That there have been evils,  
14511 no one will pretend to deny. But I do believe,

14512 that no revival ever existed since the world  
14513 began, of so great power and extent as the one  
14514 that has prevailed for the last ten years, which  
14515 has not been attended with as great or greater  
14516 evils. Still a large portion of the church have  
14517 been frightening themselves and others, by  
14518 giving constant attention to the evils of revivals.  
14519 One of the professors in a Presbyterian  
14520 Theological Seminary, felt it his duty to write a  
14521 series of letters to Presbyterians, which were  
14522 extensively circulated, the object of which  
14523 seemed to be to sound the note of alarm  
14524 throughout all the borders of the church, in  
14525 regard to the evils attending revivals. While men  
14526 are taken up with the evils instead of the  
14527 excellencies of a blessed work of God, how can  
14528 it be expected that they will be useful in  
14529 promoting it? I would say all this in great  
14530 kindness, but still it is a point upon which I must  
14531 not be silent.

14532  
14533 5. Without new measures it is impossible that the  
14534 church should succeed in gaining the attention of  
14535 the world to religion. There are so many exciting  
14536 subjects constantly brought before the public  
14537 mind, such a running to and fro, so many that  
14538 cry “Lo here,” and “Lo there,” that the church  
14539 cannot maintain her ground, cannot command

14540 attention, without very exciting preaching, and  
14541 sufficient novelty in measures, to get the public  
14542 ear. The measures of politicians, of infidels and  
14543 heretics, the scrambling after wealth, the  
14544 increase of luxury, and the ten thousand exciting  
14545 and counteracting influences that bear upon the  
14546 church and upon the world, will gain their  
14547 attention and turn all men away from the  
14548 sanctuary and from the altars of the Lord, unless  
14549 we increase in wisdom and piety, and wisely  
14550 adopt such new measures as are calculated to get  
14551 the attention of men to the Gospel of Christ. I  
14552 have already said, in the course of these lectures,  
14553 that novelties should be introduced no faster than  
14554 they are really called for. They should be  
14555 introduced with the greatest wisdom, and  
14556 caution, and prayerfulness, and in a manner  
14557 calculated to excite as little opposition as  
14558 possible. But new measures we must have. And  
14559 may God prevent the church from settling down  
14560 in any set of forms, and getting the present or  
14561 any other edition of her measures stereotyped.

14562

14563 6. It is evident that we must have more exciting  
14564 preaching, to meet the character and wants of the  
14565 age. Ministers are generally beginning to find  
14566 this out. And some of them complain of it, and  
14567 suppose it to be owing to new measures, as they

14568 call them. They say that such ministers as our  
14569 fathers would have been glad to hear, now  
14570 cannot be heard, cannot get a settlement, nor  
14571 collect an audience. And they think that new  
14572 measures have perverted the taste of the people.  
14573 But this is not the difficulty. The character of the  
14574 age is changed, and these men have not  
14575 conformed to it, but retain the same stiff, dry,  
14576 prosing style of preaching that answered half a  
14577 century ago.

14578  
14579 Look at the Methodists. Many of their ministers  
14580 are unlearned, in the common sense of the term,  
14581 many of them taken right from the shop or the  
14582 farm, and yet they have gathered congregations,  
14583 and pushed their way, and won souls  
14584 everywhere. Wherever the Methodists have  
14585 gone, their plain, pointed and simple, but warm  
14586 and animated mode of preaching has always  
14587 gathered congregations. Few Presbyterian  
14588 ministers have gathered so large assemblies, or  
14589 won so many souls. Now are we to be told that  
14590 we must pursue the same old, formal mode of  
14591 doing things, amidst all these changes? As well  
14592 might the North River be rolled back, as the  
14593 world converted under such preaching. Those  
14594 who adopt a different style of preaching, as the  
14595 Methodists have done, will run away from us.

14596 The world will escape from under the influence  
14597 of this old fashioned or rather new fashioned  
14598 ministry. It is impossible that the public mind  
14599 should be held by such preaching. We must have  
14600 exciting, powerful preaching, or the devil will  
14601 have the people, except what the Methodists can  
14602 save. It is impossible that our ministers should  
14603 continue to do good, unless we have innovations  
14604 in regard to the style of preaching. Many  
14605 ministers are finding it out already, that a  
14606 Methodist preacher, without the advantages of a  
14607 liberal education will draw a congregation  
14608 around him which a Presbyterian minister, with  
14609 perhaps ten times as much learning, cannot  
14610 equal, because he has not the earnest manner of  
14611 the other, and does not pour out fire upon his  
14612 hearers when he preaches.

14613  
14614 7. We see the importance of having young  
14615 ministers obtain right views of revivals. In a  
14616 multitude of cases, I have seen that great pains  
14617 are taken to frighten our young men, who are  
14618 preparing for the ministry, about the evils of  
14619 revivals, new measures, and the like. Young men  
14620 in some theological seminaries are taught to look  
14621 upon new measures as if they were the very  
14622 inventions of the devil. How can such men have  
14623 revivals. So when they come out, they look

14624 about, and watch, and start, as if the devil was  
14625 there. Some young men in Princeton, a few years  
14626 ago, came out with an essay upon the “evils of  
14627 revivals.” I should like to know, now, how many  
14628 of those young men have enjoyed revivals  
14629 among their people, since they have been in the  
14630 ministry; and if any have, I should like to know  
14631 whether they have not repented of that piece  
14632 about the evils of revivals.

14633  
14634 If I had a voice so loud as to be heard at  
14635 Princeton, I would speak to those young men on  
14636 this subject. It is high time to talk plainly on this  
14637 point. The church is groaning in all her borders  
14638 for the want of suitable ministers. Good men are  
14639 laboring and are willing to labor night and day to  
14640 assist in educating young men for the ministry,  
14641 to promote revivals of religion; and when they  
14642 come out of the seminary, some of them are as  
14643 shy of all the measures that God blesses as they  
14644 are of popery itself.

14645  
14646 Shall it be so always? Must we educate young  
14647 men for the ministry, and have them come out  
14648 frightened to death about new measures, as if  
14649 there had never been any such thing as new  
14650 measures. They ought to know that new  
14651 measures are no new thing in the church. Let



14652 them GO ALONG, and keep at work  
14653 themselves, and not be frightened about new  
14654 measures. I have been pained to see that some  
14655 men, in giving accounts of revivals, have  
14656 evidently felt themselves obliged to be particular  
14657 in detailing the measures used, to avoid the  
14658 inference that new measures were introduced;  
14659 evidently feeling that even the church would  
14660 undervalue the revival unless it appeared to have  
14661 been promoted without new measures. Besides,  
14662 this caution in detailing the measures to  
14663 demonstrate that there was nothing new, looks  
14664 like admitting that new measures are wrong  
14665 because they are new, and that a revival is more  
14666 valuable because it was not promoted by new  
14667 measures. In this way, I apprehend that much  
14668 evil has been done, already, and if the practice is  
14669 to continue, it must come to this, that a revival  
14670 must be judged of, by the fact that it occurred in  
14671 connection with new or old measures. I never  
14672 will countenance such a spirit, nor condescend to  
14673 guard an account of a revival against the  
14674 imputation of new or old measures. I believe  
14675 new measures are right, that is, that it is no  
14676 objection to a measure that it is new or old.  
14677  
14678 Let a minister enter fully into his work, and pour  
14679 out his heart to God for a blessing, and whenever

14680 he sees the want of any measure to bring the  
14681 truth more powerfully before the minds of the  
14682 people, let him adopt it and not be afraid, and  
14683 God will not withhold his blessing. If ministers  
14684 will not go forward, and will not preach the  
14685 Gospel with power and earnestness, and will not  
14686 turn out of their tracks to do anything new for  
14687 the purpose of saving souls, they will grieve the  
14688 Holy Spirit away, and God will visit them with  
14689 his curse, and raise up other ministers to do work  
14690 in the world.

14691

14692 8. It is the right and duty of ministers to adopt  
14693 new measures for promoting revivals. In some  
14694 places the church have opposed their minister  
14695 when he has attempted to employ those  
14696 measures which God has blessed for a revival,  
14697 and have gone so far as to give up their prayer  
14698 meetings, and give up laboring to save souls, and  
14699 stand aloof from everything, because their  
14700 minister has adopted what they call new  
14701 measures. No matter how reasonable the  
14702 measures are in themselves, nor how seasonable,  
14703 nor how much God may bless them. It is enough  
14704 that they are called new measures, and they will  
14705 not have anything to do with new measures, nor  
14706 tolerate them among the people. And thus they  
14707 fall out by the way, and grieve away the Spirit of

14708 God, and put a stop to the revival, when the  
14709 world around them is going to hell.  
14710  
14711 Finally.—This zealous adherence to particular  
14712 forms and modes of doing things, which has led  
14713 the church to resist innovations in measures,  
14714 savors strongly of fanaticism. And what is not a  
14715 little singular, is that fanatics of this stamp are  
14716 always the first to cry out “fanaticism.” What is  
14717 that but fanaticism in the Roman Catholic  
14718 Church, that causes them to adhere with such  
14719 pertinacity to their particular modes, and forms,  
14720 and ceremonies, and fooleries? They act as if all  
14721 these things were established by divine  
14722 authority; as if there were a “Thus saith the  
14723 Lord” for every one of them. Now we justly  
14724 style this a spirit of fanaticism, and esteem it  
14725 worthy of rebuke. But it is just as absolutely  
14726 fanatical, for the Presbyterian Church, or any  
14727 other church, to be sticklish for her particular  
14728 forms, and to act as if they were established by  
14729 divine authority. The fact is, that God has  
14730 established, in no church, any particular form, or  
14731 manner of worship, for promoting the interests  
14732 of religion. The scriptures are entirely silent on  
14733 these subjects, under the Gospel dispensation,  
14734 and the church is left to exercise her own  
14735 discretion in relation to all such matters. And I

14736 hope it will not be thought unkind, when I say  
14737 again, that to me it appears, that the unkind,  
14738 angry zeal for a certain mode and manner of  
14739 doing things, and the overbearing, exterminating  
14740 cry against new measures, SAVORS  
14741 STRONGLY OF FANATICISM.

14742

14743 The only thing insisted upon under the Gospel  
14744 dispensation, in regard to measures, is that there  
14745 should be decency and order. “Let all things be  
14746 done decently and in order.” We are required to  
14747 guard against all confusion and disorderly  
14748 conduct. But what is decency and order? Will it  
14749 be pretended that an anxious meeting, or a  
14750 protracted meeting, or an anxious seat, is  
14751 inconsistent with decency and order? I should  
14752 most sincerely deprecate, and most firmly resist  
14753 whatever was indecent and disorderly in the  
14754 worship of God’s house. But I do not suppose  
14755 that by “order” we are to understand any  
14756 particular set mode, in which any church may  
14757 have been accustomed to perform their service.

14758

14759

14760

14761 LECTURE XV.

14762

14763 HINDRANCES TO REVIVALS.

14764

14765 Text.—I am doing a great work, so that I cannot  
14766 come down. Why should the work cease, whilst  
14767 I leave it, and come down to you.”—Nehemiah  
14768 vi. 3.

14769

14770 THIS servant of God had come down from  
14771 Babylon to rebuild the temple and re-establish  
14772 the worship of God at Jerusalem, the city of his  
14773 fathers' sepulchres. When it was discovered by  
14774 Sanballat and certain individuals, his allies, who  
14775 had long enjoyed the desolations of Zion, that  
14776 now the temple, and the holy city were about to  
14777 be rebuilt, they raised a great opposition.  
14778 Sanballat and the other leaders tried in several  
14779 ways to divert Nehemiah and his friends, and  
14780 prevent them from going forward in their work;  
14781 at one time they threatened them, and then  
14782 complained that they were going to rebel against  
14783 the king. Again, they insisted that their design  
14784 was not pious but political, to which Nehemiah  
14785 replied by a simple and prompt denial, “There  
14786 are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou  
14787 feignest them out of thine own heart.” Finally,  
14788 Sanballat sent a message to Nehemiah,  
14789 requesting him to meet in the plain of Ono, to  
14790 discuss the whole matter amicably and have the  
14791 difficulty adjusted, but designed to do him

14792 mischief. They had found that they could not  
14793 frighten Nehemiah, and now they wanted to  
14794 come round him by artifice and fraud, and draw  
14795 him off from the vigorous prosecution of his  
14796 work. But he replied, “I am doing a great work,  
14797 so that I cannot come down: why should the  
14798 work cease, whilst I come down to you?”  
14799

14800 It has always been the case, whenever any of the  
14801 servants of God do anything in his cause, and  
14802 there appears to be a probability that they will  
14803 succeed, that Satan by his agents regularly  
14804 attempts to divert their minds and nullify their  
14805 labors. So it has been during the last ten years, in  
14806 which there have been such remarkable revivals  
14807 through the length and breadth of the land. These  
14808 revivals have been very great and powerful, and  
14809 extensive. It has been estimated that not less than  
14810 TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND persons have  
14811 been converted to God in that time.  
14812

14813 And the devil has been busy in his devices to  
14814 divert and distract the people of God, and turn  
14815 off their energies from pushing forward the great  
14816 work of salvation. In remarking on the subject, I  
14817 propose to show.

14818

14819 I. That a Revival of Religion is a great work.

14820

14821 II. To mention several things which may put a  
14822 stop to it.

14823

14824 III. Endeavor to show what must be done for the  
14825 continuance of this great revival.

14826

14827 I. I am to show that a Revival of Religion is a  
14828 great work.

14829

14830 It is a great work, because in it are great interests  
14831 involved. In a Revival of Religion are involved  
14832 both the glory of God, so far as it respects the  
14833 government of this world, and the salvation of  
14834 men. Two things that are of infinite importance  
14835 are involved in it. The greatness of a work is to  
14836 be estimated by the greatness of the  
14837 consequences depending on it. And this is the  
14838 measure of its importance.

14839

14840 II. I am to mention several things which may put  
14841 a stop to a revival.

14842

14843 Some have talked very foolishly on this subject,  
14844 as if nothing could injure a genuine revival.

14845 They say, "If your revival is a work of God, it  
14846 cannot be stopped; can any created being stop

14847 God?" Now I ask if this is common sense?

14848 Formerly, it used to be the established belief that  
14849 a revival could not be stopped, because it was  
14850 the work of God. And so they supposed it would  
14851 go on, whatever might be done to hinder it, in  
14852 the church or out of it. But the farmer might just  
14853 as well reason so, and think he could go and cut  
14854 down his wheat and not hurt the crop, because it  
14855 is God that makes grain grow. A revival is the  
14856 work of God, and so is a crop of wheat; and God  
14857 is as much dependent on the use of means in one  
14858 case as the other. And therefore a revival is as  
14859 liable to be injured as a wheat-field.

14860  
14861 1. A revival will stop whenever the church  
14862 believe it is going to cease. The church are the  
14863 instruments with which God carries on this  
14864 work, and they are to work in it voluntarily and  
14865 with their hearts. Nothing is more fatal to a  
14866 revival than for its friends to predict that it is  
14867 going to stop. No matter what the enemies of the  
14868 work may say about it, predicting that it will all  
14869 run out and come to nothing, and the like. They  
14870 cannot stop it in this way; but the friends must  
14871 labor and pray in faith to carry it on. It is a  
14872 contradiction to say they are laboring and  
14873 praying in faith to carry on the work, and yet  
14874 believe that it is going to stop. If they lose their  
14875 faith, it will stop, of course. Whenever the



14876 friends of revivals begin to prophecy that the  
14877 revival is going to stop, they should be instantly  
14878 rebuked, in the name of the Lord. If the idea  
14879 once begins to prevail, and if you cannot  
14880 counteract it and root it out, the revival will  
14881 infallibly cease; for it is indispensable to the  
14882 work, that Christians should labor and pray in  
14883 faith to promote it, and it is a contradiction to  
14884 say that they can labor in faith for its  
14885 continuance, while they believe that it is about to  
14886 cease.

14887  
14888 2. A revival will cease when Christians consent  
14889 that it should cease. Sometimes Christians see  
14890 that the revival is in danger of ceasing, and that  
14891 if something effectual is not done, it will come  
14892 to a stand. If this fact distresses them, and drives  
14893 them to prayer, and to fresh efforts, the work  
14894 will not cease. When Christians love the work of  
14895 God and the salvation of souls so well that they  
14896 are distressed at the mere apprehension of a  
14897 decline, it will drive them to an agony of prayer  
14898 and effort. If it does not drive them to agony and  
14899 effort to prevent its ceasing; if they see the  
14900 danger, and do not try to avert it, or to renew the  
14901 work, **THEY CONSENT THAT IT SHOULD**  
14902 **STOP.** There are at this time many people, all  
14903 over the country, who see revivals declining, and

14904 that they are in great danger of ceasing  
14905 altogether, and yet they manifest but little  
14906 distress, and seem to care but little about it.  
14907 Whole churches see their condition, and see  
14908 what is coming unless there can be a waking up,  
14909 and yet they are at ease, and do not groan and  
14910 agonize in prayer, that God would revive his  
14911 work. Some are even predicting that there is now  
14912 going to be a great reaction, and a great dearth  
14913 come over the church, as there did after  
14914 Whitefield's and Edwards' day. And yet they are  
14915 not startled at their own forebodings; they are  
14916 cool about it, and turn directly off to other  
14917 things. THEY CONSENT TO IT. It seems as if  
14918 they were the devil's trumpeters, sent out to  
14919 scatter dismay throughout the ranks of God's  
14920 elect.

14921  
14922 3. A revival will cease whenever Christians  
14923 become mechanical in their attempts to promote  
14924 it. When their faith is strong, and their hearts are  
14925 warm and mellow, and their prayers full of holy  
14926 emotion, and their words with power, then the  
14927 work goes on. But when their prayers begin to  
14928 be cold and without emotion, and their deep-  
14929 toned feeling is gone, and they begin to labor  
14930 mechanically, and to use words without feeling,  
14931 then the revival will cease.

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4. The revival will cease whenever Christians get the idea that the work will go on without their aid. The church are co-workers with God in promoting a revival, and the work can be carried on just as far as the church will carry it on, and no farther. God has been for one thousand eight hundred years trying to get the church into the work. He has been calling and urging, commanding, entreating, pressing and encouraging, to get them to take hold. He has stood all this while ready to make bare his arm to carry on the work with them. But the church have been unwilling to do their part. They seem determined to leave it to God alone to convert the world, and say, "If he wants the world converted, let him do it." They ought to know that this is impossible. So far as we know, neither God nor man can convert the world without the co-operation of the church. Sinners cannot be converted without their own agency, for conversion consists in their voluntary turning to God. No more can sinners be converted without the appropriate moral influences to turn them; that is, without truth and the reality of things brought full before their minds either by direct revelation or by men. God cannot convert

14959 the world by physical omnipotence, but he is  
14960 dependent on the moral influence of the church.  
14961  
14962 5. The work will cease when the church prefer to  
14963 attend to their own concerns rather than God's  
14964 business. I do not admit that men have any  
14965 business which is properly their own, but they  
14966 think so, and in fact prefer what they consider as  
14967 their own, rather than to work for God. They  
14968 begin to think they cannot afford sufficient time  
14969 from their worldly employments to carry on a  
14970 revival. And they pretend they are obliged to  
14971 give up attending to religion, and let their hearts  
14972 go out again after the world. And the work must  
14973 cease, of course.  
14974  
14975 6. When Christians get proud of their great  
14976 revival, it will cease. I mean those Christians  
14977 who have before been instrumental in promoting  
14978 it. It is almost always the case in a revival, that a  
14979 part of the church are too proud or too worldly to  
14980 take any part in the work. They are determined  
14981 to stand aloof, and wait, and see what it will  
14982 come to, and see how it will come out. The pride  
14983 of this part of the church cannot stop the revival,  
14984 for the revival never rested on them. It begun  
14985 without them, and it can go on without them.  
14986 They may fold their arms and do nothing but

14987 look on and find fault; and still the work may go  
14988 on. But when that part of the church who work,  
14989 begin to think what a great revival they have  
14990 had, and how they have labored and prayed, and  
14991 how bold and how zealous they have been, and  
14992 how much good they have done, then the work  
14993 will be likely to decline. Perhaps it has been  
14994 published in the papers what a revival there has  
14995 been in the church, and how much engaged the  
14996 members have been, and they think how high  
14997 they shall stand in the estimation of other  
14998 churches, all over the land, because they have  
14999 had such a great revival. And so they get puffed  
15000 up, and vain, and then they can no longer enjoy  
15001 the presence of God, and the Spirit withdraws  
15002 from them, and the revival ceases.

15003

15004 7. The revival will stop when the church gets  
15005 exhausted by labor. Multitudes of Christians  
15006 commit a great mistake here in time of revival.  
15007 They are so thoughtless, and have so little  
15008 judgment, that they will break up all their habits  
15009 of living, neglect to eat and sleep at the proper  
15010 hours, and let the excitement run away with  
15011 them, so that they overdo their bodies, and are so  
15012 imprudent that they soon become exhausted, and  
15013 it is impossible for them to continue in the work.  
15014 Revivals often cease, and declension follows,

15015 from negligence and imprudence, in this respect,  
15016 on the part of those engaged in carrying them on.

15017

15018 8. A revival will cease when the church begins  
15019 to speculate about abstract doctrines, which have  
15020 nothing to do with practice. If the church turn off  
15021 their attention from the things of salvation, and  
15022 go to studying or disputing about abstract points,  
15023 the revival will cease, of course.

15024

15025 9. When Christians begin to proselyte. When the  
15026 Baptists are so opposed to the Presbyterians, or  
15027 the Presbyterians to the Baptists, or both against  
15028 the Methodists, or Episcopalians against the rest,  
15029 that they begin to make efforts to get the  
15030 converts to join their church, you soon see the  
15031 last of the revival. Perhaps a revival will go on  
15032 for a time, and all sectarian difficulties are  
15033 banished, till somebody circulates a book,  
15034 privately, to gain proselytes. Perhaps some over-  
15035 zealous deacon, or some mischief-making  
15036 woman, or some proselyting minister, cannot  
15037 keep still any longer, and begins to work the  
15038 work of the devil, by attempting to gain  
15039 proselytes, and so stirs up bitterness, and raising  
15040 a selfish strife, grieves away the Spirit, and  
15041 drives Christians all into parties. No more  
15042 revival there.

15043

15044 10. When Christians refuse to render to the Lord  
15045 according to the benefits received. This is a  
15046 fruitful source of religious declensions. God has  
15047 opened the windows of heaven to a church, and  
15048 poured them out a blessing, and then he  
15049 reasonably expects them to bring in the tithes  
15050 into his store-house, and devise and execute  
15051 liberal things for Zion; and lo! they have  
15052 refused; they have not laid themselves out  
15053 accordingly to promote the cause of Christ, and  
15054 so the Spirit has been grieved and the blessing  
15055 withdrawn, and in some instances a great  
15056 reaction has taken place because the church  
15057 would not be liberal, when God has been so  
15058 bountiful. I have known churches who were  
15059 evidently cursed with barrenness for such a  
15060 course. They had a glorious revival, and  
15061 afterwards perhaps their meeting-house needed  
15062 repairing, or something else was needed which  
15063 would cost a little money, and they refused to do  
15064 it, and so for their niggardly spirit God gave  
15065 them up.

15066

15067 11. When the church, in any way, grieve the  
15068 Holy Spirit.

15069

15070 (1.) When they do not feel their dependence on  
15071 the Spirit. Whenever Christians get strong in  
15072 their own strength, God curses their blessings. In  
15073 many instances, Christians sin against their own  
15074 mercies, because they get lifted up with their  
15075 success, and take the credit to themselves, and  
15076 do not give to God all the glory. As he says, “If  
15077 ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart,  
15078 to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of  
15079 hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and, I  
15080 will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed  
15081 them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.”  
15082 There has been a great deal of this in this  
15083 country, undoubtedly. I have seen many things  
15084 that looked like it, in the papers, where there  
15085 seemed a disposition in men to take credit for  
15086 success in promoting revivals. There is doubtless  
15087 a great temptation to this, and it requires the  
15088 utmost watchfulness, on the part of ministers and  
15089 churches, to guard against it, and not grieve the  
15090 Spirit away by vain-glorying in men.  
15091  
15092 (2.) The Spirit may be grieved by a spirit of  
15093 boasting of the revival. Sometimes, as soon as a  
15094 revival commences, you will see it blazed out in  
15095 the newspapers. And most commonly this will  
15096 kill the revival. There was a case in a  
15097 neighboring State, where a revival commenced,



15098 and instantly there came out a letter from the  
15099 pastor, telling that he had a revival. I saw the  
15100 letter and said to myself, That is the last we shall  
15101 hear of this revival. And so it was. In a few days,  
15102 the work totally ceased. And such things are not  
15103 uncommon. I could mention cases and places,  
15104 where persons have published such things as to  
15105 puff up the church, and make them so proud that  
15106 little or nothing more could be done for the  
15107 revival.

15108

15109 Some, under pretence of publishing things to the  
15110 praise and glory of God, have published things  
15111 that savored so strongly of a disposition to exalt  
15112 themselves, have made their own agency to  
15113 stand out so conspicuously, as was evidently  
15114 calculated to make an unhappy impression. At  
15115 the protracted meeting held in this church, a year  
15116 ago last fall, there were five hundred hopefully  
15117 converted, whose names and places of residence  
15118 we knew. A considerable number of them joined  
15119 this church. Many of them united with other  
15120 churches. Nothing was said of this in the papers.  
15121 I have several times been asked why we were so  
15122 silent upon the subject. I could only reply, that  
15123 there was such a tendency to self-exaltation in  
15124 the churches, that I was afraid to publish  
15125 anything on the subject. Perhaps I erred. But I

15126 have so often seen mischief done by premature  
15127 publications, that I thought it best to say nothing  
15128 about it. In the revival in this city, four years  
15129 ago, so much was said in the papers, that  
15130 appeared like self-exaltation, that I was afraid to  
15131 publish. I am not speaking against the practice  
15132 itself, of publishing accounts of revivals. But the  
15133 manner of doing it is of vast importance. If it is  
15134 done so as to excite vanity, it is always fatal to  
15135 the revival.

15136  
15137 (3.) So the Spirit is grieved by saying or  
15138 publishing things that are calculated to  
15139 undervalue the work of God. When a blessed  
15140 work of God is spoken lightly of, not rendering  
15141 to God the glory due to his name, the Spirit is  
15142 grieved. If anything is said about a revival, give  
15143 only the plain and naked facts just as they are,  
15144 and let them pass for what they are worth.

15145  
15146 12. A revival may be expected to cease, when  
15147 Christians lose the spirit of brotherly love. Jesus  
15148 Christ will not continue with people in a revival  
15149 any longer than they continue in the exercise of  
15150 brotherly love. When Christians are in the spirit  
15151 of a revival, they feel this love, and then you will  
15152 hear them call each other brother and sister, very  
15153 affectionately. But when they begin to get cold,

15154 they lose this warmth and glow of affection for  
15155 one another, and then this calling brother and  
15156 sister will seem silly and contemptible and they  
15157 will leave it off. In some churches they never  
15158 call each other so, but where there is a revival,  
15159 Christians naturally do it. I never saw a revival,  
15160 and probably there never was one, in which they  
15161 did not do it. But as soon as this begins to cease,  
15162 the Spirit of God is grieved, and departs from  
15163 among them.

15164

15165 13. A revival will decline and cease, unless  
15166 Christians are frequently re-converted. By this I  
15167 mean, that Christians, in order to keep in the  
15168 spirit of a revival, commonly need to be  
15169 frequently convicted, and humbled, and broken  
15170 down before God, and re-converted. This is  
15171 something which many do not understand, when  
15172 we talk about a Christian's being re-converted.  
15173 But the fact is that in a revival the Christian's  
15174 heart is liable to get crusted over, and lose its  
15175 exquisite relish for divine things; his unction and  
15176 prevalence in prayer abates, and then he must be  
15177 converted over again. It is impossible to keep  
15178 him in such a state as not to do injury to the  
15179 work, unless he pass through such a process  
15180 every few days. I have never labored in revivals  
15181 in company with any one who would keep in the

15182 work and be fit to manage a revival continually,  
15183 who did not pass through this process of  
15184 breaking down as often as once in two or three  
15185 weeks. Revivals decline, commonly, because it  
15186 is found impossible to make the church feel their  
15187 guilt and their dependence, so as to break down  
15188 before God. It is important that ministers should  
15189 understand this, and learn how to break down the  
15190 church, and break down themselves when they  
15191 need it, or else Christians will soon become  
15192 mechanical in their work, and lose their fervor  
15193 and their power of prevailing with God. This  
15194 was the process through which Peter passed,  
15195 when he had denied the Saviour, and by which  
15196 breaking down, the Lord prepared him for the  
15197 great work on the day of Pentecost. I was  
15198 surprised, a few years since, to find that the  
15199 phrase “breaking down” was a stumbling block  
15200 to certain ministers and professors of religion.  
15201 They laid themselves open to the rebuke  
15202 administered to Nicodemus, “Art thou a master  
15203 in Israel and knowest not these things?” I am  
15204 confident that until some of them know what it is  
15205 to be “broken down,” they will never do much  
15206 more for the cause of revivals.  
15207  
15208 14. A revival cannot continue when Christians  
15209 will not practice self-denial. When the church

15210 have enjoyed a revival and begin to grow fat  
15211 upon it, and run into self-indulgence, the revival  
15212 will soon cease, Unless they sympathize with the  
15213 Son of God, who gave up all to save sinners;  
15214 unless they are willing to give up their luxuries,  
15215 and their ease, and lay themselves out in the  
15216 work, they need not expect the Spirit of God will  
15217 be poured out upon them. This is undoubtedly  
15218 one of the principal causes of personal  
15219 declension. Let Christians in a revival  
15220 BEWARE, when they first find an inclination  
15221 creeping upon them, to shrink from self-denial,  
15222 and to give in to one form of self-indulgence  
15223 after another. It is the device of Satan, to bait  
15224 them off from the work of God, and make them  
15225 dull and gross, and lazy, and fearful, and useless,  
15226 and sensual, and drive away the Spirit and  
15227 destroy the revival.

15228

15229 15. A revival will be stopped by controversies  
15230 about new measures. Nothing is more certain to  
15231 overthrow a revival than this. But as my last  
15232 lecture was on the subject of new measures, I  
15233 need not dwell longer on the subject now.

15234

15235 16. Revivals can be put down by the continued  
15236 opposition of the Old School, combined with a  
15237 bad spirit in the New School. If those who do

15238 nothing to promote revivals continue their  
15239 opposition, and if those who are laboring to  
15240 promote them allow themselves to get impatient,  
15241 and get into a bad spirit, the revival will cease.  
15242 When the Old School write their letters in the  
15243 newspapers, against revivals or revival men, and  
15244 the New School write letters back again against  
15245 them, in an angry, contentious, bitter spirit, and  
15246 get into a jangling controversy, revivals will  
15247 cease. LET THEM KEEP ABOUT THEIR  
15248 WORK, and not talk about the opposition, nor  
15249 preach, nor print about it. If others choose to  
15250 publish their slang and stuff, let the Lord's  
15251 servants keep to their work, and all the writings  
15252 and slander will not stop the revival, while those  
15253 who are engaged in it mind their business, and  
15254 keep to their work. It is astonishing how far this  
15255 holds true in fact.

15256  
15257 In one place where there was a revival, certain  
15258 ministers formed a combination against the  
15259 pastor of the church, and a plan was set on foot  
15260 to ruin him, and they actually got him prosecuted  
15261 before his Presbytery, and had a trial that lasted  
15262 six weeks, right in the midst of the revival, and  
15263 the work still went on. The praying members of  
15264 the church laid themselves out so in the work,  
15265 that it continued triumphantly throughout the

15266 whole scene. The pastor was called off, to attend  
15267 his trial, but there was another minister that  
15268 labored among the people, and the members did  
15269 not even go to the trial, generally, but kept  
15270 praying and laboring for souls, and the revival  
15271 rode out the storm. In many other places,  
15272 opposition has risen up in the church, but a few  
15273 humble souls have kept at their work, and a  
15274 gracious God has stretched out his naked arm  
15275 and made the revival go forward in spite of all  
15276 opposition.

15277  
15278 But whenever those who are actively engaged in  
15279 promoting a revival get excited at the  
15280 unreasonableness and pertinacity of the  
15281 opposition, and feel as if they could not have it  
15282 so, and they lose their patience, and feel as if  
15283 they must answer their cavils and refute their  
15284 slanders, then they get down into the plains of  
15285 Ono, and the work must cease.

15286  
15287 17. Any diversion of the public mind will hinder  
15288 a revival. Anything that succeeds in diverting  
15289 public attention, will put a stop to a revival. In  
15290 the case I have specified, where the minister was  
15291 put on trial before his Presbytery, the reason why  
15292 it did not ruin the revival was, that the praying  
15293 members of the church would not suffer

15294 themselves to be diverted. They did not even  
15295 attend the trial, but kept praying and laboring for  
15296 souls, and so public attention was kept to the  
15297 subject, in spite of all the efforts of the devil.

15298

15299 But whenever he succeeds in absorbing public  
15300 attention on any other subject, he will put an end  
15301 to the revival. No matter what the subject is. If  
15302 an angel from heaven were to come down, and  
15303 preach, or pass about the streets, it might be the  
15304 worst thing in the world for a revival, for it  
15305 would turn sinners all off from their own sins,  
15306 and turn the church off from praying for souls, to  
15307 follow this glorious being, and gaze upon him,  
15308 and the revival would cease.

15309

15310 18. Resistance to the Temperance Reformation  
15311 will put a stop to revivals in a church. The time  
15312 has come that it can no longer be innocent in a  
15313 church to stand aloof from this glorious  
15314 reformation. The time was when this could be  
15315 done ignorantly. The time has been when  
15316 ministers and Christians could enjoy revivals,  
15317 notwithstanding ardent spirit was used among  
15318 them. But since light has been thrown upon the  
15319 subject, and it has been found that the use is only  
15320 injurious, no church member or minister can be  
15321 innocent and stand neutral in the cause. They



15322 must speak out and take sides. And if they do not  
15323 take ground on one side, their influence is on the  
15324 other. Show me a minister that has taken ground  
15325 against the temperance reformation who has had  
15326 a revival. Show me one who now stands aloof  
15327 from it who has a revival. Show me one who  
15328 now temporizes upon this point who does not  
15329 come out and take a stand in favor of temperance  
15330 who has a revival? It did not use to be so. But  
15331 now the subject has come up, and has been  
15332 discussed, and is understood, no man can shut  
15333 his eyes upon the truth. The man's hands are  
15334 RED WITH BLOOD who stands aloof from the  
15335 temperance cause. And can he have a revival?

15336  
15337 19. Revivals are hindered when ministers and  
15338 churches take wrong ground in regard to any  
15339 question involving human rights. Take the  
15340 subject of SLAVERY, for instance. The time  
15341 was when this subject was not before the public  
15342 mind. John Newton continued in the slave trade  
15343 after his conversion. And so had his mind been  
15344 perverted, and so completely was his conscience  
15345 seared, in regard to this most nefarious traffic,  
15346 that the sinfulness of it never occurred to his  
15347 thoughts until some time after he became a child  
15348 of God. Had light been poured upon his mind  
15349 previously to his conversion, he never could

15350 have been converted without previously  
15351 abandoning this sin. And after his conversion,  
15352 when convinced of its iniquity, he could no  
15353 longer enjoy the presence of God, without  
15354 abandoning the sin for ever. So, doubtless, many  
15355 slave dealers and slave holders in our own  
15356 country have been converted, notwithstanding  
15357 their participation in this abomination, because  
15358 the sinfulness of it was not apparent to their  
15359 minds. So ministers and churches, to a great  
15360 extent throughout the land, have held their  
15361 peace, and borne no testimony against this  
15362 abominable abomination, existing in the church  
15363 and in the nation. But recently, the subject has  
15364 come up for discussion, and the providence of  
15365 God has brought it distinctly before the eyes of  
15366 all men. Light is now shed upon this subject, as  
15367 it has been upon the cause of temperance. Facts  
15368 are exhibited, and principles established, and  
15369 light thrown in upon the minds of men, and this  
15370 monster is dragged from his horrid den, and  
15371 exhibited before the church, and it is demanded  
15372 of them, "IS THIS SIN?" Their testimony must  
15373 be given on this subject. They are God's  
15374 witnesses. They are sworn to tell "the truth, the  
15375 whole truth, and nothing but the truth." It is  
15376 impossible that their testimony should not be  
15377 given, on one side or the other. Their silence can

15378 no longer be accounted for upon the principle of  
15379 ignorance, and that they have never had their  
15380 attention turned to the subject. Consequently, the  
15381 silence of Christians upon the subject is virtually  
15382 saying that they do not consider slavery as a sin.  
15383 The truth is, it is a subject upon which they  
15384 cannot be silent without guilt. The time has  
15385 come, in the providence of God, when every  
15386 southern breeze is loaded down with the cries of  
15387 lamentation, mourning and wo. Two millions of  
15388 degraded heathen in our own land stretch their  
15389 hands, all shackled and bleeding, and send forth  
15390 to the church of God the agonizing cry for help.  
15391 And shall the church, in her efforts to reclaim  
15392 and save the world, deafen her ears to this voice  
15393 of agony and despair? God forbid. The church  
15394 cannot turn away from this question. It is a  
15395 question for the church and for the nation to  
15396 decide, and God will push it to a decision.

15397

15398 It is in vain for the churches to resist it for fear  
15399 of distraction, contention, and strife. It is in vain  
15400 to account it an act of piety to turn away the ear  
15401 from hearing this cry of distress.

15402

15403 The church must testify, and testify “the truth,  
15404 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” on  
15405 this subject, or she is perjured, and the Spirit of

15406 God departs from her. She is under oath to  
15407 testify, and ministers and churches who do not  
15408 pronounce it sin bear false testimony for God. It  
15409 is doubtless true that one of the reasons for the  
15410 low state of religion at the present time is that  
15411 many churches have taken the wrong side on the  
15412 subject of slavery, have suffered prejudice to  
15413 prevail over principle, and have feared to call  
15414 this abomination by its true name.

15415  
15416 20. Another thing that hinders revivals is  
15417 neglecting the claims of missions. If Christians  
15418 do not feel for the heathen, neglect the monthly  
15419 concert, and confine their attention to their own  
15420 church, do not even read the Missionary Herald,  
15421 or use any other means to inform themselves on  
15422 the subject of the claims of the world, and reject  
15423 the light which God is throwing before them,  
15424 and will not do what God calls them to do in this  
15425 cause, the Spirit of God will depart from them.

15426  
15427 21. When a church rejects the calls of God upon  
15428 them for educating young men for the ministry,  
15429 they will hinder and destroy a revival. Look at  
15430 the Presbyterian church, look at the 200,000  
15431 souls converted within ten years, and means  
15432 enough to fill the world with ministers, and yet  
15433 the ministry is not increasing so fast as the

15434 population of our own country, and unless  
15435 something more can be done to provide  
15436 ministers, we shall become heathen ourselves.  
15437 The churches do not press upon young men the  
15438 duty of going into the ministry. God pours his  
15439 Spirit on the churches, and converts hundreds of  
15440 thousands of souls, and if then the laborers do  
15441 not come forth into the harvest, what can be  
15442 expected but that the curse of God will come  
15443 upon the churches, and his Spirit will be  
15444 withdrawn, and revivals will cease. Upon this  
15445 subject no minister, no church should be silent or  
15446 inactive.

15447  
15448 22. Slandering revivals will often put them  
15449 down. The great revival in the days of President  
15450 Edwards suffered greatly by the conduct of the  
15451 church in this respect. It is to be expected that  
15452 the enemies of God will revile, misrepresent and  
15453 slander revivals. But when the church herself  
15454 engages in this work, and many of her most  
15455 influential members are aiding and abetting in  
15456 calumniating and misrepresenting a glorious  
15457 work of God, it is reasonable that the Spirit  
15458 should be grieved away. It cannot be denied that  
15459 this has been done, to a grievous and God-  
15460 dishonoring extent. It has been estimated that in  
15461 one year, since this revival commenced, ONE

15462 HUNDRED THOUSAND SOULS were  
15463 converted to God in the United States. This was  
15464 undoubtedly the greatest number that were ever  
15465 converted in one year, since the world began. [5]  
15466 It could not be expected that, in an excitement of  
15467 this extent, among human beings, there should  
15468 be nothing to deplore. To expect perfection in  
15469 such a work as this, of such extent, and carried  
15470 on by human instrumentality, is utterly  
15471 unreasonable and absurd. Evils doubtless did  
15472 exist and have existed. They were to be expected  
15473 of course, and guarded against, as far as  
15474 possible. And I do not believe the world's  
15475 history can furnish one instance in which a  
15476 revival, approaching to this in extent and  
15477 influence, has been attended with so few evils,  
15478 and so little that is honestly to be deplored.

15479  
15480 But how has this blessed work of God been  
15481 treated? Admitting all the evils complained of to  
15482 be real, which is far from being true, they would  
15483 only be like spots upon the disc of the glorious  
15484 sun; things hardly to be thought of, in  
15485 comparison of the infinite greatness and  
15486 excellence of the work. And yet how have a  
15487 great portion of the Presbyterian church,  
15488 received and treated this blessed work of God?  
15489 At the General Assembly, that grave body of

15490 men that represent the Presbyterian church in the  
15491 midst of this great work, instead of appointing a  
15492 day of thanksgiving, instead of praising and  
15493 glorifying God for the greatness of his work, we  
15494 hear from them the voice of rebuke. From the  
15495 reports that were given of the speeches made  
15496 there, it appears that the house was filled with  
15497 complainings. Instead of devising measures to  
15498 forward the work, their attention seemed to be  
15499 taken up with the comparatively trifling evils  
15500 that were incidental to it. And after much  
15501 complaining, they absolutely appointed a  
15502 committee, and sent forth a “Pastoral Letter” to  
15503 the churches, calculated to excite suspicions,  
15504 quench the zeal of God’s people, and turn them  
15505 off from giving glory to God for the greatness of  
15506 the blessing, to finding fault and carping about  
15507 the evils. When I heard what was done at that  
15508 General Assembly, when I read their speeches,  
15509 when I saw their pastoral letter, my soul was  
15510 sick, an unutterable feeling of distress came over  
15511 my mind, and I felt that God would “visit” the  
15512 Presbyterian church for conduct like this. And  
15513 ever since, the glory has been departing, and  
15514 revivals have been becoming less and less  
15515 frequent—less and less powerful. [6]  
15516

15517 And now I wish it could be known, whether  
15518 those ministers who poured out those  
15519 complainings on the floor of the General  
15520 Assembly, and who were instrumental in getting  
15521 up that pastoral letter, have since been blest in  
15522 promoting revivals of religion—whether the  
15523 Spirit of God has been upon them, and whether  
15524 their churches can witness that they have an  
15525 unction from the Holy One.

15526  
15527 23. Ecclesiastical difficulties are calculated to  
15528 grieve away the Spirit, and destroy revivals. It  
15529 has always been the policy of the devil to turn  
15530 off the attention of ministers from the work of  
15531 the Lord to disputes and ecclesiastical litigations.  
15532 President Edwards was obliged to be taken up  
15533 for a long time in disputes before ecclesiastical  
15534 councils; and in our days, and in the midst of  
15535 these great revivals of religion, these difficulties  
15536 have been alarmingly and shamefully multiplied.  
15537 Some of the most efficient ministers in the  
15538 church have been called off from their direct  
15539 efforts to win souls to Christ, to attend day after  
15540 day, and in some instances week after week, to  
15541 charges preferred against them, or their fellow-  
15542 laborers in the ministry, which could never be  
15543 sustained.



15545 Look at Philadelphia: what endless and  
15546 disgraceful janglings have distracted and grieved  
15547 the church of God in that city, and through the  
15548 length and breadth of the land. And in the  
15549 Presbyterian church at large these ecclesiastical  
15550 difficulties have produced evils enough to make  
15551 creation weep. Brother Beman was shamefully  
15552 and wickedly called off from promoting revivals,  
15553 to attend a trial before his own presbytery, upon  
15554 charges which, if true, were most of them  
15555 ridiculous, but which could never be sustained.  
15556 And since that time a great portion of his time  
15557 has, it would seem necessarily, been taken up  
15558 with the adjustment of ecclesiastical difficulties.  
15559 Brother Duffield, of Carlisle, Brother Barnes, of  
15560 Philadelphia, and others of God's most  
15561 successful ministers, have been hindered a  
15562 considerable part of their time for years by these  
15563 difficulties. Oh, tell it not in Gath! When will  
15564 those ministers and professors of religion who  
15565 do little or nothing themselves let others alone,  
15566 and let them work for God?

15567  
15568 24. Another thing by which revivals may be  
15569 hindered is censoriousness on either side, and  
15570 especially in those who have been engaged in  
15571 carrying forward a revival. It is to be expected  
15572 that the opposers of the work will watch for the

15573 halting of its friends, and be sure to censure  
15574 them for all that is wrong, and not unfrequently  
15575 for that which is right in their conduct.  
15576 Especially is it to be expected that many  
15577 censorious and unchristian remarks will be made  
15578 about those that are the most prominent  
15579 instruments in promoting the work. This  
15580 censoriousness on the part of the opposers of the  
15581 work, whether in or out of the church, will not,  
15582 however, of itself put a stop to the revival. While  
15583 its promoters keep humble, and in a prayerful  
15584 spirit, while they do not retaliate, but possess  
15585 their souls in patience, while they do not suffer  
15586 themselves to be diverted, to recriminate, and  
15587 grieve away the spirit of prayer, the work will go  
15588 forward; as in the case referred to, where a  
15589 minister was on trial for six weeks in the midst  
15590 of a revival. There the people kept in the dust,  
15591 and prayed, not so much for their minister, for  
15592 they had left him with God, but with strong  
15593 crying and tears pleading with God for sinners.  
15594 And God heard and blessed them, and the work  
15595 went on. Censoriousness in those who are  
15596 opposed to the work is but little to be dreaded,  
15597 for they have not the Spirit, and nothing depends  
15598 on them, and they can hinder the work only just  
15599 so far as they themselves have influence  
15600 personally. But the others have the power of the

15601 Holy Spirit, and the work depends on their  
15602 keeping in a right temper. If they get wrong and  
15603 grieve away the Spirit, there is no help, the work  
15604 must cease. Whatever provocation, therefore, the  
15605 promoters of this blessed work may have had, if  
15606 it ceases, the responsibility be theirs. And one of  
15607 the most alarming facts, in regard to this matter,  
15608 is that in many instances, those who have been  
15609 engaged in carrying forward the work, appear to  
15610 have lost the Spirit. They are becoming diverted,  
15611 are beginning to think that the opposition is no  
15612 longer to be tolerated, and that they must come  
15613 out and reply in the newspapers to what they  
15614 say. It should be known and universally  
15615 understood, that whenever the friends and  
15616 promoters of this greatest of revivals suffer  
15617 themselves to be called off to newspaper  
15618 janglings, to attempt to defend themselves, and  
15619 reply to those who write against them, the Spirit  
15620 of Prayer will be entirely grieved away, and the  
15621 work will cease. Nothing is more detrimental to  
15622 revivals of religion, and so it has always been  
15623 found, than for the promoters of it to listen to the  
15624 opposition, and begin to reply. This was found to  
15625 be true in the days of President Edwards, as you  
15626 who are acquainted with his book on Revivals  
15627 are well aware.  
15628

15629 III. I proceed to mention some things which  
15630 ought to be done, to continue this great and  
15631 glorious revival of religion, which has been in  
15632 progress for the last ten years.

15633

15634 1. There should be great and deep repentings on  
15635 the part of ministers. WE, my brethren, must  
15636 humble ourselves before God. It will not do for  
15637 us to suppose that it is enough to call on the  
15638 people to repent. We must repent, we must take  
15639 the lead in repentance, and then call on the  
15640 churches to follow.

15641

15642 Especially must those repent who have taken the  
15643 lead in producing the feelings of opposition and  
15644 distrust in regard to revivals. Some ministers  
15645 have confined their opposition against revivals  
15646 and revival measures to their own congregations,  
15647 and created such suspicions among their own  
15648 people as to prevent the work from spreading  
15649 and prevailing among them. Such ministers  
15650 would do well to consider the remarks of  
15651 President Edwards on this subject.

15652

15653 “If ministers preach never so good doctrine, and  
15654 are never so painful and laborious in their work,  
15655 yet, if at such a day as this, they show to their  
15656 people, that they are not well-affected to this

15657 work, but are very doubtful and suspicious of it,  
15658 they will be very likely to do their people a great  
15659 deal more hurt than good; for the very fame of  
15660 such a great and extraordinary work of God, if  
15661 their people were suffered to believe it to be his  
15662 work, and the example of other towns, together  
15663 with what preaching they might hear  
15664 occasionally, would be likely to have a much  
15665 greater influence upon the minds of their people,  
15666 to awaken and animate them in religion, than all  
15667 their labors with them: and besides their  
15668 minister's opinion would not only beget in them  
15669 a suspicion of the work they hear of abroad,  
15670 whereby the mighty hand of God that appears in  
15671 it, loses its influence upon their minds, but it will  
15672 also tend to create a suspicion of everything of  
15673 the like nature, that shall appear among  
15674 themselves, as being something of the same  
15675 distemper that is become so epidemical in the  
15676 land, and that is, in effect, to create a suspicion  
15677 of all vital religion, and to put the people upon  
15678 talking against it, and discouraging it, wherever  
15679 it appears, and knocking it in the head as fast as  
15680 it rises. And we that are ministers, by looking on  
15681 this work, from year to year, with a displeased  
15682 countenance, shall effectually keep the sheep  
15683 from their pasture, instead of doing the part of  
15684 shepherds to them, by feeding them; and our

15685 people had a great deal better be without any  
15686 settled minister at all at such a day as this.”

15687

15688 Others have been more public, and aimed at  
15689 exerting a wider influence. Some have written  
15690 pieces for the public papers. Some men in high  
15691 standing in the church have circulated letters  
15692 which never were printed. Others have had their  
15693 letters printed and circulated. There seems to  
15694 have been a system of letter-writing about the  
15695 country calculated to create distrust. In the days  
15696 of President Edwards, substantially the same  
15697 course was pursued, in view of which he says in  
15698 his work on revivals:

15699

15700 “Great care should be taken that the press should  
15701 be improved to no purpose contrary to the  
15702 interest of this work. We read that when God  
15703 fought against Sisera, for the deliverance of his  
15704 oppressed church, they that handle the pen of the  
15705 writer came to the help of the Lord in that  
15706 affair.—Judges v. 14. Whatever sort of men in  
15707 Israel they were that were intended, yet as the  
15708 words were indited by a Spirit that had a perfect  
15709 view of all events to the end of the world, and  
15710 had a special eye in this song, to that great event  
15711 of the deliverance of God’s church, in the latter  
15712 days, of which this deliverance of Israel was a

15713 type, it is not unlikely that they have respect to  
15714 authors, those that should fight against the  
15715 kingdom of Satan with their pens. Those  
15716 therefore that publish pamphlets to the  
15717 disadvantage of this work, and tending either  
15718 directly or indirectly to bring it under suspicion,  
15719 and to discourage or hinder it, would do well  
15720 thoroughly to consider whether this be not  
15721 indeed the work of God, and whether, if it be, it  
15722 is not likely that God will go forth as fire, to  
15723 consume all that stand in his way, and so burn up  
15724 those pamphlets; and whether there be not  
15725 danger that the fire that is kindled in them will  
15726 scorch the authors.”

15727  
15728 All these must repent. God never will forgive  
15729 them, nor will they ever enjoy his blessing on  
15730 their preaching, or be honored to labor in  
15731 revivals till they repent. This duty President  
15732 Edwards pressed upon ministers in his day, in  
15733 the most forcible terms. There doubtless have  
15734 been now, as there were then, faults on both  
15735 sides. And there must be deep repentance, and  
15736 mutual confessions of faults on both sides.

15737  
15738 “There must be a great deal done at confessing  
15739 of faults, on both sides; for undoubtedly many  
15740 and great are the faults that have been

15741 committed, in the jangling and confusions, and  
15742 mixtures of light and darkness, that have been of  
15743 late. There is hardly any duty more contrary to  
15744 our corrupt dispositions, and mortifying to the  
15745 pride of man; but it must be done. Repentance of  
15746 faults is, in a peculiar manner, a proper duty,  
15747 when the kingdom of heaven is at hand, or when  
15748 we especially expect or desire that it should  
15749 come, as appears by John the Baptist's  
15750 preaching. And if God does now loudly call  
15751 upon us to repent, then he also calls upon us to  
15752 make proper manifestations of our repentance. I  
15753 am persuaded that those that have openly  
15754 opposed this work, or have from time to time  
15755 spoken lightly of it, cannot be excused in the  
15756 sight of God, without openly confessing their  
15757 fault therein, especially if they be ministers. If  
15758 they have any way, either directly or indirectly,  
15759 opposed the work, or have so behaved in their  
15760 public performances or private conversation, as  
15761 has prejudiced the minds of their people against  
15762 the work, if hereafter they shall be convinced of  
15763 the goodness and divinity of what they have  
15764 opposed, they ought by no means to palliate the  
15765 matter, and excuse themselves, and pretend that  
15766 they always thought so, and that it was only such  
15767 and such imprudences that they objected against,  
15768 but they ought openly to declare their



15769 conviction, and condemn themselves for what  
15770 they have done; for it is Christ that they have  
15771 spoken against, in speaking lightly of, and  
15772 prejudicing others against this work; yea, worse  
15773 than that, it is the Holy Ghost. And though they  
15774 have done it ignorantly, and in unbelief, yet  
15775 when they find out who it is that they have  
15776 opposed, undoubtedly God will hold them bound  
15777 publicly to confess it.

15778  
15779 “And on the other side, if those that have been  
15780 zealous to promote the work, have in any of the  
15781 forementioned instances openly gone much out  
15782 of the way, and done that which is contrary to  
15783 Christian rules, whereby they have openly  
15784 injured others, or greatly violated good order,  
15785 and so done that which has wounded religion,  
15786 they must publicly confess it, and humble  
15787 themselves, as they would gather out the stones,  
15788 and prepare the way of God’s people. They who  
15789 have laid great stumbling blocks in others’ way,  
15790 by their open transgression, are bound to remove  
15791 them, by their open repentance.”

15792  
15793 There are ministers in our day, I say it not in  
15794 unkindness but in faithfulness, and I would that I  
15795 had them all here before me while I say it, who  
15796 seem to have been engaged much of their time

15797 for years in doing little else than acting and  
15798 talking and writing in such a way as to create  
15799 suspicion in regard to revivals. And I cannot  
15800 doubt that their churches would, as President  
15801 Edwards says, be better with no minister at all,  
15802 unless they will repent, and regain his blessing.  
15803

15804 2. Those churches which have opposed revivals  
15805 must humble themselves and repent. Churches  
15806 which have stood aloof or hindered the work  
15807 must repent of their sin, or God will not go with  
15808 them. Look at those churches now, who have  
15809 been throwing suspicion upon revivals. Do they  
15810 enjoy revivals? Does the Holy Ghost descend  
15811 upon them, to enlarge them and build them up?  
15812 There is one of the churches in this city, where  
15813 the session have been publishing in the  
15814 newspapers what they call their “Act and  
15815 Testimony,” calculated to excite an unreasonable  
15816 and groundless suspicion against many ministers  
15817 who are laboring successfully to promote  
15818 revivals.” And what is the state of that church?  
15819 Have they had a revival? Why it appears from  
15820 the official report to the General Assembly, that  
15821 it has dwindled in one year twenty-seven per  
15822 cent. And all such churches will continue to  
15823 dwindle, in spite of everything else that can be  
15824 done, unless they repent and have a revival.

15825 They may pretend to be mighty pious, and  
15826 jealous for the honor of God, but God will not  
15827 believe they are sincere. And he will manifest  
15828 his displeasure, by not pouring out his Spirit. If I  
15829 had a voice loud enough, I should like to make  
15830 every one of these churches and ministers that  
15831 have slandered revivals, hear me, when I say,  
15832 that I believe they have helped to bring the pall  
15833 of death over the church, and that the curse of  
15834 God is on them already, and will remain unless  
15835 they repent. God has already sent leanness into  
15836 their souls, and many of them know it.

15837  
15838 3. Those who have been engaged in promoting  
15839 the work must also repent. Whatever they have  
15840 done that was wrong must be repented of, or  
15841 revivals will not return as in days past.  
15842 Whenever a wrong spirit has been manifested, or  
15843 they have got irritated and provoked at the  
15844 opposition, and lost their temper, or mistaken  
15845 Christian faithfulness for hard words and a  
15846 wrong spirit, they must repent. Those who are  
15847 opposed could never stop a revival alone, unless  
15848 those who promote it get wrong. So we must  
15849 repent if we have said things that were  
15850 censorious, or proud, or arrogant, or severe.  
15851 Such a time as this is no time to stand justifying  
15852 ourselves. Our first call is to repent. Let each one

15853     repent of his own sins, and not fall out, and  
15854     quarrel about who is most to blame.  
15855  
15856     4. The church must take right ground in regard  
15857     to politics. Do not suppose, now, that I am going  
15858     to preach a political sermon, or that I wish to  
15859     have you join and get up a Christian party in  
15860     politics. No, I do not believe in that. But the time  
15861     has come that Christians must vote for honest  
15862     men, and take consistent ground in politics, or  
15863     the Lord will curse them. They must be honest  
15864     men themselves, and instead of voting for a man  
15865     because he belongs to their party, Bank or Anti-  
15866     Bank, Jackson, or Anti-Jackson, they must find  
15867     out whether he is honest and upright, and fit to  
15868     be trusted. They must let the world see that the  
15869     church will uphold no man in office, who is  
15870     known to be a knave, or an adulterer, or a  
15871     Sabbath-breaker, or a gambler, or a drunkard.  
15872     Such is the spread of intelligence and the facility  
15873     of communication in our country, that every man  
15874     can know for whom he gives his vote. And if he  
15875     will give his vote only for honest men, the  
15876     country will be obliged to have upright rulers.  
15877     All parties will be compelled to put up honest  
15878     men as candidates. Christians have been  
15879     exceedingly guilty in this matter. But the time  
15880     has come when they must act differently, or God

15881 will curse the nation, and withdraw his spirit. As  
15882 on the subject of slavery and temperance, so on  
15883 this subject, the church must act right or the  
15884 country will be ruined. God cannot sustain this  
15885 free and blessed country, which we love and  
15886 pray for, unless the church will take right  
15887 ground. Politics are a part of religion in such a  
15888 country as this, and Christians must do their duty  
15889 to the country as a part of their duty to God. It  
15890 seems sometimes as if the foundations of the  
15891 nation were becoming rotten, and Christians  
15892 seem to act as if they thought God did not see  
15893 what they do in politics. But I tell you, he does  
15894 see it, and he will bless or curse this nation,  
15895 according to the course they take.

15896  
15897 5. The churches must take right ground on the  
15898 subject of slavery. And here the question arises,  
15899 what is right ground? And FIRST I will state  
15900 some things that should be avoided.

15901  
15902 (1.) First of all, a bad spirit should be avoided.  
15903 Nothing is more calculated to injure religion,  
15904 and to injure the slaves themselves, than for  
15905 Christians to get into an angry controversy on  
15906 the subject. It is a subject upon which there  
15907 needs to be no angry controversy among  
15908 Christians. Slave-holding professors, like rum-

15909 selling professors, may endeavor to justify  
15910 themselves, and may be angry with those who  
15911 press their consciences, and call upon them to  
15912 give up their sins. Those proud professors of  
15913 religion who think a man to blame, or think it is  
15914 a shame to have a black skin, may allow their  
15915 prejudices so far to prevail, as to shut their ears,  
15916 and be disposed to quarrel with those who urge  
15917 the subject upon them. But I repeat it, the subject  
15918 of slavery is a subject upon which Christians,  
15919 praying men, need not and must not differ.

15920  
15921 (2.) Another thing to be avoided is an attempt to  
15922 take neutral ground on this subject. Christians  
15923 can no more take neutral ground on this subject,  
15924 since it has come up for discussion, than they  
15925 can take neutral ground on the subject of the  
15926 sanctification of the Sabbath. It is a great  
15927 national sin. It is a sin of the church. The  
15928 churches by their silence, and by permitting  
15929 slaveholders to belong to their communion, have  
15930 been consenting to it. All denominations have  
15931 been more or less guilty, although the Quakers  
15932 have of late years washed their hands of it. It is  
15933 in vain for the churches to pretend it is merely a  
15934 political sin. I repeat it, it is the sin of the church,  
15935 to which all denominations have consented.  
15936 They have virtually declared that it is lawful.

15937 The very fact of suffering slaveholders quietly to  
15938 remain in good standing in their churches, is the  
15939 strongest and most public expression of their  
15940 views that it is not sin. For the church, therefore,  
15941 to pretend to take neutral ground on the subject,  
15942 is perfectly absurd. The fact is that she is not on  
15943 neutral ground at all. While she tolerates  
15944 slaveholders in her communion SHE JUSTIFIES  
15945 THE PRACTICE. And as well might an enemy  
15946 of God pretend that he was neither saint nor  
15947 sinner, that he was going to take neutral ground,  
15948 and pray “good Lord and good devil,” because  
15949 he did not know which side would be the most  
15950 popular.

15951  
15952 (3.) Great care should be taken to avoid a  
15953 censorious spirit on both sides. It is a subject on  
15954 which there has been, and probably will be for  
15955 some time to come, a difference of opinion  
15956 among Christians, as to the best method of  
15957 disposing of the question. And it ought to be  
15958 treated with great forbearance on both sides. A  
15959 denunciatory spirit, impeaching each other’s  
15960 motives, is unchristian, calculated to grieve the  
15961 Spirit of God, and to put down revivals, and is  
15962 alike injurious to the church, and to the slaves  
15963 themselves.  
15964

15965 In the SECOND place, I will mention several  
15966 things, that in my judgment the church are  
15967 imperatively called upon to do, on this subject:

15968

15969 (1.) Christians of all denominations, should lay  
15970 aside prejudice and inform themselves on this  
15971 subject, without any delay. Vast multitudes of  
15972 professors of religion have indulged prejudice to  
15973 such a degree, as to be unwilling to read and  
15974 hear, and come to a right understanding of the  
15975 subject. But Christians cannot pray in this state  
15976 of mind. I defy any one to possess the spirit of  
15977 prayer, while he is too prejudiced to examine  
15978 this, or any other question of duty. If the light  
15979 did not shine, Christians might remain in the  
15980 dark upon this point, and still possess the spirit  
15981 of prayer. But if they refuse to come to the light,  
15982 they cannot pray. Now I call upon all you who  
15983 are here present, and who have not examined  
15984 this subject because you were indisposed to  
15985 examine it, to say whether you have the spirit of  
15986 prayer. Where ministers, individual Christians,  
15987 or whole churches, resist truth upon this point  
15988 now, when it is so extensively diffused and  
15989 before the public mind, I do not believe they will  
15990 or can enjoy a revival of religion.

15991



15992 (2.) Writings, containing temperate and judicious  
15993 discussions on this subject, and such  
15994 developments of facts as are before the public,  
15995 should be quietly and extensively circulated, and  
15996 should be carefully and prayerfully examined by  
15997 the whole church. I do not mean by this, that the  
15998 attention of the church should be so absorbed by  
15999 this, as to neglect the main question, of saving  
16000 souls in the midst of them. I do not mean that  
16001 such premature movements on this subject  
16002 should be made, as to astound the Christian  
16003 community, and involve them in a broil; but that  
16004 praying men should act judiciously, and that, as  
16005 soon as sufficient information can be diffused  
16006 through the community, the churches should  
16007 meekly, but FIRMLY take decided ground on  
16008 the subject, and express before the whole nation  
16009 and the world, their abhorrence of this sin.

16010  
16011 The anti-masonic excitement which prevailed a  
16012 few years since, made such desolations in the  
16013 churches, and produced for a time so much  
16014 alienation of feeling and ill will among ministers  
16015 and people, and the first introduction of this  
16016 subject has been attended with such  
16017 commotions, that many good ministers, who are  
16018 themselves entirely opposed to slavery, dread to  
16019 introduce the subject among their people,

16020 through fear that their churches have not religion  
16021 enough to take it up, and consider it calmly, and  
16022 decide upon it in the spirit of the Gospel. I know  
16023 there is danger of this. But still the subject must  
16024 be presented to the churches. And if introduced  
16025 with discretion, and with great prayer, there are  
16026 very few churches that have enjoyed revivals,  
16027 and that are at the present time anywhere near a  
16028 revival spirit, which may not be brought to  
16029 receive the truth on this subject. Let there be no  
16030 mistake here. William Morgan's expos of  
16031 freemasonry was published in 1826. The  
16032 consequent excitement and discussion continued  
16033 until 1830. In the meantime the churches had  
16034 very generally borne their testimony against  
16035 freemasonry, and resolved that they could not  
16036 fellowship adhering masons. As a consequence  
16037 the Masonic Lodges generally disbanded and  
16038 gave up their charters. There was a general  
16039 stampede of professed Christians from the  
16040 lodges. This prepared the way, and in 1830, the  
16041 greatest revival the world had then ever seen  
16042 commenced in the center of the anti-masonic  
16043 region, and spread over the whole field where  
16044 the church action had been taken until its  
16045 converts numbered 100,000 souls.  
16046

16047 Perhaps no church in this country has had a more  
16048 severe trial upon this subject than this. They  
16049 were a church of young and for the most part  
16050 inexperienced Christians. And many  
16051 circumstances conspired, in my absence, to  
16052 produce confusion and wrong feeling among  
16053 them. But so far as I am now acquainted with the  
16054 state of feeling in this church, I know of no ill  
16055 will among them on this subject. The Lord has  
16056 blessed us, the Spirit has been distilled upon us,  
16057 and considerable numbers added to our  
16058 communion every month since my return. There  
16059 are doubtless in this church those who feel on  
16060 this subject in very different degrees. And yet I  
16061 can honestly say that I am not aware of the least  
16062 difference in sentiment among them. We have  
16063 from the beginning, previous to my going on my  
16064 foreign tour, taken the same ground on the  
16065 subject of slavery that we have on temperance.  
16066 We have excluded slaveholders and all  
16067 concerned in the traffic from our communion.  
16068 By some out of this church this course has been  
16069 censured as unwarrantable and uncharitable, and  
16070 I would by no means make my own judgment, or  
16071 the example of this church, a rule for the  
16072 government of other ministers and churches.  
16073 Still, I conscientiously believe that the time is  
16074 not far distant when the churches will be united

16075 in this expression of abhorrence against this sin.  
16076 If I do not baptize slavery by some soft and  
16077 Christian name, if I call it SIN, both consistency  
16078 and conscience conduct to the inevitable  
16079 conclusion, that while the sin is persevered in, it  
16080 perpetrators cannot be fit subjects for Christian  
16081 communion and fellowship.

16082  
16083 To this it is objected, that there are many  
16084 ministers in the Presbyterian church who are  
16085 slaveholders. And it is said to be very  
16086 inconsistent that we should refuse to suffer a  
16087 slaveholder to come to our communion, and yet  
16088 belong to the same church with them, sit with  
16089 them in ecclesiastical bodies, and acknowledge  
16090 them as ministers. To this I answer, that I have  
16091 not the power to deal with those ministers, and  
16092 certainly I am not to withdraw from the church  
16093 because some of its ministers or members are  
16094 slaveholders. My duty is to belong to the church,  
16095 even if the devil belong to it. Where I have  
16096 authority, I exclude slaveholders from the  
16097 communion, and I always will as long as I live.  
16098 But where I have no authority, if the table of  
16099 Christ is spread, I will sit down to it, in  
16100 obedience to his commandment, whoever else  
16101 may sit down or stay away.  
16102

16103 I do not mean, by any means, to denounce all  
16104 those slaveholding ministers and professors as  
16105 hypocrites, and to say that they are not  
16106 Christians. But this I say, that while they  
16107 continue in that attitude, the cause of Christ and  
16108 of humanity demands, that they should not be  
16109 recognized as such, unless we mean to be  
16110 partakers of other men's sins. It is no more  
16111 inconsistent to exclude slaveholders because  
16112 they belong to the Presbyterian church, than it is  
16113 to exclude persons who drink or sell ardent  
16114 spirits. For there are a great many rum-sellers  
16115 belonging to the Presbyterian church.

16116  
16117 I believe the time has come, and although I am  
16118 no prophet, I believe it will be found to have  
16119 come, that the revival in the United States will  
16120 continue and prevail, no farther and faster than  
16121 the church take right ground upon this subject.  
16122 The church are God's witnesses. The fact is that  
16123 slavery is, pre-eminently, the sin of the church. It  
16124 is the very fact that ministers and professors of  
16125 religion of different denominations hold slaves,  
16126 which sanctifies the whole abomination, in the  
16127 eyes of ungodly men. Who does not know that  
16128 on the subject of temperance every drunkard in  
16129 the land will skulk behind some rum-selling  
16130 deacon, or wine-drinking minister? It is the most

16131 common objection and refuge of the  
16132 intemperate, and of moderate drinkers, that it is  
16133 practised by professors of religion. It is this that  
16134 creates the imperious necessity for excluding  
16135 traffickers in ardent spirit, and rum-drinkers  
16136 from the communion. Let the churches of all  
16137 denominations speak out on the subject of  
16138 temperance; let them close their doors against all  
16139 who have anything to do with the death-dealing  
16140 abomination, and the cause of temperance is  
16141 triumphant. A few years would annihilate the  
16142 traffic. just so with slavery.

16143  
16144 It is the church that mainly supports this sin. Her  
16145 united testimony upon this subject would settle  
16146 the question. Let Christians of all denominations  
16147 meekly but firmly come forth, and pronounce  
16148 their verdict; let them clear their communions,  
16149 and wash their hands of this thing; let them give  
16150 forth and write on the head and front of this  
16151 great abomination, SIN! and in three years a  
16152 public sentiment would be formed that would  
16153 carry all before it, and there would not be a  
16154 shackled slave, nor a bristling, cruel slave-driver  
16155 in this land.

16156  
16157 Still it may be said, that in many churches, this  
16158 subject cannot be introduced without creating

16159 confusion and ill-will. This may be. It has been  
16160 so upon the subject of temperance, and upon the  
16161 subject of revivals too. In some churches, neither  
16162 temperance nor revivals can be introduced  
16163 without producing dissension. Sabbath-schools,  
16164 and missionary operations, and everything of the  
16165 kind have been opposed, and have produced  
16166 dissensions in many churches. But is this a  
16167 sufficient reason for excluding these subjects?  
16168 And where churches have excluded these  
16169 subjects for fear of contention, have they been  
16170 blessed with revivals? Every body knows that  
16171 they have not. But where churches have taken  
16172 firm ground on these subjects, although  
16173 individuals and sometimes numbers have  
16174 opposed, still they have been blessed with  
16175 revivals. Where any of these subjects are  
16176 carefully and prayerfully introduced; where they  
16177 are brought forward with a right spirit, and the  
16178 true relative importance is attached to each one  
16179 of them; if in such cases, there are those who  
16180 will make disturbance and resist, let the blame  
16181 fall where it ought. There are some individuals,  
16182 who are themselves disposed to quarrel with this  
16183 subject, who are always ready to exclaim, “Do  
16184 not introduce these things into the church, they  
16185 will create opposition.” And if the minister and  
16186 praying people feel it their duty to bring the

16187 matter forward, they will themselves create a  
16188 disturbance, and then say, “There, I told you so;  
16189 now see what your introducing this subject has  
16190 done; it will tear the church all to pieces.” And  
16191 while they are themselves doing all they can to  
16192 create division, they are charging the division  
16193 upon the subject, and not upon themselves.  
16194 There are some such people in many of our  
16195 churches. And neither sabbath-schools, nor  
16196 missions, nor revivals, nor anti-slavery, nor  
16197 anything else that honors God or benefits the  
16198 souls of men, will be carried in the churches,  
16199 without these careful souls being offended by it.

16200  
16201 These things, however, have been introduced,  
16202 and carried, one by one, in some churches with  
16203 more, and others with less opposition, and  
16204 perhaps in some churches with no opposition at  
16205 all. And as true as God is the God of the church,  
16206 as certain as that the world must be converted,  
16207 this subject must be considered and pronounced  
16208 sin by the church. There might, infinitely better,  
16209 be no church in the world, than that she should  
16210 attempt to remain neutral or give a false  
16211 testimony on a subject of such importance as  
16212 slavery, especially since the subject has come  
16213 up, and it is impossible from the nature of the



16214 case, that her testimony should not be in the  
16215 scale, on the one side or the other.  
16216  
16217 Do you ask, “What shall be done—shall we  
16218 make it the all-absorbing topic of conversation,  
16219 and divert attention from the all-important  
16220 subject of the salvation of souls in the midst of  
16221 us?” I answer, No. Let a church express her  
16222 opinion upon the subject, and be at peace. So far  
16223 as I know, we are entirely at peace upon this  
16224 subject. We have expressed our opinion; we  
16225 have closed our communion against  
16226 slaveholders, and are attending to other things. I  
16227 am not aware of the least unhealthy excitement  
16228 among us on this subject. And where it has  
16229 become an absorbing topic of conversation in a  
16230 place, in most instances I believe it has been  
16231 owing to the pertinacious and unreasonable  
16232 opposition of a few individuals against even  
16233 granting the subject a hearing.

16234  
16235 6. If the church wishes to promote revivals, she  
16236 must sanctify the Sabbath. There is a vast deal of  
16237 Sabbath-breaking in the land. Merchants break  
16238 it, travellers break it, the Government breaks it.  
16239 A few years ago an attempt was made in the  
16240 western part of this State, to establish and sustain  
16241 a Sabbath-keeping line of boats and stages. But

16242 it was found that the church would not sustain  
16243 the enterprise. Many professors of religion  
16244 would not travel in these stages, and would not  
16245 have their goods forwarded in canal-boats that  
16246 would be detained from travelling on the  
16247 Sabbath. At one time, Christians were much  
16248 engaged in petitioning Congress to suspend the  
16249 Sabbath mails, and now they seem to be  
16250 ashamed of it. But one thing is most certain, that  
16251 unless something is done, and done speedily, and  
16252 done effectually, to promote the sanctification of  
16253 the Sabbath by the church, the Sabbath will go  
16254 by the board, and we shall not only have our  
16255 mails running on the Sabbath, and post offices  
16256 open, but by and by our courts of justice and  
16257 halls of legislation will be kept open on the  
16258 Sabbath. And what can the church do, what will  
16259 this nation do, WITHOUT ANY SABBATH?

16260

16261 7. The church must take right ground on the  
16262 subject of Temperance and Moral Reform, and  
16263 all the subject of practical morality which come  
16264 up for decision from time to time.

16265

16266 There are those in the churches who are standing  
16267 aloof from the subject of Moral Reform, and  
16268 who are afraid to have anything said in the pulpit  
16269 against lewdness. On this subject the church

16270 need not expect to be permitted to take neutral  
16271 ground. In the providence of God, it is up for  
16272 discussion. The evils have been exhibited, the  
16273 call has been made for reform. And what is to  
16274 reform mankind but the truth? And who shall  
16275 present the truth if not the church and the  
16276 ministry? Away with the idea that Christians can  
16277 remain neutral and keep still, and yet enjoy the  
16278 approbation and blessing of God.

16279  
16280 In all such cases, the minister who holds his  
16281 peace is counted among those on the other side.  
16282 Everybody knows that it is so in a revival. It is  
16283 not necessary for a person to rail out against the  
16284 work. If he only keeps still and takes neutral  
16285 ground, the enemies of the revival will all  
16286 consider him as on their side. So on the subject  
16287 of temperance. It is not needful that a person  
16288 should rail at the cold-water society, in order to  
16289 be on the best terms with drunkards and  
16290 moderate drinkers. Only let him plead for the  
16291 moderate use of wine, only let him continue to  
16292 drink it as a luxury, and all the drunkards  
16293 account him on their side. If he refuses to give  
16294 his influence to the temperance cause, he is  
16295 claimed of course by the other side as a friend.  
16296 On all these subjects, when they come up, the  
16297 churches and ministers must take the right

16298 ground, and take it openly and stand to it, and  
16299 carry it through, if they expect to enjoy the  
16300 blessing of God in revivals. They must cast out  
16301 from their communions such members, as in  
16302 contempt of the light that is shed upon them,  
16303 continue to drink or traffic in ardent spirits.

16304  
16305 8. There must be more done for all the great  
16306 objects of Christian benevolence. There must be  
16307 much greater efforts for the cause of missions,  
16308 and education, and the Bible, and all the other  
16309 branches of religious enterprise, or the church  
16310 will displease God. Look at it. Think of the  
16311 mercies we have received, of the wealth,  
16312 numbers and prosperity of the church. Have we  
16313 rendered unto God according to the benefits we  
16314 have received, so as to show that the church is  
16315 bountiful and willing to give their money and to  
16316 work for God? No. Far from it. Have we  
16317 multiplied our means and enlarged our plans, in  
16318 proportion as the church has increased? Is God  
16319 satisfied with what has been done, or has he  
16320 reason to be? Such a revival as has been enjoyed  
16321 by the churches of America for the last ten  
16322 years! We ought to have done ten times as much  
16323 as we have for missions, Bibles, education,  
16324 tracts, free churches, and in all the ways  
16325 designed to promote religion and save souls. If

16326 the churches do not wake up on this subject, and  
16327 lay themselves out on a larger scale, they may  
16328 expect the revival in the United States will cease.

16329

16330 9. If Christians in the United States expect  
16331 revivals to spread, and prevail, till the world is  
16332 converted, they must give up writing letters and  
16333 publishing pieces calculated to excite suspicion  
16334 and jealousy in regard to revivals, and must take  
16335 hold of the work themselves. If the whole church  
16336 as a body had gone to work ten years ago, and  
16337 continued it as a few individuals, whom I could  
16338 name, have done, there would not now have  
16339 been an impenitent sinner in the land. The  
16340 millennium would have fully come in the United  
16341 States before this day. Instead of standing still,  
16342 and writing letters from Berkshire, let ministers  
16343 who think we are going wrong, just buckle on  
16344 the harness and go forward, and show us a more  
16345 excellent way. Let them teach us by their  
16346 example how to do better. I do not deny that we  
16347 have made mistakes, and committed errors. I do  
16348 not deny that there are many things which are  
16349 wrong done in revivals by some persons. But is  
16350 that the way to correct them, brethren? So did  
16351 not Paul. He corrected his brethren by telling  
16352 them kindly that he would show them a more  
16353 excellent way. Let our brethren take hold and go

16354 forward. Let us hear the cry from all their  
16355 pulpits. TO THE WORK. Let them lead on,  
16356 where the Lord will go with them and make bare  
16357 his arm, and I, for one, will follow. Only let  
16358 them GO ON, and let us have the United States  
16359 converted to God, and let all minor questions  
16360 cease.

16361

16362 If not, and if revivals do cease in this land, the  
16363 ministers and churches will be guilty of all the  
16364 blood of all the souls that shall go to hell in  
16365 consequence of it. There is no need that the work  
16366 should cease. If the church will do all her duty,  
16367 the millennium may come in this country in  
16368 three years. But if this writing letters is to be  
16369 kept up, filling the country with suspicions and  
16370 jealousies, if it is to be always so, that two-thirds  
16371 of the church will hang back and do nothing but  
16372 find fault in time of revival, the curse of God  
16373 will be on this nation, and that before long.

16374

16375 REMARKS.

16376

16377 1. It is high time there should be great searchings  
16378 of heart among Christians and ministers.  
16379 Brethren, this is no time to resist the truth, or to  
16380 cavil and find fault because the truth is spoken  
16381 out plainly. It is no time to recriminate or to

16382 strive, but we must search our own hearts, and  
16383 humble ourselves before God.

16384

16385 2. We must repent and forsake our sins, and  
16386 amend our ways and our doings, or the revival  
16387 will cease. Our ecclesiastical difficulties **MUST**  
16388 **CEASE**, and all minor differences must be laid  
16389 aside and given up, to unite in promoting the  
16390 great interests of religion. If not, revivals will  
16391 cease from among us, and the blood of lost  
16392 millions will be found in our skirts.

16393

16394 If the church would do all her duty, she would  
16395 soon complete the triumph of religion in the  
16396 world. But if this Act and Testimony warfare is  
16397 to be kept up, and this system of espionage, and  
16398 insinuation and denunciation, not only will  
16399 revivals cease, but the blood of millions who  
16400 will go to hell before the church will get over the  
16401 shock, will be found in the skirts of the men who  
16402 have got up and carried on this dreadful  
16403 contention.

16404

16405 4. Those who have circulated slanderous reports  
16406 in regard to revivals, must repent. A great deal  
16407 has been said about heresy, and about some  
16408 men's denying the Spirit's influence, which is  
16409 wholly groundless, and has been made up out of

16410 nothing. And those who have made up the  
16411 reports, and those who have circulated them  
16412 against their brethren, must repent and pray to  
16413 God that they may receive his forgiveness.

16414

16415 5. We see the constant tendency there is in  
16416 Christians to declension and backsliding. This is  
16417 true in all converts of all revivals. Look at the  
16418 revival in President Edwards' day. The work  
16419 went on till 30,000 souls had been converted,  
16420 and by this time so many ministers and  
16421 Christians got in such a state, by writing books  
16422 and pamphlets, on one side and the other, that  
16423 they carried all by the board, and the revival  
16424 ceased. Those who had opposed the work grew  
16425 obstinate and violent, and those who promoted it  
16426 lost their meekness, and got ill-tempered, and  
16427 were then driven into the very evils that had  
16428 been falsely charged upon them.

16429

16430 And now, what shall we do? This great and  
16431 glorious work of God seems to be indicating a  
16432 decline. The revival is not dead—blessed be God  
16433 for that—it is not dead! No, we hear from all  
16434 parts of the land that Christians are reading on  
16435 the subject and inquiring about the revival. In  
16436 some places there are now powerful revivals.  
16437 And what shall we do, to lift up the standard, to



16438 move this entire nation and turn all this great  
16439 people to the Lord? We must DO RIGHT. We  
16440 must all have a better spirit, we must get down in  
16441 the dust, we must act unitedly, we must take  
16442 hold of this great work with all our hearts, and  
16443 then God will bless us, and the work will go on.  
16444

16445 What is the condition of this nation? No doubt,  
16446 God is holding the rod of WAR over the heads  
16447 of this nation. He is waiting before he lets loose  
16448 his judgments, to see whether the church will do  
16449 right. The nation is under his displeasure,  
16450 because the church has conducted in such a  
16451 manner with respect to revivals. And now  
16452 suppose war should come, where would be our  
16453 revivals? How quickly would war swallow up  
16454 the revival spirit. The spirit of war is anything  
16455 but the spirit of revivals. Who will attend to the  
16456 claims of religion, when the public mind is  
16457 engrossed by the all-absorbing topic of war. See  
16458 now, how this nation is, all at once, brought  
16459 upon the brink of war. God brandishes his  
16460 blazing sword over our heads. Will the church  
16461 repent? It is THE CHURCH that God chiefly has  
16462 in view. How shall we avoid the curse of war?  
16463 Only by a reformation in the church. It is in vain  
16464 to look to politicians to avert war. Perhaps they  
16465 would generally be in favor of war. Very likely

16466 the things they would do to avert it would run us  
16467 right into it. If the church will not feel, will not  
16468 awake, will not act, where shall we look for  
16469 help? If the church absolutely will not move,  
16470 will not tremble in view of the just judgments of  
16471 God hanging over our heads, we are certainly  
16472 nigh unto cursing, as a nation.

16473

16474 6. Whatever is done must be done quickly. The  
16475 scale is on a poise. If we do not go forward, we  
16476 must go back. Things cannot remain as they are.  
16477 If the church do not come up, if we do not have a  
16478 more powerful revival than we have had, very  
16479 soon we shall have none at all. We have had  
16480 such a great revival, that now small revivals do  
16481 not interest the public mind. You must act as  
16482 individuals. Do your own duty. You have a  
16483 responsibility. Repent quickly. Do not wait till  
16484 another year. Who but God knows what will be  
16485 the state of these churches, if things go on  
16486 another year without a great and general revival  
16487 of religion?

16488

16489 7. It is common, when things get all wrong in the  
16490 church, for each individual to find fault with the  
16491 church, and with his brethren, and overlook his  
16492 own share of the blame. Do not let any one  
16493 spend his time in finding fault with that abstract

16494 thing, "The Church." But as individual members  
16495 of the church of Christ, let each one act, and act  
16496 right, and get down in the dust, and never speak  
16497 proudly, or censoriously. GO FORWARD. Who  
16498 would leave such a work, and go to writing  
16499 letters, and go down into the plain of Ono, and  
16500 see if all these petty disputes cannot be adjusted,  
16501 and let the work cease. Let us mind our work,  
16502 and let the Lord take care of the rest. Do our  
16503 duty, and leave the issue to God.

16504

16505 Since these lectures were delivered great  
16506 progress has been made in all benevolent  
16507 enterprises in this country. Time has settled the  
16508 question of the purity and inestimable value of  
16509 those revivals, against which so much mistaken  
16510 opposition existed in the Presbyterian church. It  
16511 is now known that the great and disastrous  
16512 reaction predicted by opposers has not been  
16513 witnessed. It must now be admitted that the  
16514 converts of those revivals have composed the  
16515 strength of the churches, and that their Christian  
16516 influence has been felt throughout the land. No  
16517 revivals have ever existed the power and purity  
16518 of which have been more thoroughly established  
16519 by time and experience, than that great and  
16520 blessed work of God, against which such a storm  
16521 of opposition was raised. The opposition was

16522 evidently a great mistake. Let it not be said that  
16523 the opposition was demanded by the great evils  
16524 attending that work, and that those evils and  
16525 errors were arrested and corrected by the  
16526 opposition. The fact is that the supposed errors  
16527 and evils that were made the justification of the  
16528 opposition, never existed to any such extent as to  
16529 justify alarm or opposition. I have written a  
16530 narrative of those revivals in which I have  
16531 considered the question more fully. The  
16532 churches did take hold of temperance and other  
16533 branches of reform to such an extent as to avoid  
16534 those evils against which they were warned.  
16535 Upon the question of slavery the church was too  
16536 late in her testimony to avoid the war. But the  
16537 slaveholders were much alarmed and  
16538 exasperated by the constantly growing  
16539 opposition to their institution throughout all that  
16540 region of the north where revival influences had  
16541 been felt. They took up arms to defend and  
16542 perpetuate the abomination, and by so doing  
16543 abolished it.

16544

16545

16546

16547 [5] This was in 1831. There have been more  
16548 extensive revivals since. In 1857-8 it was  
16549 estimated that 50,000 conversions per week

16550 occurred for six or eight weeks in succession in  
16551 the northern part of the United States.

16552

16553 [6] The strange opposition of such men as Dr.  
16554 Lyman Beecher and Mr. Nettleton had much to  
16555 do with provoking and sustaining this  
16556 opposition.

16557

16558

16559

16560 LECTURE XVI.

16561

16562 THE NECESSITY AND EFFECT OF UNION.

16563

16564 Text.—Again I say unto you, That if two of you  
16565 shall agree on earth, as touching anything that  
16566 they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my  
16567 Father which is in heaven.—Matthew xviii. 19.

16568

16569 SOME weeks since, I used this text, in preaching  
16570 on the subject of prayer meetings. At present I  
16571 design to enter more into the spirit and meaning  
16572 of the text. The evident design of our Lord in  
16573 this text was to teach the importance and  
16574 influence of union in prayer and effort to  
16575 promote religion. He states the strongest possible  
16576 case by taking the number two, as the least  
16577 number between whom there can be an

16578 agreement, and says that “where two of you are  
16579 agreed on earth, as touching anything that they  
16580 shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father  
16581 which is in heaven.” It is the fact of their  
16582 agreement, upon which he lays the stress, and  
16583 mentioning the number two, appears to have  
16584 been designed merely to afford encouragement  
16585 to the smallest number between whom there can  
16586 be an agreement. But what are we to understand  
16587 “being it agreed as touching” the things we shall  
16588 ask? I will answer this question under the two  
16589 following heads:

16590

16591 I. By showing that we are to be “agreed” in  
16592 prayer.

16593

16594 II. We are to agree in everything that is essential  
16595 to obtaining the blessing that we seek.

16596

16597 I. In order to come within this promise, we are to  
16598 be agreed in prayer. This is particularly taught in  
16599 the text. That is,

16600

16601 1. We should agree in our desires for the object,  
16602 It is necessary to have desires for the object, and  
16603 to be agreed in those desires. Very often  
16604 individuals pray in words for the same thing,  
16605 when they are by no means agreed in desiring

16606 that thing. Nay, perhaps some of them, in their  
16607 hearts desire the very opposite. People are called  
16608 on to pray for an object, and they all pray for it  
16609 in words, but God knows they often do not  
16610 desire it, and perhaps he sees that the hearts of  
16611 some may, all the while, be resisting the prayer.  
16612

16613 2. We must agree in the motive from which we  
16614 desire the object. It is not enough that our desires  
16615 for an object should be the same, but the reason  
16616 why must be the same. An individual may desire  
16617 a revival, for the glory of God and the salvation  
16618 of sinners. Another member of the church may  
16619 also desire a revival, but from very different  
16620 motives. Some, perhaps, desire a revival in order  
16621 to have the congregation built up and  
16622 strengthened, so as to make it more easy for  
16623 them to pay their expenses in supporting the  
16624 Gospel. Another desires a revival for the sake of  
16625 having the church increased so as to be more  
16626 numerous and more respectable. Others desire a  
16627 revival because they have been opposed or evil  
16628 spoken of, and they wish to have their enemies  
16629 know that whatever they may think or say, God  
16630 blesses them. Sometimes people desire a revival  
16631 from mere natural affection, so as to have their  
16632 friends converted and saved. If they mean to be  
16633 so united in prayer as to obtain a blessing, they

16634 must not only desire the blessing, and be agreed  
16635 in desiring it, but they must also agree in  
16636 desiring it for the same reasons.

16637

16638 3. We must be agreed in desiring it for good  
16639 reasons. These desires must not only be united,  
16640 and from the same motives, but they must be  
16641 from good motives. The supreme motive must  
16642 be to honor and glorify God. People may even  
16643 desire a revival, and agree in desiring it, and  
16644 agree in the motives, and yet if these motives are  
16645 not good, God will not grant their desires. Thus  
16646 parents may be agreed in prayer for the  
16647 conversion of their children, and may have the  
16648 same feelings and the same motives, and yet if  
16649 they have no higher motives than because they  
16650 are their children, their prayers will not be  
16651 granted. They are agreed in the reason, but it is  
16652 not the right reason.

16653

16654 In like manner, any number of persons might be  
16655 agreed in their desires and motives, but if their  
16656 motives are selfish, their being agreed in them  
16657 will only make them more offensive to God.  
16658 “How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt  
16659 the Spirit of the Lord?” I have seen a great deal  
16660 of this, where churches have been engaged in  
16661 prayer for an object, and their motives were



16662 evidently selfish. Sometimes they are engaged in  
16663 praying for a revival, and you would think by  
16664 their earnestness and union that they would  
16665 certainly move God to grant the blessing, till you  
16666 find out the reason. And what is it? Why, they  
16667 see their congregation is about to be broken up,  
16668 unless something can be done. Or they see some  
16669 other denomination gaining ground, and there is  
16670 no way to counteract them but by having a  
16671 revival in their church. And all their praying is  
16672 only an attempt to get the Almighty in to help  
16673 them out of their difficulty, and is purely selfish  
16674 and offensive to God. A woman in Philadelphia,  
16675 was invited to attend a female prayer meeting at  
16676 a certain place. She inquired what they met there  
16677 for, and for what they were going to pray? She  
16678 was answered that they were going to pray for  
16679 the outpouring of the Spirit upon the city.  
16680 “Well,” said she, “I shall not go; if they were  
16681 going to pray for our congregation I would go,  
16682 but I am not going there to pray for other  
16683 churches!” Oh, what a spirit!  
16684  
16685 I have had a multitude of letters and requests that  
16686 I should visit such and such places, and endeavor  
16687 to promote a revival, and many reasons have  
16688 been urged why I should go, but when I came to  
16689 weigh their reasons, I have sometimes found

16690 every one of them selfish. And God would look  
16691 upon every one with abhorrence.

16692

16693 In prayer meetings, how often do we hear people  
16694 offer such reasons why they desire such and  
16695 such blessings, as are not right in the sight of  
16696 God. Such reasons, that if they are the true ones,  
16697 and if Christians are actually excited by those  
16698 reasons, it would render their prayers not  
16699 acceptable to God, because their motive was not  
16700 right.

16701

16702 There are a great many things often said in favor  
16703 of the cause of missions, which are of this  
16704 character, appealing to wrong motives. How  
16705 often are we told of six hundred millions of  
16706 heathens, who are in danger of going to hell, and  
16707 how little is said of the guilt of six hundred  
16708 millions engaged and banded together as rebels  
16709 against God, or of the dishonor and contempt  
16710 poured upon God our Maker by such a world of  
16711 outlaws. Now I know that God refers to those  
16712 motives which appeal to our mere natural  
16713 sympathies, and compassion, and uses them, but  
16714 always in subordination to his glory. If these  
16715 lower motives are placed foremost, it must  
16716 always produce a defective piety and zeal, and a  
16717 great deal that is false. Until the church will look

16718 at the dishonor done to God, little will be done.  
16719 It is this which must be made to stand out before  
16720 the world, it is this which must be deeply felt by  
16721 the church, it is this which must be fully  
16722 exhibited to sinners, before the world can ever  
16723 be converted.  
16724  
16725 Parents never agree in praying for the conversion  
16726 of their children in such a way as to have their  
16727 prayers answered, until they feel that their  
16728 children are rebels. Parents often pray very  
16729 earnestly for their children because they wish  
16730 God to save them, and they almost think hard of  
16731 God if he does not save their children. But if  
16732 they would have their prayers prevail, they must  
16733 come to take God's part against their children,  
16734 even though for their perverseness and  
16735 incorrigible wickedness he should be obliged to  
16736 send them to hell. I knew a woman who was  
16737 very anxious for the salvation of her son, and she  
16738 used to pray for him with agony, but still he  
16739 remained impenitent, until at length she became  
16740 convinced that her prayers and agonies had been  
16741 nothing but the fond yearnings of parental  
16742 feeling, and were not dictated at all by a just  
16743 view of her son's character as a wilful and  
16744 wicked rebel against God. And there was never  
16745 any impression made on his mind until she was

16746 made to take strong ground against him as a  
16747 rebel, and to look on him as deserving to be sent  
16748 to hell. And then he was converted. The reason  
16749 was, she never before was influenced by the  
16750 right motive in prayer, desiring his salvation  
16751 with a supreme regard to the glory of God.

16752  
16753 4. If we would be so united as to prevail in  
16754 prayer, we must agree in faith. That is, we must  
16755 concur in expecting the blessing prayed for. We  
16756 must understand the reason why it is to be  
16757 expected, we must see the evidence on which  
16758 faith ought to rest, and must absolutely believe  
16759 that the blessing will come, or we do not bring  
16760 ourselves within the promise. Faith is always  
16761 understood as an indispensable condition of  
16762 prevailing prayer. If it is not expressed in any  
16763 particular case, it is always implied, for no  
16764 prayer can be effectual but that which is offered  
16765 in faith. And in order that united prayer may  
16766 prevail, there must be united faith.

16767  
16768 5. So, again, we must be agreed as to the time  
16769 when we desire the blessing to come. If two or  
16770 more agree in desiring a particular blessing, and  
16771 one of them desires to have it come now, while  
16772 others are not ready to have it quite yet, it is  
16773 plain they are not agreed. They are not united in

16774 regard to one essential point. If the blessing is to  
16775 come in answer to their united prayer, it must  
16776 come as they prayed for it. And if it comes, it  
16777 must be at some time. But if they disagree as to  
16778 the time when they will have it, plainly it can  
16779 never come in answer to their prayer.

16780

16781 Suppose a church should undertake to pray for a  
16782 revival, and should be all agreed in desiring a  
16783 revival, but not as to the time when it shall be.  
16784 Suppose some wish to have the revival come  
16785 now, and are all prepared, and their hearts  
16786 waiting for the Spirit of God to come down, and  
16787 are willing to give time and attention and labor  
16788 to it NOW; but others are not quite ready, they  
16789 have something else to attend to at present, some  
16790 worldly object which they want to accomplish,  
16791 some piece of business in hand and want just to  
16792 finish this thing, and then—but they cannot  
16793 possibly find time to attend to it now, they are  
16794 not prepared to humble themselves, to search  
16795 their hearts and break up their fallow ground,  
16796 and put themselves in a posture to receive the  
16797 blessing. Is it not plain that here is no real union,  
16798 for they are not agreed in that which is essential?  
16799 While one part are praying that the revival may  
16800 come now, the others are praying with equal  
16801 earnestness that it may not come now.

16802

16803     Suppose the question were now put to this  
16804 church, whether you are agreed in praying for a  
16805 revival of religion here? Do you all desire a  
16806 revival, and would you all like to have it come  
16807 now? Would you be heartily agreed now to  
16808 break down in the dust, and open your hearts to  
16809 the Holy Ghost if he should come to-night? I do  
16810 not ask what you would say, if I should propose  
16811 the question. Perhaps if I should put it to you  
16812 now, you would all rise up and vote that you  
16813 were agreed in desiring a revival, and agreed to  
16814 have it now, You know how you ought to feel  
16815 and what you ought to say, and you know you  
16816 ought to be ready for a revival now. But, I ask,  
16817 would GOD see it to be so in your hearts, that  
16818 you are agreed on this point? Has there been a  
16819 time, since I came back from the country, that  
16820 this church were all agreed in desiring and  
16821 praying for a revival, and in wishing to have it  
16822 come now? Have any two of you agreed on this  
16823 point, and prayed accordingly? If not, when will  
16824 you be agreed to pray for a revival? And if this  
16825 church cannot be agreed among yourselves, how  
16826 can you expect a revival? It is of no use for you  
16827 to take the outward attitude, and stand up here  
16828 and say you are agreed, when God reads the  
16829 heart, and sees that you are not agreed. Here is

16830 the promise—”Again I say unto you, That if two  
16831 of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything  
16832 that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of  
16833 my Father which is in heaven.” Now this is  
16834 either true, or it is false. Which ground will you  
16835 take? If it is true, then it is true that you are not  
16836 agreed, and never have been, except in those  
16837 cases where you have had a revival.

16838  
16839 But we must agree not only upon a time, but it  
16840 must be the present time, or we are not agreed in  
16841 everything essential to the work. Unless we  
16842 agree to have the revival now, we shall not now  
16843 use the means. But until the means are used, it  
16844 cannot come. It is plain, then, that we must be  
16845 agreed upon the present time, that is, we are not  
16846 agreed in the sense of the text, until we agree  
16847 that now we will have the blessing, and conduct  
16848 accordingly. To agree upon a future time is of no  
16849 use, for when that future time comes, we must  
16850 then be agreed upon that present time, and use  
16851 means accordingly, so that you see you are never  
16852 properly agreed until you agree that now is the  
16853 time.

16854  
16855 II. We are to agree in everything that is essential  
16856 to obtaining the blessing that we seek.  
16857

16858 You see the language of the text, “If two of you  
16859 shall agree as touching anything that they shall  
16860 ask.” Many people seem to read it as if it  
16861 referred merely to an agreement in asking, and  
16862 they understand it to promise, that whenever two  
16863 are agreed in asking for any blessing, it shall be  
16864 given, But Christ says there must be an  
16865 agreement “as touching” the thing prayed for.  
16866 That is, the agreement or union must comprise  
16867 everything that is essential to the bestowment  
16868 and reception of the blessing.

16869  
16870 1. If Christians would enjoy the benefits of this  
16871 promise in praying for a revival, they must be  
16872 agreed in believing revivals of religion to be a  
16873 reality. There are many individuals, even in the  
16874 church, who do not in their hearts believe that  
16875 the revivals which take place are the work of  
16876 God. Some of them may pray in words for an  
16877 outpouring of the Spirit and a revival of religion,  
16878 while in their hearts they doubt whether there are  
16879 any such things known in modern times. In  
16880 united prayer there must be no hypocrisy.

16881  
16882 2. They must agree in feeling the necessity of  
16883 revivals. There are some who believe in the  
16884 reality of revivals, as a work of God, while at the  
16885 same time they are unsettled as to the necessity



16886 of having them in order to the success of the  
16887 Gospel. They think there is a real work of God in  
16888 revivals, but after all, perhaps it is quite as well  
16889 to have sinners converted and brought into the  
16890 church in a more quiet and gradual way, and  
16891 without so much excitement. Whenever revivals  
16892 are abroad in the land, and prevail, and are  
16893 popular, they may appear in favor of them, and  
16894 may put up their cold prayers for a revival, while  
16895 at the same time they would be sorry on the  
16896 whole to have a revival come among them. They  
16897 think it so much safer and better to indoctrinate  
16898 the people, and spread the matter before them in  
16899 a calm way, and to bring them in gradually, and  
16900 not run the risk of having animal feeling or wild-  
16901 fire in their congregations.

16902

16903 3. They must be agreed in regard to the  
16904 importance of revivals. Men are not blessed with  
16905 revivals, in answer to prayers that are not half in  
16906 earnest. They must feel the infinite importance  
16907 of a revival before they will pray so as to prevail.  
16908 Blessings of this kind are not granted but in  
16909 answer to such prayers as arise from a sense of  
16910 their importance. As I have shown before, when  
16911 preaching on the subject of prevailing prayer, it  
16912 is when men desire the blessing with  
16913 UNUTTERABLE AGONY, that they offer such

16914 prayer as will infallibly prevail with God. Those  
16915 who feel less of the importance of a revival may  
16916 pray for it in words, but they will never have the  
16917 blessing. But when a church has been united in  
16918 prayer, and really felt the importance of a  
16919 revival, they never have failed of having one. I  
16920 do not believe a case can be found of such a  
16921 church being turned empty away. Such an  
16922 agreement, when sincere, will secure an  
16923 agreement also on all other subjects that are  
16924 indispensable.

16925

16926 4. They must be agreed also, in having correct  
16927 scriptural notions about several things connected  
16928 with revivals.

16929

16930 (1.) The necessity of divine agency to produce a  
16931 revival. It is not enough that they all hold this in  
16932 theory, and pray for it in words. They must fully  
16933 understand and deeply feel this necessity, they  
16934 must realize their entire dependence on the Spirit  
16935 of God, or the whole will fail.

16936

16937 (2.) Why divine agency is necessary. There must  
16938 be an agreement on correct principles in regard  
16939 to the reason that divine agency is so  
16940 indispensable. If they get wrong ideas on this  
16941 point, they will be hindered. If Christians get the

16942 idea that this necessity of divine influence lies in  
16943 the inability of sinners, or if they feel as if God  
16944 was under obligation to give the Holy Spirit, in  
16945 order to make sinners able to obey the Gospel,  
16946 they insult God, and their prayers will not avail.  
16947 For in that case they must feel that it is a mere  
16948 matter of common justice for God to pour out his  
16949 Spirit, before he can justly require Christians to  
16950 work, or sinners to repent.

16951

16952 Suppose a church get the idea that sinners are  
16953 poor, unfortunate creatures, who come into the  
16954 world with such a nature that they cannot help  
16955 sinning, and that sinners are just as unable to  
16956 repent and believe the Gospel as they are to fly  
16957 to the moon, how can they feel that the sinner is  
16958 a rebel against God, and that he deserves to be  
16959 sent to hell? How can they feel that the sinner is  
16960 to blame? And how can they take God's part  
16961 when they pray? If they do not take God's part  
16962 against the sinner, they cannot expect God will  
16963 regard their prayers, for they do not pray with  
16964 right motives. No doubt one great reason why so  
16965 many prayers are not answered, is that those who  
16966 pray do in fact take the sinner's part against  
16967 God. They pray as if the sinner was a poor  
16968 unfortunate being, to be pitied, rather than as if  
16969 he was a guilty wretch, to be blamed. And the

16970 reason is that they do not believe sinners are able  
16971 to obey God. If a person does not believe that  
16972 sinners are able to obey their Maker, and really  
16973 believes that the Spirit's influences are necessary  
16974 to make him able, it is impossible, with these  
16975 views, to offer acceptable and prevailing prayer  
16976 for the sinner, and it is not wonderful that  
16977 persons with these views should not prevail with  
16978 God, and should doubt about the efficacy of the  
16979 prayer of faith.

16980

16981 How often do you hear people pray for sinners in  
16982 this style, "O Lord, help this poor soul to do  
16983 what he is required to do—O Lord, enable him  
16984 to do so and so." Now this language implies that  
16985 they take the sinner's part, and not God's. If it  
16986 was understood by those who use it, as it is  
16987 sometimes explained, and if people meant by it  
16988 what they ought to mean when they plead for  
16989 sinners, I would not find so much fault with it,  
16990 But the truth is, that when people use this  
16991 language, they often mean just what the  
16992 language itself would be naturally at first sight,  
16993 understood to mean, which is just as if they  
16994 should pray, "Lord, thou commandest these poor  
16995 sinners to repent, when, O Lord, thou knowest  
16996 they cannot repent unless thou givest them thy  
16997 Spirit, to enable them to do it, though thou hast

16998 declared that thou wilt send them to hell if they  
16999 do not, whether they ever receive the Spirit or  
17000 not, and now, Lord, this seems very hard, and we  
17001 pray thee to have pity upon these poor creatures,  
17002 and do not deal so hardly with them, for Christ's  
17003 sake." Who does not see that such a prayer, or a  
17004 prayer which means this, whatever language it  
17005 may be couched in, is an insult to God, charging  
17006 him with infinite injustice, if he continues to  
17007 exact from sinners a duty which they are unable  
17008 to perform without that aid which he will not  
17009 grant. People may pray in this way till the day of  
17010 judgment, and never obtain a blessing, because  
17011 they take the sinners part against God. They  
17012 cannot pray successfully, until they understand  
17013 that the sinner is a rebel, and obstinate in his  
17014 rebellion—so obstinate that he never will,  
17015 without the Holy Spirit, do what he might do as  
17016 well as not, instantly, and this obstinacy is the  
17017 reason, and the only reason, why he needs the  
17018 influence of the Holy Spirit for his conversion.  
17019 The only ground on which the sinner needs  
17020 divine agency is to overcome his obstinacy, and  
17021 make him willing to do what he can do, and  
17022 what God justly requires him to do. And a  
17023 church are never in an attitude in which God will  
17024 hear their united prayers, unless they are agreed  
17025 in so understanding their dependence on God, as

17026 to feel it in perfect consistency with the sinner's  
17027 blame. If it is the other way, they are agreed in  
17028 understanding it wrong, and their prayers for  
17029 divine help to the unfortunate instead of divine  
17030 favor to make a rebel submit, are wide of the  
17031 mark, are an insult to God, and they never will  
17032 obtain favor in heaven.

17033

17034 (3.) They must be agreed in understanding that  
17035 revivals are not miracles, but that they are  
17036 brought about by the use of means like other  
17037 events. No wonder revivals formerly came so  
17038 seldom and continued so short a time, when  
17039 people generally regarded them as miracles, or  
17040 like a mere shower of rain, that will come on a  
17041 place and continue a little while, and then blow  
17042 over; that is, as something over which we have  
17043 no control. For what can people do to get a  
17044 shower of rain? Or how can they make it rain  
17045 any longer than it does rain? It is necessary that  
17046 those who pray should be agreed in  
17047 understanding a revival as something to be  
17048 brought about by means, or they never will be  
17049 agreed in using them.

17050

17051 (4.) They must be agreed in understanding that  
17052 human agency is just as indispensable to a  
17053 revival as divine agency. Such a thing as a

17054 revival of religion, I venture to say, never did  
17055 occur without divine agency, and never did  
17056 occur without human agency. How often do  
17057 people say, “God can, if he pleases, carry on the  
17058 work without means.” But I have no faith in it,  
17059 for there is no evidence of it. What is religion?  
17060 Obedience to God’s law. But the law cannot be  
17061 obeyed unless it is known. And how can God  
17062 make sinners obey but by making known his  
17063 commandments? And how can he make them  
17064 known but by revealing them himself, or sending  
17065 them by others—that is, by bringing THE  
17066 TRUTH to bear upon the person’s mind till he  
17067 obeys it. God never did and never can convert a  
17068 sinner except with the truth. What is conversion?  
17069 Obeying the truth. He may communicate it  
17070 himself, directly to the sinner. But then, the  
17071 sinner’s own agency is indispensable, for  
17072 conversion consists in the right employment of  
17073 the sinner’s own agency. And ordinarily, he  
17074 employs the agency of others also, in printing,  
17075 writing, conversation, and preaching. God has  
17076 put the Gospel treasure in earthen vessels. He  
17077 has seen fit to employ men in preaching the  
17078 word. That is, he has seen that human agency is  
17079 that which he can best employ in saving sinners.  
17080 And if there ever was a case, of which we have  
17081 no evidence, there is not one in a thousand, if

17082 one in a million, converted in any other way than  
17083 through the truth, made known and urged by  
17084 human instrumentality. And as the church must  
17085 be united in using those means, it is plainly  
17086 necessary that they should be united in  
17087 understanding the true reason why means are to  
17088 be used, and the true principles on which they  
17089 are to be governed and applied.

17090  
17091 5. It is important that there should be union in  
17092 regard to the measures essential to the promotion  
17093 of a revival. Let individuals agree to do anything  
17094 whatever, and if they are not agreed in their  
17095 measures, they will run into confusion, and  
17096 counteract one another. Set them to sail a ship,  
17097 and they never can get along without agreement.  
17098 If they attempt to do business as merchants when  
17099 they are not agreed in their measures, what will  
17100 they do? Why, they will only undo each other's  
17101 work, and thwart the whole business of the  
17102 concern. All this is pre-eminently true in regard  
17103 to the work of promoting a revival. Otherwise  
17104 the members of the church will counteract each  
17105 other's influence, and they need not expect a  
17106 revival.

17107  
17108 (1.) The church must be agreed in regard to the  
17109 meetings which are held, as to what meeting



17110 shall be held, and how many, and where, and  
17111 when they shall be held. Some people always  
17112 desire to multiply meetings in a revival, as if the  
17113 more meetings they had, the more religion.  
17114 Others are always opposed to any new meetings  
17115 in a revival. Some are always for having a  
17116 protracted meeting, and others are never ready to  
17117 hold a protracted meeting at all. Whatever  
17118 difference there may be, it is essential that the  
17119 church should come to a good understanding on  
17120 the subject, so that they can go on together in  
17121 harmony, and labor with zeal and effect.

17122  
17123 (2.) They must be agreed as to the manner of  
17124 conducting meetings. It is necessary that the  
17125 church should be united and cordial on this  
17126 subject, if they expect to offer united prayer with  
17127 effect. Sometimes there are individuals who  
17128 want to adopt every new thing they can hear of  
17129 or imagine, while others are totally unwilling to  
17130 have anything altered in regard to the  
17131 management of the meeting, but would have  
17132 everything done precisely as they are  
17133 accustomed to. They ought to be agreed in some  
17134 way, either to have the meetings altered, or to  
17135 keep them on in the old way. The best possible  
17136 way is, for the church to agree in this, that they  
17137 will let the meetings go on and take their course,

17138 just as the Spirit of God shapes them, and not  
17139 even attempt to make two meetings just alike.  
17140 The church never will give the fullest effect to  
17141 the truth, until they are agreed in this  
17142 principle,—that in promoting a revival they will  
17143 accommodate their measures to circumstances,  
17144 and not attempt to interrupt the natural course  
17145 which pious feeling and sound judgment  
17146 indicate, but cast themselves entirely upon the  
17147 guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit,  
17148 introducing any measure, at any time, that shall  
17149 seem called for in the Providence of God,  
17150 without laying any stress upon its being new or  
17151 old.

17152  
17153 6. They must be agreed in the manner of dealing  
17154 with impenitent sinners. This is a point  
17155 immensely important, that the church should be  
17156 agreed in their treatment of sinners. Suppose that  
17157 they are not agreed, and one will tell a sinner one  
17158 thing and another another. What confusion! How  
17159 can they agree in prayer, when it is plain that  
17160 they are not agreed as to the things they shall  
17161 pray for. Go among such a church, and hear  
17162 them pray for sinners. Attend a prayer meeting  
17163 and listen. Here is one man prays that the sinners  
17164 present may repent. Another prays that they may  
17165 be convicted, and perhaps, if he is very much

17166 engaged, will go so far as to pray that they may  
17167 be deeply convicted. Another prays that sinners  
17168 may go home solemn, and pensive, and silent,  
17169 meditating upon the truths they have heard.  
17170 Another prays in such a manner, that you can see  
17171 he is afraid to have them converted now.  
17172 Another prays very solemnly that they may not  
17173 attempt to do anything in their own strength.  
17174 And so on. How easy it is to see that the church  
17175 are not agreed as touching the things they ask  
17176 for, and of course they have no interest in the  
17177 promise.  
17178  
17179 If you set them to talk with sinners, their courses  
17180 would be just as discordant, for it is plain that  
17181 they are not agreed, and have no clear views in  
17182 regard to what a sinner must do to be saved, or  
17183 of what ought to be said to sinners, to bring them  
17184 to repent. And the consequence is, that sinners  
17185 who are awakened and anxious, presently get  
17186 confounded, and do not know what to do, and  
17187 perhaps give it all up in despair, or conclude  
17188 there is in reality nothing rational or consistent  
17189 in religion. One will tell the sinner he must  
17190 repent, immediately. Another will give him a  
17191 book, Doddridge's Rise and Progress perhaps,  
17192 and tell him to read that book. Another will tell  
17193 him he must pray and persevere, and in God's

17194 time he will obtain the blessing. A revival can  
17195 never go on for any length of time amidst such  
17196 difficulties. If it begins, it must soon run out;  
17197 unless, perhaps, the body of the church will keep  
17198 still and say nothing at all, and let others carry  
17199 on the work. And there the work will suffer  
17200 materially for want of their co-operation and  
17201 support. A church ought to be agreed. Every  
17202 Christian ought to have a clear understanding of  
17203 this subject, and all speak the same thing, and  
17204 give the same directions. And then the sinner  
17205 will find no one to take his part, and can get no  
17206 relief or comfort till he repents.

17207

17208 7. They must be agreed in removing the  
17209 impediments to a revival. If a church expect a  
17210 revival, they must take up the stumbling blocks  
17211 out of the way.

17212

17213 (1.) In the exercise of discipline. If there are  
17214 rotten members in the church, they should be  
17215 removed, and the church should all agree to cut  
17216 them off. If they remain in the church, they are  
17217 such a reproach to religion, as to hinder a  
17218 revival. Sometimes when an attempt is made to  
17219 cast them out, this creates division, and thus the  
17220 work is stopped. Sometimes the offenders are  
17221 persons of influence, or they have family friends

17222 who will take their part, and make a party, and  
17223 thus create a bad spirit, and prevent a revival.  
17224  
17225 (2.) In mutual confessions. Whenever wrong has  
17226 been done to any, there should be a full  
17227 confession. I do not mean a cold and forced  
17228 acknowledgment, such as saying, "If I have done  
17229 wrong, I am sorry for it." But a hearty  
17230 confession, going the full length of the wrong,  
17231 and showing that it comes out of a broken heart.  
17232  
17233 (3.) Forgiveness of enemies. A great obstruction  
17234 to revivals is often found in the fact that active  
17235 and leading individuals harbor a revengeful and  
17236 unforgiving spirit towards those who have  
17237 injured them, which destroys their spirituality,  
17238 makes them harsh and disagreeable in their  
17239 manner, and prevents them from enjoying either  
17240 communion with God in prayer, or the blessing  
17241 of God to give them success in labor. But let the  
17242 members of a church be truly agreed in breaking  
17243 down and confessing their own faults, and in  
17244 cherishing a tender, merciful, forgiving, Christ-  
17245 like spirit toward those who they think have  
17246 done them wrong, and then the Spirit will come  
17247 down upon them not by measure.  
17248

17249 8. They must be agreed in making all the  
17250 necessary preparations for a revival. They should  
17251 be agreed in having all necessary preparation  
17252 made, and agreed in bearing their part of the  
17253 labor or expense of making it. There should be  
17254 an equality, and not let a few be burdened and  
17255 the rest do little or nothing, but every one his  
17256 proportion, according to his several ability. Then  
17257 there will be no envying nor jealousy, nor any of  
17258 those mutual recriminations and altercations and  
17259 disrespectful remarks about one another, which  
17260 are so inconsistent with brotherly love, and such  
17261 a stumbling block in the way of sinners.

17262

17263 9. They must be agreed in doing heartily  
17264 whatever is necessary to be done for the  
17265 promotion of the revival. Sometimes a slight  
17266 disagreement about a very little thing will be  
17267 allowed to break in and destroy a revival. A  
17268 minister told me that he once went to labor in a  
17269 place as an evangelist, and the Spirit of God was  
17270 evidently present, and sinners began to inquire,  
17271 and things looked quite favorable, until some of  
17272 the members in the church began to agitate the  
17273 inquiry how they should pay him for his  
17274 services. They said “If he stays among us any  
17275 longer, he will expect we should give him  
17276 something,” and they did not see how they could

17277 afford to do it. And they talked about it until the  
17278 minds of the brethren got distracted and divided,  
17279 and the minister went away. Look at it. There  
17280 God stood in the door of that church, with his  
17281 hands full of mercies but these parsimonious and  
17282 wicked professors thought it would cost  
17283 something to have a revival, and their expenses  
17284 were about as much as they felt willing or able  
17285 to bear. And so they let him depart and the work  
17286 ceased. The minister would not have left at the  
17287 time, whether they gave him anything or not, for  
17288 what he should receive, or whether he should  
17289 receive anything from them, was a question  
17290 about which he felt no concern. But the church  
17291 by their parsimonious spirit got into such a state  
17292 as to grieve the Spirit, and he saw that to stay  
17293 longer with them would do no good. Oh, how  
17294 will those professors feel when they meet sinners  
17295 from that town in judgment, when it will all  
17296 come out, that God was ready and waiting to  
17297 grant them a blessing, but they allowed  
17298 themselves to get agitated and divided by  
17299 inquiring how much they should have to pay!

17300

17301 10. They must be agreed in laboring to carry on  
17302 the work. It is not enough that they should agree  
17303 to pray for a revival, but they should agree also  
17304 in laboring to promote it. They should set

17305 themselves to it systematically, and as a matter  
17306 of business, to visit and converse and pray with  
17307 their neighbors, to look out for opportunities of  
17308 doing good; to watch the effect of the word, and  
17309 watch the signs of the times, that they may know  
17310 when anything needs to be done, and do it.

17311

17312 (1.) They should be agreed to labor.

17313

17314 (2.) They should be agreed how to labor.

17315

17316 (3.) They should be agreed to live accordingly.

17317

17318 11. They must agree in a determination to  
17319 persevere. It will not answer for some members  
17320 of the church to-day to begin to move and  
17321 bluster about, and then, as soon as the least thing  
17322 turns up unfavorable, to get discouraged, and  
17323 faint, and one-half of them give over. They  
17324 should be all united and agree to persevere, and  
17325 labor, and pray, and hold on, until the blessing  
17326 comes.

17327

17328 In a word, if Christians expect to unite in prayer  
17329 and effort, so as to prevail with God, they must  
17330 be agreed in speaking and doing the same things,  
17331 in walking by the same rule, and maintaining the  
17332 same principles, and in persevering till they



17333 obtain the blessing, so as not to hinder or thwart  
17334 each other's efforts. All this is evidently implied  
17335 in being agreed as touching the things for which  
17336 they are praying.

17337

17338 REMARKS.

17339

17340 1. We see why it is that so many of the children  
17341 of professing parents are not converted.

17342

17343 It is because the parents have not been agreed as  
17344 touching the things they should pray for in  
17345 behalf of their children. Perhaps they never had  
17346 any kind of agreement respecting them. Perhaps  
17347 they were never agreed even as to what was the  
17348 very best thing they could ask them. Sometimes  
17349 parents are not agreed in anything, but their  
17350 opinions clash, and they are perpetually  
17351 disagreeing, and their children see it, and then no  
17352 wonder they are not converted.

17353

17354 Or perhaps they may not be agreed as touching  
17355 the salvation of their children. Are they sincere  
17356 in desiring it? Do they agree to desire and agree  
17357 from right motives? Do they agree in regard to  
17358 the importance of it? Are they agreed how their  
17359 children ought to be dealt with, to effect their  
17360 conversion—what shall be said to them—how it

17361 shall be said—when—by whom. Alas! in how  
17362 many cases is it evident they are not agreed.  
17363 Probably few cases will be found, where  
17364 children remain unconverted, but what it will  
17365 prove that the parents were never truly agreed as  
17366 touching the things they should ask for the  
17367 salvation of their children.

17368

17369 Often there is such disagreement that we could  
17370 not expect any good to result, or anything but  
17371 ruin to the children. The husband and wife often  
17372 disagree entirely and fundamentally in regard to  
17373 the manner of bringing up their children.  
17374 Perhaps the wife is fond of dress, and display,  
17375 and visiting, while the husband is plain and  
17376 humble, and is grieved and distressed, and  
17377 mourns and prays to see how his children are  
17378 puffed up with vanity. Or it may be that the  
17379 father is ambitious, and wants to have his  
17380 daughters fashionably educated and make a  
17381 display, and his sons become great men, and so  
17382 he will send his daughters to a polite boarding-  
17383 school, where they may learn anything but their  
17384 duty to God, and will be all the time pushing his  
17385 sons forward, and goading their ambition, while  
17386 the mother grieves and weeps in secret to see her  
17387 dear children hurried on to destruction, and all  
17388 her own influence counteracted, and her sons

17389 and daughters trained up to serve the god of this  
17390 world, and go to hell.

17391

17392 2. We see the hypocrisy of those who profess to  
17393 be praying for a revival while they are doing  
17394 nothing to promote it. There are many who  
17395 appear to be very zealous in praying for a  
17396 revival, while they are not doing anything at all  
17397 for one. What do they mean? Are they agreed as  
17398 touching the things they ask for? Certainly not.  
17399 They cannot be agreed in offering acceptable  
17400 prayer for a revival until they are prepared TO  
17401 DO what God requires them to do to promote it.  
17402 What would you think of the farmer who should  
17403 pray for a crop, and not plough or sow? Would  
17404 you think such prayers pious, or an insult to  
17405 God?

17406

17407 3. We see why so many prayers offered in the  
17408 church are never answered. It is because those  
17409 who offered them never were agreed as touching  
17410 the things they asked for. Perhaps the minister  
17411 never laid the subject before them, never  
17412 explained what it is to be agreed, nor showed  
17413 them its importance, nor set before them the  
17414 great encouragement which the promise before  
17415 us affords to churches that will agree. Perhaps  
17416 the members of the church have never conferred

17417 together, and compared their views, to see  
17418 whether they understood the subject alike,  
17419 whether they were agreed in regard to the  
17420 motives, grounds, and importance of being  
17421 united in prayer and labor for a revival. Suppose  
17422 you were to go through the churches in this city,  
17423 and learn the precise views and feelings of the  
17424 members on this subject. How many would you  
17425 find who were agreed even in regard to the  
17426 essential and indispensable things, concerning  
17427 which it is necessary Christians should be agreed  
17428 in order to unite in prevailing prayer? Perhaps no  
17429 two could be found who are agreed, and if two  
17430 were found whose views and desires were alike,  
17431 it would probably be ascertained that they are  
17432 unacquainted with each other, and of course  
17433 neither act nor pray together.

17434  
17435 4. We see why it is that this text has been  
17436 generally understood to mean something  
17437 different from what it says. People have first  
17438 read it wrong. They have read it as if it was, “If  
17439 any two of you shall agree to ask anything, it  
17440 shall be done.” And as they have often agreed to  
17441 ask for things, and the things were not done, they  
17442 have said, “The literal meaning of the text  
17443 cannot be true, for we have tried it and know it is  
17444 not true. How many prayer meetings have we

17445 held, and how many petitions have we put up, in  
17446 which we have perfectly agreed in asking for  
17447 blessings, and yet they have not been granted?"  
17448 Now the fact is, that they have never yet  
17449 understood what it is to be agreed as touching  
17450 the things they are to ask for. I am sure this is no  
17451 strained construction of the text, but is its true  
17452 and obvious meaning, as a plain, pious reader  
17453 would understand it, if he inquired seriously and  
17454 earnestly the true import. They must be agreed  
17455 not only in asking, but in everything else that is  
17456 indispensable to the existence of the thing  
17457 prayed for. Suppose two of you were agreed in  
17458 desiring to go to London together. If you were  
17459 not agreed in regard to the means, what route  
17460 you shall take, and what ship you will go in, you  
17461 will never get there together. Just so in praying  
17462 for a revival, you must be agreed in regard to the  
17463 means and circumstances, and everything  
17464 essential to the existence and progress of a  
17465 revival.

17466

17467 5. We may ordinarily expect a revival of religion  
17468 to prevail and extend among those without the  
17469 church, just in proportion to the union of prayer  
17470 and effort within. If there is a general union  
17471 within the church, the revival will be general. If  
17472 the union continues, the revival will continue. If

17473 anything begins to break in upon this perfect  
17474 union in prayer and effort, it will begin to limit  
17475 the revival. How great and powerful would be  
17476 the revival in this city, if all the churches in the  
17477 city were thus united in promoting it!

17478

17479 There is another fact which I have witnessed,  
17480 worthy of notice. I have observed, that a revival  
17481 will prevail out of the church, among persons in  
17482 that class of society, amongst whom it prevails  
17483 in the church. If the females in the church are  
17484 most awake and prayerful, the work may  
17485 ordinarily be expected to prevail mostly among  
17486 females out of the church, and more women will  
17487 be converted than men. If the youth of either, or  
17488 of both sexes, in the church are most awake, the  
17489 work is most likely to prevail among youth, male  
17490 or female, or both, as the work may be in the  
17491 church, in this respect. If the heads of families  
17492 and the principal men in the church are awake,  
17493 the revival is, I have observed, more likely to  
17494 prevail among that class out of the church. I  
17495 have known a revival mostly confined to  
17496 females, and few males converted, apparently  
17497 because the male part of the church did not take  
17498 hold and work. Again I have repeatedly known  
17499 the greatest number of converts among men,  
17500 owing apparently to the fact that the male part of

17501 the church were most engaged. When the revival  
17502 does not reach a particular class of the  
17503 impenitent, pains should be taken to arouse that  
17504 portion of the church who are of their own age  
17505 and standing, to make more direct efforts for  
17506 their conversion. There seems to be a philosophy  
17507 in this fact, which has often been witnessed.  
17508 Different classes of professors naturally feel a  
17509 sympathy for the impenitent of their own sex  
17510 and age and rank, and more naturally pray for  
17511 them, and have more intercourse with them, and  
17512 more influence over them, and this seems to be  
17513 at least one of the reasons why revivals are apt to  
17514 be the most powerful and general in that class  
17515 without the church, who are the most awake in  
17516 the church. Christians should understand this,  
17517 and feel their responsibility. One great reason  
17518 why so few of the principal men are sometimes  
17519 converted in revivals, doubtless is, that that class  
17520 in the church are often so worldly, they cannot  
17521 be aroused. The revival will generally prevail  
17522 mostly in those families where the professors  
17523 belonging to them are awake, and the impenitent  
17524 belonging to those families where the professors  
17525 are not awake, are apt to be left unconverted.  
17526 One principal reason, obviously is, that when the  
17527 professors in a family or neighborhood are  
17528 awake, there is not only prayer offered for

17529 sinners in the midst of them, but there are  
17530 corresponding influences acting upon the  
17531 impenitent among them. If they are awake, their  
17532 looks and lives and warnings, all tend to promote  
17533 the conversion of their impenitent friends. But if  
17534 they are asleep, all their influences tend to  
17535 prevent their conversion. Their coldness grieves  
17536 the Spirit, their worldliness contradicts the  
17537 Gospel, and all their intercourse with their  
17538 impenitent friends is in favor of impenitence,  
17539 and calculated to perpetuate it.

17540

17541 6. We see why different denominations have  
17542 been suffered to spring up in the church, and  
17543 under the government of God.

17544

17545 Christians often see and deplore the evils that  
17546 have arisen to the church of God, from the  
17547 division of his people into jarring sects. And  
17548 they have wondered and been perplexed, to think  
17549 that God should suffer it to be so. But in the light  
17550 of this subject we can see, that considering what  
17551 diversities of opinions and feelings and views  
17552 actually exist in the church, much good results  
17553 from this division of sects. Considering this  
17554 diversity of opinion, many would never agree to  
17555 pray and labor together, so as to do it with  
17556 success, and so it is better they should separate,



17557 and let those unite who are agreed. In all cases  
17558 where there cannot be a cordial agreement in  
17559 labor, it is better that each denomination should  
17560 labor by themselves, so long as this difference  
17561 exists. I have sometimes seen revivals broken up  
17562 by attempting to unite Christians of different  
17563 denominations in prayer and labor together,  
17564 while they were not agreed as to the principles or  
17565 measures by which the work was to be  
17566 promoted. They would then undo each other's  
17567 work, and destroy each other's influence,  
17568 perplex the anxious, and give occasion to  
17569 enemies to blaspheme, and soon their feelings  
17570 would get soured, and the Spirit of God is  
17571 grieved away, and the work stops, and perhaps  
17572 painful confusion and controversy follow.

17573

17574 7. We see why God sometimes suffers churches  
17575 to be divided. It is because he finds that the  
17576 members are so much at variance that they will  
17577 not pray and labor together with effect.  
17578 Sometimes churches that are in such a state, will  
17579 still keep together from worldly considerations  
17580 and worldly policy, because it is so much easier  
17581 for the whole to support public worship. Perhaps  
17582 both parties want to keep the meeting-house, or  
17583 both want to retain the minister, and they cannot  
17584 agree which shall go off, and so they continue

17585 along, jealous and jangling for years,  
17586 accomplishing little or nothing for the salvation  
17587 of sinners. In such cases, God has often let  
17588 something turn up among them, that would tear  
17589 them asunder, and then each party would go to  
17590 work in their own way, and perhaps both would  
17591 prosper. While they were in the same church,  
17592 they were always making each other trouble, as  
17593 as they did not think nor feel alike, but as soon as  
17594 they were separated, every thing settled down in  
17595 peace, and made it evident that it was better they  
17596 should divide. I have known some cases in this  
17597 State, where this has been done with the happiest  
17598 results, and both churches have been speedily  
17599 blessed with revivals.

17600

17601 8. It is evident that many more churches need to  
17602 be divided. How many churches there are, who  
17603 are holding together, and yet are doing no good,  
17604 for the simple reason that they are not  
17605 sufficiently agreed. They do not think alike nor  
17606 feel alike on the subjects connected with  
17607 revivals, and while this is so, they never can  
17608 work together. Unless they can be brought to  
17609 such a change of views and feelings on the  
17610 subject as will unite them, they are only a  
17611 hindrance to each other and to the work of God.  
17612 In many cases they see and feel that it is so, and

17613 yet they keep together, conscientiously, for fear  
17614 a division should dishonor religion, when in fact  
17615 the division that now exists may be making  
17616 religion a by-word and a reproach. Far better  
17617 would it be if they would just agree to divide  
17618 amicably, like Abraham and Lot. "If thou wilt  
17619 take the left hand, I will go to the right; or if thou  
17620 depart to the right hand, then I will go to the  
17621 left." Let them separate, and each work in his  
17622 own way, and they may both enjoy the blessing.

17623

17624 9. We see why a few individuals, who are  
17625 perfectly united may be successful in gathering  
17626 and building up a new church, and may do so  
17627 much better than a much larger number who are  
17628 not agreed among themselves. If I were going to  
17629 gather a new church in this city, I should rather  
17630 have five persons, or three, or even two that were  
17631 perfectly agreed as touching the things they were  
17632 to pray for, and the manner in which they should  
17633 labor for them, and in all that is essential to the  
17634 prosperity of a church, and who would stand by  
17635 me, and stand by each other, than to have a  
17636 church to begin with, or five hundred members  
17637 who were not agreed.

17638

17639 10. We see what glorious things may be  
17640 expected for Zion, whenever the churches

17641 generally shall be agreed on these subjects.  
17642 When ministers shall lay aside their prejudices,  
17643 and their misconstructions, and their jealousies,  
17644 and shall see eye to eye, and when the churches  
17645 shall understand the Bible alike, and see their  
17646 duty alike, and pray alike, and shall be “agreed  
17647 as touching the things they shall ask for,” a  
17648 nation shall be born in a day. Only let them feel  
17649 as the heart of one man, and be agreed as to what  
17650 ought to be done for the salvation of the world,  
17651 and the millennium will come at once.

17652  
17653 11. There is vast ignorance in the churches on  
17654 the subject of revivals. After all the revivals that  
17655 have been enjoyed, and all that has been said and  
17656 written and printed concerning revivals, there are  
17657 very few who have any real, consistent  
17658 knowledge on the subject. And when there is a  
17659 revival, how few are there who can take hold to  
17660 labor and promote it as if they understood what  
17661 they were about. How few persons are to be  
17662 found, who have ever taken up revivals of  
17663 religion as a subject to be studied and  
17664 understood. Every body knows, that in a revival  
17665 Christians must pray, and must do some things  
17666 which they have not been in the habit of doing.  
17667 But multitudes know nothing of the REASON  
17668 WHY they should do this, or why one thing is

17669 better than another, and of course they have no  
17670 principles to guide them, and when anything  
17671 occurs which they did not expect, they are all at  
17672 a fault and know nothing what to do. If men  
17673 should go to work to build a house of worship,  
17674 and know as little how to proceed as many  
17675 ministers and professors know how to build the  
17676 spiritual temple of God, they never would get up  
17677 a house in the world. And yet people make  
17678 themselves believe they are building the church  
17679 of God, when they know nothing at all what they  
17680 are about, and are utterly unable to give a reason  
17681 why they are doing as they do, or why one thing  
17682 should be done rather than another. There are  
17683 multitudes in the church who never seem to  
17684 suppose that the work of promoting revivals of  
17685 religion is one that requires study, and thought,  
17686 and knowledge of principles, and skill in  
17687 applying the word of God, so as to give every  
17688 one his portion in season. And so they go on,  
17689 generally doing little or nothing because they are  
17690 attempting nothing, and if they ever do awake,  
17691 go headlong to work, without any system or  
17692 plan, as if God had left this part of our duty out  
17693 of the reach of sound judgment and good sense.  
17694  
17695 12. There is vast ignorance among ministers  
17696 upon this subject, and one great reason of this

17697 ignorance is, that many get the idea that they  
17698 already understand all about revivals, when in  
17699 reality they know next to nothing about them. I  
17700 once knew a minister come in where there was a  
17701 powerful revival, and bluster about and found  
17702 fault with many things, speaking of his  
17703 knowledge of revivals, that he had been in  
17704 seventeen of them and so on, when it was  
17705 evident that he knew nothing as he ought to  
17706 know of revivals.

17707

17708 13. How important it is that the church should be  
17709 trained and instructed, so as to know what to do  
17710 in a revival. They should be trained and  
17711 disciplined like an army; each one having a  
17712 place to fill, and something to do, and knowing  
17713 where he belongs, and what he has to do, and  
17714 how to do it. Instead of this, how often do you  
17715 see a church in a time of revival take hold of the  
17716 work to promote it, just like a parcel of children  
17717 taking hold to build a house. How few are there  
17718 that really know how to do—what?—Why, the  
17719 very thing for which God suffers Christians to  
17720 live in this world, the very thing for which  
17721 ALONE he would ever let them remain away  
17722 from heaven a day, is the very thing of all others  
17723 that they do not study and do not try to  
17724 understand.

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14. We see why revivals are often so short, and why they so often produce a reaction. It is because the church do not understand the subject. Revivals are short, because professors have been stirred up to a spasmodical kind of action. They have gone to work by impulse rather than from deliberate conviction of duty, and have been guided by their feelings rather than by a sound understanding of what they ought to do. The church did not know what to do, what they could do, and what they could not, nor how to husband their strength, nor what the state of things would bear, and perhaps their zeal led them into some indiscretions, and they lost their hold on God, and so the enemy prevailed. The church ought to be so trained as to know what to do, so as never to fail, and never to suffer defeat or reaction, when they attempt to promote a revival. They should understand all the tactics of the devil, and know where to guard against his devices, so that they may know him when they see him, and not mistake him for an angel of light come to give them lessons of wisdom in promoting the revival, and so that they can co-operate wisely with the minister, and with one another, and with the Holy Ghost, in carrying on the work. No person who has been

17753 conversant in revivals can overlook the fact, that  
17754 the ignorance of professors of religion  
17755 concerning revivals, and their stupid blunders  
17756 are among the most common things that put  
17757 revivals down, and bring back a fearful reaction  
17758 upon the church. Brethren, How long shall this  
17759 be so? It ought not to be so, it need not be so,  
17760 shall it always be so?

17761  
17762 15. We see that every church is justly  
17763 responsible for the souls that are among them. If  
17764 God has given such a promise, and if it is true  
17765 that where so many as two are agreed, as  
17766 touching the things they ask for, it shall be done,  
17767 then certainly Christians are responsible, and if  
17768 sinners are lost, their blood will be found upon  
17769 the church. If the churches can have what they  
17770 ask, as soon as they are agreed as touching it,  
17771 then certainly the damnation of the world will be  
17772 required at the hands of the church.

17773  
17774 16. We see the guilt of ministers, in not  
17775 informing themselves, and rightly and speedily  
17776 instructing the churches upon this momentous  
17777 subject. Why, what is the end of the Christian  
17778 ministry! What have they to do, but to instruct  
17779 and marshal the sacramental host, and lead them  
17780 on to conquest. What! let the church remain in



17781 ignorance upon the very subject, and the only  
17782 point of duty, for the performance of which they  
17783 are in the world, the salvation of sinners. Some  
17784 ministers have acted as mysteriously about  
17785 revivals, as if they thought Christians were either  
17786 incapable of understanding how to promote  
17787 them, or that it was of no importance that they  
17788 should know. But this is all wrong. No minister  
17789 has yet begun to understand, or do his duty, if he  
17790 has neglected to teach his church to work for  
17791 God in the promotion of revivals. What is he  
17792 about? What does he mean? Why is he a  
17793 minister? To what end has he taken the sacred  
17794 office? Is it that he “may eat a piece of bread?”

17795  
17796 17. We see that pious parents can render the  
17797 salvation of their children certain. Only let them  
17798 pray in faith, and be agreed as touching the  
17799 things they shall ask for, and God has promised  
17800 them the desire of their hearts. Who can be  
17801 agreed so well as parents? Let them be agreed in  
17802 prayer, and agreed what to do, and agreed in  
17803 doing all their duty; let them thus train up their  
17804 children in the way they should go, and when  
17805 they are old, they will not depart from it.

17806  
17807 And now, brethren, do you believe you are  
17808 agreed, according to the meaning of this

17809 promise? I know that where a few individuals  
17810 may be agreed in some things, they may produce  
17811 some effect. But while the body of the church  
17812 are not agreed, there will always be so many  
17813 things to counteract, that they will accomplish  
17814 but little. THE CHURCH MUST BE AGREED.  
17815 Oh, if we could find one church that were  
17816 perfectly and heartily agreed in all these points,  
17817 so that they could pray and labor together, all as  
17818 one, what good would be done! But now, while  
17819 things are as they are, we see colony after colony  
17820 peopling hell, because the church are not agreed.  
17821 Oh, what do Christians think, how can they keep  
17822 still, when God has brought down his blessings  
17823 so that if any two were agreed, as touching the  
17824 things they ask for, it would be done. Alas! alas!  
17825 how bitter will be the remembrance of these  
17826 janglings in the church, when Christians come to  
17827 see the crowds of lost souls that have gone down  
17828 to hell, because we were not agreed to labor and  
17829 pray for their salvation.  
17830  
17831 Finally.—In the light of this promise we see the  
17832 awful guilt of the church. God has given it to be  
17833 the precious inheritance of his people at all  
17834 times, and in all places. If his people agree, their  
17835 prayers will be answered. We see the awful guilt  
17836 of this church, who come here and listen to

17837 lectures about revivals and then go away and  
17838 have no revival, and also the guilt of members of  
17839 other churches who hear these lectures and go  
17840 home and refuse to do their duty. How can you  
17841 meet the thousands of impenitent sinners around  
17842 you, at the bar of God, and see them sink away  
17843 into everlasting burnings? Have you been united  
17844 in heart to pray for them? If you have not, why  
17845 have you disagreed? Why have you not prayed  
17846 with this promise until you have prevailed?

17847

17848 You will now either be agreed, and pray for the  
17849 Holy Ghost, and receive him before you leave  
17850 the house, or the anger of the Lord will be upon  
17851 you. Should you now agree to pray in the sense  
17852 of this promise, for the Spirit of God to come  
17853 down on this city, the heavenly dove would fly  
17854 through the city in the midst of the night and  
17855 would rouse the consciences and break up the  
17856 guilty slumbers of the wicked. What then is the  
17857 crimson guilt of those professors of religion who  
17858 are sleeping in sight of such a promise? They  
17859 seem to have skipped over, or to have entirely  
17860 forgotten it. Multitudes of sinners going to hell  
17861 in all directions, and yet this blessed promise is  
17862 neglected; yea, more, is practically despised by  
17863 the church. There it stands in the solemn record,  
17864 and the church might take hold of it in such a

17865 manner that vast numbers might be saved, but  
17866 they are not agreed. Therefore souls will perish.  
17867 And where is the responsibility? Who can take  
17868 this promise and look the perishing in the face at  
17869 the day of judgment?

17870

17871 These lectures were greatly instrumental in  
17872 reviving religion in the church to which they  
17873 were preached, and their publication in this  
17874 country and in Europe has been the means of  
17875 promoting revivals in very many places. To God  
17876 belongs all the glory.

17877

17878

17879

17880 LECTURE XVII.

17881

17882 FALSE COMFORTS FOR SINNERS.

17883

17884 Text.—How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing  
17885 in your answers there remaineth falsehood.—Job  
17886 xxi. 34.

17887

17888 JOB'S three friends insisted on it that the  
17889 afflictions which he suffered were sent as a  
17890 punishment for his sins, and were evidence  
17891 conclusive that he was a hypocrite, and not a  
17892 good man as he professed to be. A lengthy

17893 argument ensued, in which Job referred to all  
17894 past experience, to prove that men are not dealt  
17895 with in this world according to their character;  
17896 that the distinction is not observed in the  
17897 allotments of Providence. His friends maintained  
17898 the opposite, and intimated that this world is also  
17899 a place of rewards and punishments, in which  
17900 men receive good or evil, according to their  
17901 deeds. In this chapter, Job shows by appealing to  
17902 common sense and common observation, and  
17903 experience, that this cannot be true, because it is  
17904 a matter of fact that the wicked are often  
17905 prosperous in the world and through life, and  
17906 hence infers that their judgment and punishment  
17907 must be reserved for a future state. “The wicked  
17908 is reserved to the day of destruction,” and “they  
17909 shall be brought forth to the day of his wrath.”  
17910 And inasmuch as his friends came to comfort  
17911 him, but being in the dark on this fundamental  
17912 point, had not been able to understand his case,  
17913 and so could not afford him any comfort, but  
17914 rather aggravated his grief, Job insisted upon it  
17915 that he would still look to a future state for  
17916 consolation, and rebukes them by exclaiming, in  
17917 the bitterness of his soul, “How then comfort ye  
17918 me in vain, seeing in your answers there  
17919 remaineth falsehood?”  
17920

17921 My present purpose is, to make some remarks  
17922 upon the various methods employed in  
17923 comforting anxious sinners, and I design:  
17924  
17925 I. To notice briefly the necessity and design of  
17926 instructing anxious sinners.  
17927  
17928 II. To show that anxious sinners are always  
17929 seeking comfort. Their supreme object is to get  
17930 comfort in their distress.  
17931  
17932 III. To notice some of the false comforts often  
17933 administered.  
17934  
17935 I. The necessity and design of instructing  
17936 anxious sinners.  
17937  
17938 The very idea of anxiety implies some  
17939 instruction. A sinner would not be anxious at all  
17940 about his future state, unless he had light enough  
17941 to know that he is a sinner, and that he is in  
17942 danger of punishment and needs forgiveness.  
17943 But men are to be converted, not by physical  
17944 force, or by a change wrought in their nature or  
17945 constitution by creative power, but by the truth  
17946 made effectual by the Holy Spirit. Conversion is  
17947 yielding to the truth. And therefore, the more  
17948 truth can be brought to bear upon the mind, other

17949 things being equal, so much the more probable is  
17950 it that the individual will be converted. Unless  
17951 the truth is brought to bear upon him, it is certain  
17952 he will not be converted. If it is brought to bear,  
17953 it is not absolutely certain that it will be  
17954 effectual, but the probability is in proportion to  
17955 the extent to which the truth is brought to bear.  
17956 The great design of dealing with an anxious  
17957 sinner is to clear up all his difficulties and  
17958 darkness, and do away all his errors, and sap the  
17959 foundation of his self-righteous hopes, and  
17960 sweep away every vestige of comfort that he  
17961 could find in himself. There is often much  
17962 difficulty in this, and much instruction is  
17963 required. Sinners often cling with a death grasp  
17964 to their false dependences. The last place to  
17965 which a sinner ever betakes himself for relief is  
17966 to Jesus Christ. Sinners had rather be saved in  
17967 any other way in the world. They had rather  
17968 make any sacrifice, go to any expense, or endure  
17969 any suffering, than just to throw themselves as  
17970 guilty and lost rebels upon Christ alone for  
17971 salvation. This is the very last way in which they  
17972 are ever willing to be saved. It cuts up all their  
17973 self-righteousness, and annihilates their pride  
17974 and self-satisfaction so completely, that they are  
17975 exceedingly unwilling to adopt it. But it is as  
17976 true in philosophy as it is in fact, that this is,

17977 after all, the only way in which a sinner could  
17978 find relief. If God should attempt to relieve  
17979 sinners, and save them without humbling their  
17980 pride and turning them from their sins, he could  
17981 not do it. Now the object of instructing an  
17982 anxious sinner should be to lead him by the  
17983 shortest possible way to do this. It is to bring his  
17984 mind, by the shortest route, to the practical  
17985 conclusion that there is, in fact, no other way in  
17986 which he can be relieved and saved, but to  
17987 renounce himself and rest in Christ alone. To do  
17988 this with effect requires great skill. It requires a  
17989 thorough knowledge of the human heart, a clear  
17990 understanding of the plan of salvation, and a  
17991 precise and definite idea of the very thing that a  
17992 sinner **MUST DO** in order to be saved. To know  
17993 how to do this effectually is one of the rarest  
17994 qualifications in the ministry at the present day.  
17995 It is distressing to see how few ministers, and  
17996 how few professors of religion there are who  
17997 have in their own minds that distinct idea of the  
17998 thing to be done, that they can go to an anxious  
17999 sinner and tell him exactly what he has to do,  
18000 and how to do it, and can show him clearly that  
18001 there is no possible way for him to be saved but  
18002 by doing that very thing which they tell him, and  
18003 can make him feel the certainty that he must do



18004 it, and that unless he does that very thing, he will  
18005 be damned.

18006

18007 II. I am to show that anxious sinners are always  
18008 seeking comfort.

18009

18010 Sinners often imagine they are seeking Jesus  
18011 Christ, and seeking religion, but this is a  
18012 mistake, No person ever sought religion, and yet  
18013 remained irreligious. What is religion? It is  
18014 obeying God. Seeking religion is seeking to  
18015 obey God. The soul that hungers and thirsts after  
18016 righteousness is the soul of a Christian. To say  
18017 that a person can seek to obey God, and yet not  
18018 obey him, is absurd. For if he is seeking religion  
18019 he is not an impenitent sinner. To seek religion,  
18020 implies a willingness to obey God, and a  
18021 willingness to obey God is religion. It Is a  
18022 contradiction to say that an impenitent sinner is  
18023 seeking religion. It is the same as to say, that he  
18024 seeks and actually longs to obey God, and God  
18025 will not let him, or that he longs to embrace  
18026 Jesus Christ, and Christ will not let him come.  
18027 The fact is, the anxious sinner is seeking a hope,  
18028 he is seeking pardon, and comfort, and  
18029 deliverance from hell. He is anxiously looking  
18030 for some one to comfort him, and make him feel  
18031 better, without being obliged to conform to such

18032 humiliating conditions as those of the Gospel.  
18033 And his anxiety and distress continue, only  
18034 because he will not yield to the terms.  
18035 Unfortunately, anxious sinners find comforters  
18036 enough to their liking. Miserable comforters they  
18037 all are, too, “seeing in their answers there  
18038 remaineth falsehood.” No doubt, millions and  
18039 millions are now in hell, because there were  
18040 those around them who gave them false comfort,  
18041 who had so much false pity, or were themselves  
18042 so much in the dark, that they would not let them  
18043 remain in anxiety till they had submitted their  
18044 hearts to God, but administered falsehood, and  
18045 relieved their distress in this way, and now their  
18046 souls are lost.

18047  
18048 III. I am to notice several of the ways in which  
18049 false comfort is given to anxious sinners.

18050  
18051 I might almost say, there is an endless variety of  
18052 ways in which this is done. The more experience  
18053 I have, and the more I observe the ways in which  
18054 even good people deal with anxious sinners, the  
18055 more I feel grieved at the endless fooleries and  
18056 falsehoods with which they attempt to comfort  
18057 their anxious friends, and thus, in fact, deceive  
18058 them and beguile them out of their salvation. It  
18059 often reminds me of the manner in which people

18060 act when any one is sick. Let any one of you be  
18061 sick, with almost any disease in the world, and  
18062 you will find that every person you meet with  
18063 has a remedy for that disorder, a certain cure, a  
18064 specific, a panacea; and you will find such a  
18065 world of quackery all around you, that if you do  
18066 not take care and SHUT IT ALL OUT, you will  
18067 certainly lose your life. A man must exercise his  
18068 own judgment, for he will find as many remedies  
18069 as he has friends, and each one is tenacious of  
18070 his own medicine, and perhaps will think hard if  
18071 it is not taken. And no doubt this miserable  
18072 system of quackery kills a great many people.

18073

18074 This is true to no greater extent respecting the  
18075 diseases of the body than respecting the diseases  
18076 of the mind. People have their specifics and their  
18077 catholicons and their panaceas to comfort  
18078 distressed souls, and whenever they begin to talk  
18079 with an anxious sinner, they will bring in their  
18080 false comforts, so much that if he does not  
18081 TAKE CARE, and mind the word of God, he  
18082 will infallibly be deceived to his own  
18083 destruction. I propose to mention a few of the  
18084 falsehoods that are often brought forward in  
18085 attempting to comfort anxious sinners. Time  
18086 would fail me, even to name them all.

18087

18088 The direct object of many persons is to comfort  
18089 sinners, and they are often so intent upon this  
18090 that they do not stick at means or kind of  
18091 comfort. They see their friends distressed, and  
18092 they pity them, they feel very compassionate,  
18093 “Oh, oh, I cannot bear to see them so distressed,  
18094 I must comfort them somehow,” and so they try  
18095 one way, and another, and all to comfort them!  
18096 Now, God desires they should be comforted. He  
18097 is benevolent, and has kind feelings, and his  
18098 heart yearns over them, when he sees them so  
18099 distressed. But he sees that there is only one way  
18100 to give a sinner real comfort. He has more  
18101 benevolence and compassion than all men, and  
18102 wishes to comfort them. But he has fixed the  
18103 terms as unyielding as his throne, on which he  
18104 will give a sinner relief. And he will not alter.  
18105 He knows that nothing else will do the sinner  
18106 effectual good, for nothing can make him happy,  
18107 until he repents of his sins and forsakes them,  
18108 and turns to God. And therefore God will not  
18109 yield. Our object should be the same as that of  
18110 God. We should feel compassion and  
18111 benevolence, just as he does, and be as ready to  
18112 give comfort, but be sure that it be of the right  
18113 kind. The fact is, our prime object should be to  
18114 induce the sinner to obey God. His comfort  
18115 ought to be with us, and with him, but a

18116 secondary object, and while we are more  
18117 anxious to relieve his distress than to have him  
18118 cease to abuse, and dishonor God, we are not  
18119 likely, by our instructions, to do him any real  
18120 good. This is a fundamental distinction, in  
18121 dealing with anxious sinners, but it is evidently  
18122 overlooked by many, who seem to have no  
18123 higher motives, than sympathy or compassion  
18124 for the sinner. If in preaching the Gospel, or  
18125 instructing the anxious, we are not actuated by a  
18126 high regard to the honor of God, and rise no  
18127 higher, than to desire to relieve the distressed;  
18128 this is going no farther than a constitutional  
18129 sympathy, or compassion, would carry us.  
18130 Overlooking this principle, has often misled  
18131 professors of religion, and when they have heard  
18132 others dealing faithfully with anxious sinners,  
18133 they have accused them of cruelty. I have often  
18134 had professors bring anxious sinners to me, and  
18135 beg me to comfort them, and, when I have  
18136 probed their consciences to the quick, they have  
18137 shuddered, and sometimes taken the sinners'  
18138 part. It is sometimes impossible to deal  
18139 effectually with youth who are anxious, in the  
18140 presence of their parents, because they have so  
18141 much more compassion for their children, than  
18142 regard to the honor of God. This is all wrong,  
18143 and with such views and feelings you had better

18144 hold your tongue, than to say anything to the  
18145 anxious.

18146

18147 1. One of the ways in which people give false  
18148 comfort to distressed sinners, is, by asking them  
18149 “What have you done? you are not so bad.”

18150 They see them distressed, and cry out, “Why,  
18151 what have you done?” as if they had never done  
18152 anything wicked, and had in reality no occasion  
18153 to feel distressed at all. I have before mentioned  
18154 the case of a fashionable lady, who was  
18155 awakened in this city, and was going to see a  
18156 minister to converse with him, when she was  
18157 met by a friend, who turned her back, and drove  
18158 off her anxiety, by the cry, “What have you  
18159 done, to make you feel so? I am sure you have  
18160 never committed any sin, that need to make you  
18161 feel so.” [7]

18162

18163 I have often met with cases of this kind. A  
18164 mother will tell her son, who is anxious, what an  
18165 obedient child he has always been, how good  
18166 and how kind, and she begs him not to take on  
18167 so. So a husband will tell his wife, or a wife her  
18168 husband, how good they are, and ask, “What  
18169 have you done?” When they see them in great  
18170 distress, they begin to comfort them, “Why you  
18171 are not so bad. You have been to hear that

18172 frightful minister, that frightens people, and you  
18173 have got excited. Be comforted, for I am sure  
18174 you have not been bad enough to feel so much  
18175 distressed.” When the truth is, they have been a  
18176 great deal worse than they think they have. No  
18177 sinner ever had an idea that his sins were greater  
18178 than they are. No sinner ever had an adequate  
18179 idea of how great a sinner he is. It is not  
18180 probable that any man could live under the full  
18181 sight of his sins. God has, in mercy, spared all  
18182 his creatures on earth that worst of sights, a  
18183 naked human heart. The sinner’s guilt is much  
18184 more deep and damning than he thinks, and his  
18185 danger is much greater than he thinks it is, and if  
18186 he should see them as they are, probably he  
18187 would not live a moment. A sinner may have  
18188 some false notions on the subject, that creates  
18189 distress, which have no foundation. He may  
18190 think he has committed the unpardonable sin, or  
18191 that he has grieved away the Spirit, or sinned  
18192 away his day of grace. But to tell the most moral  
18193 and naturally amiable person in the world that he  
18194 is good enough, or that he is not so bad as he  
18195 thinks he is, is not giving him rational comfort,  
18196 but is deceiving him, and ruining his soul. Let  
18197 those who do it, take care.  
18198

18199 2. Others tell awakened sinners that “Conversion  
18200 is a progressive work,” and in this way ease their  
18201 anxiety. When a man is distressed, because he  
18202 sees himself to be such a sinner, and that unless  
18203 he turns to God, he will be damned; it is a great  
18204 relief to have some friend hold out the idea that  
18205 he can get better by degrees, and that he is now  
18206 coming on, by little and little, They tell him,  
18207 “Why you cannot expect to get along all at once;  
18208 I do not believe in these sudden conversions, you  
18209 must wait and let it work, you have begun well,  
18210 and by and by you will get comfort.” All this is  
18211 false as the bottomless pit. The truth is,  
18212 Regeneration, or conversion, is not a progressive  
18213 work. What is regeneration? What is it but the  
18214 beginning of obedience to God? And is the  
18215 beginning of a thing progressive? It is the first  
18216 act of genuine obedience to God—the first  
18217 voluntary action of the mind that is what God  
18218 approves, or that can be regarded as obedience to  
18219 God. That is conversion. When persons talk  
18220 about conversion as a progressive work, it is  
18221 absurd. They show that they know just as much  
18222 about regeneration or conversion, as Nicodemus  
18223 did. They know nothing about it, as they ought  
18224 to know, and are no more fit to conduct an  
18225 anxious meeting, or to advise or instruct anxious  
18226 sinners, than Nicodemus was.



18227

18228 3. Another way in which anxious sinners are  
18229 deceived with false comfort, is by being advised  
18230 to dismiss the subject for the present.

18231

18232 Men who are supposed to be wise and good,  
18233 have assumed to be so much wiser than God,  
18234 that when God is dealing with a sinner, by his  
18235 Spirit, and endeavoring to bring him to an  
18236 immediate decision; they think God is crowding  
18237 too hard, and that it is necessary for them to  
18238 interfere; and they will advise the person to take  
18239 a ride, or go into company, or engage in  
18240 business, or something that will relieve his mind  
18241 a little, at least for the present. They might just  
18242 as well say to God, in plain words, "O God, you  
18243 are too hard, you go too fast, you will make him  
18244 crazy, or kill him, he cannot stand it; poor  
18245 creature, if he is so pressed, he will die." Just so  
18246 they takes sides against God, and do the same as  
18247 to tell the sinner himself, "God will make you  
18248 crazy if you do not dismiss the subject, and resist  
18249 the Spirit, and drive him away from your mind."

18250

18251 Such advice, if it be truly conviction of sin that  
18252 distresses the sinner, is in no case, either safe or  
18253 lawful. The strivings of the Spirit, to bring a  
18254 sinner to himself, will never hurt him, nor drive

18255 him crazy. He may make himself deranged by  
18256 resisting, but it is blasphemous, to think, that the  
18257 blessed, wise and benevolent Spirit of God,  
18258 would ever conduct with so little care, as to  
18259 derange and destroy the soul he came to sanctify  
18260 and save. The proper course to take with a  
18261 sinner, when the striving of the Spirit throws him  
18262 into distress, is, to instruct him, to clear up his  
18263 views, correct his mistakes, and make the way of  
18264 salvation so plain that he can see it right before  
18265 him. Not to dismiss the subject, but fall in with  
18266 the Spirit, and thus hush all those dreadful  
18267 agonies which are produced by resisting the  
18268 Holy Ghost. REMEMBER, if an awakened  
18269 sinner voluntarily dismiss the subject once,  
18270 probably he will never take it up again.

18271

18272 4. Sometimes an awakened sinner is comforted  
18273 by being told that religion does not consist in  
18274 feeling bad. I once heard of a Doctor of Divinity,  
18275 giving an anxious sinner such counsel, when he  
18276 was actually writhing under the arrows of the  
18277 Almighty. Said he, "Religion is cheerful,  
18278 religion is not gloomy, do not be distressed, be  
18279 comforted, dismiss your fears, you should not  
18280 feel so bad," and such like miserable comforts,  
18281 when, in fact, the man had infinite reason to be

18282 distressed, for he was resisting the Holy Ghost,  
18283 and in danger of grieving him away for ever.  
18284  
18285 It is true, religion does not consist in feeling bad.  
18286 But the sinner has reason to be distressed,  
18287 because he has no religion. If he had religion, he  
18288 would not feel so. Were he a Christian, he would  
18289 rejoice. But to tell an impenitent sinner to be  
18290 cheerful! why, you might as well preach this  
18291 doctrine in hell, and tell them there, "Cheer up  
18292 here, cheer up, do not feel so bad."  
18293  
18294 The sinner is on the very verge of hell, he is in  
18295 rebellion against God, and his danger is  
18296 infinitely greater than he imagines. Oh, what a  
18297 doctrine of devils! to tell a rebel against heaven  
18298 not to be distressed. What is all his distress but  
18299 rebellion itself? He is not comforted, because he  
18300 refuses to be comforted. God is ready to comfort  
18301 him. You need not think to be more  
18302 compassionate than God. He will fill him with  
18303 comfort, in an instant, if he will submit. But  
18304 there he stands, struggling against God, and  
18305 against the Holy Ghost, and against conscience,  
18306 until he is distressed almost to death, and still he  
18307 will not yield; and now some one comes in, "Oh,  
18308 I hate to see you feel so bad, do not be so

18309 distressed, cheer up, cheer up, religion do not  
18310 consist in being gloomy, be comforted.” Horrid!

18311

18312 5. Whatever involves the subject of religion in  
18313 mystery, is calculated to give a sinner false  
18314 comfort.

18315

18316 When a sinner is anxious on the subject of  
18317 religion, very often, if you becloud it in mystery,  
18318 he will feel relieved. The sinner’s distress arises  
18319 from the pressure of present obligation.

18320 Enlighten him on this point, and clear it up, and  
18321 if he will not yield, it will only increase his  
18322 distress. But tell him that regeneration is all a  
18323 mystery, something he cannot understand; and  
18324 leave him all in a fog of darkness, and you  
18325 relieve his anxiety. It is his clear view of the  
18326 nature and duty of repentance, that produces his  
18327 distress. It is the light that brings agony to his  
18328 mind, while he refuses to obey. It is that, which  
18329 will make up the pains of hell. And it will almost  
18330 make hell in the sinner’s breast here, if only  
18331 made clear enough. But only cover up this light,  
18332 and his anxiety will immediately become far less  
18333 acute and thrilling. But if you lift up a certain  
18334 and clear light, and flash it broad upon his soul,  
18335 and if he will not yield, you kindle up to the  
18336 tortures of hell in his bosom.

18337

18338 6. Whatever relieves the sinner from a sense of  
18339 blame, is calculated to give him false comfort.

18340

18341 The more a man feels himself to blame, the  
18342 deeper is his distress. But anything that lessens  
18343 his sense of blame, of course lessens his distress,  
18344 but it is a comfort full of death. If anything will  
18345 help him divide the blame, and throw off a part  
18346 of it upon God, it will afford comfort, but it is a  
18347 relief that will destroy his soul.

18348

18349 7. To tell him of his inability, is false comfort.  
18350 Tell an anxious sinner "What can you do? you  
18351 are a poor, feeble creature, you can do nothing."  
18352 You will make him feel a kind of despondency.  
18353 But it is not that keen agony of remorse, with  
18354 which God wrings the soul, when he is laboring  
18355 to cut him down and bring him to repentance.

18356

18357 If you tell him he is unable to comply with the  
18358 Gospel, he naturally falls in with it as a relief.  
18359 He says to himself, "Yes, I am unable, I am a  
18360 poor, feeble creature, I cannot do this, and  
18361 certainly God cannot send me to hell for not  
18362 doing what I cannot do." Why, if I believed that  
18363 the sinner was unable, I would tell him plainly,  
18364 "Do not be afraid, you are not to blame for not

18365 complying with the call of the Gospel: for you  
18366 are unable, and God will never send you to hell  
18367 for not doing what you have no strength to do.  
18368 “Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” I  
18369 know it is not common for those who talk about  
18370 the sinner’s being unable, to be so consistent,  
18371 and carry out their theory. But the sinner infers  
18372 all this, and so he feels relieved. It is all false,  
18373 and all the comfort derived from it, is only  
18374 treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

18375  
18376 8. Whatever makes the impression on a sinner’s  
18377 mind that he is to be passive in religion, is  
18378 calculated to give him false comfort.

18379  
18380 Give him the idea he has nothing to do but to  
18381 wait God’s time; tell him conversion is the work  
18382 of God, and he ought to leave it to him; and that  
18383 he must be careful, not to try to take the work  
18384 out of God’s hand; and he will infer, as before,  
18385 that he is not to blame, and will feel relieved. If  
18386 he is only to hold still, and let God do the work,  
18387 just as a man holds still to have his arm  
18388 amputated, he feels relieved. But such  
18389 instruction as this, is all wrong. If the sinner is  
18390 thus to hold still and let God do it, he instantly  
18391 infers that he is not to blame for not doing it

18392 himself. And the inference is not only natural but  
18393 legitimate, for he is not to blame,

18394

18395 It is true that there is a sense in which  
18396 conversion is the work of God. But it is false, as  
18397 it is often represented. It is also true that there is  
18398 a sense, in which conversion is the sinner's own  
18399 act. It is ridiculous, therefore, to say, that a  
18400 sinner is passive in regeneration, or passive in  
18401 being converted, for conversion is his own act.  
18402 The thing to be done is that which cannot be  
18403 done for him. It is something which he must do,  
18404 or it will never be done.

18405

18406 9. Telling a sinner to wait God's time.

18407

18408 Some years ago, I met a woman in Philadelphia,  
18409 who was anxious about her soul, and had been a  
18410 long time in that state. I conversed with her, and  
18411 endeavored to learn her state. She told me a  
18412 good many things, and finally said she knew she  
18413 ought to be willing to wait on God as long as he  
18414 had waited upon her. She said, God had waited  
18415 on her a great many years, before she would give  
18416 any attention to his calls, and now she believed it  
18417 was her duty to wait God's time to show mercy  
18418 and convert her soul. And she said, this was the  
18419 instruction she had received. She must be

18420 patient, and wait God's time, and by and by he  
18421 would give her relief. Oh, amazing folly!  
18422  
18423 Here is the sinner in rebellion. God comes with  
18424 pardon in one hand, and a sword in the other,  
18425 and tells the sinner to repent and receive pardon,  
18426 or refuse and perish. And now here comes a  
18427 minister of the Gospel, and tells the sinner to  
18428 "wait God's time." Virtually he says, that God is  
18429 not ready to have him repent now, and is not  
18430 ready to pardon him now, and thus, in fact,  
18431 throws off the blame of his impenitence upon  
18432 God. Instead of pointing out the sinner's guilt, in  
18433 not submitting at once to God, he points out  
18434 God's insincerity in making the offer, when, in  
18435 fact, he was not ready to grant the blessing.  
18436  
18437 I have often thought such teachers needed the  
18438 rebuke of Elijah when he met the priests of Baal.  
18439 "Cry aloud, for he is a God; either he is talking,  
18440 or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey; or  
18441 peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."  
18442 The minister who ventures to intimate that God  
18443 is not ready, and that tells the sinner to wait  
18444 God's time, might almost as well tell him, that  
18445 now God is asleep, or gone on a journey, and  
18446 cannot attend to him at present. Miserable  
18447 comforters indeed! It is little less than



18448 outrageous blasphemy of God. How many have  
18449 gone to the judgment, red all over with the blood  
18450 of souls, that they have deceived and destroyed,  
18451 by telling them God was not ready to save them,  
18452 and they must wait God's time. No doubt, such a  
18453 doctrine is exceedingly calculated to afford  
18454 present relief to an anxious sinner. It warrants  
18455 him to say, "Oh, yes, God is not ready, I must  
18456 wait God's time and so I can live in sin, and take  
18457 it out a while longer, till he gets ready to attend  
18458 to me, and then I will get religion."

18459

18460 10. It is false comfort to tell an anxious sinner to  
18461 do any thing for relief, which he can do, and not  
18462 submit his heart to God.

18463

18464 An anxious sinner is often willing to do anything  
18465 else, but the very thing which God requires him  
18466 to do. He is willing to go to the ends of the earth,  
18467 or to pay his money, or to endure suffering, or  
18468 anything, but full and instantaneous submission  
18469 to God. Now, if you will compromise the matter  
18470 with him, and tell him of something else that he  
18471 may do, and yet evade that point, he will be very  
18472 much comforted. He likes that instruction. He  
18473 says, "Oh, yes, I will do that, I like that minister,  
18474 he is not so severe as others, he seems to

18475 understand my particular case, and knows how  
18476 to make allowances.”

18477

18478 It often reminds me of the conduct of a patient  
18479 who is very sick, but has a great dislike for a  
18480 certain physician and a particular medicine; but  
18481 that is the very physician who alone understands  
18482 treating his disease, and that the only remedy for  
18483 it. Now the patient is willing to do anything else,  
18484 and call in any other physician; and he is anxious  
18485 and in distress, and is asking all his friends if  
18486 they cannot tell him what he shall do, and he will  
18487 take all the nostrums and quack medicines in the  
18488 country, before he will submit to the only course  
18489 that can bring him relief. By and by, after he has  
18490 tried everything without any benefit, if he does  
18491 not die in the experiment, he gives up his  
18492 unreasonable opposition, calls in the physician,  
18493 takes the proper medicine, and is cured. Just so it  
18494 is with sinners. They will eagerly do anything, if  
18495 you will let them off from this intolerable  
18496 pressure of present obligation to submit to God. I  
18497 will mention a few of the things which sinners  
18498 are told to do.

18499

18500 (1.) Telling a sinner he must use the means. Tell  
18501 an anxious sinner this—You must use the  
18502 means, and he is relieved. “Oh, yes, I will do

18503 that, if that is all. I thought that God required me  
18504 to repent and submit to him now. But if using the  
18505 means will answer, I will do that with all my  
18506 heart.” He was distressed before, because he was  
18507 cornered up, and did not know which way to  
18508 turn. Conscience had beset him, like a wall of  
18509 fire, and urged him to repent now. But this  
18510 relieves him at once, and he feels better, and is  
18511 very thankful, he says, that he found such a good  
18512 adviser in his distress. But he may use the  
18513 means, as he calls it, till the day of judgment,  
18514 and not be a particle the better for it, but will  
18515 only hasten his way to death. What is the  
18516 sinner’s use of means, but rebellion against  
18517 God? God uses means. The church uses means  
18518 to convert and save sinners, to bear down upon  
18519 them, and bring them to submission. But what  
18520 has the sinner to do with using means? Will you  
18521 set him to use means back upon God, and so  
18522 make an offset in the matter? Or is he to use  
18523 means to make himself submit to God? How  
18524 shall he go to work with his means to make  
18525 himself submit? It is just telling the sinner, “You  
18526 need not submit to God now, but just use the  
18527 means awhile, and see if you cannot melt God’s  
18528 heart down to you, so that he will yield this point  
18529 of unconditional submission.” It is a mere cavil  
18530 to evade the duty of immediate submission to

18531 God. It is true that sinners, actuated by a regard  
18532 to their own happiness, often give attention to  
18533 the subject of religion, attend meetings, and  
18534 pray, and read, and many such things. But in all  
18535 this, they have no regard to the honor of God,  
18536 nor do they so much as mean to obey him. Their  
18537 design, is not obedience, for if it were, they  
18538 would not be impenitent sinners. They are not,  
18539 therefore, using means to be Christians, but to  
18540 obtain pardon, and a hope. It is absurd to say that  
18541 an impenitent sinner is using means to repent,  
18542 for this is the same as to say that he is willing to  
18543 repent, or in other words, that he does repent,  
18544 and is not an impenitent sinner. So, to say that an  
18545 unconverted sinner uses means with design to  
18546 become a Christian, is a contradiction, for it is  
18547 saying, that he is willing to be a Christian, which  
18548 is the same as to say that he is a Christian  
18549 already.

18550

18551 (2.) Telling the sinner to pray for a new heart. I  
18552 once heard a celebrated Sunday-school teacher  
18553 do this. He was almost the father of Sunday-  
18554 schools in this country. He called a little girl up  
18555 to him, and began to talk to her. "My little  
18556 daughter, are you a Christian?" No, sir. "Well,  
18557 you cannot be a Christian, yourself, can you?"  
18558 No, sir. "No, you cannot be a Christian, you

18559 cannot change your heart yourself, but you must  
18560 pray for a new heart, that is all you can do, pray  
18561 to God, God will give you a new heart.” He was  
18562 an aged and venerable man, but I felt almost  
18563 disposed to rebuke him openly in the name of  
18564 the Lord, I could not bear to hear him deceive  
18565 that child, telling her she could not be a  
18566 Christian. Does God say “Pray for a new heart?”  
18567 Never. He says, “Make you a new heart.” And  
18568 the sinner is not to be told to pray to God to do  
18569 his duty for him, but to go and do it himself. I  
18570 know the Psalmist, a good man, prayed. “Create  
18571 in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit  
18572 within me.” He had faith and prayed in faith. But  
18573 that is a very different thing from setting an  
18574 obstinate rebel to pray for a new heart. No doubt,  
18575 an anxious sinner will be delighted with such  
18576 instruction. “Why, I knew I needed a new heart,  
18577 and that I ought to repent, but I thought I must  
18578 do it myself, I am very willing to ask God to do  
18579 it, I hated to do it myself, but have no objection  
18580 that God should do it, if he will, and I will pray  
18581 for it, if that is all that is required.”

18582  
18583 (3.) Telling the sinner to persevere. And suppose  
18584 he does persevere. He is as certain to be damned  
18585 as if he had been in hell ever since the  
18586 foundation of the world. His anxiety arises only

18587 from his resistance, and if he would submit, it  
18588 would cease. And now, will you tell him to  
18589 persevere in the very thing that causes his  
18590 distress? Suppose my child should, in a fit of  
18591 passion, throw a book or something on the floor.  
18592 I tell him "Take it up," and instead of minding  
18593 what I say, he runs off and plays. "Take it up!"  
18594 He sees I am in earnest, and begins to look  
18595 serious. "Take it up, or I shall get a rod." And I  
18596 put up my arm to get the rod. He stands still.  
18597 "Take it up, or you must be whipped." He comes  
18598 slowly along to the place, and then begins to  
18599 weep. "Take it up, my child, or you will  
18600 certainly be punished." Now he is in distress,  
18601 and sobs and sighs as if his bosom would burst,  
18602 but still remains as stubborn as if he knew I  
18603 could not punish him. Now I begin to press him  
18604 with motives to submit and obey, but there he  
18605 stands, in agony, and at length bursts out, "Oh,  
18606 father, I do feel so bad, I think I am growing  
18607 better." And now, suppose a neighbor to come  
18608 in, and see the child standing there, in all this  
18609 agony of stubbornness. The neighbor asks him  
18610 what he is standing there for, and what he is  
18611 doing. "Oh, I am using means to pick up that  
18612 book." If this neighbor should tell the child,  
18613 "Persevere, persevere, my boy, you will get it by  
18614 and by," what should I do? Why, I would turn

18615 him out of the house. What does he mean by  
18616 encouraging my child in his rebellion.  
18617  
18618 Now, God calls the sinner to repent, he threatens  
18619 him, he draws the glittering sword, he persuades  
18620 him, he uses motives, and the sinner is distressed  
18621 to agony, for he sees himself driven to the  
18622 dreadful alternative of giving up his sins or  
18623 going to hell. He ought instantly to lay down his  
18624 weapons, and break his heart at once. But he  
18625 resists, and struggles against conviction, and that  
18626 creates his distress. Now will you tell him to  
18627 persevere? Persevere in what? In struggling  
18628 against God! That is just the direction the devil  
18629 would give. All the devil wants is to see him  
18630 persevere in just the way he is going on, and his  
18631 destruction is sure. Satan may go to sleep.  
18632  
18633 (4.) Telling the sinner to press forward. That is,  
18634 “You are in a good way, only press forward, and  
18635 you will get to heaven.” This is on the  
18636 supposition that his face is towards heaven,  
18637 when in fact his face is towards hell, and he is  
18638 pressing forward, and never more rapidly than  
18639 now, while he is resisting the Holy Ghost. Often  
18640 have I heard this direction given, when the  
18641 sinner was in as bad a way as he could be. What  
18642 you ought to tell him is, “STOP—sinner, stop,

18643 do not take another step that way, it leads to  
18644 hell.” God tells him to stop, and because he does  
18645 not wish to stop, he is distressed. Now, why  
18646 should you attempt to comfort him in this way?

18647

18648 (5.) Tell a sinner that he must try to repent and  
18649 give his heart to God. “Oh, yes,” says the sinner,  
18650 “I am willing to try. I have often tried to do it,  
18651 and I will try again.” Ah, does God tell you to  
18652 try to repent? All the world would be willing to  
18653 try to repent, in their way. Giving this direction  
18654 implies that it is very difficult to repent, and  
18655 perhaps impossible, and that the best thing a  
18656 sinner can do is to try and see whether he can do  
18657 it or not. What is this but substituting your own  
18658 commandment in the place of God’s. God  
18659 requires nothing short of repentance and a holy  
18660 heart. Anything short of that is comforting him  
18661 in vain, “seeing in your answers there remaineth  
18662 falsehood.”

18663

18664 (6.) To tell him to pray for repentance. “Oh yes,  
18665 I will pray for repentance, if that is all. I was  
18666 distressed because I thought God required me to  
18667 repent, but if he will do it, I can wait.” And so he  
18668 feels relieved, and is quite comfortable.

18669



18670 (7.) To tell a sinner to pray for conviction, or  
18671 pray for the Holy Ghost to show him his sins, or  
18672 to labor to get more light on the subject of his  
18673 guilt, in order to increase his conviction.

18674

18675 All this is just what the sinner wants, because it  
18676 lets him off from the pressure of present  
18677 obligation. He wants just a little more time.  
18678 Anything that will defer that present pressure of  
18679 obligation to repent immediately is a relief.  
18680 What does he want more conviction for? Does  
18681 God give any such direction to an impenitent  
18682 sinner? God takes it for granted that he has  
18683 conviction enough already. And so he has. Do  
18684 you say he cannot realize all his sins? If he can  
18685 realize only one of them, let him repent of that  
18686 one, and he is a Christian. Suppose he could see  
18687 them all, what reason is there to think he would  
18688 repent of them all, any more than that he would  
18689 repent of that one that he does see? All this is  
18690 comforting the sinner by setting him to do that  
18691 which he can do and will not submit his heart to  
18692 God.

18693

18694 11. Another way in which false comfort is given  
18695 to anxious sinners, is to tell them God is trying  
18696 their faith by keeping them in the furnace, and  
18697 they must wait patiently upon the Lord. Just as if

18698 God was in fault, or stood in the way, of his  
18699 being a Christian. Or as if an impenitent sinner  
18700 had faith! What an abomination! Suppose  
18701 somebody should tell my child, while he was  
18702 standing by the book as I have described, “Wait  
18703 patiently, boy, your father is trying your faith.”  
18704 No. The sinner is trying the patience and  
18705 forbearance of God. God is not setting himself to  
18706 torture a sinner, and teach him a lesson of  
18707 patience. But he is waiting upon him, and  
18708 laboring to bring him at once into such a state of  
18709 mind as will render it consistent to fill his soul  
18710 with the peace of heaven. And shall the sinner be  
18711 encouraged to resist by the idea that God is  
18712 bantering? TAKE CARE. God has said his Spirit  
18713 shall not always strive.

18714

18715 12. Another false comfort is telling a sinner, Do  
18716 your duty, and leave your conversion with God.

18717

18718 I once heard an elder of a church say to an  
18719 anxious sinner, “Do your duty, and leave your  
18720 conversion to God, he will do it in his own time  
18721 and way.” That was just the same as telling him  
18722 that it was not his duty to be converted now. He  
18723 did not say, Do your duty, and leave your  
18724 salvation with God. That would have been  
18725 proper enough, for it would have been simply

18726 telling him to submit to God, and would have  
18727 included conversion as the first duty of all. But  
18728 he told him to leave his conversion to God. And  
18729 this elder, that gave such advice, was a man of  
18730 liberal education too. How absurd! Just as if he  
18731 could do his duty and not be converted. Just as if  
18732 God was going to convert a sinner and let the  
18733 sinner sit calmly under it in the use of means.  
18734 Horrible! No. God has required him to make him  
18735 a new heart, and do you beware how you  
18736 comfort him with an answer of falsehood.

18737

18738 13. Sometimes professors of religion will try to  
18739 comfort a sinner, by telling him, “Do not be  
18740 discouraged; I was a long time in this way before  
18741 I found comfort.” They will tell him, “I was  
18742 under conviction so many weeks—or perhaps so  
18743 many months, or sometimes years, and have  
18744 gone through with all this, and know just how  
18745 you feel, your experience is the same with mine,  
18746 precisely, and after so long a time I found relief,  
18747 and I do not doubt you will find it by and by. Do  
18748 not despair, God will comfort you soon.” Tell a  
18749 sinner to take courage in his rebellion! Oh,  
18750 horrible. Such professors ought to be ashamed.  
18751 Suppose you were under conviction so many  
18752 weeks, and afterwards found relief, it is the very  
18753 last thing you ought to tell to an anxious sinner.

18754 What is it but encouraging him to hold on, when  
18755 his business is to submit. Did you hold out so  
18756 many weeks while the Spirit was striving with  
18757 you. You only deserved so much the more to be  
18758 damned, for your obstinacy and stupidity.

18759

18760 Sinner! it is no sign God will spare you so long,  
18761 or that his Spirit will remain with you to be  
18762 resisted. And remember, if the Spirit is taken  
18763 away, you will be sent to hell.

18764

18765 14. "I have faith to believe you will be  
18766 converted."

18767

18768 You have faith to believe! On what does your  
18769 faith rest? On the promise of God? On the  
18770 influences of the Holy Ghost? Then you are  
18771 counteracting your own faith. The very design  
18772 and object of the Spirit of God, is, to tear away  
18773 from the sinner his last vestige of a hope, while  
18774 remaining in sin; to annihilate every crag and  
18775 twig he may cling to. And the object of your  
18776 instruction should be the same. You should fall  
18777 in with the plan of God. It is only in this way  
18778 that you can ever do any good, by crowding him  
18779 right up to the work, to submit at once and leave  
18780 his soul in the hands of God. But when one that  
18781 he thinks is a Christian tells him, "I have faith to

18782 believe you will be converted,” it upholds him in  
18783 his false expectation. Instead of tearing him  
18784 away from his false hopes, and throwing him  
18785 upon Christ, you just turn him off to hang upon  
18786 your faith, and find comfort because you have  
18787 faith for him. This is all false comfort, that  
18788 worketh death.

18789

18790 15. “I will pray for you.” Sometimes professors  
18791 of religion try to comfort an anxious sinner in  
18792 this way, by telling him, “I will pray for you.”  
18793 This is false comfort, for it leads the sinner to  
18794 trust in those prayers, instead of trusting in  
18795 Christ. The sinner says, “He is a good man, and  
18796 God hears the prayers of good men, no doubt his  
18797 prayers will prevail some time, and I shall be  
18798 converted, I do not think I shall be lost.” And his  
18799 anxiety, his agony, is all gone. A woman said to  
18800 a minister, “I have no hope now, but I have faith  
18801 in your prayers.” Just such faith, this is, as the  
18802 devil wants them to have—faith in prayers  
18803 instead of faith in Christ.

18804

18805 16. “I rejoice to see you in this way, and I hope  
18806 you will be faithful, and hold out.” What is that  
18807 but rejoicing to see him in rebellion against  
18808 God? For that is precisely the ground on which  
18809 he stands. He is resisting conviction, and

18810 resisting conscience, and resisting the Holy  
18811 Ghost, and yet you rejoice to see him in this  
18812 way, and hope he will be faithful and hold out.  
18813 There is a sense, indeed, in which it may be said  
18814 that his situation is more hopeful than when he  
18815 was in stupidity. For God has convinced him,  
18816 and may succeed in turning and subduing him.  
18817 But that is not the sense in which the sinner  
18818 himself will understand it. He will suppose that  
18819 you think him in a hopeful way, because he is  
18820 doing better than formerly. When his guilt and  
18821 danger are, in fact, greater than they ever were  
18822 before. And instead of rejoicing, you ought to be  
18823 distressed and in agony, to see him thus resisting  
18824 the Holy Ghost, for every moment he does this,  
18825 he is in danger of being left of God, and given  
18826 up to hardness of heart and to despair.

18827  
18828 17. “You will have your pay for this, by and by,  
18829 God will reward you.” Yes, sinners, God will  
18830 reward you, if you continue in this way, he will  
18831 put you in the fires of hell. Reward for all this  
18832 distress! Yes, if you are ever rewarded for it, it  
18833 will be in hell. I once heard a sinner say, “I feel  
18834 very bad, I have strong hopes that I shall get my  
18835 reward.” But that individual afterwards said,  
18836 “Nowhere can there be found so black a sinner  
18837 as I am, and no sin of my life seems so black,

18838 and damning as that expression.” He was  
18839 overwhelmed with contrition, that he should ever  
18840 have had such an idea, as to think God would  
18841 reward him for suffering so much distress, when  
18842 he brought it all upon himself, needlessly, by his  
18843 wicked resistance to the truth, The truth is, what  
18844 such people want, is to comfort the sinner, and  
18845 being all in the dark themselves on the subject of  
18846 religion, they of course give him false comfort.

18847  
18848 18. Another false comfort, is to tell the sinner he  
18849 has not repented enough. The truth is, he has nor  
18850 repented at all. God always comforts the sinner  
18851 as soon as he repents. This direction implies that  
18852 his feelings are right as far as they go. To imply  
18853 that he has any repentance, is to tell him a lie,  
18854 and cheat him out of his soul.

18855  
18856 19. People sometimes comfort a sinner by telling  
18857 him “If you are elected, you will be brought in.”  
18858 I once heard of a case where a person under  
18859 great distress of mind was sent to converse with  
18860 a neighboring minister, They conversed a long  
18861 time. As the person went away, the minister said  
18862 to him, “I should like to write a line by you, to  
18863 your father.” His father was a pious man. The  
18864 minister wrote the letter, and forgot to seal it. As  
18865 the sinner was going home, he saw that the letter

18866 was not sealed, and he thought to himself, that  
18867 probably the minister had written about him, and  
18868 his curiosity at length led him to open and read  
18869 it. And there he found it written to this purport:  
18870 “Dear sir. I find your son under conviction, and  
18871 in great distress, and it seems not easy to say  
18872 anything to give him relief. But, if he is one of  
18873 the elect, he will surely be brought in.” He  
18874 wanted to say something to comfort the father.  
18875 But now, mark. That letter had well-nigh ruined  
18876 his soul. He settled down on the doctrine of  
18877 election—”If I am elected, I shall be brought in,”  
18878 and his conviction was all gone. Years  
18879 afterwards he was awakened and converted, but  
18880 only after a great struggle, and never until that  
18881 false impression was obliterated from his mind,  
18882 and he was made to see that he had nothing at all  
18883 to do with the doctrine of election, but if he did  
18884 not repent, he would be damned.

18885

18886 20. It is very common for some people to tell an  
18887 awakened sinner, “You are in a very prosperous  
18888 way, I am glad to see you so, and feel  
18889 encouraged about you.” It sometimes seems as if  
18890 the church was in league with the devil to help  
18891 sinners resist the Holy Ghost. The thing that the  
18892 Holy Ghost wants to make the sinner feel, is,  
18893 that all his ways are wrong, and that they lead to



18894 hell. And everybody is conspiring to make the  
18895 opposite impression. The Spirit is trying to  
18896 discourage him, and they are trying to encourage  
18897 him; the Spirit to distress, by showing him he is  
18898 all wrong, and they to comfort him by saying he  
18899 is doing well. Has it come to this, that the worst  
18900 counteraction to the truth, and the greatest  
18901 obstacle to the Spirit shall spring from the  
18902 church? Sinner! Do not believe any such thing.  
18903 You are not in a hopeful way. You are not doing  
18904 well, but ill; as ill as you can, while resisting the  
18905 Holy Ghost.

18906  
18907 21. Another very fatal way, in which false  
18908 comfort is given to sinners, is by applying to  
18909 them certain Scripture promises, which were  
18910 designed only for saints. This is a grand device  
18911 of the devil. It is much practised by the  
18912 Universalists. But Christians often do it. For  
18913 example:

18914  
18915 (1.) “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall  
18916 be comforted.” How often has this passage been  
18917 applied to anxious sinners, who were in distress  
18918 because they would not submit to God; blessed  
18919 are ye that mourn. Indeed! That is true, where  
18920 they mourn with godly sorrow. But what is this  
18921 sinner mourning about? He is mourning because

18922 God's law is holy and his terms of salvation so  
18923 fixed that he cannot bring them down to his  
18924 mind. Tell such a rebel—Blessed are they that  
18925 mourn! You might just as well apply it to those  
18926 that are in hell. There is mourning there too. The  
18927 sinner is mourning because there is no other way  
18928 of salvation, because God is so holy that he  
18929 requires him to give up all his sins, and he feels,  
18930 that the time has come, that he must either give  
18931 them up, or be damned. Shall we tell him, he  
18932 shall be comforted? Go and tell the devil, "Poor  
18933 devil, you mourn now, but the Bible says you are  
18934 blessed if you mourn, and you shall be  
18935 comforted by and by."

18936  
18937 (2.) "They that seek shall find." This is said to  
18938 sinners in such a way as to imply that the  
18939 anxious sinner is seeking religion. This promise  
18940 was made in reference to Christians, who ask in  
18941 faith, and seek to do the will of God, and is not  
18942 applicable to those who are seeking hope or  
18943 comfort; but to holy seeking. To apply it to an  
18944 impenitent sinner, is only to deceive him, for his  
18945 seeking is not of this character. To tell him "You  
18946 are seeking, are you? Well, seek, and you shall  
18947 find," is to cherish a fatal delusion. While he  
18948 remains impenitent, he has not a desire, which  
18949 the devil might not have, and remain a devil still.

18950

18951 If he had desire to do his duty, if he was seeking  
18952 to do the will of God, and give up his sins, he  
18953 would be a Christian. But to comfort an  
18954 impenitent sinner, with such a promise, you  
18955 might just as well comfort Satan.

18956

18957 (3.) “Be not weary in well doing, for in due time  
18958 you shall reap if you faint not.” To apply this to  
18959 a sinner for comfort, is absurd. Just as if he was  
18960 doing something to please God. He has never  
18961 done well, and never has done more ill, than  
18962 now. Suppose my neighbor, who came in while I  
18963 was trying to subdue my child, should say to the  
18964 child, “In due time you shall reap, if you faint  
18965 not,” what should I say? “Reap, yes, you shall  
18966 reap, if you do not give up your obstinacy, you  
18967 shall reap indeed, for I will apply the rod.” So  
18968 the struggling sinner shall reap the damnation of  
18969 hell, if he does not give up his sins.

18970

18971 22. Some professors of religion, when they  
18972 attempt to converse with awakened sinners, are  
18973 very fond of saying, “I will tell you my  
18974 experience.” This is a dangerous snare, and often  
18975 gives the devil a handle to lead him to hell, by  
18976 trying to copy your experience. If you tell it to  
18977 him, and he thinks it is a Christian experience,

18978 he will almost infallibly be trying to imitate it,  
18979 and instead of following the Gospel, or the  
18980 leadings of the Spirit in his own soul, he is  
18981 following your example. This is absurd as well  
18982 as dangerous. He never will have just such  
18983 feelings as you had. No two persons were ever  
18984 exercised just alike. Men's experiences are as  
18985 much unlike as their countenances. Such a  
18986 course is very likely to mislead him. The design,  
18987 is often, nothing but to encourage him, at the  
18988 very point where he ought not to be encouraged,  
18989 before he has submitted to God, And it is  
18990 calculated to impede the work of God in his  
18991 soul.

18992  
18993 23. How many times will people tell an  
18994 awakened sinner that God has begun a good  
18995 work in him, and he will carry it on. I have  
18996 known parents talk so with their children, and as  
18997 soon as they saw their children awakened, give  
18998 up all former anxiety about them, and settle  
18999 down at their ease, thinking that now God had  
19000 begun a good work in their children, he would  
19001 carry it on. It would be just as rational for a  
19002 farmer to say so about his grain, and as soon as it  
19003 comes up out of the ground, say, "Well, God has  
19004 begun a good work in my field, and he will carry  
19005 it on." What would be thought of a farmer who

19006 should neglect to put up his fence, because God  
19007 had begun the work of giving him a crop of  
19008 grain? If you tell a sinner so, and he believes  
19009 you, it will certainly be his destruction, for it will  
19010 prevent his doing that which is absolutely  
19011 indispensable to his being saved. If, as soon as  
19012 the sinner is awakened, he is taught that now  
19013 God has begun a good work, that only needs to  
19014 be carried on, and that God will surely carry it  
19015 on, he sees that he has no further occasion to be  
19016 anxious, for, in fact, he has nothing more to do.  
19017 And so he will be relieved from that intolerable  
19018 pressure of present obligation, to repent and  
19019 submit to God. And if he is relieved from his  
19020 sense of obligation to do it, he will never do it.

19021  
19022 24. Some will tell the sinner, “Well, you have  
19023 broken off your sins, have you?” “Oh, yes,” says  
19024 the sinner. When it is all false, he has never  
19025 forsaken his sins for a moment, he has only  
19026 exchanged one form of sin for another; only  
19027 placed himself in a new attitude of resistance.  
19028 And to tell him, he has broken them off, is to  
19029 give him false comfort.

19030  
19031 25. Sometimes this direction is given for the  
19032 purpose of relieving the agony of an anxious  
19033 sinner, “Do what you can, and God will do the

19034 rest,” or “Do what you can, and God will help  
19035 you.” This is the same as telling a sinner, “You  
19036 cannot do what God requires you to do, but if  
19037 you will do what you can, God will help you, as  
19038 to the rest.” Now sinners often get the idea that  
19039 they have done all they can, when, in fact, they  
19040 have done nothing at all, only resisted God with  
19041 all their might. I have often heard them say, “I  
19042 have done all I can, and I get no relief, what can  
19043 I do more?” Now, you can see how comforting it  
19044 must be to such a one to have a professor of  
19045 religion come in and say, “If you will do what  
19046 you can, God will help you.” It relieves all his  
19047 keen distress at once. He may be uneasy, and  
19048 unhappy, but his agony is gone.

19049  
19050 26. Again they say, “You should be thankful for  
19051 what you have, and hope for more.” If the sinner  
19052 is convicted, they tell him he should be thankful  
19053 for conviction, and hope for conversion. If he  
19054 has any feeling, he should be thankful for what  
19055 feeling he has, just as if his feeling was religious  
19056 feeling, when he has no more religion, than  
19057 Satan. He has reason to be thankful, indeed;  
19058 thankful that he is out of hell, and thankful that  
19059 God is yet waiting on him. But it is ridiculous to  
19060 tell him he should be thankful in regard to the

19061 state of his mind, when he is all the while  
19062 resisting his Maker with all his might.

19063

19064 ERRORS IN PRAYING FOR SINNERS.

19065

19066 I will here mention a few errors in praying for  
19067 sinners in their presence, by which an unhappy  
19068 impression is made on their minds, in  
19069 consequence of which, they often obtain false  
19070 comfort in their distress.

19071

19072 1. People sometimes pray for sinners, as if they  
19073 deserved TO BE PITIED more than BLAMED.  
19074 They pray for them as MOURNERS. "Lord help  
19075 these pensive mourners," as if they were just  
19076 mourning, like one that had lost a friend, or met  
19077 some other calamity, and they could not help it,  
19078 and were very sorry for it, but death would  
19079 come, and so they were greatly to be pitied, as  
19080 they were sitting there, sad, pensive, and sighing.  
19081 The Bible never talks so. It pities sinners, but it  
19082 pities them as mad and guilty rebels, guilty, and  
19083 deserving to go to hell, not as poor pensive  
19084 mourners, that cannot help it, that want to be  
19085 relieved, but can do nothing but sit and mourn.

19086

19087 2. Praying for them as poor sinners. Does the  
19088 Bible ever use any such language as this? The

19089 Bible never speaks of them as “poor sinners,” as  
19090 if they deserved to be pitied more than blamed.  
19091 Christ pities sinners in his heart. And so does  
19092 God pity them. He feels in his heart, all the  
19093 gushings of compassion for them, when he sees  
19094 them going on, obstinate and wilful in gratifying  
19095 their own lusts, at the peril of his eternal wrath.  
19096 But he never lets an expression escape from him,  
19097 as if the sinner was just a “poor creature” to be  
19098 pitied, as if he could not help it. The idea that he  
19099 is poor, rather than wicked, unfortunate, rather  
19100 than guilty, relieves the sinner greatly. I have  
19101 seen the sinner writhe with agony under the  
19102 truth, in a meeting, until somebody begun to  
19103 pray for him as a poor creature. And then he  
19104 would gush out into tears, and weep profusely,  
19105 and think he was greatly benefited by such a  
19106 prayer. “Oh, what a good prayer that was.” If  
19107 you go now and converse with that sinner, you  
19108 will find he is pitying himself as a poor  
19109 unfortunate creature, perhaps weeping over his  
19110 unhappy condition, but his CONVICTIONS OF  
19111 SIN, his deep impressions of AWFUL GUILT,  
19112 are all gone.

19113

19114 3. Praying that God would help the sinner to  
19115 repent. “O Lord, enable this poor sinner to  
19116 repent now.” This conveys the idea to the



19117 sinner's mind, that he is now trying with all his  
19118 might to repent, and that he cannot do it, and  
19119 therefore Christians are calling on God to help  
19120 him, and enable him to do it. Most professors of  
19121 religion pray for sinners, not that God would  
19122 make them WILLING to repent, but that he  
19123 would ENABLE them, or make them able. No  
19124 wonder their prayers are not heard. They relieve  
19125 the sinner of his sense of responsibility, and that  
19126 relieves his distress. But it is an insult to God, as  
19127 if God had commanded a sinner to do what he  
19128 could not do.

19129  
19130 4. People sometimes pray: "Lord, these sinners  
19131 are seeking thee, sorrowing." This language is an  
19132 allusion to what took place at the time when  
19133 Jesus was a little boy, and went into the temple  
19134 to talk with the rabbis and doctors. His parents,  
19135 you recollect, went a day's journey towards  
19136 home, before they missed him, and then they  
19137 turned back, and after looking all around, they  
19138 found the little Jesus standing in the temple and  
19139 disputing with the learned men, and his mother  
19140 said to him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with  
19141 us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee  
19142 sorrowing." And so this prayer represents  
19143 sinners as seeking Jesus, and he hides himself  
19144 from them, and they look all around, and hunt,

19145 and try to find him, and wonder where Jesus is,  
19146 and say, "Lord, we have sought Jesus these three  
19147 days sorrowing." It is a LIE. No sinner ever  
19148 sought Jesus with all his heart three days, or  
19149 three minutes, and could not find him. There  
19150 Jesus stands at his door and knocks, there he is  
19151 right before him pleading with him, and facing  
19152 him down with all his false pretences. Seeking  
19153 him! The sinner may whine and cry, "Oh, how I  
19154 am sorrowing, and seeking Jesus." It is no such  
19155 thing; Jesus is seeking you. And yet how many  
19156 oppressed consciences are relieved and  
19157 comforted by hearing one of these prayers.

19158  
19159 5. "Lord, have mercy on these sinners, who are  
19160 seeking thy love to know." This is a favorite  
19161 expression with many, as if sinners were seeking  
19162 to know the love of Christ, and could not. No  
19163 such thing. They are not seeking the love of  
19164 Christ, but seeking to get to heaven without  
19165 Jesus Christ. Just as if they were seeking it, and  
19166 he was so hard-hearted that he would not let  
19167 them have it.

19168  
19169 6. "Lord, have mercy on these penitent souls;"  
19170 calling anxious sinners penitent souls. If they are  
19171 penitent, they are Christians. To make an  
19172 impression on an unconverted sinner that he is

19173 penitent, is to make him believe a lie. But it is  
19174 very comforting to the sinner, and he likes to  
19175 take it up, and pray it over again, “O Lord, I am  
19176 a poor penitent soul, I am very penitent, I am so  
19177 distressed, Lord have mercy on a poor penitent.”  
19178 Dreadful delusion!

19179  
19180 7. Sometimes people pray for anxious sinners as  
19181 humble souls. “O Lord, these sinners have  
19182 humbled themselves.” Why, that is not true, they  
19183 have not humbled themselves; if they had, the  
19184 Lord would have raised them up and comforted  
19185 them, as he has promised. There is a hymn of  
19186 this character, that has done great mischief. It  
19187 begins,

19188  
19189  
19190 “Come HUMBLE sinner in whose breast  
19191  
19192 A thousand thoughts revolve.”

19193  
19194 This hymn was once given by a minister to an  
19195 awakened sinner, as one applicable to his case.  
19196 He began to read, “Come humble sinner.” He  
19197 stopped, “Humble sinner, that is not applicable  
19198 to me, I am not a humble sinner.” Ah, how well  
19199 was it for him that the Holy Ghost had taught  
19200 him better than the hymn. If the hymn had said,

19201 Come anxious sinner, or guilty sinner, or  
19202 trembling sinner, it would have been well  
19203 enough, but to call him a humble sinner would  
19204 not do. There are a vast many hymns of the same  
19205 character. It is very common to find sinners  
19206 quoting the false sentiments of some hymn, to  
19207 excuse themselves in rebellion against God.

19208

19209 A minister told me he heard a prayer, quite  
19210 lately, in these words, "O Lord, these sinners  
19211 have humbled themselves, and come to thee as  
19212 well as they know how. If they knew any better,  
19213 they would do better, but O Lord, as they have  
19214 come to thee, in the best manner they can, we  
19215 pray thee accept them and shew mercy."

19216 Horrible!

19217

19218 8. Many pray, "Father, forgive them, they know  
19219 not what they do." This is the prayer which  
19220 Christ made for his murderers. And, in that case,  
19221 it was true, they did not know what they were  
19222 doing, for they did not believe that Jesus Christ  
19223 was the Messiah. But it cannot be said of sinners  
19224 under the Gospel, they do not know what they  
19225 are doing. They do know what they are doing.  
19226 They do not see the full extent of it, but they do  
19227 know that they are sinning against God, and  
19228 rejecting Christ, and the difficulty is, that they

19229 are unwilling to submit to God. But such a  
19230 prayer is calculated to make him feel relieved,  
19231 and make him say, “Lord, how can you blame  
19232 me so, I am a poor ignorant creature, I do not  
19233 know how to do what is required of me. If I  
19234 knew how, I would do it.”

19235  
19236 9. Another expression is, “Lord, direct these  
19237 sinners, who are inquiring the way to Zion, with  
19238 their faces thitherward.” But this language is  
19239 only applicable to Christians. Sinners have not  
19240 their faces toward Zion, their faces are set  
19241 toward hell. And how can a sinner be said to be  
19242 “inquiring the way” to Zion, when he has no  
19243 disposition to go there. The real difficulty is, that  
19244 he is unwilling to WALK in the way in which he  
19245 knows he ought to go.

19246  
19247 10. People pray that sinners may have more  
19248 conviction. Or, they pray that sinners may go  
19249 home solemn and tender, and take the subject  
19250 into consideration, instead of praying that they  
19251 may repent now. Or, they pray as if they  
19252 supposed the sinner was willing to do what is  
19253 required. All such prayers, are just such prayers  
19254 as the devil wants. He wishes to have such  
19255 prayers, and I dare say he does not care how  
19256 many such are offered.

19257

19258 Sometimes I have seen in an anxious meeting, or  
19259 when sinners have been called to the anxious  
19260 seats, and the minister has made the way of  
19261 salvation all plain to them, and taken away all  
19262 the stumbling blocks out of their path, and  
19263 removed the darkness of their minds on the  
19264 several points, and when they are just ready to  
19265 YIELD, some one will be called on to pray, and  
19266 instead of praying that they may repent now, he  
19267 begins to pray, "O Lord, we pray, that these  
19268 sinners may be solemn, that they may have a  
19269 deep sense of their sinfulness, that they may go  
19270 home impressed with their lost condition, that  
19271 they may attempt nothing in their own strength,  
19272 that they may not lose their convictions, and  
19273 that, in thine own time and way, they may be  
19274 brought out into the glorious light and liberty of  
19275 the sons of God."

19276

19277 Instead of bringing them right up to the point of  
19278 IMMEDIATE submission, on the spot, it gives  
19279 them time to breathe, it lets off all the pressure  
19280 of conviction, and he breathes freely again and  
19281 feels relieved, and sits down at his ease. Thus,  
19282 when the sinner is brought up, as it were, and  
19283 stands at the gate of heaven, such a prayer,  
19284 instead of pushing him in, sets him away back

19285 again,—”There, poor thing, sit there till God  
19286 helps you.”

19287

19288 11. Christians sometimes pray in such a manner  
19289 as to make the impression that CHRIST IS THE  
19290 SINNER’S FRIEND, in a different sense from  
19291 what God the Father is. They pray to him, “O,  
19292 thou friend of sinners,” as if God was full of  
19293 wrath, and stern vengeance, just going to crush  
19294 the poor wretch, till Jesus Christ comes in and  
19295 takes his part, and delivers him. Now this is all  
19296 wrong. The Father and the Son are perfectly  
19297 agreed, their feelings are all the same, and both  
19298 are equally disposed to have sinners saved. And  
19299 to make such an impression, deceives the sinner,  
19300 and leads to wrong feelings towards God. To  
19301 represent God the Father as standing over him,  
19302 with the sword of justice in his hand, eager to  
19303 strike the blow, till Christ interposes, is not true.  
19304 The Father is as much the sinner’s friend as the  
19305 Son. His compassion is equal. But if the sinner  
19306 gets this unfavorable idea of God the Father,  
19307 how is he ever to love him with all his heart, so  
19308 as to say “Abba, Father.”

19309

19310 12. The impression is often made by the manner  
19311 of praying, that you do not expect sinners to  
19312 repent NOW, or that you expect God to do

19313 THEIR duty, or that you wish to encourage them  
19314 to trust in your prayers. And so, sinners are  
19315 ruined. Never pray so as to make the impression  
19316 on sinners, that you secretly hope they are  
19317 Christians already, or that you feel a strong  
19318 confidence they will be, by and by, or that you  
19319 half believe they are converted now. This is  
19320 always unhappy. Multitudes are deceived with  
19321 false comfort, in this way, and prevented, just at  
19322 the critical point, from making the final  
19323 surrender of themselves to God.

19324

19325 Brethren, I find this field so broad that I cannot  
19326 possibly mention all I wished to say. There are  
19327 many other things that I intended to touch upon  
19328 this evening, but the time is too far spent. I must  
19329 close with a few brief

19330

19331 REMARKS.

19332

19333 1. Many persons who deal in this way with  
19334 anxious sinners, do it from false pity. They feel  
19335 so much sympathy and compassion that they  
19336 cannot bear to tell them the truth, which is  
19337 necessary to save them. As well might a  
19338 surgeon, when he sees that a man's arm must be  
19339 amputated, or he will die, indulge this feeling of  
19340 false pity, and just put on a plaster, and give him



19341 an opiate. There is no benevolence in that. True  
19342 benevolence would lead the surgeon to hide his  
19343 feelings, and to be cool and calm, and with a  
19344 keen knife, cut the limb off, and save the life. It  
19345 is false tenderness to do anything short of that. I  
19346 once saw a woman under distress of mind, who  
19347 had been well nigh driven to despair for months.  
19348 Her friends had tried all these false comforts  
19349 without effect, and they brought her to see a  
19350 minister, She was emaciated, and worn out with  
19351 agony. The minister set his eye upon her, and  
19352 poured in the truth upon her mind, and rebuked  
19353 her in a most pointed manner. The woman who  
19354 was with her interfered, she thought it cruel, and  
19355 said, "Oh, do comfort her, she is so distressed,  
19356 do not trouble her any more, she cannot bear it."  
19357 He turned, and rebuked her, and sent her away,  
19358 and then poured in the truth upon the anxious  
19359 sinner like fire, and in five minutes she was  
19360 converted, and went home full of joy. The plain  
19361 truth swept all her false notions away, and in a  
19362 few moments she was joyful in God.

19363

19364 2. This treatment of anxious sinners,  
19365 administering their false comfort, is, in fact,  
19366 cruelty. It is cruel as the grave, as cruel as hell,  
19367 for it is calculated to send the sinner down to its  
19368 burning abyss. Christians feel compassion for

19369 the anxious, and so they ought. But the last thing  
19370 they ought to do, is to flinch just at the point  
19371 where it comes to a crisis. They should feel  
19372 compassion, but they should show it just as the  
19373 surgeon does, when he deliberately goes to  
19374 work, in the right and best way, and cuts off the  
19375 man's arm, and thus cures him and saves his life.  
19376 just so Christians should let the sinner see their  
19377 compassion and tenderness, but they should take  
19378 God's part, fully and decidedly. They should lay  
19379 open to the sinner, the worst of his case, expose  
19380 his guilt and danger, and then lead him right up  
19381 to the cross, and insist on instant submission.  
19382 They must have firmness enough to do this work  
19383 thoroughly, and if they see the sinner distressed  
19384 and in agony, still they must press him right on,  
19385 and not give way in the least, however much he  
19386 may be in agony, but still press on till he yield.  
19387  
19388 To do this often requires nerve. I have often  
19389 been placed in circumstances, to know this by  
19390 experience. I have found myself surrounded by  
19391 anxious sinners, in such distress, as to make  
19392 every nerve tremble, some overcome with  
19393 emotion and lying on the floor, some applying  
19394 camphor to prevent their fainting, others  
19395 shrieking out as if they were just going to hell.  
19396 Now, suppose any one should give false comfort

19397 in such a case as this. Suppose he had not nerve  
19398 enough to bring them right up to the point of  
19399 instant and absolute submission. How unfit is  
19400 such a man to be trusted in a case like this.

19401

19402 3. Sometimes sinners become deranged through  
19403 despair and anguish of mind. Where this is the  
19404 case, it is almost always because those who deal  
19405 with them try to encourage them with false  
19406 comfort, and thus lead them to such a conflict  
19407 with the Holy Ghost. They try to hold them up,  
19408 while God is trying to break them down. And by  
19409 and by, the sinner's mind gets confused with this  
19410 contrariety of influences, and he either goes  
19411 deranged, or is driven to despair.

19412

19413 4. If you are going to deal with sinners,  
19414 remember that you are soon to meet them in  
19415 judgment, and be sure to treat them in such a  
19416 way that if they are lost, it will be their own  
19417 fault. Do not try to comfort them with false  
19418 notions now, and have them reproach you with it  
19419 then. Better suppress your false sympathy, and  
19420 let the naked truth cleave them asunder, joints  
19421 and marrow, than to sooth them with false  
19422 comfort, and beguile them away from God.

19423

19424 4. Sinner! if you converse with any Christians,  
19425 and they tell you to do anything, first ask, "If I  
19426 do that, shall I be saved?" You may be anxious,  
19427 and not be saved. You may pray, and not be  
19428 saved. You may read your Bible, and not be  
19429 saved. You may use means, in your way, and not  
19430 be saved. Whatever they tell you to do, if you  
19431 can do it and not be saved, do not attend to such  
19432 instructions. They are calculated to give you  
19433 false comfort, and divert your attention from the  
19434 main thing to be done, and beguile you down to  
19435 hell. Do not follow any such directions, lest you  
19436 should die while doing it, and then there is no  
19437 retrieve.

19438  
19439 Finally, never tell a sinner anything, or give him  
19440 any direction, that will lead him to stop short, or  
19441 that does not include absolute submission to  
19442 God. To let him stop at any point short of this, is  
19443 infinitely dangerous. Suppose you are at an  
19444 anxious meeting, or a prayer meeting, and tell a  
19445 sinner to pray, or to read a book, or anything  
19446 short of saving repentance, and he should fall  
19447 and break his neck that night, of whom would  
19448 his blood be required? A youth in New England  
19449 once met a minister in the street, and asked him  
19450 what he should do to be saved. The minister told  
19451 him to go home and go into his chamber, and

19452 kneel down and give his heart to God. “Oh, sir,”  
19453 said the boy, “I feel so bad, I am afraid I shall  
19454 not live to get home.” The minister saw his error,  
19455 and felt the rebuke, thus unconsciously given by  
19456 a child, and he told him, “Well, then, give your  
19457 heart to God here, and go home to your chamber  
19458 and tell him of it.”

19459

19460 Oh, it is enough to make one’s heart bleed, to  
19461 see so many miserable comforters for anxious  
19462 sinners, in whose answers there remaineth  
19463 falsehood. What a vast amount of spiritual  
19464 quackery there is in the world, and how many  
19465 “forgers of lies” there are, “physicians of no  
19466 value,” who know no better than to comfort  
19467 sinners with false hopes, and delude them with  
19468 their “old wives’ fables,” and nonsense, or who  
19469 give way to false tenderness and sympathy, till  
19470 they have not firmness enough to see the sword  
19471 of the Spirit applied, to cut men to the soul, and  
19472 lay open the sinner’s naked heart. Alas! that so  
19473 many are ever put into the ministry, who have  
19474 not skill enough to stand by and see the Spirit of  
19475 God do its work, in breaking up the old  
19476 foundations, and crushing all the rotten hopes of  
19477 a sinner, and breaking him all down at the feet of  
19478 Jesus.

19479

19480

19481

19482 [7] I believe the reporter passed over and did not  
19483 mention this case.

19484

19485

19486

19487 LECTURE XVIII.

19488

19489 DIRECTIONS TO SINNERS.

19490

19491 Text—What shall I do to be saved.—Acts xvi.

19492 30.

19493

19494 THESE are the words of the jailor at Philippi,  
19495 the question which he put to Paul and Silas, who  
19496 were then under his care as prisoners. Satan had,  
19497 in many ways, opposed these servants of God in  
19498 their work of preaching the Gospel, and had  
19499 been as often defeated and disgraced. But here,  
19500 at Philippi, he devised a new and peculiar project  
19501 for frustrating their labors. There was a certain  
19502 woman at Philippi, who was possessed with a  
19503 spirit of divination, or in other words, the spirit  
19504 of the devil, and brought her masters much gain  
19505 by her soothsaying. The devil set this woman to  
19506 follow Paul and Silas about the streets, and as

19507 soon as they had begun to gain the attention of  
19508 the people, she would come in and cry, “These  
19509 men are the servants of the most high God,  
19510 which show unto us the way of salvation.” That  
19511 is, she undertook to second the exhortations of  
19512 the preachers, and added her testimony, as if to  
19513 give additional weight to their instructions. The  
19514 effect of it was just what Satan desired. The  
19515 people all knew that this was a wicked, base  
19516 woman, and when they heard her attempting to  
19517 recommend this new preaching, they were  
19518 disgusted, and concluded it was all of a piece.  
19519 The devil knew that it would not do him any  
19520 good, but would help their cause, to set such a  
19521 person to oppose the preaching of the apostles,  
19522 or to speak against it. The time had gone by, for  
19523 that to succeed. And, therefore, he comes round  
19524 the other way, and takes the opposite ground,  
19525 and by setting her to praise them as the servants  
19526 of God, and to bear her polluted testimony in  
19527 favor of their instructions, he led people to  
19528 suppose the apostles. were of the same character  
19529 with her, and had the same spirit that she had,  
19530 and thus all their efforts were defeated. Paul saw  
19531 that if things went on so, he should be totally  
19532 baffled, and never succeed in establishing a  
19533 church at Philippi. And he turns round to her,  
19534 and commands the foul spirit, in the name of

19535 Jesus Christ, to come out of her. When her  
19536 masters saw that the hope of their gains was  
19537 gone, they raised a great persecution, and caught  
19538 Paul and Silas, and made a great ado, and  
19539 brought them before the magistrates, and raised  
19540 such a clamor that the magistrates shut them up  
19541 in prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.  
19542

19543 Thus, they thought they had put down the  
19544 excitement. But at midnight Paul and Silas  
19545 prayed and sang praises, and the prisoners heard  
19546 them. This old prison that had so long echoed to  
19547 the voice of blasphemy and oaths, now  
19548 resounded with the praises of God, and these  
19549 walls, that had stood so firm, now trembled  
19550 under the power of prayer. The stocks were  
19551 unloosed, the gates thrown open, and every  
19552 one's bands broken. The jailor was aroused from  
19553 his sleep, and when he saw the prison doors  
19554 opened, as he knew that if the prisoners had  
19555 escaped he must pay for it with his life, he drew  
19556 his sword, and was about to kill himself. But  
19557 Paul, who had no notion of escaping  
19558 clandestinely, cried out to him instantly. "Do  
19559 thyself no harm, for we are all here." And the  
19560 Jailor called for a light, and sprang in, and came  
19561 trembling, and fell down before his prisoners,



19562 Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said,  
19563 “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”  
19564  
19565 In my last lecture, I dwelt at some length on the  
19566 false instructions given to sinners under  
19567 conviction, and the false comforts too often  
19568 administered, and the erroneous instructions  
19569 which such persons receive. It is my design, to-  
19570 night, to show what are the instructions that  
19571 should be given to anxious sinners in order to  
19572 their speedy and effectual conversion. Or, in  
19573 other words, to explain to you, what answer  
19574 should be given to those who make the inquiry,  
19575 “What must I do to be saved?” In doing it, I  
19576 propose,  
19577  
19578 I. To show what is not a proper direction to be  
19579 given to sinners, when they make the inquiry in  
19580 the text.  
19581  
19582 II. Show what is a proper answer to the inquiry.  
19583 And,  
19584  
19585 III. To specify several errors, which anxious  
19586 sinners are apt to fall into.  
19587  
19588 I. I am to show what are not proper directions to  
19589 be given to anxious sinners.

19590

19591 No more important inquiry was ever made than  
19592 this, "What must I do to be saved?" Mankind are  
19593 apt enough to inquire "What shall I eat, and what  
19594 shall I drink," and the question may be answered  
19595 in various ways, with little danger. But when a  
19596 sinner asks in earnest, "What must I do to be  
19597 saved?" it is of infinite importance that he should  
19598 receive the right answer. It is my desire, to-night,  
19599 to tell you, professors of religion, what to answer  
19600 to this inquiry, and to tell you, who are sinners,  
19601 what you must do to be saved.

19602

19603 1. No direction should be given to a sinner, that  
19604 will leave him still in the gall of bitterness and  
19605 the bonds of iniquity. No answer is proper to be  
19606 given, with which, if he complies, he would not  
19607 go to heaven, if he should die the next moment.

19608

19609 2. No direction should be given, that does not  
19610 include a change of heart, or a right heart, or  
19611 hearty obedience to Christ. In other words,  
19612 nothing is proper, which does not imply actually  
19613 becoming a Christian. Any direction that falls  
19614 short of this, is of no use. It will not bring him  
19615 any nearer to the kingdom, it will do no good,  
19616 but will only lead him to defer the very thing  
19617 which he must do, in order to be saved. The

19618 sinner should be told plainly, at once, what he  
19619 must do, or die; and he should be told nothing  
19620 that does not include a right state of heart.  
19621 Whatever you may do, sinner, that does not  
19622 include a right heart, is sin. Whether you read  
19623 the Bible or not, it is sin, so long as you remain  
19624 in rebellion. Whether you go to meeting, or stay  
19625 away, whether you pray or not, it is nothing but  
19626 rebellion, every moment. It is surprising, that a  
19627 sinner should suppose himself doing God's  
19628 services, when he prays, and reads his Bible.  
19629 Should a rebel against this government, read the  
19630 statute book, while he continues in rebellion, and  
19631 has no design to obey; should he ask for pardon,  
19632 while he holds on to his weapons of resistance  
19633 and warfare, would you think him doing his  
19634 country a service, and laying them under  
19635 obligations to show him favor. No, you would  
19636 say that all his reading and praying, were only an  
19637 insult to the majesty both of the lawgiver and the  
19638 law. So you, sinner, while you remain in  
19639 impenitence, are insulting God and setting him  
19640 at defiance, whether you read his word and pray  
19641 or let it alone. No matter what place or what  
19642 attitude your body is in, on your knees, or in the  
19643 house of God, so long as your heart is not right,  
19644 so long as you resist the Holy Ghost, and reject  
19645 Christ, you are a rebel against your Maker.

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II. I am to show what is a proper answer to this inquiry. "What must I do to be saved?"

And, generally, you may give the sinner any direction, or tell him to do anything, that includes a right heart, and if you make him understand it, and do it, he will be saved. The Spirit of God, in striving with sinners, suits his strivings to the state of mind in which he finds them. His great object in striving with them, is, to dislodge them from their hiding-places, and bring them to submit to God, at once. Now these objections, and difficulties, and states of mind, are as various as the circumstances of mankind, as many as there are individuals. The characters of individuals affords an endless diversity. What is to be done with each one, and how he is to be converted, depends on his particular errors. It is necessary to ascertain his errors, to find out what he understands, and what he needs to be taught more perfectly, to see what points the Spirit of God is pressing upon his conscience, and to press the same things and thus bring him to Christ. The most common directions are the following:

19673 1. It is generally in point, and a safe and suitable  
19674 direction, to tell a sinner to repent. I say,  
19675 generally. For sometimes the Spirit of God  
19676 seems not so much to direct the sinner's  
19677 attention to his own sins as to some other thing.  
19678 In the days of the apostles, the minds of the  
19679 people seem to have been agitated mainly on the  
19680 question, whether Jesus was the true Messiah.  
19681 And so the apostles directed much of their  
19682 instructions to this point, to prove that he was  
19683 the Christ. And whenever anxious sinners asked  
19684 them what they must do, they most commonly  
19685 exhorted them to "Believe in the Lord Jesus  
19686 Christ." They bore down on this point, because  
19687 here was where the Spirit of God was striving  
19688 with them, and this was the subject that  
19689 especially agitated people's minds, and,  
19690 consequently, this would probably be the first  
19691 thing a person would do on submitting to God. It  
19692 was the grand point at issue between God and  
19693 the Jew and Gentile of those days, whether Jesus  
19694 Christ was the son of God. It was the point in  
19695 dispute. To bring a sinner to yield this  
19696 controverted question, was the way the most  
19697 effectually to humble him.  
19698  
19699 At other times, it will be found, that the Spirit of  
19700 God is dealing with sinners chiefly in reference

19701 to their own sins. Sometimes he deals with them  
19702 in regard to a particular duty, as prayer, perhaps  
19703 family prayer. The sinner will be found to be  
19704 contesting that point with God, whether it is  
19705 right for him to pray, or whether he ought to  
19706 pray in his family. I have known striking cases  
19707 of this kind, where the individual was struggling  
19708 on this point, and as soon as he fell on his knees  
19709 to pray, he yielded his heart, showing that this  
19710 was the very point which the Spirit of God was  
19711 contesting, and the hinge on which his  
19712 controversy with God all turned. That was  
19713 conversion.

19714

19715 The direction to repent is always proper, but will  
19716 not always be effectual, for there may be some  
19717 other thing that the sinner needs to be told also.  
19718 And where it is the pertinent direction, sinners  
19719 need not only to be told to repent, but to have it  
19720 explained to them what repentance is. Since  
19721 there has been so much mysticism, and false  
19722 philosophy and false theology, thrown around  
19723 the subject, it has become necessary to tell  
19724 sinners not only what you mean by repentance,  
19725 but also to tell them what you do not mean.  
19726 Words that used to be plain and easily  
19727 understood have now become so perverted that  
19728 they need to be explained to sinners, or they will

19729 often convey a wrong impression to their minds.  
19730 This is the case with the word repentance. Many  
19731 suppose that remorse, or a sense of guilt, is  
19732 repentance. Then hell is full of repentance, for it  
19733 is full of remorse, unutterable and eternal. Others  
19734 feel regret that they have done such a thing, and  
19735 they call that repenting of it. But they only regret  
19736 that they have sinned, because of the  
19737 consequences, and not because they abhor sin.  
19738 This is not repentance. Others suppose that  
19739 convictions of sin and strong fears of hell are  
19740 repentance. Others consider the remonstrances  
19741 of conscience as repentance; they say, "I never  
19742 do anything wrong but that I repent; that I  
19743 always feel sorry I did it." Others regard  
19744 repentance as a feeling of sorrow for sin. But  
19745 repentance is not an involuntary feeling of any  
19746 kind or degree. Sinners must be shown that all  
19747 these things are not repentance. They are not  
19748 only consistent with the utmost wickedness, but  
19749 the devil might have them all, and doubtless has  
19750 them all, and yet remains a devil. Repentance is  
19751 a change of mind, as regards God and towards  
19752 sin itself. It is not only a change of views, but a  
19753 change of the ultimate preference or choice of  
19754 the soul. It is a voluntary change, and by  
19755 consequence involves a change of feeling and of  
19756 action toward God and toward sin. It is what is

19757 naturally understood by a change of mind on any  
19758 subject of interest and importance. We hear that  
19759 such a man has changed his mind on the subject  
19760 of Abolition, for instance, or that he has changed  
19761 his views in politics. Everybody understands that  
19762 he has undergone a change in his views, his  
19763 feelings, and his conduct. This is repentance, on  
19764 that subject, it is a change of mind, but not  
19765 towards God. Evangelical repentance is a change  
19766 of willing, of feeling, and of life, in respect to  
19767 God.

19768  
19769 Repentance always implies abhorrence of sin. It  
19770 is willing and feeling as God does in respect to  
19771 sin. It of course involves the love of God, and an  
19772 abhorrence of sin. It always implies forsaking  
19773 sin. Sinners should be made to understand this.  
19774 The sinner that repents does not feel as  
19775 impenitent sinners think they should feel, at  
19776 giving up their sins if they should become  
19777 religious. Impenitent sinners look upon religion  
19778 just like this, that if they become pious, they  
19779 shall be obliged to stay away from balls and  
19780 parties, and obliged to give up theatres, or  
19781 gambling, or other things that they now take  
19782 delight in. And they see not how they could ever  
19783 enjoy themselves, if they should break off from  
19784 all those things. But this is very far from being a



19785 correct view of the matter. Religion does not  
19786 make them unhappy, by shutting them out from  
19787 things in which they delight, because the first  
19788 step in it is to repent, to change their mind in  
19789 regard to all these things. They do not seem to  
19790 realize that the person who has repented has no  
19791 disposition for these things, he has given them  
19792 up, and turned their mind away from them.  
19793 Sinners feel as if they should want to go to such  
19794 places, and want to mingle in such scenes, just as  
19795 much as they do now, and that it will be such a  
19796 continued sacrifice as to make them unhappy.  
19797 This is a great mistake.  
19798  
19799 I know there are some professors who would be  
19800 very glad to betake themselves to their former  
19801 practices, were it not that they feel constrained,  
19802 by fear of losing their character, or the like.  
19803 Now, mark me. If they feel so, it is because they  
19804 have no religion, they do not hate sin. If they  
19805 desire their former ways, they have no religion,  
19806 they have never repented, for repentance always  
19807 consists in a change of choice of views and  
19808 feelings. If they were really converted, instead of  
19809 choosing such things, they would turn away  
19810 from them with loathing. Instead of lusting after  
19811 the flesh-pots of Egypt, and desiring to go into

19812 their former circles, parties, balls, and the like,  
19813 they find their highest pleasure in obeying God.

19814

19815 2. Sinners should be told to believe the Gospel.  
19816 Here, also, they need to have it explained to  
19817 them, and to be told what is not faith, and what  
19818 is. Nothing is more common than for a sinner,  
19819 when told to believe the Gospel, to say, "I do  
19820 believe it." The fact is, he has been brought up to  
19821 admit the fact, that the Gospel is true, but he  
19822 does not believe it, he knows nothing about the  
19823 evidence of it, and all his faith is a mere  
19824 admission without evidence. He holds it to be  
19825 true, in a kind of loose, indefinite sense, so that  
19826 he is always ready to say, "I do believe the  
19827 Bible." It is strange they do not see that they are  
19828 deceived in thinking that they believe, for they  
19829 must see that they have never acted upon these  
19830 truths, as they do upon those things that they do  
19831 believe. Yet it is often quite difficult to convince  
19832 them that they do not believe.

19833

19834 But the fact is, that the careless sinner does not  
19835 believe the Gospel at all. The idea that the  
19836 careless sinner is an intellectual believer, is  
19837 absurd. The devil is an intellectual believer, and  
19838 that is what makes him tremble. What makes a  
19839 sinner anxious is, that he begins to be an

19840 intellectual believer, and that makes him feel. No  
19841 being in heaven, earth, or hell, can intellectually  
19842 believe the truths of the Gospel, and not feel on  
19843 the subject. The anxious sinner has faith of the  
19844 same kind with devils, but he has not so much of  
19845 it, and, therefore, he does not feel so much. The  
19846 man that does not feel nor act at all, on the  
19847 subject of religion is an infidel, let his  
19848 professions be what they may. He that feels  
19849 nothing and does nothing, believes nothing. This  
19850 is a philosophical fact.

19851

19852 Faith does not consist in an intellectual  
19853 conviction that Christ died for you in particular,  
19854 nor in a belief that you are a Christian, or that  
19855 you ever shall be, or that your sins are forgiven.  
19856 But faith is that trust or confidence in God, and  
19857 in Christ, that commits the whole soul to him in  
19858 all his relations to us. It is a voluntary trust in his  
19859 person, his veracity, his word. This was the faith  
19860 of Abraham. He had that confidence in what God  
19861 said, which led him to act as if it were true. This  
19862 is the way the apostle illustrates it in the eleventh  
19863 of Hebrews. "Faith is the substance of things  
19864 hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And  
19865 he goes on to illustrate it by various examples.  
19866 "Through faith we understand that the worlds  
19867 were made," that is, we believe this, and act

19868 accordingly. Take the case of Noah. Noah was  
19869 warned of God of things not seen as yet, that is,  
19870 he was assured that God was going to drown the  
19871 world, and he believed it, and acted accordingly;  
19872 he prepared an ark to save his family, and by so  
19873 doing, he condemned the world that would not  
19874 believe; his actions gave evidence that he was  
19875 sincere. Abraham, too, was called of God to  
19876 leave his country, with the promise that he  
19877 should be the gainer by it, and he obeyed and  
19878 went out, without knowing where he should go.  
19879 Read the whole chapter and you will find many  
19880 instances of the same kind. The whole design of  
19881 the chapter is to illustrate the nature of faith, and  
19882 to show that it invariably results in action. The  
19883 sinner should have it explained to him, and be  
19884 made to see that the faith which the Gospel  
19885 requires is just that confidence in Christ which  
19886 leads him to act on what he says as a certain fact.  
19887 This is believing in Christ,

19888  
19889 3. Another direction proper to be given to the  
19890 sinner is that he should give his heart to God.  
19891 God says, "My son, give me thine heart." But  
19892 here also there needs to be explanation, to make  
19893 him understand what it is. It is amazing that  
19894 there should be any darkness here. It is the  
19895 language of common life, in everybody's mouth,

19896 and everybody understands just what it means,  
19897 when we use it in regard to any thing else. But  
19898 when it comes to religion, they seem to be all in  
19899 the dark. Ask a sinner, no matter what may be  
19900 his age, or education, what it means to give the  
19901 heart to God, and, strange as it may appear, he is  
19902 at a loss for an answer. Ask a woman what it is  
19903 to give her heart to her husband, or a man what it  
19904 is to give his heart to his wife, and they  
19905 understand it. But then they are totally blind as  
19906 to giving their hearts to God. I suppose I have  
19907 asked more than a thousand anxious sinners this  
19908 question. When I have told them they must give  
19909 their hearts to God, they would always say they  
19910 were willing to do it, and, sometimes, that they  
19911 were anxious to do it, and even seem to be in an  
19912 agony of desire about it. Then I have asked them  
19913 what they understood to be giving their hearts to  
19914 God, as they were so willing to do it. And very  
19915 seldom have I received a correct or rational  
19916 answer from a sinner of any age. I have  
19917 sometimes had the strangest answers that can be  
19918 imagined—anything but what they ought to say.  
19919 Now, to give your heart to God is the same thing  
19920 as to give your heart to anybody else; the same  
19921 as for a woman to give her heart to her husband.  
19922 Ask that woman if she understands this? “Oh,  
19923 yes, that is plain enough, it is to place my

19924 affections on him, and strive to please him in  
19925 everything.” Very well, place your affections on  
19926 God, and strive to please him in everything. But  
19927 alas, when they come to the subject of religion,  
19928 people suppose there is some wonderful mystery  
19929 about it. Some talk as if they supposed it was to  
19930 take out this bundle of muscles, or fleshy organ,  
19931 in their bosom, and give it to God. Sinner, what  
19932 God asks of you is, that you should love him  
19933 supremely.

19934  
19935 3. Submit to God, is also a proper direction to  
19936 anxious sinners. And, Oh, how dark sinners are  
19937 here too. Scarcely a sinner can be found, who  
19938 will not tell you he is willing to submit to God.  
19939 But they do not understand it. They need to be  
19940 told what true submission is. Sometimes they  
19941 think it means that they should be willing to be  
19942 damned. Sometimes they place themselves in  
19943 this attitude, and call it submission; they say, if  
19944 they are elected, they shall be saved, and if not,  
19945 they shall be damned. This is not submission.  
19946 True submission, is yielding obedience to God.  
19947 Suppose a rebel, in arms against the government,  
19948 was called on to submit. What would he  
19949 understand by it? Why, that he should yield the  
19950 point, and lay down his arms, and obey the laws.  
19951 That is just what it means, for a sinner to submit

19952 to God. He must cease his strife and conflict  
19953 against his Maker, and take the attitude of a  
19954 willing and obedient child, willing to be and do  
19955 whatever God requires. "Here, Lord, am I; Lord,  
19956 what wilt thou have me to do?"  
19957  
19958 Suppose a company of soldiers had rebelled, and  
19959 Government had an army to put them down, and  
19960 had driven them into a strong hold, where they  
19961 were out of provisions, and had no way to  
19962 escape, and they should not know what to do.  
19963 Suppose the rebels to have met in this extremity,  
19964 to consider what is to be done? and one rises up,  
19965 and says, "Well, comrades, I am convinced we  
19966 are all wrong from the beginning, and now the  
19967 reward of our deeds is like to overtake us, and  
19968 we cannot escape, and as for remaining here to  
19969 die, I am resolved not to do it. I am going to  
19970 throw myself on the mercy of the commander-  
19971 in-chief." That man submits. He ceases, from  
19972 that moment, to be a rebel in his heart, just as  
19973 soon as he comes to this conclusion. So it is with  
19974 the sinner when he yields the point, and consents  
19975 in his heart to do, and be, whatever God shall  
19976 require. The sinner may be in doubt what to do,  
19977 and may feel afraid to put himself in God's  
19978 hands, thinking that if he does, perhaps God will  
19979 send him down to hell, as he deserves. But it is

19980 his business to leave all that question with God,  
19981 and not resist his Maker any longer, but give all  
19982 up to God, make no conditions, and trust it  
19983 wholly to God's benevolence and wisdom to  
19984 decide what shall be done, and to appoint his  
19985 future condition. Until you do this, sinner, you  
19986 have done nothing to the purpose.

19987

19988 5. Another proper direction to be given to  
19989 sinners, is to confess and forsake your sins. This  
19990 means that they should both confess and forsake  
19991 them. They must confess to God their sins  
19992 against God, and confess to men their sins  
19993 against men, and forsake them all. A man does  
19994 not forsake his sins till he has made all the  
19995 reparation in his power. If he has stolen money,  
19996 or defrauded his neighbor out of property, he  
19997 does not forsake his sins by merely resolving not  
19998 to steal any more, or not to cheat again; he must  
19999 make reparation to the extent of his power. So, if  
20000 he has slandered any one, he does not forsake his  
20001 sin by merely saying he will not do so again. He  
20002 must make reparation. So, in like manner, if he  
20003 has robbed God, as all sinners have, he must  
20004 make reparation, as far as he has the power.  
20005 Suppose a man has made money in rebellion  
20006 against God, and has withheld from him his  
20007 time, talents and service, has lived and rioted



20008 upon the bounties of his providence, and refused  
20009 to lay himself out for the salvation of the world;  
20010 he has robbed God. Now, if he should die feeling  
20011 that this money was his own, and should he  
20012 leave it to his heirs without consulting the will of  
20013 God—why, he is just as certain to go to hell as  
20014 the highway robber. He has never made any  
20015 satisfaction to God. With all his whining and  
20016 pious talk, he has never confessed HIS SIN to  
20017 God, nor forsaken his sin, for he has never felt  
20018 nor acknowledged himself to be the steward of  
20019 God. If he refuses to hold the property in his  
20020 possession, as the steward of God; if he accounts  
20021 it his own, and as such gives it to his children, he  
20022 says, in effect, to God. “That property is not  
20023 yours, it is mine, and I will give it to my  
20024 children.” He has continued to persevere in his  
20025 sin, for he does not relinquish the ownership of  
20026 that of which he has robbed God.

20027

20028 What would a merchant think, if his hired clerk  
20029 should take all the capital and set up a store of  
20030 his own, and die with it in his hands? Will such a  
20031 man go to heaven? “No,” you say, every one of  
20032 you, “If such a man does not go to hell, there  
20033 might just as well be no hell.” God would prove  
20034 himself infinitely unjust, to let such a character  
20035 go unpunished. What, then, shall we say of the

20036 man who has robbed God all his life? Here God  
20037 set him to be his clerk, to manage some of his  
20038 affairs, and he has gone and stolen all the  
20039 money, and says it is his, and he keeps it, and  
20040 dies, and gives it to his children, as if it was all  
20041 his own lawful property. Is that man going to  
20042 heaven? Has that man forsaken sin? I tell you,  
20043 no. If he has not surrendered himself and all to  
20044 God, he has not taken the first step in the way to  
20045 heaven.

20046

20047 6. Another proper direction to be given to  
20048 sinners is, "Choose ye this day, whom ye will  
20049 serve." Under the Old Testament dispensation,  
20050 this or something equivalent to it, was the most  
20051 common direction given. It was not common to  
20052 call on men to believe in Christ until the days of  
20053 John the Baptist. He baptized those who came to  
20054 him, with the baptism of repentance, and  
20055 directed them to believe on him who should  
20056 come after him. Under Joshua, the text was  
20057 something which the people all understood more  
20058 easily than they would a call to believe on the  
20059 distant Messiah; it was "Choose ye, this day,  
20060 whom ye will serve." On another occasion,  
20061 Moses said to them, "I call heaven and earth to  
20062 record this day against you, that I have set before  
20063 you life and death, blessing and cursing:

20064 therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed  
20065 may live.” The direction was accommodated to  
20066 the people’s knowledge. And it is good now, as  
20067 it was then. Sinners are called upon to choose—  
20068 what? Whether they will serve God or the  
20069 world—whether they will follow holiness or sin.  
20070 Let them be made to understand what is meant  
20071 by choosing, and what is to be chosen, and then  
20072 if the thing is done from the heart, they will be  
20073 saved.

20074

20075 Any of these directions, if complied with, will  
20076 constitute true conversion. The particular  
20077 exercises may vary in different cases. Sometimes  
20078 the first exercise in conversion, is submission to  
20079 God, sometimes repentance, sometimes faith,  
20080 sometimes the choice of God and his service, in  
20081 short, whatever their thoughts are taken up with  
20082 at the time. If their thoughts are directed to  
20083 Christ at the moment, the first exercise will be  
20084 faith. If to sin, the first exercise will be  
20085 repentance. If to their future course of life, it is  
20086 choosing the service of God. If to the Divine  
20087 government, it is submission. It is important to  
20088 find out just where the Holy Spirit is pressing the  
20089 sinner at the time, and then take care to push that  
20090 point. If it is in regard to Christ, press that; if it is  
20091 in regard to his future course of life, push him

20092 right up to an immediate choice of obedience to  
20093 God.  
20094  
20095 It is a great error to suppose that any one  
20096 particular exercise is always foremost in  
20097 conversion, or, that every sinner must have faith  
20098 first, or submission first. It is not true, either in  
20099 philosophy or in fact. There is a great variety in  
20100 people's exercises. Whatever point is taken hold  
20101 of, between God and the sinner, when the sinner  
20102 YIELDS that, he is converted. Whatever the  
20103 particular exercise may be, if it includes  
20104 obedience of heart to God on any point, it is true  
20105 conversion. When he yields one point to God's  
20106 authority, he is ready to yield all. When he  
20107 changes his mind, and obeys in one thing,  
20108 because it is God's will, he will obey in other  
20109 things, so far as he sees it to be God's will.  
20110 Where there is this right choice, then, whenever  
20111 the mind is directed to any one point of duty, he  
20112 is ready to follow. It matters very little which of  
20113 these directions is given, if it is only made plain,  
20114 and if it is to the point, so as to serve as a test of  
20115 obedience to God. If it is to the point that the  
20116 Spirit of God is debating with the sinner's mind,  
20117 so as to fall in with the Spirit's work, and not to  
20118 divert the sinner's attention from the very point  
20119 in controversy, let it be made perfectly clear, and

20120 then pressed till the sinner yields, and he will be  
20121 saved.

20122

20123 III. I am to mention several errors which anxious  
20124 sinners are apt to fall into, respecting this great  
20125 inquiry.

20126

20127 1. The first error is, in supposing that they must  
20128 make themselves better, or prepare themselves,  
20129 so as in some way to recommend themselves to  
20130 the mercy of God. It is marvelous, that sinners  
20131 will not understand, that all they have to do is to  
20132 accept salvation from God, all prepared to their  
20133 hands. But they all, learned or unlearned, at first,  
20134 betake themselves to a legal course to get relief.  
20135 This is one principal reason why they will not  
20136 become Christians at once, just as soon as they  
20137 begin to attend to the subject. They imagine that  
20138 they must be, in some way or other, prepared to  
20139 come. They must change their dress, and make  
20140 themselves look a little better; they are not  
20141 willing to come just as they are, in their rags and  
20142 poverty. They must have something more on,  
20143 before they can approach to God. They should  
20144 be shown, at once, that it is impossible they  
20145 should be any better, until they do what God  
20146 requires. Every pulse that beats, every breath  
20147 they draw, they are growing worse, because they

20148 are standing out in rebellion against God, so long  
20149 as they do not do the very thing which God  
20150 requires of them as the first thing to be done.

20151

20152 2. Another error is, in supposing that they must  
20153 suffer a considerable time under conviction, as a  
20154 kind of punishment, before they are ready  
20155 properly to come to Christ. And so they will  
20156 pray for conviction. And they think, that if they  
20157 are ground down to the earth, with distress, for a  
20158 sufficient time, then God will pity them, and be  
20159 more ready to help them, when he sees them so  
20160 very miserable. They should be made to  
20161 understand clearly, that they are thus unhappy  
20162 and miserable, merely because they refuse to  
20163 accept the relief which God offers. Take the case  
20164 of the stubborn child, when his parent stands  
20165 over him with the rod, and the child shudders  
20166 and screams. Should that child imagine he is  
20167 gaining anything by his agony? His distress  
20168 arises from his conviction, and shall he pray for  
20169 more conviction? Does that make him any  
20170 better? Does his father pity him any more,  
20171 because he stands out? Who does not see that he  
20172 is all the while growing worse?

20173

20174 3. Sometimes sinners imagine that they must  
20175 wait for different feelings, before they submit to

20176 God. They say, "I do not think I feel right yet, to  
20177 accept of Christ; I do not think I am prepared to  
20178 be converted yet." They ought to be made to see  
20179 what God requires of them is to will right. If  
20180 they obey and submit with the will the feelings  
20181 will adjust themselves in due time. It is not a  
20182 question of feeling, but of willing and acting.  
20183

20184 The feelings are involuntary, and have no moral  
20185 character except what they derive from the  
20186 action of the will, with which action they  
20187 sympathize. Before the will is right, the feelings  
20188 will not be, of course. The sinner should come to  
20189 Christ by accepting him at once; and this he  
20190 must do, not in obedience to his feelings, but in  
20191 obedience to his conscience. Obey, submit, trust.  
20192 Give up all instantly, and your feelings will  
20193 come right. Do not wait for better feelings, but  
20194 commit your whole being to God at once, and  
20195 this will soon result in the feelings for which you  
20196 are waiting. What God requires of you, is the  
20197 present act of your own mind, in turning from  
20198 sin to holiness, and from the service of Satan to  
20199 the service of the living God.  
20200

20201 4. Another error of sinners, is to suppose they  
20202 must wait till their hearts are changed. "What?"  
20203 say they, "am I to believe in Christ before my

20204 heart is changed? Do you mean that I am to  
20205 repent before my heart is changed?” Now, the  
20206 simple answer to all this is, that the change of  
20207 heart is the very thing in question. God requires  
20208 sinners to love him. That is to change their heart.  
20209 God requires the sinner to believe the Gospel.  
20210 That is to change his heart. God requires him to  
20211 repent. That is to change his heart. God does not  
20212 tell him to wait till his heart is changed, and then  
20213 repent and believe, and love God. The very word  
20214 itself, repent, signifies a change of mind or heart.  
20215 To do either of these things, is to change your  
20216 heart, and to make you a new heart, just as God  
20217 requires.

20218  
20219 5. Sinners often get the idea that they are  
20220 perfectly willing to do what God requires. Tell  
20221 them to do this thing, or that, to repent, or  
20222 believe, or give God their hearts, and they say,  
20223 “Oh, yes, I am perfectly willing to do that, I wish  
20224 I could do it, I would give anything if I could do  
20225 it.” They ought to understand, that, being truly  
20226 willing is doing it, but there is a difference  
20227 between willing and desiring. People often  
20228 desire to be Christians, when they are wholly  
20229 unwilling to be so. When we see anything which  
20230 appears to us to be a good, we are so constituted  
20231 that we desire it. We necessarily desire it when it



20232 is before our minds. We cannot help desiring it  
20233 in proportion as its goodness is presented to our  
20234 minds. But yet we may not be willing to have it,  
20235 under all the circumstances. It may be that we  
20236 prefer, upon the whole, that the present  
20237 possessor should continue to possess it still. Or  
20238 that we choose to have our friend or child  
20239 possess it, instead of ourselves. A man may  
20240 desire to go to Philadelphia on many accounts,  
20241 while, for still more weighty reasons, he chooses  
20242 not to go there. So the sinner may desire to be a  
20243 Christian. He may see many good things in  
20244 being a Christian. He may see that if he were a  
20245 Christian he would be a great deal more happy,  
20246 and that he should go to heaven when he dies,  
20247 but yet he is not willing to be a Christian.  
20248 WILLING to obey Christ is to be a Christian.  
20249 When an individual actually chooses to obey  
20250 God, he is a Christian. But all such desires, as do  
20251 not terminate in actual choice, are nothing.

20252  
20253 6. The sinner will sometimes say, that he offers  
20254 to give God his heart, but he intimates that God  
20255 is unwilling. But this is absurd. What does God  
20256 ask? Why, that you should love him. Now, for  
20257 you to say you are willing to give God your  
20258 heart, but God is unwilling, is the same as saying  
20259 that you are willing to love God, but God is not

20260 willing to be loved by you, and will not suffer  
20261 you to love him. It is important to clear up all  
20262 these points in the sinner's mind, that he may  
20263 have no dark and mysterious comer to rest in,  
20264 where the truth will not reach him.

20265

20266 7. Sinners sometimes get the idea that they  
20267 repent, when they are only convicted. Whenever  
20268 the sinner is found resting in any LIE, let the  
20269 truth sweep it away, however much it may pain  
20270 and distress him. If he has any error of this kind,  
20271 you must tear it away from him, if you do not  
20272 mean that he shall stumble into the depths of  
20273 hell.

20274

20275 8. Sinners are often wholly taken up with  
20276 looking at themselves, to see if they cannot find  
20277 something there, some kind of feeling or other,  
20278 that will recommend them to God. Evidently, for  
20279 want of proper instruction, David Brainard was a  
20280 long time taken up with his state of mind,  
20281 looking for some feelings that would  
20282 recommend him to God. Sometimes he imagined  
20283 that he had such feelings, and would tell God in  
20284 prayer, that now he felt as he ought, to receive  
20285 his mercy; and then he would see that he had  
20286 been all wrong, and be ashamed that he had told  
20287 God that he felt right. Thus, the poor man, for

20288 want of correct instruction, was driven almost to  
20289 despair, and it is easy to see that his Christian  
20290 exercises through life were greatly modified, and  
20291 his comfort and usefulness much impaired by the  
20292 false philosophy he had adopted on this point.  
20293 You must turn the sinner away from himself to  
20294 something else. Suppose he keeps poring over  
20295 himself, until he is going into a state of despair.  
20296 The proper course then is, to turn off his  
20297 attention from looking at himself, and make him  
20298 look at some duty to be performed, or make him  
20299 look at Christ, and, perhaps, before he is aware,  
20300 he will find that he has submitted to God. His  
20301 attention was diverted away from himself, to  
20302 contemplate the reasonableness of God's  
20303 requirements, or the sufficiency of Christ's  
20304 atonement, or something of this kind, and as he  
20305 dwelt upon it, he just gave up his heart, and the  
20306 agony was over.

20307

20308 REMARKS.

20309

20310 1. The labor of ministers is greatly increased,  
20311 and the difficulties in the way of salvation are  
20312 greatly multiplied, by the false instructions that  
20313 have been given to sinners. The consequence has  
20314 been, that directions which used to be plain are  
20315 now obscure. People have been taught so long,

20316 that there is something awfully mysterious and  
20317 unintelligible about conversion, that they do not  
20318 try to understand it. Sinners have been taught  
20319 these false notions, till now they are every where  
20320 entrenched behind these sentiments, such as  
20321 “cannot repent,” “must wait for God,” and the  
20322 like. It was once sufficient, as we learn from the  
20323 Bible, to tell sinners to repent, or to tell them to  
20324 believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But now faith  
20325 has been talked about as a principle, instead of  
20326 an act, and repentance as something put into the  
20327 mind, instead of an exercise of the mind, and  
20328 sinners are perplexed. Ministers are charged with  
20329 preaching heresy, because they presume to teach  
20330 that faith is an exercise, and not a principle, and  
20331 that sin is an act, and not a part of the  
20332 constitution of man. And sinners have become  
20333 so sophisticated, that you have to be at great  
20334 pains in explaining not only what you do not  
20335 mean, but what you do mean, otherwise they  
20336 will be almost sure to misunderstand you, and  
20337 either gain a false relief from their anxiety, by  
20338 throwing their duty off upon God, or else run  
20339 into despair from the supposed impracticability  
20340 of doing what is requisite for their salvation. It is  
20341 often the greatest difficulty to lead them out of  
20342 these theological labyrinths and mazes, into  
20343 which they have been deluded, and to lead them

20344 along the straight and simple way of the Gospel.  
20345 It seems as if the greatest ingenuity had been  
20346 employed to mystify the minds of people and  
20347 weave a most subtle web of false theology,  
20348 calculated to involve a sinner in endless  
20349 darkness.

20350  
20351 Who that has been in revivals, has not  
20352 encountered that endless train of fooleries, which  
20353 have been inculcated, till it has become  
20354 necessary to be as plain as A B C, and the best  
20355 educated have to be talked to just like children.  
20356 So much has been done to mystify and befool  
20357 people's minds, in the plainest matters. Tell a  
20358 sinner to believe, and he turns round to you, and  
20359 stares, "Why, how you talk; is not faith a  
20360 principle implanted in the soul, and how am I to  
20361 believe until I get this principle?" So, if a  
20362 minister tells a sinner the very words that the  
20363 apostles used, in the great revival at the day of  
20364 pentecost, "Repent and be converted, every one  
20365 of you," and they reply as they have been taught,  
20366 "Oh, I guess you are an Arminian; I do not want  
20367 any of your Arminian teaching for me; do not  
20368 you deny the Spirit's influences?" It is enough to  
20369 make humanity weep to see the fog and darkness  
20370 that have been thrown around the plain

20371 directions of the Gospel, till many generations  
20372 have been emptied into hell.

20373

20374 2. These false instructions to sinners are  
20375 infinitely worse than none. The Lord Jesus  
20376 Christ found it more difficult to get the people to  
20377 yield up their false notions of theology than  
20378 anything else. This has been the great difficulty  
20379 with the Jews to this day, that they have received  
20380 false notions in theology, have perverted the  
20381 truth on certain points, and you cannot make  
20382 them understand the plainest points in the  
20383 Gospel. So it is with sinners, the most difficult  
20384 thing to be done is to get away these refuges of  
20385 lies, which they have gotten from false theology.  
20386 They are so fond of holding on to these refuges,  
20387 because they are called orthodox, and because  
20388 they excuse the sinner, and condemn God, that it  
20389 is found to be the most perplexing, and difficult,  
20390 and discouraging part of a minister's labor to  
20391 drive them away.

20392

20393 3. No wonder the Gospel has taken so little  
20394 effect, encumbered as it has been with these  
20395 strange dogmas. The truth is, that very little of  
20396 the Gospel has come out upon the world, for  
20397 these hundreds of years, without being clogged  
20398 and obscured by false theology. People have

20399 been told that they must repent, and, in the same  
20400 breath, told that they could not repent until the  
20401 truth itself has been all mixed up with error, so  
20402 as to produce the same practical effect with  
20403 error, and the Gospel that is preached has been  
20404 another Gospel, or no Gospel at all.

20405  
20406 4. You can understand what is meant by healing  
20407 slightly the hurt of the daughter of God's people,  
20408 and the danger of doing it. It is very easy when  
20409 sinners are under conviction, to say something  
20410 that shall smooth over the case, and relieve their  
20411 anxiety, so that they will either get a false hope,  
20412 or will be converted with their views so obscure,  
20413 that they will always be poor, feeble, wavering,  
20414 doubting, inefficient Christians.

20415  
20416 5. Much depends on the manner in which a  
20417 person is dealt with, when under conviction.  
20418 Much of his future comfort and usefulness  
20419 depends on the clearness, and strength, and  
20420 firmness, with which the directions of the Gospel  
20421 are given, when he is under conviction. If those  
20422 who deal with him are afraid to use the probe  
20423 thoroughly, he will always be a poor, sickly,  
20424 doubting Christian. If converted at all, he will  
20425 never do much good. The true mode, is to deal  
20426 thoroughly and plainly with a sinner, to tear

20427 away every excuse he can get up, and show him  
20428 plainly what he is, and what he ought to be, and  
20429 he will bless God to all eternity, that he fell in  
20430 with those who would be so faithful to his soul.  
20431 For the want of this thorough and searching  
20432 management, many are converted who seem to  
20433 be stillborn. And the reason is, they never were  
20434 faithfully dealt with. We may charitably hope  
20435 they are Christians, but still it is uncertain and  
20436 doubtful. Their conversion seems rather a  
20437 change of opinion, than a change of heart. But if,  
20438 when a sinner is under conviction, you pour in  
20439 the truth, put in the probe, break up the old  
20440 foundations, and sweep away his refuges of lies,  
20441 and use the word of God, like fire and like a  
20442 hammer, you will find that they will come out  
20443 with clear views, and strong faith, and firm  
20444 principles, not doubting, halting, irresolute  
20445 Christians, but such as follow the Lord wholly.  
20446 This is the way to make strong Christians. This  
20447 has been eminently the case in many revivals of  
20448 modern days. I have heard old Christians say of  
20449 the converts, "These converts were born men  
20450 and women, full grown, they never were  
20451 children, but have, at the very outset, all the  
20452 clearness of view, and strength of faith, of old  
20453 Christians. They seem to understand the  
20454 doctrines of religion, and to know what to do,



20455 and how to take hold, to promote revivals, better  
20456 than one in a hundred of the old members in the  
20457 church.”

20458

20459 I once knew a young man who was converted,  
20460 away from home. The place where he lived had  
20461 no minister, and no preaching, and no religion.  
20462 He went home in three days after he was  
20463 converted, and immediately set himself to work,  
20464 to labor for a revival. He set up meetings in his  
20465 neighborhood, and prayed and labored, and a  
20466 revival broke out, of which he had the principal  
20467 management through a powerful work, which  
20468 converted most of the principal men of the place.  
20469 The truth was, he had been so dealt with, that he  
20470 knew what he was about. He understood the  
20471 subject, and knew where he stood himself. He  
20472 was not all the while troubled with doubts,  
20473 whether he was himself a Christian. He knew  
20474 that he was serving God, and that God was with  
20475 him, and so he went boldly and resolutely  
20476 forward to his object. But if you undertake to  
20477 make converts, without cutting up all their  
20478 errors, and tearing away their false hopes, you  
20479 may make a host of hypocrites, or of puny,  
20480 dwarfish Christians, always doubting, and easily  
20481 turned back from a revival spirit, and worth  
20482 nothing. The way is, to bring them right out to

20483 the light. When a man is converted in this way,  
20484 you can depend on him, and know where to find  
20485 him.

20486

20487 7. Protracted seasons of conviction are generally  
20488 owing to defective instruction. Wherever clear  
20489 and faithful instructions are given to sinners,  
20490 there you will generally find that convictions are  
20491 deep and pungent, but short.

20492

20493 8. Where clear and discriminating instructions  
20494 are given to convicted sinners, if they do not  
20495 soon submit, their convictions will generally  
20496 leave them. Convictions in such cases are  
20497 generally short. Where sinners are deceived by  
20498 false views, they may be kept along for weeks,  
20499 and perhaps months, and sometimes for years, in  
20500 a languishing state, and at last, perhaps, be  
20501 crowded into the kingdom and saved. But where  
20502 the truth is made perfectly clear to the sinner's  
20503 mind, and all his errors are torn away, if he does  
20504 not soon submit, his case is hopeless. Where the  
20505 truth is brought to bear upon his mind, and he  
20506 directly resists the very truth that must convert  
20507 him, there is nothing more to be done. The Spirit  
20508 will soon leave him, for the very weapons he  
20509 uses are resisted. Where instructions are not  
20510 clear, and are mixed up with errors, the Spirit

20511 may strive even for years, in great mercy, to get  
20512 sinners through the fog of false instruction. But  
20513 not so, where their duty is clearly explained to  
20514 them, and they are brought right up to the single  
20515 point of immediate submission, and have all  
20516 their false pretences exposed, and the path of  
20517 duty made perfectly plain. Then, if they do not  
20518 submit, the Spirit of God forsakes them, and  
20519 their state is well nigh hopeless.

20520

20521 If there be sinners in this house, and you see  
20522 your duty clearly, TAKE CARE how you delay.  
20523 If you do not submit, you may expect the Spirit  
20524 of God will forsake you, and you are LOST.

20525

20526 8. A vast deal of the direction given to anxious  
20527 sinners amounts to little less than the popish  
20528 doctrine of indulgences. The pope used to sell  
20529 indulgences to sin, and this led to the  
20530 reformation under Luther. Sometimes people  
20531 would purchase an indulgence to sin for a certain  
20532 time, or to commit some particular sin, or a  
20533 number of sins. Now, there is a vast deal in  
20534 Protestant churches, which is little less than the  
20535 same thing. What does it differ from this, to tell  
20536 a sinner to wait? The amount of it is, telling him  
20537 to continue in sin a while longer, while he is  
20538 waiting for God to convert him. And what is that

20539 but an indulgence to commit sin? Any direction  
20540 given to sinners that does not require them  
20541 immediately to obey God, is an indulgence to  
20542 sin. It is in effect, giving them liberty to continue  
20543 in sin against God. Such directions are not only  
20544 wicked, but ruinous and cruel. If they do not  
20545 destroy the soul, as no doubt they often do, they  
20546 defer, at all events, the sinner's enjoyment of  
20547 God and of Christ, and he stands a great chance  
20548 of being lost for ever, while listening to such  
20549 instructions. Oh, how dangerous it is, to give a  
20550 sinner reason to think he may wait a moment,  
20551 before giving his heart to God.

20552

20553 9. So far as I have had opportunity to observe,  
20554 those conversions which are most sudden have  
20555 commonly turned out to be the best Christians. I  
20556 know the reverse of this has often been held and  
20557 maintained. But I am satisfied there is no reason  
20558 for it, although multitudes, even now, regard it  
20559 as a suspicious circumstance, if a man has been  
20560 converted very suddenly. But the Bible gives no  
20561 warrant for this supposition. There is not a case  
20562 of protracted conviction recorded in the whole  
20563 Bible. All the conversions recorded there, are  
20564 sudden conversions. And I am persuaded there  
20565 never would have been such multitudes of  
20566 tedious convictions, and often ending in nothing

20567 after all, if it had not been for those theological  
20568 perversions which have filled the world with  
20569 cannot-ism. In Bible days, they told sinners to  
20570 repent, and they did it then. Cannot-ism had not  
20571 been broached in that day. It is this speculation,  
20572 about the inability of sinners to obey God, that  
20573 lays the foundation for all the protracted anguish  
20574 and distress, and perhaps ruin, through which so  
20575 many are led. Where a sinner is brought to see  
20576 what he has to do, and he takes his stand at once,  
20577 AND DOES IT, he generally does so afterwards,  
20578 and you generally find that such a person will  
20579 hold out so, and prove a decided character. You  
20580 will not find him one of those that you always  
20581 have to warp up to duty, like a ship, against wind  
20582 and tide. Look at those professors who always  
20583 have to be dragged forward in duty, and you will  
20584 generally find that they had not clear and  
20585 consistent directions when they were converted,  
20586 and most likely they will be very much “afraid  
20587 of these sudden conversions.”

20588  
20589 Afraid of sudden conversions! Some of the best  
20590 Christians of my acquaintance were convicted  
20591 and converted in the space of a few minutes. In  
20592 one quarter of the time that I have been  
20593 speaking, many of them were awakened, and  
20594 came right out on the Lord’s side, and have been

20595 shining lights in the church ever since, and have  
20596 generally manifested the same decision of  
20597 character in religion, that they did when they  
20598 first came out and took a stand on the Lord's  
20599 side.

20600

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20601

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20602

20603 LECTURE XIX.

20604

20605 INSTRUCTIONS TO CONVERTS.

20606

20607 Text.—Feed my lambs.—John xxi. 15.

20608

20609 YOU, who read your Bibles, recollect the  
20610 connection in which these words are found, and  
20611 by whom they were spoken. They were  
20612 addressed by the Lord Jesus Christ to Peter, after  
20613 he had denied his Lord, and had professed  
20614 repentance. Probably one of the designs which  
20615 Christ had in view, in suffering Peter to sin so  
20616 awfully as to deny his master, was to produce a  
20617 deeper work of grace in him, and thus fit him for  
20618 the peculiar duty to which he intended to call  
20619 him, in laying the foundations of the Christian  
20620 Church, and watching over the spiritual interests  
20621 of the converts. It needed a peculiar work of  
20622 grace in his soul, to fit him to lead others through

20623 those scenes of trial and temptation to which the  
20624 early Christians, in particular, were exposed.

20625

20626 It is evident, that, though Peter had special  
20627 natural qualifications for such a work, yet he was  
20628 quite a superficial saint. He was probably  
20629 converted before this, but he was weak, and  
20630 there was left so much of his natural roughness  
20631 and turbulence of temper, that he was still ready  
20632 to bristle up on any occasion, and take offence at  
20633 everything that crossed him, so that he was still  
20634 quite unfit for that particular work to which he  
20635 was destined. Christ designed him for such a  
20636 peculiar service, that it seems something was  
20637 indispensable to fit him for it, and make him  
20638 such a saint, that future opposition would not  
20639 irritate him, nor difficulties dishearten him, nor  
20640 success and honor spoil him, by lifting up his  
20641 heart with pride. And, therefore, Christ takes the  
20642 effectual method recorded before us, of dealing  
20643 with him once for all, to secure a thorough work  
20644 in his soul.

20645

20646 He asked him this question, to remind him, in an  
20647 affecting manner, at once of his sin and of the  
20648 love of Christ, “Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou  
20649 me more than these?” Strongly implying a doubt  
20650 whether he did love him. Peter answers, “Yea,

20651 Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” He said  
20652 unto him, “Feed my lambs.” He then repeated  
20653 the question, as if he would read his inmost soul,  
20654 “Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me?” Peter was  
20655 still firm, and promptly answers again, “Yea,  
20656 Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” Jesus still  
20657 asked him the question again, the third time,  
20658 emphatically. He seemed to urge the point, as if  
20659 he would search his inmost thoughts, to see  
20660 whether Peter would ever deny him again. Peter  
20661 was touched, he was grieved, it is said; he did  
20662 not fly into a passion—he did not boast, as he  
20663 did on a former occasion, “Though I should die  
20664 with thee, yet would I not deny thee,” but he was  
20665 grieved, he was subdued, he spoke tenderly, he  
20666 appealed to the Saviour himself, as if he would  
20667 implore him not to doubt his sincerity any  
20668 longer, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou  
20669 knowest that I love thee.” Christ then gave him  
20670 his final charge, “Feed my sheep.”

20671  
20672 By the terms sheep and lambs here, the Saviour  
20673 undoubtedly designated Christians,—members  
20674 of his church; the lambs probably represent  
20675 young converts, those that have but little  
20676 experience and but little knowledge of religion,  
20677 and therefore, need to have special attention and  
20678 pains taken with them, to guard from harm, and



20679 to train them for future usefulness. And when  
20680 our Saviour told Peter to feed his sheep, he  
20681 doubtless referred to the important part which  
20682 Peter was to perform in watching over the newly  
20683 formed churches in different parts of the world,  
20684 and in training the young converts, and leading  
20685 them along to usefulness and happiness.

20686

20687 My last lecture was on the subject of giving right  
20688 instruction to anxious sinners. And this naturally  
20689 brings me along, in this Course of Lectures, to  
20690 consider the manner in which young converts  
20691 should be treated and the instructions that should  
20692 be given to them.

20693

20694 INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUNG CONVERTS.

20695

20696 In speaking on this subject, it is my design,

20697

20698 I. To state several things that ought to be  
20699 considered, in regard to the hopes of young  
20700 converts.

20701

20702 II. Several things respecting their making a  
20703 profession of religion, and joining the church.

20704

20705 III. The importance of having correct instruction  
20706 given to young converts.

20707

20708 IV. What should not be taught to young  
20709 converts.

20710

20711 V. What particular things are specially necessary  
20712 to be taught to young converts.

20713

20714 VI. How young converts should be treated by  
20715 church members.

20716

20717 I. I am to state several matters in regard to the  
20718 hopes of young converts.

20719

20720 1. Nothing should be said to them to create a  
20721 hope. Nothing should ordinarily be intimated to  
20722 persons under conviction, calculated to make  
20723 them think they have experienced religion, till  
20724 they find it out themselves. I do not like this  
20725 term, “experienced religion,” and I use it only  
20726 because it is a phrase in common use. It is an  
20727 absurdity in itself. What is religion? Obedience  
20728 to God. Suppose you should hear a good citizen  
20729 say he had experienced obedience to the  
20730 government of the country. You see it is  
20731 nonsense. Or suppose a child should talk about  
20732 experiencing obedience to his father. If he knew  
20733 what he was saying, he would say he had obeyed  
20734 his father, just as the apostle Paul says to the

20735 Roman believers, “Ye have obeyed from the  
20736 heart that form of doctrine which was delivered  
20737 you.”

20738  
20739 What I mean to say is, that ordinarily, it is best  
20740 to let their hope or belief that they are converted  
20741 spring up spontaneously in their own minds.  
20742 Sometimes it will happen that persons may be  
20743 really converted, but owing to some notions  
20744 which they have been taught about religion, they  
20745 do not realize it. Their views of what religion is,  
20746 and its effect upon the mind, are so entirely wide  
20747 of the truth, that they do not think that they have  
20748 it. I will give you an illustration of this point.

20749  
20750 Some years since, I labored in a place where a  
20751 revival was in progress, and there was in the  
20752 place a young lady from Boston. She had been  
20753 brought up a Unitarian, she had considerable  
20754 education, and was intelligent on many subjects,  
20755 but on the subject of religion she was very  
20756 ignorant. At length she was convicted of sin. She  
20757 became awfully convinced of her horrible  
20758 enmity against God. She had been so educated as  
20759 to have a sense of propriety, but her enmity  
20760 against God became so great, and broke out so  
20761 frightfully, that it was horrible to hear her talk.  
20762 She used to come to the anxious meetings, where

20763 we conversed with each one separately. And her  
20764 feelings of opposition to God were such that she  
20765 used to create disturbance. By the time I came  
20766 within two or three seats from her, where she  
20767 could hear what I said in a low voice to others,  
20768 she would begin to make remarks in reply, so  
20769 that they could be heard. And she would say the  
20770 most bitter things against God, and against his  
20771 providence, and his method of dealing with  
20772 mankind, as if God was an infinite tyrant. She  
20773 would speak of him as the most unjust and cruel  
20774 being in the universe. I would try to hush her,  
20775 and make her keep still, because she distracted  
20776 the attention of others. Sometimes she would  
20777 stop and command her temper awhile, and  
20778 sometimes she would rise and go out. I have  
20779 seldom seen a case, where the enmity of the  
20780 heart rose so high against God. One night at the  
20781 anxious meeting, after she had been very  
20782 restless, as I came towards her, she began as  
20783 usual to reply, but I hushed her, and told her I  
20784 could not converse with her there, but invited her  
20785 to my room the next morning, and then I would  
20786 talk with her. She promised to come, but, says  
20787 she, "God is unjust, he is infinitely unjust. Is he  
20788 not almighty? Why then has he never shown me  
20789 my enmity before? Why has he let me run on so  
20790 long? Why does he let my friends at Boston

20791 remain in this ignorance? They are the enemies  
20792 of God, as much as I am, and are going to hell.  
20793 Why does he not show them the truth in regard  
20794 to their condition?" And in this temper she left  
20795 the room.

20796

20797 The next morning she came to my room, as she  
20798 had promised. I saw as soon as she came in that  
20799 her countenance was changed, but I said nothing  
20800 about it. "Oh," said she, "I have changed my  
20801 mind, as to what I said last night about God, I do  
20802 not think he has done me any wrong, and I think  
20803 I shall get religion sometime, for now I love to  
20804 think about God. I have been all wrong; the  
20805 reason why I had never known my enmity  
20806 before, was, that I would not. I used to read the  
20807 Bible, but I always passed over the passages that  
20808 would make me feel as if I was a lost sinner, and  
20809 those passages that spoke of Jesus Christ as God,  
20810 I passed over without consideration, and now I  
20811 see that it was my fault, not God's fault, that I  
20812 did not know any more about myself; I have  
20813 changed my mind now." She had no idea that  
20814 this was religion, but she was encouraged now to  
20815 expect religion at some future time, because she  
20816 loved God so much. I said nothing to make her  
20817 imagine that I thought her a Christian, but left  
20818 her to find it out. And, for a time, her mind was

20819 so entirely occupied with thinking about God,  
20820 that she never seemed to ask whether this is  
20821 religion or not.

20822

20823 It is a great evil, ordinarily, to encourage persons  
20824 to hope they are Christians. Very likely you may  
20825 judge prematurely. Or if not, it is better they  
20826 should find it out for themselves, suppose they  
20827 do not see it at once. They may break down  
20828 lower than ever, and then they will come out so  
20829 clear and decided, that they will know where  
20830 they are.

20831

20832 2 When you see persons expressing a hope, and  
20833 yet they express doubts too, it is generally  
20834 because the work is not thorough. If they are  
20835 convicted, they need breaking up. They are still  
20836 lingering around the world, or they have not  
20837 broken off effectually from their sins, and they  
20838 need to be pushed back, rather than urged  
20839 forward. If you see reason to doubt, or if you  
20840 find that they have doubts, most probably there  
20841 is some good reason to doubt. Sometimes  
20842 persons express a hope in Christ, and afterwards  
20843 remember some sin, that needs to be confessed  
20844 to men, or some case where they have slandered,  
20845 or defrauded, where it is necessary to make  
20846 satisfaction, and where either their character, or

20847 their purse, is so deeply implicated that they  
20848 hesitate, and refuse to perform their duty. This  
20849 grieves the Spirit, brings darkness over their  
20850 minds of course, and justly leads them to doubt  
20851 whether they are truly converted. If a soul is  
20852 truly converted, it will generally be found when  
20853 there are doubts, that on some point they are  
20854 neglecting duty. They should be searched as  
20855 with a lighted candle, and brought up to the  
20856 performance of duty, and not suffered to hope  
20857 until they do it. Ordinarily it is proper just there  
20858 to throw in some plain and searching truth, that  
20859 will go through them, something that will wither  
20860 their hopes like a moth. Do it while the Spirit of  
20861 God is dealing with them, and do it in the right  
20862 way, and there is no danger of its doing harm.

20863

20864 To illustrate this: I knew a person, who was a  
20865 member of the church, but an abominable  
20866 hypocrite, proved to be so by her conduct, and  
20867 afterwards fully confessed to be so. In a revival  
20868 of religion she was awakened and deeply  
20869 convicted, and after a while she got a hope. She  
20870 came to a minister to talk with him about her  
20871 hope, and he poured in the truth to her mind in  
20872 such a manner as to annihilate all her hopes. She  
20873 then remained under conviction many days, and  
20874 at last she broke out in hope again. The minister

20875 knew her temperament, and knew what she  
20876 needed, and he tore away her hope again. And  
20877 then she broke down, clear to the ground, so that  
20878 she could not stand or go. So deeply did the  
20879 Spirit of God PROBE her heart, that, for a time,  
20880 it took away all her bodily strength. And then  
20881 she came out subdued. Before, she had been one  
20882 of the proudest rebels against God's government  
20883 that ever was, but now she became humbled, and  
20884 was one of the most modest, tender, lovely of  
20885 Christians. No doubt that was just the way to  
20886 deal with her. It was just the treatment that her  
20887 case required.

20888  
20889 It is often useful to deal with individuals in this  
20890 way. Some persons are naturally unamiable in  
20891 their temper, and unlovely in their deportment.  
20892 And it is particularly important that such persons  
20893 should be dealt with most thoroughly whenever  
20894 they first begin to express hope in Christ. Unless  
20895 the work with them, is, in the first place,  
20896 uncommonly deep and thorough, they will be  
20897 vastly less useful, and interesting, and happy,  
20898 than they would have been, had the probe been  
20899 thoroughly and skilfully applied to their heart. If  
20900 they are encouraged at first, without being  
20901 thoroughly dealt with, if they are left to go right  
20902 along, and not sufficiently probed and broken



20903 down, these unlovely traits of character will  
20904 remain unsubdued, and will be always breaking  
20905 out to the great injury, both of their personal  
20906 peace, and their general influence and usefulness  
20907 as Christians.

20908

20909 It is important to take advantage of such  
20910 characters while they are just in these peculiar  
20911 circumstances, so that they can be moulded into  
20912 proper form. Do not spare, though it should be a  
20913 child, or a brother, or a husband, or a wife. Let it  
20914 be a thorough work. If they express a hope, and  
20915 you find they bear the image of Christ, they are  
20916 Christians. But if that appears doubtful—if they  
20917 do not appear to be fully changed, just tear away  
20918 their hope, by searching them with the most  
20919 discriminating truth, and leave the Spirit to do  
20920 the work more deeply. If still the image is not  
20921 perfect, do it again—break them down into a  
20922 child-like spirit, and then let them hope. They  
20923 will then be clear and thorough Christians. By  
20924 such a mode of treatment, I have often known  
20925 people of the crookedest and hatefulest natural  
20926 character, so transformed in a few days, that they  
20927 appear like different beings. You would think  
20928 the work of a whole life of Christian cultivation  
20929 had been done at once. Doubtless this was the  
20930 intent of our Saviour's dealing with Peter. He

20931 had been converted, but became puffed up with  
20932 spiritual pride and self-confidence, and then he  
20933 fell. After that, Christ broke him down again, by  
20934 three times searching him with the inquiry,  
20935 “Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me?” after  
20936 which, he seems to have been a stable and  
20937 devoted saint the rest of his days.

20938

20939 3. There is no need of young converts having or  
20940 expressing doubts as to their conversion. There  
20941 is no more need of a person doubting whether he  
20942 is now in favor of God’s government, than there  
20943 is for a man to doubt whether he is in favor of  
20944 our government or another. It is, in fact, on the  
20945 face of it, absurd, for a person to talk of doubting  
20946 on such a point, if he is intelligent and  
20947 understands what he is talking about. It has long  
20948 been supposed to be a virtue, and a mark of  
20949 humility, for a person to doubt whether he is a  
20950 Christian, and this notion that there is virtue in  
20951 doubting is a device of the devil. “I say,  
20952 neighbor, are you in favor of our government, or  
20953 do you prefer that of Russia?” “Why, I have  
20954 some hopes that I love our own government, but  
20955 I have many doubts.” Wonderful! “Woman, do  
20956 you love your children?” “Why, sir, I sometimes  
20957 have a trembling hope that I love them, but you  
20958 know the best have doubts.” “Wife, do you love

20959 your husband?” “I do not know—I sometimes  
20960 think I do, but you know the heart is deceitful,  
20961 and we ought to be careful and not be too  
20962 confident.” Who would have such a wife? “Man  
20963 do you love your wife, do you love your  
20964 family?” “Ah, you know we are poor creatures,  
20965 we do not know our own hearts. I think I do love  
20966 them, but perhaps I am deceived.” Ridiculous!

20967  
20968 Ordinarily, the very idea of a person’s  
20969 expressing doubts, renders his piety truly  
20970 doubtful. A real Christian has no need to doubt.  
20971 And when one is full of doubts, ordinarily you  
20972 ought to doubt for him and help him doubt.  
20973 Affection to God is as much a matter of  
20974 consciousness as any other affection. A woman  
20975 knows she loves her child. How? By  
20976 consciousness. She is conscious of the exercise  
20977 of this affection. And, then, she sees it carried  
20978 out into action every day. In the same way a  
20979 Christian may know that he loves God, by his  
20980 consciousness of this affection, and by seeing  
20981 that it influences his daily conduct.

20982  
20983 In the case of young converts, truly such, these  
20984 doubts generally arise from their having been  
20985 wrongly dealt with, and not sufficiently taught,  
20986 or not thoroughly humbled. In any case, they

20987 should never be left in such a state, but should be  
20988 brought, if possible, to such a thorough change,  
20989 that they will doubt no longer. It is inconsistent  
20990 with the greatest usefulness, for a Christian to be  
20991 always entertaining doubts. It not only makes  
20992 him gloomy. but it renders his religion a  
20993 stumbling block to sinners. What do sinners  
20994 think of such religion? They say, "These  
20995 converts are always afraid to think they have got  
20996 any thing real. They are always trembling, and  
20997 doubting whether it is a reality, and they ought  
20998 to know whether there is anything in it or not;  
20999 for if it is any thing, these people seem to have  
21000 it, and I am inclined to think it rather doubtful.  
21001 At any rate, I will let it pass for the present; for I  
21002 do not believe God will damn me for not  
21003 attending to what appears so uncertain." No, a  
21004 cheerful, settled hope in Christ, is indispensable  
21005 to usefulness, and therefore you should deal so  
21006 with young converts, as to lead them to a  
21007 consistent, well-grounded, stable hope.  
21008 Ordinarily this may be done, if pursued wisely,  
21009 at the proper time, and that is at the  
21010 commencement of their religious life. And they  
21011 should not be left till it is done.  
21012  
21013 I know there are some exceptions; there are  
21014 cases where the best instructions will be

21015 ineffectual, but these generally depend on the  
21016 state of the health, and the condition of the  
21017 nervous system. Sometimes you find a person  
21018 incapable of reasoning on a certain topic, and so  
21019 their errors will not yield to instruction. But most  
21020 commonly they mistake the state of their own  
21021 hearts, because they judge under the influence of  
21022 a physical disease. Sometimes persons under a  
21023 nervous depression will go almost into despair. I  
21024 will not take time now to show the connection,  
21025 but persons who are acquainted with physiology  
21026 will easily explain the matter, and this will make  
21027 it plain that the only way to deal with such cases  
21028 is first to recruit their health, and get their  
21029 nervous system in a proper tone, and thus  
21030 remove the physical cause of their gloom and  
21031 depression, and then they will be able to receive  
21032 and apply your instructions to the state of their  
21033 minds. But if you cannot remove their gloom  
21034 and doubts and fears in this way, you can at least  
21035 avoid doing any positive harm, by giving them  
21036 wrong instructions. I have known even  
21037 experienced Christians to have the error fastened  
21038 upon them, thinking it was necessary, or was  
21039 virtuous, or a mark of humility to be always in  
21040 doubt, and Satan would take advantage of it, and  
21041 of the state of their health, to drive them almost  
21042 into despair. You ought to guard against this, by

21043 avoiding the error in teaching young converts.  
21044 Teach them that instead of there being any virtue  
21045 in doubting, it is a sin to have any reason to  
21046 doubt, and a sin if they doubt without any  
21047 reason, and a sin to be gloomy, and disgust  
21048 sinners with their despondency. And if you teach  
21049 them thoroughly what religion is, and make  
21050 them SEE CLEARLY what God wishes to have  
21051 them do, and lead them to do it promptly and  
21052 decidedly, ordinarily they will not be harassed  
21053 with doubts and fears, but will be clear, open-  
21054 hearted, cheerful and growing Christians, an  
21055 honor to the religion they profess, and a blessing  
21056 to the church and the world.

21057  
21058 II. I proceed to mention some things worthy of  
21059 consideration in regard to their making a  
21060 profession of religion, or joining the church.

21061  
21062 1. Young converts should, ordinarily, offer  
21063 themselves for admission to some church of  
21064 Christ immediately. By immediately, I mean that  
21065 they should do it the first opportunity they have.  
21066 They should not wait. If they set out in religion  
21067 by waiting, most likely they will always be  
21068 waiting and never do anything to much purpose.  
21069 If they are taught to wait under conviction,  
21070 before they give themselves up to Christ, or if

21071 they are taught to wait after conversion, before  
21072 they give themselves publicly to God, by joining  
21073 the church, they will probably go halting and  
21074 stumbling along through life. The first thing they  
21075 should be taught, always is, NEVER TO WAIT  
21076 WHERE GOD HAS POINTED OUT YOUR  
21077 DUTY. We profess to have given up the waiting  
21078 system, let us carry it through and be consistent.  
21079

21080 While I say it is the duty of young converts to  
21081 offer themselves to the church immediately, I do  
21082 not say that they should, in all cases, be received  
21083 immediately. But the church may, and have an  
21084 undoubted right to assume the responsibility of  
21085 receiving them immediately or not. If the church  
21086 are not satisfied in the case, they have the power  
21087 to bid candidates wait till they can make  
21088 inquiries, or in any other way obtain satisfaction,  
21089 as to their character and their sincerity. This is  
21090 more necessary in large cities than it is in the  
21091 country, because the church is liable to receive  
21092 so many applications from persons that are entire  
21093 strangers, where it is necessary to make inquiries  
21094 before admitting them to communion. But if the  
21095 church think it necessary to postpone an  
21096 applicant, the responsibility is not his. He has  
21097 not postponed obedience to the dying command  
21098 of Christ, and so he has not grieved the Spirit

21099 away, and so he may not be essentially injured if  
21100 he is faithful in other respects. Whereas, if he  
21101 had neglected the duty voluntarily, he would  
21102 soon get into the dark, and very likely backslide.

21103

21104 If there is no particular reason for delay,  
21105 ordinarily the church ought to receive them  
21106 when they apply. If they are sufficiently  
21107 instructed on the subject of religion to know  
21108 what they are doing, and if their general  
21109 character is such that they can be trusted as to  
21110 their sincerity and honesty in making a  
21111 profession, I see no reason why they should  
21112 delay. But if there are sufficient reasons, in the  
21113 view of the church, for making them wait a  
21114 reasonable time, let them do it, on their  
21115 responsibility to Jesus Christ. They should,  
21116 however, remember, what is the responsibility  
21117 they assume, and that if they keep those out of  
21118 the church who ought to be in it, they sin, and  
21119 grieve the Holy Spirit.

21120

21121 It is impossible to lay down particular rules on  
21122 this subject, applicable to all cases. There is so  
21123 great a variety of reasons which may warrant  
21124 keeping persons back, that no general rules can  
21125 reach them all. Our practice, in this church, is to  
21126 propound persons for a month after they make



21127 application, before they are received to full  
21128 communion. The reason of this is, that the  
21129 Session may have opportunity to inquire  
21130 respecting individuals who offer themselves, as  
21131 so many of them are strangers. But in the  
21132 country, where there are regular congregations,  
21133 and all the people have been instructed from  
21134 their youth in the doctrines of religion, and  
21135 where everybody is perfectly known, the case is  
21136 different, and ordinarily I see no reason why  
21137 persons of fair character should not be admitted  
21138 immediately. If a person has not been a  
21139 drunkard, or otherwise of bad character, let him  
21140 be admitted at once, as soon as he can give a  
21141 rational and satisfactory account of the hope that  
21142 is in him.

21143

21144 That is evidently the way the apostles did. There  
21145 is not the least evidence in the New Testament,  
21146 that they ever put off a person that wanted to be  
21147 baptized and join the church. I know this does  
21148 not satisfy some people, because they think the  
21149 case is different. But I do not see it so. They say  
21150 the apostles were inspired. That is true; but it  
21151 does not follow that they were inspired to read  
21152 the characters of men, so as to prevent their  
21153 making mistakes in this matter. On the other  
21154 hand, we know they were not inspired in this

21155 way, for we know they did make mistakes, just  
21156 as ministers may do now, and, therefore, it is not  
21157 true that their being inspired men alters the case  
21158 on this point. Simon Magus was supposed to be  
21159 a Christian, and was baptised and admitted to the  
21160 communion, and remained in good standing till  
21161 he undertook to purchase the Holy Ghost with  
21162 money. The apostles used to admit converts  
21163 from Heathenism immediately, and without  
21164 delay. If they could receive persons who,  
21165 perhaps, never heard more than one Gospel  
21166 sermon, and who never had a Bible, nor attended  
21167 a Sabbath-school or Bible-class in their lives,  
21168 surely it is not necessary to wake up such an  
21169 outcry and alarm, if a church thinks proper to  
21170 receive persons of fair character who have had  
21171 the Bible all their lives, and been trained in the  
21172 Sabbath-school, and sat under the preaching of  
21173 the Gospel, and who, therefore, may be  
21174 supposed to understand what they are about, and  
21175 not to profess what they do not feel.

21176  
21177 I know it may be said that persons who make a  
21178 profession of religion now, are not obliged to  
21179 make such sacrifices for their religion as the  
21180 early believers were, and, consequently, people  
21181 may be more ready to play the hypocrite. And, to  
21182 some extent, that is true. But then, on the other

21183 hand, it should be remembered, that, with the  
21184 instructions which they have on the subject of  
21185 religion, they are not so easily led to deceive  
21186 themselves, as those who were converted  
21187 without the previous advantages of a religious  
21188 education. They may be strongly tempted to  
21189 deceive others, but I insist upon it, that, with the  
21190 instructions which they have received, the  
21191 converts of these great revivals are not half so  
21192 liable to deceive themselves, and take up with a  
21193 false hope, as they were in the days of the  
21194 Apostles. And on this ground I believe that those  
21195 churches who are faithful in dealing with young  
21196 converts, and who exhibit habitually the power  
21197 of religion, are not likely to receive so many  
21198 unconverted persons, as the Apostles did.

21199  
21200 It is important that the churches should act  
21201 wisely on this point. Great evil has been done by  
21202 this practice of keeping persons out of the  
21203 church a long time to see if they were Christians.  
21204 This is almost as absurd as it would be to throw  
21205 out a young child into the street, to see whether  
21206 it will live; to say, if it lives and promises to be a  
21207 healthy child, we will take care of it, when that  
21208 is the very time it wants nursing, and taking care  
21209 of, at the moment when the scale is turning,  
21210 whether it shall live or die. Is that the way to

21211 deal with young converts? Should the church  
21212 throw her new-born children out to the winds,  
21213 and say, if they live there, let them be raised; but  
21214 if they die, they ought to die. I have not a doubt  
21215 that thousands of converts, in consequence of  
21216 this treatment, have gone through life, and never  
21217 have joined any church, but have lingered along,  
21218 full of doubts, and fears, and darkness, and in  
21219 this way have spent their days, and gone to the  
21220 grave without the comforts or the usefulness  
21221 which they might have enjoyed, simply because  
21222 the church, in her folly, has suffered them to  
21223 wait outside of the pale, to see whether they  
21224 would grow and thrive, without those ordinances  
21225 which Jesus Christ established particularly for  
21226 their benefit.

21227

21228 Jesus Christ says to his church, “Here, take these  
21229 lambs, and feed them, and shelter them and  
21230 watch over them, and protect them:” and what  
21231 does the church do? Why, turn them out alone  
21232 upon the cold mountains, among the wild beasts,  
21233 to starve or perish, to see whether they are alive  
21234 or not. This whole system is as unphilosophical  
21235 as it is unscriptural. Did Jesus Christ tell his  
21236 churches to do so? Did God of Abraham teach  
21237 any such doctrine as this, in regard to the  
21238 children of Abraham? Never. He never taught us

21239 to treat young converts in such a barbarous  
21240 manner. It is the very best way that could be  
21241 taken to render it doubtful whether they are  
21242 converts. The very way to lead them into doubts  
21243 and darkness, is to keep them away from the  
21244 church, from its fellowship, and its ordinances.

21245  
21246 I have understood there is a church, not very far  
21247 from here, who have passed a resolution that no  
21248 young converts shall be admitted till they have  
21249 had a hope for at least six months. Where did  
21250 they get any such rule? Not from the Bible, nor  
21251 the example of the early churches.

21252  
21253 3. In examining young converts for admission to  
21254 the church, their consciences should not be  
21255 ensnared by examining them too extensively or  
21256 minutely on doctrinal points. From the manner  
21257 in which examinations are conducted in some  
21258 churches, it would seem as if they expected that  
21259 young converts would be all at once acquainted  
21260 with the whole system of divinity, and able to  
21261 answer every puzzling question in theology. The  
21262 effect of it is, that young converts are perplexed  
21263 and confused, and give their assent to things they  
21264 do not understand, and thus their conscience is  
21265 ensnared, and consequently weakened. Why, one  
21266 great design of receiving young converts into the

21267 church, is to teach them doctrines, but if they are  
21268 to be kept out of the church till they understand  
21269 the whole system of doctrines, this end is  
21270 defeated. Will you keep them out till one main  
21271 design of receiving them is accomplished by  
21272 other means? It is absurd. There are certain  
21273 cardinal doctrines of Christianity, which are  
21274 embraced in the experience of every true  
21275 convert. And these, young converts will testify  
21276 to, on their examination, if they are questioned  
21277 in such a way as to draw out their knowledge,  
21278 and not in such a way as to puzzle and confound  
21279 them. The questions should be such, as are  
21280 calculated to draw out from them what they have  
21281 learned by experience, and not what they may  
21282 have got in theory before or since their  
21283 conversion. The object is, not to find out how  
21284 much they know, or how good scholars they are  
21285 in divinity, as you would examine a school, or a  
21286 number of young men striving for a premium. It  
21287 is to find out whether they have a change of  
21288 heart, to learn whether they have experienced the  
21289 great truths of religion by their power in their  
21290 own souls. You see therefore how absurd, and  
21291 injurious too, it must be, to examine as is  
21292 sometimes done, like a lawyer at the bar, cross-  
21293 examining a suspicious witness. It should rather  
21294 be like a faithful physician anxious to find out

21295 his patient's true condition, and therefore leading  
21296 his mind, by inquiries and hints, to disclose the  
21297 real symptoms of his case.

21298

21299 You will always find, if you put your questions  
21300 right, that real converts will see clearly those  
21301 great fundamental points, the divine authority of  
21302 the scriptures, the necessity of the influences of  
21303 the Holy Spirit, the divinity of Christ, the  
21304 doctrine of total depravity and regeneration, the  
21305 necessity of the atonement, justification by faith,  
21306 and the justice of the eternal punishment of the  
21307 wicked. By a proper course of inquiries you will  
21308 find all these points come out, as a part of their  
21309 experience, if you put your questions in such a  
21310 way that they understand them.

21311

21312 A church session in this city have, as we are  
21313 informed, passed a vote, that no person shall join  
21314 that church till he will give his assent to the  
21315 whole Presbyterian Confession of Faith, and  
21316 adopt it as his "rule of faith and practice and  
21317 Christian obedience." That is, they must read the  
21318 book through, which is about three times as large  
21319 as this hymn-book, and must understand it, and  
21320 agree to it all, before they can be admitted to the  
21321 church, before they can make a profession of  
21322 religion, or obey the command of Christ. By

21323 what authority does a church say that no one  
21324 shall join their communion till he understands all  
21325 the points and technicalities of this long  
21326 confession of faith? Is that their charity, to cram  
21327 this whole confession of faith down the throat of  
21328 a young convert, before they let him so much as  
21329 come to the communion? He says, “I love the  
21330 Lord Jesus Christ, and wish to obey his  
21331 command.” “Very well, but do you understand  
21332 and adopt the confession of Faith?” He says, “I  
21333 do not know, for I never read that, but I have  
21334 read the Bible, and I love that, and wish to  
21335 follow the directions in it, and to come to the  
21336 table of the Lord.” “Do you love the confession  
21337 of faith? If not, YOU SHALL NOT COME,” is  
21338 the reply of this charitable session, “you shall  
21339 not sit down at the Lord’s table, till you have  
21340 adopted all this confession of faith.” Did Jesus  
21341 Christ ever authorise a church session to say  
21342 this—to tell that child of God, who stands there  
21343 with tears, and asks permission to obey his Lord,  
21344 and who understands the grounds of his faith,  
21345 and can give a satisfactory reason of his hope, to  
21346 tell him he cannot join the church till he  
21347 understands the confession of faith? No doubt,  
21348 Jesus Christ is angry with such a church, and he  
21349 will show his displeasure in a way that admits of  
21350 no mistake, if they do not repent. Shut the door



21351 against young converts till they swallow the  
21352 confession of faith! And will such a church  
21353 prosper? Never.  
21354  
21355 No church on earth has a right to impose its  
21356 extended confession of faith on a young convert,  
21357 who admits the fundamentals of religion. They  
21358 may let the young convert know their own faith  
21359 on ever so many points, and they may examine  
21360 him, if they think it necessary, as to his belief;  
21361 but suppose he has doubts on some points not  
21362 essential to Christian experience, as the doctrine  
21363 of Infant Baptism, or of Election, or the  
21364 Perseverance of the Saints, and suppose he  
21365 honestly and frankly tells you he has not made  
21366 up his mind concerning these points. Has any  
21367 minister or church a right to say, he shall not  
21368 come to the Lord's table till he has finished all  
21369 his researches into these subjects? That he shall  
21370 not obey Jesus Christ till he has fully made up  
21371 his mind on every such point on which  
21372 Christians, and devoted ones too, differ among  
21373 themselves? I would sooner cut off my right  
21374 hand than debar a convert under such  
21375 circumstances. I would teach a young convert as  
21376 well as I could in the time before he made his  
21377 application, and I would examine him candidly  
21378 as to his views, and after he was in the church, I

21379 would endeavor to make him grow in knowledge  
21380 as he grows in grace. And by just as much  
21381 confidence as I have that my own doctrines are  
21382 the doctrines of God, I should expect to make  
21383 him adopt them, if I could have a fair hearing  
21384 before his mind. But I never would bid one,  
21385 whom I charitably believed to be a child of God,  
21386 to stay away from his Father's table, because he  
21387 did not see all I see, or believe all I believe,  
21388 through the whole system of divinity. The thing  
21389 is utterly irrational, ridiculous and wicked.

21390

21391 4. Sometimes persons who are known to  
21392 entertain a hope dare not make a profession of  
21393 religion for fear they should be deceived. I  
21394 would always deal decidedly with such cases. A  
21395 hope that will not warrant a profession of  
21396 religion is manifestly worse than no hope, and  
21397 the sooner it is torn away the better. Shall a man  
21398 hope he loves God, and yet not dare obey Jesus  
21399 Christ? Preposterous. Such a hope had better be  
21400 given up at once.

21401

21402 5. Sometimes persons professing to be converts  
21403 will make an excuse for not joining the church,  
21404 that they can enjoy religion just as well without  
21405 it. This is always suspicious. I should look out  
21406 for such characters. It is almost certain they have

21407 no religion. Ordinarily, if a person does not  
21408 desire to be associated with the people of God,  
21409 he is rotten at the bottom. It is because he wants  
21410 to keep out of the responsibilities of a public  
21411 profession. He has a feeling within him that he  
21412 had rather be free, so that he can by and by go  
21413 back to the world again if he likes, without the  
21414 reproach of instability or hypocrisy. Enjoy  
21415 religion just as well without obeying Jesus  
21416 Christ! It is false on the face of it. He overlooks  
21417 the fact that religion consists in obeying Jesus  
21418 Christ.

21419  
21420 III. I am to consider the importance of giving  
21421 right instruction to young converts.

21422  
21423 Ordinarily, their Christian character through life  
21424 is moulded and fashioned according to the  
21425 manner in which they are dealt with when first  
21426 converted. There are many who have been  
21427 poorly taught at first, but have been afterwards  
21428 re-converted, and if they are then dealt with  
21429 properly, they may be made something of. But  
21430 the proper time to do this is when they are first  
21431 brought in, when their minds are soft and tender,  
21432 and easily yield to the truth. Then they may be  
21433 led with a hair, if they think it is the truth of  
21434 God. And whatever notions in religion they get

21435 then they are apt to cleave to for ever afterwards.  
21436 It is almost impossible to get away a man's  
21437 notions that he got when he was a young  
21438 convert. You may reason him down, but he  
21439 cleaves to them. How often is it the case where  
21440 persons have been taught certain things when  
21441 first converted, that if they afterwards get a new  
21442 minister, who teaches somewhat differently, they  
21443 will rise up against him, as if he was going to  
21444 subvert the faith and carry away the church to  
21445 error, and throw everything into confusion. Thus  
21446 you see that young converts are thrown into the  
21447 hands of the church, and it depends on the  
21448 church to mould them, and form them into  
21449 Christians of the right stamp. Much of their  
21450 future comfort and usefulness depends on the  
21451 manner in which they are instructed at the outset.  
21452 The future character of the church, the progress  
21453 of revivals, the coming of the millennium,  
21454 depend on having right instruction given, and a  
21455 right direction of thought and life to those who  
21456 are young converts.

21457

21458 IV. I am to mention some things which should  
21459 not be taught to young converts.

21460

21461 1. "You will not always feel as you do now."

21462 When the young convert is rejoicing in his

21463 Saviour, and calculating to live for the glory of  
21464 God and the good of mankind, how often is he  
21465 met with this reply, “You will not always feel  
21466 so.” Thus preparing his mind to expect that he  
21467 shall backslide, and not to be much surprised  
21468 when he does. This is just the way the devil  
21469 wants young converts dealt with, to have old  
21470 Christians tell them, your feelings will not last,  
21471 and that by and by you will be as cold as we are.  
21472 It has made my heart bleed to see it. When the  
21473 young convert has been pouring out his warm  
21474 heart to some old professor, and expecting to  
21475 meet the warm burstings of a kindred spirit  
21476 responding to his own, what does he meet with?  
21477 This cold answer, coming like a northern blast  
21478 over his soul, “You will not always feel so.”  
21479 SHAME! Just preparing the young convert to  
21480 expect that he shall backslide as a matter of  
21481 course; so that when he begins to decline, as  
21482 under the very influences of this instruction it is  
21483 most likely he will, it produces no surprise or  
21484 alarm in his mind, but he looks at it just as a  
21485 thing of course, doing as every body else does.  
21486  
21487 I have heard it preached as well as prayed, that  
21488 seasons of backsliding are necessary to test the  
21489 church. They say, “when it rains, you can find  
21490 water anywhere: it is only in seasons of drought

21491 that you can tell where the deep springs are.”  
21492 Wonderful logic! And so you would teach that  
21493 Christians must get cold and stupid, and  
21494 backslide from God, and for what reason? Why  
21495 forsooth, to show that they are not hypocrites.  
21496 Amazing! You would prove that they are  
21497 hypocrites in order to show that they are not.  
21498  
21499 Such doctrine as this is the very last that should  
21500 be taught to young converts. They should be told  
21501 that now they have only begun the Christian life,  
21502 and that their religion is to consist in going on in  
21503 it. They should be taught to go forward all the  
21504 time, and grow in grace continually. Do not  
21505 teach them to taper off their religion, let it grow  
21506 smaller and smaller till it comes to a point. God  
21507 says, “The path of the just is as the shining light,  
21508 that shineth more and more to the perfect day.”  
21509 Now whose path is that which grows dimmer  
21510 and dimmer until the perfect night? They should  
21511 be brought to such a state of mind that the first  
21512 indications of decay in spirituality or zeal will  
21513 alarm them and spur them up to duty. There is  
21514 no need that young converts should backslide as  
21515 they do. Paul did not backslide. And I do not  
21516 doubt that this very doctrine, “You will not  
21517 always feel so,” is one of the grand devices of  
21518 Satan to bring about the result which it predicts.

21519

21520

2. “Learn to walk by faith and not by sight.”

21521

This is sometimes said to young converts in

21522

reference to their continuing to exhibit the power

21523

of religion, and is a manifest perversion of

21524

scripture. If they begin to lose their faith and

21525

zeal, and to get into darkness, some old

21526

professor will tell them, “Ah, you cannot expect

21527

to have the Saviour always with you, you have

21528

been walking by sight, you must learn to walk

21529

by faith and not by sight.” That is, you must

21530

learn to get as cold as death, and then hang on to

21531

the doctrine of the Saints’ Perseverance, as your

21532

only ground of hope that you shall be saved.

21533

And that is walking by faith. Cease to persevere,

21534

and then hold on to the doctrine of perseverance.

21535

“One of guilt’s blunders, and the loudest laugh

21536

of hell.” And living in the enjoyment of God’s

21537

favor and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, they

21538

call walking by sight! Do you suppose young

21539

converts see the Saviour at the time they believe

21540

on him? When they are so full of the enjoyments

21541

of heaven, do you suppose they see heaven, and

21542

so walk by sight? It is absurd on the face of it. It

21543

is not faith, it is presumption, that makes a

21544

backslider hold on to the doctrine of

21545

perseverance, as if that would save him, without

21546

any sensible exercise of godliness in his soul.

21547 Those who attempt to walk by faith in this way  
21548 had better take care, or they will walk into hell  
21549 with their faith. Faith indeed! Faith without  
21550 works is dead. Can dead faith make the soul  
21551 live?  
21552  
21553 3. “Wait till you see whether you can hold out.”  
21554 When a young convert feels zealous and warm-  
21555 hearted, and wants to lay himself out for God,  
21556 some prudent old professor will caution him not  
21557 to go too fast. “You had better not be too  
21558 forward in religion, till you see whether you can  
21559 hold out; for if you take this high ground and  
21560 then fall, you will disgrace religion.” That is, in  
21561 plain English, “Do not do anything that  
21562 constitutes religion, till you see whether you  
21563 have religion.” Religion consists in obeying  
21564 God. Now these wise teachers tell a young  
21565 convert, “Do not obey God till you see”—  
21566 what?—till you see whether you have obeyed  
21567 him—or, till you see whether you have gotten  
21568 that substance, that mysterious thing which they  
21569 imagine is created and put into a man, like a  
21570 lump of new flesh, and called religion. This  
21571 waiting system is all alike, and all wrong. There  
21572 is no scripture warrant for telling a person to  
21573 wait, when the command of God is upon him



21574 and the path of duty before him. Let him go  
21575 along.  
21576  
21577 Young converts should be fully taught that this  
21578 is the only consistent way to find out whether  
21579 they have any religion.—The only evidence they  
21580 can have is to find that they are heartily engaged  
21581 in doing the will of God. To tell him to wait,  
21582 therefore, before he does these things, till he gets  
21583 his evidence, is reversing the matter, and is  
21584 absurd.  
21585  
21586 4. “Wait till you get strength, before you take up  
21587 the cross.” This is applied to various religious  
21588 duties. Sometimes it is applied to prayer, just as  
21589 if prayer was a cross. But I have known young  
21590 converts advised not to attempt to pray in their  
21591 families, or not to attempt quite yet to pray in  
21592 meetings and social circles. “Wait till you get  
21593 strength.” Just as if they would get strength  
21594 without exercise. Strength comes by exercise.  
21595 You cannot get strength by lying still. Let a child  
21596 lie in the cradle all his life, and he would never  
21597 have any strength, he might grow in size, but he  
21598 never could be any thing more than a great baby.  
21599 This is a law of nature. There is no substitute for  
21600 exercise in producing strength. The body as  
21601 every one knows, can be strengthened only by

21602 exercise. It is so in the nature of things. And it is  
21603 just so with the mind. It is so with the affections,  
21604 so with the judgment, so with conscience. All  
21605 the powers of the soul are strengthened by  
21606 exercise. I need not now enter into the  
21607 philosophy of this. Every body knows it is so. If  
21608 the mind is not exercised, the brain will not  
21609 grow, and the man will become an idiot. If the  
21610 affections are not exercised he will become a  
21611 stoic. To talk to a convert about neglecting  
21612 Christian action till he gets strength, is absurd. If  
21613 he wants to gain strength, let him go to work.

21614  
21615 5. Young converts should not be made sectarian  
21616 in their feelings. They should not be taught to  
21617 dwell upon sectarian distinctions, or to be  
21618 sticklish about sectarian points. They ought to  
21619 examine these points, at a proper time, and in a  
21620 proper way, and make up their minds for  
21621 themselves, according to their importance. But  
21622 they should not be taught to dwell upon them, or  
21623 to make much of them in the outset of their  
21624 religious life. Otherwise there is great danger  
21625 that their whole religion will run into  
21626 sectarianism. I have seen some most sad and  
21627 melancholy exhibitions of the effects of this  
21628 upon young converts. And whenever I see  
21629 professed converts taking a strong hold of

21630 sectarian peculiarities, no matter of what  
21631 denomination of Christians, I always feel in  
21632 doubt about them. When I hear them asking,  
21633 “Do you believe in the doctrine of election?” or,  
21634 “Do you believe in sprinkling?” or, “Do you  
21635 believe in plunging?” I feel sad. I never knew  
21636 such converts to be worth much. Their sectarian  
21637 zeal soon sours their feelings, eats out all the  
21638 heart of their religion, and moulds their whole  
21639 character into sinful sectarian bigotry. They  
21640 generally become mighty zealous for the  
21641 traditions of the elders, and very little concerned  
21642 for the salvation of souls.

21643  
21644 V. I proceed to mention some of the things  
21645 which it is important should be taught to young  
21646 converts.

21647  
21648 1. One of the first things young converts should  
21649 be taught is to distinguish between emotion and  
21650 principle in religion. Do you understand me? I  
21651 am going to explain what I mean, but I want you  
21652 to get hold of the words, and have them fixed in  
21653 your mind. What I want is to have you  
21654 distinguish between emotion and principle.

21655  
21656 By emotion, I mean that state of mind of which  
21657 we are conscious, and which we call feeling, an

21658 involuntary state of mind, that arises of course  
21659 when we are in certain circumstances or under  
21660 certain influences. There may be high-wrought  
21661 feelings, or they may subside into tranquillity, or  
21662 disappear entirely. But these emotions should be  
21663 carefully distinguished from religious principle.  
21664 By principle I do not mean any substance or root  
21665 or seed or sprout implanted in the soul. But I  
21666 mean the voluntary decision of the mind, the  
21667 firm determination to act out duty and to obey  
21668 the will of God, by which a Christian should  
21669 always be governed. When a man is fully  
21670 determined to obey God, because it is RIGHT  
21671 that he should obey God, I call that principle.  
21672 Whether he feels any lively religious emotion at  
21673 the time or not, he will do his duty cheerfully,  
21674 and readily, and heartily, whatever may be the  
21675 state of his feelings. This is acting upon  
21676 principle, and not from emotion. Many young  
21677 converts have mistaken views upon this subject,  
21678 and depend almost entirely upon the state of  
21679 their feelings to go forward in duty. Some will  
21680 not lead in a prayer meeting, unless they feel as  
21681 if they could make an eloquent prayer.  
21682 Multitudes are influenced almost entirely by  
21683 their emotions, and they give way to this, as if  
21684 they thought themselves under no obligation to  
21685 duty unless urged on by some strong emotion.

21686 They will be very zealous in religion when they  
21687 feel like it, when their emotions are warm and  
21688 lively, but they will not act out religion  
21689 consistently, and carry it into all the concerns of  
21690 life. They are religious only as they are impelled  
21691 by a gush of feeling. But this is not true religion.  
21692

21693 Young converts should be carefully taught, when  
21694 duty is before them to do it. However dull their  
21695 feelings may be, if duty calls, DO IT. Do not  
21696 wait for feeling, but DO IT. Most likely the very  
21697 emotions for which you would wait will be  
21698 called into exercise when you begin to do your  
21699 duty. If the duty is prayer, for instance, and you  
21700 have not the feelings you would wish, do not  
21701 wait for emotions before you pray, but pray, and  
21702 open your mouth wide. And in doing it, you are  
21703 most likely to have the emotions for which you  
21704 were inclined to wait, and which constitute the  
21705 conscious happiness of religion.

21706  
21707 2. Young converts should be taught that they  
21708 have renounced the ownership of all their  
21709 possessions, and of themselves, or if they have  
21710 not done this they are not Christians. They  
21711 should not be left to think that any thing is their  
21712 own, their time, property, influence, faculties,  
21713 bodies or souls. "Ye are not your own;" all

21714 belongs to God; and when they submitted to God  
21715 they made a free surrender of all to him, to be  
21716 ruled and disposed of at his pleasure. They have  
21717 no right to spend one hour as if their time was  
21718 their own. No right to go any where, or do  
21719 anything, for themselves, but should hold all at  
21720 the disposal of God, and employ all for the glory  
21721 of God. If they do not, they ought not to call  
21722 themselves Christians, for the very idea of being  
21723 a Christian is to renounce self and become  
21724 entirely consecrated to God. A man has no more  
21725 right to withhold anything from God, than he has  
21726 to rob or steal. It is robbery in the highest sense  
21727 of the term. It is an infinitely higher crime than it  
21728 would be for a clerk in a store to go and take the  
21729 money of his employer, and spend it on his own  
21730 lusts and pleasures. I mean, that for a man to  
21731 withhold from God, is a higher crime against  
21732 HIM, than a man can commit against his fellow  
21733 man, inasmuch as God is the owner of all things  
21734 in an infinitely higher sense than man can be the  
21735 owner of any thing. If God calls on them to  
21736 employ anything they have, their money, or their  
21737 time, or to give their children, or to dedicate  
21738 themselves, in advancing his kingdom, and they  
21739 refuse, because they want to use them in their  
21740 own way, or prefer to do something else, it is  
21741 vastly more blamable than for a clerk or an agent

21742 to go and embezzle the money that is intrusted to  
21743 him by his employer, and spend it for his family,  
21744 or lay it out in bank stock or in speculation for  
21745 himself.

21746

21747 God is, in an infinitely higher sense, the owner  
21748 of all, than any employer can be said to be the  
21749 owner of what he has. And the church of Christ  
21750 never will take high ground, never will be  
21751 disentangled from the world, never will be able  
21752 to go forward without these continual  
21753 declensions and backslidings, until Christians,  
21754 and the churches generally, take the ground, and  
21755 hold to it, that it is just as much a matter of  
21756 discipline for a church member practically to  
21757 deny his stewardship as to deny the divinity of  
21758 Christ, and that covetousness fairly proved shall  
21759 just as certainly exclude a man from communion  
21760 as adultery.

21761

21762 The church is mighty orthodox in notions, but  
21763 very heretical in practice, but the time must  
21764 come when the church will be just as vigilant in  
21765 guarding orthodoxy in practice as orthodoxy in  
21766 doctrine, and just as prompt to turn out heretics  
21767 in practice as heretics that corrupt the doctrines  
21768 of the Gospel. In fact, it is vastly more  
21769 important. The only design of doctrine is to

21770 produce practice, and it does not seem to be  
21771 understood by the church, that true faith “works  
21772 by love and purifies the heart,” that heresy in  
21773 practice, is proof conclusive of heresy in  
21774 sentiment. The church are very sticklish for  
21775 correct doctrine and very careless about correct  
21776 living. This is preposterous. Has it come to this,  
21777 that the church of Jesus Christ is to be satisfied  
21778 with correct notions on some abstract points, and  
21779 never reduce her orthodoxy to practice? Let it be  
21780 so no longer.

21781

21782 It is high time these matters were set right. And  
21783 the only way to set them right, is to begin right  
21784 with those who are just entering upon religion.  
21785 Young converts must be told that they are just as  
21786 worthy of damnation, and that the church cannot  
21787 and will not hold fellowship with them, if they  
21788 show a covetous spirit, and turn a deaf ear when  
21789 the whole world is calling for help, as if they  
21790 were living in adultery, or in the daily worship  
21791 of idols.

21792

21793 3. Teach them how to cultivate a tender  
21794 conscience. I have often been amazed to find  
21795 how little conscience there is, even among those  
21796 who we hope are Christians. And here we see  
21797 the reason of it. Their consciences were never



21798 cultivated. They never were taught and told how  
21799 to cultivate a tender conscience. They have not  
21800 even a natural conscience. They have dealt so  
21801 rudely with their conscience, and resisted it so  
21802 often, that it has got blunted, and does not act.  
21803 The usefulness of a Christian, greatly depends  
21804 on his knowing how to cultivate his conscience.  
21805 Young converts should be taught to keep their  
21806 conscience just as tender as the apple of the eye.  
21807 They should watch their conduct and their  
21808 motives, and let their motives be so pure and  
21809 their conduct so disinterested as not to offend or  
21810 injure or stifle conscience. They should maintain  
21811 such a habit of listening to conscience, that it  
21812 will be always ready to give forth a stern verdict  
21813 on all occasions. It is astonishing to see how  
21814 much the conscience may be cultivated by a  
21815 proper course. If rightly attended to, it may be  
21816 made so pure, and so powerful, that it will  
21817 always respond exactly to the word of God.  
21818 Present any duty to such a Christian, or any self-  
21819 denial, or suffering, and only show him the word  
21820 of God and he will do it without a word. In a few  
21821 months, if properly taught and attended to,  
21822 young converts may have a conscience so  
21823 delicately poised that the weight of a feather will  
21824 turn them. Only bring a "Thus saith the Lord,"

21825 and they will be always ready to do that, be it  
21826 what it may.

21827

21828 4. Young converts should be taught to pray  
21829 without ceasing. That is, they should always  
21830 keep up a watch over their minds, and be all the  
21831 time in a prayerful spirit. They should be taught  
21832 to pray always, whatever may take place. For the  
21833 want of right instruction on this point many  
21834 young converts suffer loss and get far away from  
21835 God. For instance, sometimes it happens that a  
21836 young convert will fall into some sin, and then  
21837 he feels as if he could not pray, and instead of  
21838 overcoming this he feels so distressed that he  
21839 waits for the keen edge of his distress to pass  
21840 away. Instead of going right to Jesus Christ in  
21841 the midst of his agony, and confessing his sin  
21842 out of the fulness of his heart and getting a  
21843 renewed pardon and peace restored, he waits till  
21844 all the keenness of his feelings have subsided,  
21845 and then his repentance, if he does repent, is cold  
21846 and half-hearted. Let me tell you, beloved, never  
21847 to do this, but when your conscience presses  
21848 you, go then right to Christ, confess your sin  
21849 fully, and pour out your heart to God.

21850

21851 Sometimes people will neglect to pray because  
21852 they are in the dark, and feel no desire to pray.

21853 But that is the very time when they need prayer.  
21854 That is the very reason why they ought to pray.  
21855 You should go right to God and confess your  
21856 coldness and darkness of mind. Tell him just  
21857 how you feel, Tell him, “O Lord, I have no  
21858 desire to pray, but I know I ought to pray.” And  
21859 the first you will know, the Spirit may come, and  
21860 lead your heart out in prayer, and all the dark  
21861 clouds will pass away.

21862  
21863 5. Young converts should be faithfully warned  
21864 against adopting a false standard in religion.  
21865 They should not be left to fall in behind old  
21866 professors, and keep them before their minds as  
21867 a standard of holy living. They should always  
21868 look at Christ as their model. Not aim at being as  
21869 good Christians as the old church members, and  
21870 not think they are doing pretty well because they  
21871 are as much awake as the old members of the  
21872 church. But they should aim at being holy, and  
21873 not rest satisfied till they are as perfect as God.  
21874 The church has been greatly injured for the want  
21875 of attention to this matter. Young converts have  
21876 come forward, and their hearts were warm and  
21877 their zeal ardent enough to aim at a high  
21878 standard, but they were not directed properly,  
21879 and so they soon settle down into the notion that  
21880 what is good enough for others is good enough

21881 for them, and therefore they never aim higher  
21882 than those who are before them. And in this way  
21883 the church instead of rising with every revival,  
21884 higher and higher in holiness, is kept nearly  
21885 stationary.

21886

21887 6. Young converts should be taught to do all  
21888 their duty. They should never make a  
21889 compromise with duty, nor think of saying “I  
21890 will do this as an offset for neglecting that.”  
21891 They should never rest satisfied till they have  
21892 done their duty of every kind, in relation to their  
21893 families, the church, Sabbath Schools, the  
21894 impenitent around them, the disposal of their  
21895 property, the conversion of the world. Let them  
21896 do their duty, as they feel it when their hearts are  
21897 warm; and never attempt to pick and choose  
21898 among the commandments of God.

21899

21900 7. They should be made to feel that they have no  
21901 separate interest. It is time Christians were made  
21902 actually to feel that they have no interest  
21903 whatever, separate from the interest of Jesus  
21904 Christ and his kingdom. They should understand  
21905 that they are incorporated into the family of  
21906 Jesus Christ, as members in full, so that their  
21907 whole interest is identified with his. They are  
21908 embarked with him, they have gone on board,

21909 and taken them all. And henceforth they have  
21910 nothing to do, or nothing to say, except as it is  
21911 connected with this interest and bears on the  
21912 cause and kingdom of Christ.

21913

21914 8. They should be taught to maintain singleness  
21915 of motive. Young converts should not begin to  
21916 have a double mind, on any subject, or let selfish  
21917 motives mingle in with good motives in anything  
21918 they do. But this can never be, so long as  
21919 Christians are allowed to hold a separate interest  
21920 of their own, distinct from the interest of Jesus  
21921 Christ. If they feel that they have a separate  
21922 interest, it is impossible to keep them from  
21923 regarding it, and having an eye to it as well as to  
21924 Christ's interest, in many things that they do. It  
21925 is only by becoming entirely consecrated to God,  
21926 and giving up all to his service, that they can  
21927 ever keep their eye single and their motives pure.

21928

21929 9. They should set out with a determination to  
21930 aim at being useful in the highest degree  
21931 possible. They should not rest satisfied with  
21932 merely being useful, or remaining in a situation  
21933 where they can do some good. But if they see an  
21934 opportunity where they can do more good, they  
21935 must embrace it, whatever may be the sacrifice  
21936 to themselves. No matter what it may cost them,

21937 no matter what danger or what suffering, no  
21938 matter what change in their outward  
21939 circumstances, or habits, or employments it may  
21940 lead to. If they are satisfied that they will on the  
21941 whole do more good, they should not even  
21942 hesitate. How else can they be like God? How  
21943 can they think to bear the image of Jesus Christ,  
21944 if they are not prepared to do all the good that is  
21945 in their power? When a man is converted he  
21946 comes into a new world, and should consider  
21947 himself as a new man. If he finds he can do the  
21948 most good by remaining in his old employment,  
21949 let it be so. But if he can do more good in some  
21950 other way, he is bound to change. It is for the  
21951 want of attention to this subject, in the outset,  
21952 that Christians have got such low ideas on the  
21953 subject of duty. And that is the reason why there  
21954 are so many useless members in our churches.

21955

21956 10. They must be taught not to aim at comfort  
21957 but usefulness in religion. There are a great  
21958 many spiritual epicures in the churches, who are  
21959 all the while seeking to be happy in religion,  
21960 while they take very little pains to be useful.  
21961 They had much rather spend their time in  
21962 singing joyful hymns, and in pouring out their  
21963 happy feelings in a gushing tide of exultation  
21964 and triumph, than to spend it in agonizing prayer

21965 for sinners, or in going about and pulling dying  
21966 men out of the fire. They seem to feel as if they  
21967 were born to enjoy themselves. But I do not  
21968 think such Christians show such fruits as to  
21969 make their example one to be imitated. Such was  
21970 not the temper of the apostles. They travailed for  
21971 souls, and laboured in weariness and  
21972 painfulness, and in deaths oft, to save sinners.  
21973 Nor is it safe. Ordinarily, Christians are not  
21974 qualified to drink deep at the fountain of joy. In  
21975 ordinary cases, a deep agony of prayer for souls  
21976 is more profitable than high flights of joy. Let  
21977 young converts be taught, plainly, not to  
21978 calculate upon a life of joy and triumph. They  
21979 may be called to go through fiery trials. Satan  
21980 may sift them like wheat. But they must go  
21981 forward, not calculating so much to be happy as  
21982 to be useful, not talking about comfort but duty,  
21983 not desiring flights of joy and triumph, but  
21984 hungering and thirsting after righteousness, not  
21985 studying how to create new flights of rapture, but  
21986 how to know the will of God, and do it. They  
21987 will be happy enough in heaven. There they may  
21988 sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. And they  
21989 will in fact enjoy a more solid and rational  
21990 happiness here, by thinking nothing about it, but  
21991 patiently devoting themselves to do the will of  
21992 God.

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11. They should be taught to have moral courage, and not to be afraid of going forward in duty. The Bible insists fully on Christian boldness and courage in action as a duty. I do not mean that they should indulge in their bravadoes, like Peter, telling what they will do, and boasting of their courage. The boaster is generally a coward at heart. But I mean moral courage, a humble and fixed decision of purpose, that will go forward in any duty, unangered and unawed, with the meekness and firmness of the Son of God.

12. They should be so instructed as to be sound in the faith. That is, they should be early made, as far as possible, complete and correct in regard to their doctrinal belief. As soon as may be, without turning their minds off from their practical duties, in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of men, they should be taught fully and plainly, all the leading doctrines of the Bible. Doctrinal knowledge is indispensable to growth in grace. Knowledge is the food of the mind. "That the soul be without knowledge," says the Wise Man, "It is not good." The mind cannot grow without knowledge, any more than the body without food. And therefore it is



22021 important that young converts should be  
22022 thoroughly indoctrinated, and made to  
22023 understand the Bible. By indoctrinating I do not  
22024 mean teaching the catechism, but teaching them  
22025 to draw knowledge from the fountain head.  
22026 Create in their minds such an appetite for  
22027 knowledge that they will eat the Bible up, will  
22028 devour it, will love it and love it all. All scripture  
22029 is profitable, that the man of God may be perfect,  
22030 thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

22031

22032 13. Great pains should be taken to guard young  
22033 converts against censoriousness. Young  
22034 converts, when they first come out on the Lord's  
22035 side, and are all warm and zealous, sometimes  
22036 find old professors so cold and dead that they are  
22037 strongly tempted to be censorious. This should  
22038 be corrected immediately, otherwise the habit  
22039 will poison their minds and destroy their  
22040 religion.

22041

22042 14. They must learn to say, No. This is a very  
22043 difficult lesson to many. See that young woman.  
22044 Formerly she loved the gay circle, and took  
22045 delight in its pleasures. She joined the church,  
22046 and then found herself aloof from all her old  
22047 associates. They ask her not now to their balls  
22048 and parties, because they know she will not join

22049 them, and perhaps they keep entirely away for a  
22050 time, for fear she should converse with them  
22051 about their souls. But by and by they grow a  
22052 little bold, and some of them venture to ask her  
22053 just to take a ride with a few friends. She does  
22054 not like to say, No. They are her old friends,  
22055 only a few of them are going, and surely a ride is  
22056 so innocent a recreation, that she accepts the  
22057 invitation. But now she has begun to comply, the  
22058 ice is broken, and they have her again as one of  
22059 them. It goes on, and she begins to attend their  
22060 social visits—"only a few friends," you know,  
22061 till by and by the carpet is taken up for a dance,  
22062 and the next thing, perhaps, she is gone to a  
22063 sleigh ride, on Saturday night, and comes home  
22064 after midnight, and then sleeps all the forenoon  
22065 on the Sabbath to make up for it, perhaps  
22066 communion Sabbath too. All for the want of  
22067 learning to say, No.

22068

22069 See that young man. For a time he was always in  
22070 his place, in the Sabbath school and in the prayer  
22071 meeting. But by and by his old friends begin to  
22072 treat him with attention again, and they draw  
22073 him along step by step. Every one seems a very  
22074 small thing, and it would look like rudeness to  
22075 deny so small a thing. He reasons that if he  
22076 refuses to go with them in things that are

22077 innocent, he will lose his influence with them.  
22078 And so he goes on, till prayer meeting, Bible  
22079 class, and even Bible and closet are neglected.  
22080 Ah, young man, stop there! Go only a little  
22081 farther without learning to say, No, and you are  
22082 gone. If you do not wish to hang up the cause of  
22083 Christ to scorn and contempt, learn to resist the  
22084 beginnings of temptation. Otherwise it will come  
22085 upon you, by and by, like the letting out of  
22086 water.

22087

22088 15. They should be taught what is and what is  
22089 not Christian experience. It is necessary, both for  
22090 their comfort and their usefulness, that they  
22091 should understand this, so that they need not run  
22092 themselves into needless distress for the want of  
22093 that which is by no means essential to Christian  
22094 experience, nor flatter themselves that they have  
22095 more religion than they really exercise. But I  
22096 cannot dwell on this topic to-night.

22097

22098 16. Teach them not to count anything a sacrifice  
22099 which they do for God. Some persons are always  
22100 telling about the sacrifices they make in religion.  
22101 I have no confidence in such piety. Why keep  
22102 telling about their sacrifices, as if everything  
22103 they did for God was a sacrifice. If they loved  
22104 God they would not talk so. If they considered

22105 their own interests and the interest of Christ  
22106 identical, they would not talk of making  
22107 sacrifices for Christ; it would be like talking of  
22108 making sacrifices for themselves.

22109

22110 17. It is of great importance that young converts  
22111 should be taught to be strictly honest. I mean  
22112 more by this than perhaps you would think. It is  
22113 a great thing to be strictly honest. It is being very  
22114 different from the world at large, and very  
22115 different even from the great body of professors  
22116 of religion. The holiest man I ever knew, and  
22117 one who had been many years a Christian and a  
22118 minister, once made the remark to me, "Brother,  
22119 it is a great thing to be strictly honest, upright,  
22120 straight in everything, so that God's pure eye can  
22121 see that the mind is perfectly upright."

22122

22123 It is of the utmost importance that young  
22124 converts should understand what it is to be  
22125 strictly honest in everything, so that they can  
22126 maintain a conscience void of offence, both  
22127 towards God and towards men. Alas, alas! how  
22128 little conscience there is. How little of that real  
22129 honesty, that pure, simple uprightness, which  
22130 ought to mark the life of a child of God. How  
22131 little do many regard even an express promise. I  
22132 heard the other day of a number of individuals

22133 who subscribed to the Anti-Slavery Society, and  
22134 not half of them will pay their subscriptions. The  
22135 plea is, that they signed when they were under  
22136 excitement, and they do not choose to pay. Just  
22137 as if their being excited released them from the  
22138 obligation to keep their promise. Why it is just  
22139 as dishonest as it would be to refuse payment of  
22140 a note of hand. They promised, signed their  
22141 names, did they, and now will not pay? And they  
22142 call that honesty!

22143

22144 I have heard that there are a number of men in  
22145 the city who have signed hundreds of dollars for  
22146 the Oneida Institute, promising to pay the money  
22147 when called on; and when they were called on  
22148 they refused to pay the money. And the reason  
22149 was, they had all turned abolitionist in the  
22150 Institute. Very well. Suppose they have. Does  
22151 that alter your promise? Did you sign on the  
22152 condition that if they got Abolitionism  
22153 introduced there you should be clear? If you did,  
22154 then you are clear. But if you gave your promise  
22155 without any condition, it is just as dishonest to  
22156 refuse as if you had given a note of hand. And  
22157 yet some of you might be almost angry if  
22158 anybody should charge you with refusing to pay  
22159 money when you promised it.

22160

22161 Look at this seriously. Who does God say will  
22162 go to heaven? Read the 15th Psalm, and see. “He  
22163 that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”  
22164 What do you think of that? If a man has  
22165 promised anything, except it be to commit sin,  
22166 let him keep his promise, if he means to be  
22167 honest or to go to heaven. But here these people  
22168 will make promises, and because they cannot be  
22169 prosecuted, will break them as easily as if they  
22170 were nothing. They would not let a note be  
22171 protested at the bank. Why? Because they would  
22172 lose credit, and would be sued. But the Oneida  
22173 Institute, and the Anti-Slavery Society, and other  
22174 societies, will not sue for the money, and  
22175 therefore these people take some offence at  
22176 something, and refuse to pay. Is this honest?  
22177 Will such honesty as this get them admitted to  
22178 heaven? What? Break your promises, and go up  
22179 and carry a lie in your hand before God? If you  
22180 refuse or neglect to fulfill your promise you are a  
22181 liar, and if you persist in this, you shall have  
22182 your part in the lake that bums with fire and  
22183 brimstone. I would not, for ten thousand worlds,  
22184 die with money in my hands, that I had  
22185 unrighteously withheld from any other object to  
22186 which I had promised it. Such money will “eat  
22187 like a canker.”  
22188

22189 If you are not able to pay the money, that is a  
22190 good excuse. But then say so. But if you refuse  
22191 to pay what you have promised, because you  
22192 have altered your mind, rely upon it, you are  
22193 guilty. You cannot pray till you pay that money.  
22194 What will you pray? “O Lord, I promised to give  
22195 that money, but I altered my mind, and broke my  
22196 promise; but still, O Lord, I pray thee to bless  
22197 me, and forgive my sin, although I keep my  
22198 money, and make me happy in thy love.” Will  
22199 such prayers be heard? Never.

22200

22201 But, brethren, I find it impossible to touch upon  
22202 all the points I intended to speak upon, and so I  
22203 will break off here, and finish this subject  
22204 another time.

22205

22206

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22207

22208 LECTURE XX.

22209

22210 INSTRUCTIONS TO CONVERTS.

22211

22212 Text.—Feed my lambs.—John xxi. 15.

22213

22214 I REMARKED on this text in my last lecture,  
22215 and was obliged, for want of time, to omit many

22216 of the points which I wished to present in regard  
22217 to the

22218

22219 INSTRUCTION OF YOUNG CONVERTS.

22220

22221 To-night I propose to continue the subject by  
22222 noticing,

22223

22224 I. Several other points upon which young  
22225 converts ought to be instructed.

22226

22227 II. To show the manner in which young converts  
22228 should be treated by the church.

22229

22230 III. Mention some of the evils which naturally  
22231 result from defective instructions given in that  
22232 stage of Christian experience.

22233

22234 I. I shall pursue the subject, taking it up where I  
22235 left off, by mentioning some further instructions  
22236 which it is important should be given to young  
22237 converts.

22238

22239 1. It is of great importance that young converts  
22240 should early be made to understand what  
22241 religion consists in. Perhaps you will be  
22242 surprised at my mentioning this. "What! Are  
22243 they converts, and do they not know what



22244 religion consists in?" I answer, They would  
22245 know, if they had had no instruction but such as  
22246 is drawn from the Bible. But multitudes of  
22247 people have imbibed such notions about religion,  
22248 that not only young converts, but a great part of  
22249 the church do not know what religion consists in,  
22250 so as to have a clear and distinct idea of it. There  
22251 are many ministers who do not. I do not mean to  
22252 say that they have no religion, for it may be  
22253 charitably believed they have; but what I mean  
22254 is, that they do not discriminate as to what it  
22255 consists in, and cannot give a correct statement  
22256 of what does and what does not constitute real  
22257 religion. It is important that young converts  
22258 should be taught.

22259  
22260 Negatively, what religion does not consist in  
22261

22262 (1.) Not in doctrinal knowledge. Knowledge is  
22263 essential to religion, but it is not religion. The  
22264 devil has doctrinal knowledge, but he has no  
22265 religion. A man may have doctrinal knowledge  
22266 to any extent without a particle of religion. Yet  
22267 some people have very strange ideas on this  
22268 subject, as though having doctrinal knowledge  
22269 indicated an increase of piety. I once heard a  
22270 remark of this kind: in a certain instance, where  
22271 some young converts had made rapid progress in

22272 doctrinal knowledge, a person who saw it said,  
22273 “How these young converts grow in grace.”  
22274 Here he confounded improvement in knowledge  
22275 with improvement in piety. The truth was, that  
22276 he had no means of judging of their growth in  
22277 grace, and it was no evidence of it because they  
22278 were making progress in doctrinal knowledge.

22279

22280 (2.) They should be taught that religion is not a  
22281 substance. It is not any root, or sprout, or seed,  
22282 or anything else in the mind, as a part of the  
22283 mind itself. Persons often speak of religion as if  
22284 it was something that may be covered up in the  
22285 mind, just as a spark of fire may be covered up  
22286 in the ashes, which does not show itself, and  
22287 which produces no effects, but yet lives and is  
22288 ready to act as soon as it is uncovered. And in  
22289 like manner they think they may have religion,  
22290 as something remaining in them, although they  
22291 do not manifest it by obeying God. But they  
22292 should be taught that this is not the nature of  
22293 religion. It is no part of the mind itself, or of the  
22294 body, nor is it a root, or seed, or spark, that can  
22295 exist and yet be hid and produce no effects.

22296

22297 (3.) Teach them that religion does not consist in  
22298 raptures, or ecstacies, or high flights of feeling.  
22299 There may be a great deal of these where there is

22300 religion. But it ought to be understood that they  
22301 are all involuntary emotions, and may exist in  
22302 full power where there is no religion. They may  
22303 be the mere workings of the imagination,  
22304 without any truly religious affection at all.  
22305 Persons may have them to such a degree as  
22306 actually to swoon away with ecstasy, even on  
22307 the subject of religion, without having any  
22308 religion. I have known one person almost carried  
22309 away with rapture, by a mere view of the natural  
22310 attributes of God, his power and wisdom, as  
22311 displayed in the starry heavens, and yet the  
22312 person had no religion. Religion is obedience to  
22313 God, the voluntary submission of the soul to the  
22314 will of God.

22315  
22316 (4.) Neither does religion consist in going to  
22317 meeting or reading the Bible, or praying, or any  
22318 other of what are commonly called religious  
22319 duties. The very phrase, “religious duties,” ought  
22320 to be stricken out of the vocabulary of young  
22321 converts. They should be made to know that  
22322 these acts are not religion. Many become very  
22323 strict in performing certain things, which they  
22324 call religious duties, and suppose that is being  
22325 religious; while they are careless about the  
22326 ordinary duties of life, which in fact constitute A  
22327 LIFE OF PIETY. Prayer may be an expression

22328 and an act of piety, or it may not be. Going to  
22329 church or to a prayer meeting, may be  
22330 considered either as a means, an act, or an  
22331 expression of pious sentiment; but the  
22332 performance of these does not constitute a man a  
22333 Christian, and there may be great strictness and  
22334 zeal in these, without a particle of religion. If  
22335 young converts are not taught to discriminate,  
22336 they may be led to think there is something  
22337 peculiar in what are called religious duties, and  
22338 to imagine they have a great deal of religion  
22339 because they abound in certain actions that are  
22340 commonly called religious duties, although they  
22341 may at the same time be very deficient in  
22342 honesty or faithfulness or punctuality, or  
22343 temperance, or any other of what they choose to  
22344 call their common duties. They may be very  
22345 punctilious in some things, may tithe mint, anise  
22346 and cummin, and yet neglect the weightier  
22347 matters of the law, justice and the love of God.

22348  
22349 (5.) Religion does not consist in desires to do  
22350 good actions. Desires that do not result in choice  
22351 and action are not virtuous. Nor are such desires  
22352 necessarily vicious. They may arise involuntarily  
22353 in the mind, in view of certain objects, but while  
22354 they produce no voluntary act, they are no more  
22355 virtuous or vicious than the beating of the pulse,

22356 except in cases where we have indirectly willed  
22357 them into existence, by voluntarily putting  
22358 ourselves under circumstances to excite them.  
22359 The wickedest man on earth may have strong  
22360 desires after holiness. Did you ever think of that?  
22361 He may see clearly that holiness is the only and  
22362 indispensable means of happiness, he naturally  
22363 desires it. It is to be feared, that multitudes are  
22364 deceiving themselves with the supposition, that a  
22365 desire for holiness, as a means of happiness, is  
22366 religion. Many, doubtless, give themselves great  
22367 credit for desires that never result in choosing  
22368 right. They feel desires to do their duty, but do  
22369 not choose to do it, because upon the whole they  
22370 have still stronger desires not to do it. In such  
22371 desires, there is no virtue. An action or desire to  
22372 be virtuous in the sight of God, must be an act of  
22373 the will. People often talk most absurdly on this  
22374 subject, as though their desires had anything  
22375 good, while they remain mere desires. "I think I  
22376 desire to do so and so." But do you do it? "Oh,  
22377 no, but I often feel a desire to do it." This is  
22378 practical Atheism.  
22379  
22380 Whatever desires a person may have, if they are  
22381 not carried out into actual choice and action,  
22382 they are not virtuous. And no degree of desire is  
22383 itself virtuous. If this idea could be made

22384 prominent, and fully riveted in the minds of  
22385 men, it would probably annihilate the hopes of  
22386 half the church, who are living on their good  
22387 desires, while doing nothing for God.

22388

22389 (6.) They should be made to understand that  
22390 nothing which is selfish, is religion. Whatever  
22391 desires they may have, and whatever choices and  
22392 actions they may put forth, if after all the reason  
22393 of them is selfish, there is no religion in them. A  
22394 man may just as well commit sin in praying, or  
22395 reading the Bible, or going to meeting, as in  
22396 anything else, if his motive is selfish. Suppose a  
22397 man prays simply with a view to promote his  
22398 own happiness. Is that religion? What is it, but  
22399 attempting to make God his almighty servant? It  
22400 is nothing else but to attempt a great speculation,  
22401 and put the universe, God and all, under  
22402 contribution to make him happy. It is the  
22403 sublime degree of wickedness. It is so far from  
22404 being piety, that it is in fact superlative  
22405 wickedness.

22406

22407 (7.) Nothing is acceptable to God, as religion,  
22408 unless it be performed heartily, to please God.  
22409 No outward action has anything good, or  
22410 anything that God approves, unless it is

22411 performed from right motives, and from the  
22412 heart.  
22413  
22414 (a) Young converts should be taught fully and  
22415 positively that all religion consists in obeying  
22416 God from the heart. All religion consists in  
22417 voluntary action. All that is holy, all that is  
22418 lovely in the sight of God, all that is properly  
22419 called religion, consists in voluntary action, in  
22420 voluntarily obeying the will of God from the  
22421 heart.  
22422  
22423 2. Young converts should be taught that the duty  
22424 of self-denial is one of the leading features of the  
22425 Gospel. They should understand that they are not  
22426 pious at all, any farther than they are willing to  
22427 take up the cross daily, and deny themselves, for  
22428 Christ. There is but very little self-denial in the  
22429 church, and the reason is, that the duty is so  
22430 much lost sight of, in giving instruction to young  
22431 converts. How seldom are they told that self-  
22432 denial is the leading feature of Christianity. In  
22433 pleading for benevolent objects, how often will  
22434 you find, that ministers and agents do not even  
22435 ask Christians to deny themselves for the sake of  
22436 promoting the object. They only ask them to  
22437 give what they can spare as well as not, or in  
22438 other words, to offer unto the Lord that which

22439 costs them nothing. What an abomination! They  
22440 only ask for the surplus, for what they do not  
22441 want, for what they can give just as well as not.  
22442 There is no religion in this kind of giving. A man  
22443 may give to a benevolent object, a hundred  
22444 thousand dollars, and there would be no religion  
22445 in it, if he could give it as well as not, and there  
22446 was no self-denial in it. Jesus Christ exercised  
22447 self-denial to save sinners. So has God the  
22448 Father exercised self-denial in giving his Son to  
22449 die for us, and in sparing us, and in bearing with  
22450 our perverseness. The Holy Ghost exercises self-  
22451 denial, in condescending to strive with such  
22452 unholy beings to bring them to God. The angels  
22453 exercise self-denial, in watching over this world.  
22454 The apostles planted the Christian religion  
22455 among the nations by the exercise of self-denial.  
22456 And are we to think of being religious without  
22457 any self-denial? Are we to call ourselves  
22458 Christians, the followers of Christ, the temples  
22459 of the Holy Ghost, and to claim fellowship with  
22460 the apostles, when we have never deprived  
22461 ourselves of anything that would promote our  
22462 personal enjoyment for the sake of promoting  
22463 Christ's kingdom? Young converts should be  
22464 made to see that unless they are willing to lay  
22465 themselves out for God and ready to sacrifice



22466 life and everything else for Christ, they have not  
22467 the spirit of Christ, and are none of his.

22468

22469 3. They must be taught what sanctification is.

22470 “What!” you will say, “do not all who are  
22471 Christians know what sanctification is?” No,  
22472 many do not. Multitudes would be as much at a  
22473 loss to tell intelligibly what sanctification is, as  
22474 they would be to tell what religion is. If the  
22475 question were asked of every professor of  
22476 religion in this city, What is sanctification? I  
22477 doubt if one in ten would give a right answer.  
22478 They would blunder just as they do when they  
22479 undertake to tell what religion is, and speak of it  
22480 as something dormant in the soul, something that  
22481 is put in, and lies there, something that may be  
22482 practised or not, and still be in them. So they  
22483 speak of sanctification as if it were a sort of  
22484 washing off of some defilement, or a purging out  
22485 of some physical impurity. Or they will speak of  
22486 it as if the faculties were steeped in sin, and  
22487 sanctification is taking out the stains. This is the  
22488 reason why some people will pray for  
22489 sanctification, and practise sin, evidently  
22490 supposing that sanctification is something that  
22491 precedes obedience. They should be taught that  
22492 sanctification is not something that precedes  
22493 obedience, some change in the nature or the

22494 constitution of the soul. But sanctification is  
22495 obedience, and, as a progressive thing, consists  
22496 in obeying God more and more perfectly and  
22497 perpetually.

22498

22499 4. Young converts should be taught so as to  
22500 understand what perseverance is. It is  
22501 astonishing how people talk about perseverance.  
22502 As if the doctrine of perseverance was “Once in  
22503 grace, always in grace,” or “Once converted,  
22504 sure to go to heaven.” This is not the idea of  
22505 perseverance. The true idea is, that if a man is  
22506 truly converted, HE WILL CONTINUE TO  
22507 OBEY GOD. And as a consequence, he will  
22508 surely go to heaven. But if a person gets the  
22509 idea, that because he is converted, therefore he  
22510 will assuredly go to heaven, that man will almost  
22511 assuredly go to hell.

22512

22513 5. Young converts should be taught to be  
22514 religious in everything. They should aim to be  
22515 religious in every department of life and in all  
22516 that they do. If they do not aim at this, they  
22517 should understand that they have no religion at  
22518 all. If they do not intend and aim to keep all the  
22519 commandments of God, what pretence can they  
22520 make to piety? Whosoever shall keep the whole  
22521 law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of

22522 all. He is justly subject to the whole penalty. If  
22523 he disobeys God habitually in one particular, he  
22524 does not in fact obey him in any particular.  
22525 Obedience to God consists in the state of the  
22526 heart. It is being willing to obey God; willing  
22527 that God should rule in all things. But if a man  
22528 habitually disobeys God, in any one particular,  
22529 he is in a state of mind that renders obedience in  
22530 anything else impossible. To say that in some  
22531 things a man obeys God, out of respect to his  
22532 authority, and that in some other things he  
22533 refuses obedience, is absurd. The fact is that  
22534 obedience to God consists in an obedient state of  
22535 heart, a preference of God's authority and  
22536 commandments to everything else. If, therefore,  
22537 an individual appears to obey in some things,  
22538 and yet perseveringly and knowingly disobeys in  
22539 any one thing, he is deceived. He offends in one  
22540 point, and this proves that he is guilty of all; in  
22541 other words, that he does not, from the heart,  
22542 obey at all. A man may pray half of the time and  
22543 have no religion; if he does not keep the  
22544 commandments of God, his very prayer will be  
22545 hateful to God. "He that turneth away his ear  
22546 from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be  
22547 abomination." Do you hear that? If a man  
22548 refuses to obey God's law, if he refuses to

22549 comply with any one duty, he cannot pray, he  
22550 has no religion, his very devotions are hateful.  
22551  
22552 6. Young converts, by proper instructions, are  
22553 easily brought to be “temperate in all things.”  
22554 Yet this is a subject greatly neglected in regard  
22555 to young converts, and almost lost sight of in the  
22556 churches. There is a vast deal of intemperance in  
22557 the churches. I do not mean intemperate  
22558 drinking, in particular, but intemperance in  
22559 eating, and in living generally. There is in fact  
22560 but little conscience about it in the churches.  
22561 And therefore the progress of reform in the  
22562 matter is so slow. Nothing but an enlightened  
22563 conscience can carry forward a permanent  
22564 reform. Ten years ago, most ministers used  
22565 ardent spirit, and kept it in their houses to treat  
22566 their friends and their ministering brethren with.  
22567 And the great body of the members in the  
22568 churches did the same. Now there are but few of  
22569 either, who are not actual drunkards, that will do  
22570 it. But still there are many that indulge without  
22571 scruple in the use of wine. There are some  
22572 ministers, and many professors, who will drink  
22573 down wine that has as much spirit in it as brandy  
22574 and water. This is intemperance. Chewing and  
22575 smoking tobacco are mere acts of intemperance.  
22576 If they use these mere stimulants when there is

22577 no necessity for it, what is that but  
22578 intemperance? That is not being temperate in all  
22579 things. Until Christians shall have a conscience  
22580 on this subject, and be made to feel that they  
22581 have no right to be intemperate in anything, they  
22582 will make but little progress in religion. It is well  
22583 known, or ought to be, that TEA AND COFFEE  
22584 have no nutriment in them. They are mere  
22585 stimulants. They go through the system without  
22586 being digested. The milk and sugar you put in  
22587 them are nourishing. And so they would be just  
22588 as much so if you mixed them with rum, and  
22589 made milk punch. But the tea and the coffee  
22590 afford no nourishment. And yet I dare say, that a  
22591 majority of the families in this city give more in  
22592 a year for their tea and coffee, than they do to  
22593 save the world from hell. Probably this is true  
22594 respecting entire churches. Even agents of  
22595 benevolent societies will dare to go through the  
22596 churches soliciting funds for the support of  
22597 missionary and other institutions, and yet use  
22598 tea, coffee, and in some cases tobacco. Strange!  
22599 There is now in this city an agent employed in  
22600 soliciting funds, who uses all three of these  
22601 worse than useless stimulants. And he is,  
22602 moreover, a minister of the Gospel! No doubt  
22603 many are giving five times as much for mere  
22604 intemperance as they give for every effort to

22605 save the world. If the church could be made to  
22606 know how much they spend for what are mere  
22607 poisons, and nothing else, they would be  
22608 amazed. Sit down and talk with many persons,  
22609 and they will strenuously maintain that they  
22610 cannot get along without these stimulants, these  
22611 poisons, and they cannot give them up—no, not  
22612 to redeem the world from eternal damnation.  
22613 And very often they will absolutely show anger  
22614 if argued with, just as soon as the argument  
22615 begins to pinch their consciences. Oh, how long  
22616 shall the church show her hypocritical face at the  
22617 Monthly Concert, and pray God to save the  
22618 world, while she is actually throwing away five  
22619 times as much for sheer intemperance, as she  
22620 will give to save the world. Some of you may  
22621 think these are little things, and that it is quite  
22622 beneath the dignity of the pulpit to lecture  
22623 against tea and coffee. But I tell you it is a great  
22624 mistake of yours, if you think these are little  
22625 things, when they make the church odious in the  
22626 sight of God, by exposing her hypocrisy and  
22627 lust. Here is an individual who pretends he has  
22628 given himself up to serve Jesus Christ, and yet  
22629 he refuses to deny himself any darling lust, and  
22630 then he will go and pray, “O Lord, save the  
22631 world; O Lord, thy kingdom come.” I tell you it  
22632 is hypocrisy. Shall such prayers be heard?

22633 Unless men are willing to deny themselves, I  
22634 would not give a groat for the prayers of as  
22635 many such professors as would cover the whole  
22636 United States.

22637

22638 These things must be taught to young converts.  
22639 It must come to this point in the church, that men  
22640 shall not be called Christians, unless they will  
22641 cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right  
22642 eye, and deny themselves for Christ's sake. A  
22643 little thing? See it poison the spirit of prayer?  
22644 See it debase and sensualize the soul! Is that a  
22645 trifle beneath the dignity of the pulpit? When  
22646 these intemperate indulgences of one kind and  
22647 another, cost the church five times if not fifty  
22648 times more than all they do for the salvation of  
22649 the world.

22650

22651 An estimate has recently been made, showing,  
22652 that the United States consume seven millions of  
22653 dollars worth of coffee yearly; and who does not  
22654 know that a great part of this is consumed by the  
22655 church. And yet, grave ministers and members  
22656 of Christian churches are not ashamed to be seen  
22657 countenancing this enormous waste of money;  
22658 while at the same time the poor heathen are  
22659 sending upon every wind of heaven their  
22660 agonizing wail for help. Heaven calls from

22661 above, “go preach the Gospel to every creature.”  
22662 Hell groans from beneath, and ten thousand  
22663 voices cry out from heaven, earth and hell, “Do  
22664 something to save the world!” Do it now! Oh,  
22665 NOW, or millions more are in hell through your  
22666 neglect. And Oh, tell it not in Gath, the church,  
22667 the ministry, will not deny even their lusts to  
22668 save a world. Is this Christianity? What business  
22669 have you to use Christ’s money for such a  
22670 purpose? Are you a steward? Who gave you this  
22671 liberty? Look to it, lest it should be found at last  
22672 that you have preferred self-gratification to  
22673 obedience, and made a “god of your belly.”

22674

22675 The time to teach these things with effect is  
22676 when they are young converts. If they are not  
22677 properly taught then, if they get a wrong habit,  
22678 and begin with an easy, self-indulgent mode of  
22679 living, it is rare that they are ever thoroughly  
22680 reformed. I have conversed with old professors  
22681 on these subjects, and have been astonished at  
22682 their pertinacious obstinacy in indulging their  
22683 lusts. And I am satisfied that the church never  
22684 can rise out of this sloth until young converts are  
22685 faithfully taught in the outset of their religious  
22686 course to be temperate in all things.

22687



22688 7. They should be taught to have just as much  
22689 religion in all their business, as they have in  
22690 prayer, or in going to meeting. They should be  
22691 just as holy, just as watchful, aim just as singly  
22692 at the glory of God, be just as sincere and  
22693 solemn in all their daily employments, as when  
22694 they come to the throne of grace. If they are not,  
22695 their Sabbath performances will be an  
22696 abomination.

22697  
22698 8. They should be taught that it is necessary for  
22699 them to be just as holy as they think ministers  
22700 ought to be. There has for a long time been an  
22701 idea that ministers are bound to be holy and  
22702 practice self-denial. And so they are. But it is  
22703 strange they should suppose that ministers are  
22704 bound to be any more holy than other people.  
22705 They would be shocked to see a minister show  
22706 levity, or running after the fashions, or getting  
22707 out of temper, or living in a fine house, or riding  
22708 in a coach. Oh, that is dreadful. It does not look  
22709 well in a minister. Indeed! For a minister's wife  
22710 to wear such a fine bonnet, or such a silk shawl.  
22711 Oh, no. But they think nothing of all this in a  
22712 layman or a layman's wife. That is no offence at  
22713 all. I am not saying that these things do look well  
22714 in a minister; I know they do not. But they look,  
22715 in God's eyes, just as well in a minister as they

22716 do in a layman. You have no more right to  
22717 indulge in vanity and folly and pride than a  
22718 minister. Can you go to heaven without being  
22719 sanctified? Can you be holy without living for  
22720 God, and doing all that you do to his glory? I  
22721 have heard professedly good men speak against  
22722 ministers having large salaries, and living in an  
22723 expensive style, when they themselves were  
22724 actually spending a great deal more money for  
22725 the support of their families than any ministers.  
22726 What would be thought of a minister living in  
22727 the style in which many professors of religion  
22728 and elders of churches are living in this city?  
22729 Why everybody would say that they were  
22730 hypocrites. But, it is just as much an evidence of  
22731 hypocrisy in a layman to spend God's money to  
22732 gratify his lusts, or to please the world, or his  
22733 family, as it is for a minister to do the same. It is  
22734 distressing to hear some of our foremost laymen  
22735 talk of its being dishonorable to religion to give  
22736 ministers a large salary, and let them live in an  
22737 expensive style, when it is a fact that their own  
22738 expenses are, for the number of their families  
22739 and the company they have, far above that of  
22740 any minister. All this arises out of fundamentally  
22741 wrong notions imbibed while they were young  
22742 converts. Young converts have been taught to  
22743 expect that ministers will have all the religion,

22744 especially all the self-denial, and so long as this  
22745 continues there can be no hope that the church  
22746 will ever do much for the glory of God, or for  
22747 the conversion of the world. There is nothing of  
22748 all this in the Bible. Where has God said, “You,  
22749 ministers, love God with all your heart and soul  
22750 and mind and strength,” or “You, ministers, do  
22751 all that you do to the glory of God?” This is said  
22752 to all alike, and he who attempts to excuse  
22753 himself from any duty or self-denial, from any  
22754 watchfulness or sobriety, by putting it off upon  
22755 ministers, or who ventures to adopt a lower scale  
22756 of holy living for himself than he thinks is  
22757 proper for a minister, is in great danger of  
22758 proving himself a hypocrite, and paying the  
22759 forfeit of his foolishness in hell.

22760  
22761 Much depends on the instructions given to  
22762 young converts. If they once get into the habit of  
22763 supposing that they may indulge in things which  
22764 they would condemn in a minister, it is ten to  
22765 one if they ever get out of it.

22766  
22767 8. They should aim at being perfect. Every  
22768 young convert should be taught that if it is not  
22769 his purpose to live without sin, he has not yet  
22770 begun to be religious. What is religion, but a  
22771 supreme love to God and a supreme purpose of

22772 heart or disposition to obey God. If there is not  
22773 this, there is no religion at all. It is one thing to  
22774 profess to be perfect, and another thing to  
22775 profess and feel that you ought to be perfect. It is  
22776 one thing to say that men ought to be perfect,  
22777 and can be if they are so disposed, and another  
22778 thing to say that they are perfect. If any are  
22779 prepared to say that they are perfect, all I have to  
22780 say is, Let them prove it. If they are so, I hope  
22781 they will show it by their actions, otherwise we  
22782 can never believe they are perfect.

22783  
22784 But it is the duty of all to be perfect and to  
22785 purpose entire, perpetual and universal  
22786 obedience to God. It should be their constant  
22787 purpose to live wholly to God, and obey all his  
22788 commandments. They should live so that if they  
22789 should sin it would be an inconsistency, an  
22790 exception, an individual case, in which they act  
22791 contrary to the fixed and general purpose and  
22792 tenor of their lives. They ought not to sin at all;  
22793 they are bound to be as holy as God is, and  
22794 young converts should be taught to set out in the  
22795 right course, or they will never be right.

22796  
22797 9. They should be taught to exhibit their light.  
22798

22799 If the young convert does not exhibit his light,  
22800 and hold it up to the world, it will go out. If he  
22801 does not bestir himself, and go forth and try to  
22802 enlighten those around him, his light will go out,  
22803 and his own soul will soon be in darkness.  
22804 Sometimes young converts seem disposed to be  
22805 still and not do anything in public till they get a  
22806 great deal of light, or a great deal of religion. But  
22807 this is not the way. Let the convert use what he  
22808 has; let him hold up his little twinkling rush-light  
22809 boldly and honestly, and then God will pour in  
22810 the oil and make him like a blazing torch. But  
22811 God will not take the trouble to keep a light  
22812 burning that is hid. Why should he? Where is the  
22813 use?  
22814  
22815 This is the reason why so many people enjoy so  
22816 little in religion, They do not exert themselves to  
22817 honor God. They keep what little they do enjoy  
22818 so entirely to themselves, that there is no good  
22819 reason why God should bestow blessings and  
22820 benefits on them.  
22821  
22822 10. They should be taught how to win souls to  
22823 Christ. Young converts should be taught  
22824 particularly what to do for this, and how to do it,  
22825 and then taught to live for this end as the great  
22826 leading object of life. How strange has been the

22827 course sometimes pursued. These persons have  
22828 been converted, and there they are. They get into  
22829 the church, and then they are left to go along in  
22830 their business just as they did before; they do  
22831 nothing and are taught to do nothing for Christ,  
22832 and the only change is that they go more  
22833 regularly to church on the Sabbath, and let the  
22834 minister feed them, as it is called. But suppose  
22835 he does feed them, they do not grow strong, for  
22836 they cannot digest it, because they take no  
22837 exercise. They become spiritual dyspeptics. Now  
22838 the great object for which Christians are  
22839 converted and left in this world, is to pull sinners  
22840 out of the fire. If they do not effect this, they had  
22841 better be dead. And young converts should be  
22842 taught this as soon as they are born into the  
22843 kingdom. The first thing they do should be to go  
22844 to work for this end, to save sinners.

22845

22846 II. I am to show how young converts should be  
22847 treated by the church.

22848

22849 1. Old professors ought to be able to give young  
22850 converts a great deal of instruction, and they  
22851 ought to give it. The truth is, however, that the  
22852 great body of professors in the churches do not  
22853 know how to give good instruction to young  
22854 converts, and if they attempt to give them

22855 instruction, give only that which is false. The  
22856 church ought to be able to teach her children;  
22857 and when she receives them, she ought to be as  
22858 busy in training them to act, as mothers are in  
22859 teaching their little children such things as they  
22860 will need to know and do hereafter. But this is  
22861 far enough from being the case generally. And  
22862 we can never expect to see young converts  
22863 habitually taking right hold of duty, and going  
22864 straight forward without declension and  
22865 backsliding, until young converts shall be  
22866 intelligently trained by the church.

22867  
22868 2. Young converts should not be kept back  
22869 behind the rest of the church. How often is it  
22870 found that the old professor will keep the young  
22871 converts back behind the rest of the church, and  
22872 prevent them from taking any active part in  
22873 religion, for fear they should become spiritually  
22874 proud. Young converts in such churches are  
22875 rarely or never called on to take a part in  
22876 meetings, or set to any active duty, or the like,  
22877 for fear they should become lifted up with  
22878 spiritual pride. Thus the church become the  
22879 modest keepers of their humility, and teach them  
22880 to file in behind the old, stiff, dry, cold members  
22881 and elders, for fear that if they are allowed to do  
22882 anything for Christ, it will make them proud.

22883 Whereas, the very way to make young converts  
22884 humble and keep them so, is to put them to their  
22885 work and keep them there. That is the way to  
22886 keep God with them, and as long as God is with  
22887 them, He will take care of their humility. Keep  
22888 them constantly engaged in religion, and then  
22889 the Spirit of God will dwell with them, and then  
22890 they will be kept humble by the most effectual  
22891 process. But if young converts are left to fall in  
22892 behind the old professors, where they never can  
22893 do anything, they will never know what spirit  
22894 they are of, and this is the very way to run them  
22895 into danger of the worst species of spiritual  
22896 pride.

22897  
22898 3. They should be watched over by the church,  
22899 and warned of their dangers, just as a tender  
22900 mother watches over her young children. Young  
22901 converts do not know at all the dangers by which  
22902 they are surrounded. The devices of the devil,  
22903 the temptations of the world, the power of their  
22904 own passions and habits, and the thousand forms  
22905 of danger they do not know; and if not properly  
22906 watched and warned, they will run right into  
22907 danger. See that mother watching her little child.  
22908 Does she let it put its little hand in the candle, or  
22909 allow it to creep where it will fall, because its  
22910 own blindness and ignorance does not prevent it



22911 from desiring to do so? The church should watch  
22912 over and care for her young children, just as  
22913 mothers watch their little children in this great  
22914 city, for fear the carts may run over them, or  
22915 they may stray away and be lost; or as they  
22916 watch them while growing up, for fear they may  
22917 be drawn into the whirlpools of iniquity. The  
22918 church should watch over all the interests of her  
22919 young members, know where they are, and what  
22920 are their habits, temptations, dangers, privileges,  
22921 state of religion in their hearts, spirit of prayer.  
22922 Look at that anxious mother, when she sees  
22923 paleness gather round the little brow of her child.  
22924 “What is the matter with you, my child? Have  
22925 you eaten something improper? Have you taken  
22926 cold? What ails you?” Oh, how different it is  
22927 with the children of the church, the lambs that  
22928 the Saviour has committed to the care of his  
22929 churches. Alas! Instead of restraining her  
22930 children, and taking care of them, the church lets  
22931 them go anywhere, and look out for themselves.  
22932 What should we say of a mother who should  
22933 knowingly let her little child totter along to the  
22934 edge of a precipice? Should we not say she was  
22935 horribly guilty for doing so, and that if the child  
22936 should fall and be killed, its blood would rest on  
22937 the mother’s head? What then is the guilt of the  
22938 church, in knowingly neglecting her young

22939 converts? I have known churches where young  
22940 converts were first totally neglected, and  
22941 regarded with suspicion and jealousy; nobody  
22942 went near them to strengthen or encourage or  
22943 counsel them; nothing was done to lead them to  
22944 usefulness, to teach them what to do, or how to  
22945 do it, or open to them a field of labor. And  
22946 then—what then? Why, when they find that  
22947 young converts cannot stand everything, and find  
22948 them growing cold and backward under their  
22949 own treatment, they just turn round and abuse  
22950 them because they did not hold out.

22951

22952 4. Be tender in reproofing them. When Christians  
22953 find it necessary to reprove young converts, they  
22954 should be exceedingly careful of their manner in  
22955 doing it. Young converts should be faithfully  
22956 watched over by the elder members of the  
22957 church, and when they begin to lose ground, or  
22958 to turn aside, they should be promptly  
22959 admonished, and if necessary, reproofed. But to  
22960 do it in a wrong manner is worse than not to do  
22961 it. It is sometimes done in a manner that is  
22962 abrupt, harsh, coarse, and apparently censorious,  
22963 more like scolding than like brotherly  
22964 admonition. Such a manner, instead of inspiring  
22965 confidence, or leading to reformation, is just  
22966 calculated to harden the heart of the young

22967 convert, and confirm him in his wrong courses,  
22968 while at the same time it closes his mind against  
22969 the influence of such censorious guardians. The  
22970 heart of a young convert is tender, and easily  
22971 grieved, and sometimes a single unkind look will  
22972 set them into such a state of mind as will fasten  
22973 his errors upon him and make him grow worse  
22974 and worse.

22975

22976 You who are parents know how important it is  
22977 when you reprove your children, that they  
22978 should see that you do it from the best of  
22979 motives, for their benefit, because you wish them  
22980 to be good, and not because you are angry.  
22981 Otherwise they will soon come to regard you as  
22982 a tyrant, rather than a friend. just so with young  
22983 converts. Kindness and tenderness, even in  
22984 reproof, will win their confidence, and attach  
22985 them to you, and give an influence to your  
22986 brotherly instructions and counsels, so that you  
22987 can mould them into finished Christians. Instead  
22988 of this, if you are severe and critical in your  
22989 manner, that is the way to make them think you  
22990 wish to lord it over them. Many persons, under  
22991 pretence of being faithful, as they call it, often  
22992 hurt young converts in such a severe and  
22993 overbearing manner as to drive them away, or  
22994 perhaps crush them into despondency and

22995 apathy. Young converts have but little  
22996 experience, and are easily thrown down. They  
22997 are just like a little child when it first begins to  
22998 walk. You see it tottering along, and there it  
22999 stumbles over a straw. You see the mother take  
23000 up everything from the floor, when her little one  
23001 is going to try to walk. just so with young  
23002 converts. The church ought to take up every  
23003 stumbling block, and treat them in such a way as  
23004 to make them see that if they are reprov'd,  
23005 Christ is in it, and then they will receive it as it is  
23006 meant, and it will do them good.

23007  
23008 5. Kindly point out things that are faulty in the  
23009 young convert which he does not see. He is but a  
23010 child, and knows but little about religion, and  
23011 will of course have a great many things that he  
23012 needs to learn, and a great many that he ought to  
23013 mend. Whatever there is that is wrong in spirit,  
23014 or unlovely in his deportment, or uncultivated in  
23015 manner, that will impede his usefulness or  
23016 impair his influence as a Christian, ought to be  
23017 kindly pointed out and corrected. To do this in  
23018 the right way, however, requires great wisdom.  
23019 Christians ought to make it a subject of much  
23020 prayer and reflection, that they may do it right,  
23021 so as not to do more hurt than good. If you  
23022 rebuke him merely for the things that he did not

23023 see, or did not know to be improper, it will  
23024 grieve and disgust him. Such instruction should  
23025 be carefully timed; often it is well to take the  
23026 opportunity after you have been praying  
23027 together, or after a kind conversation of religious  
23028 subjects, calculated to make him feel that you  
23029 love him, and seek his good, and earnestly desire  
23030 to promote his sanctification, his usefulness, and  
23031 his happiness. Then a mere hint will often do the  
23032 work. Just suggest that “Such a thing in your  
23033 prayer” or “your conduct so and so, did not  
23034 strike me pleasantly. Had you not better think of  
23035 it, and perhaps you will judge better to avoid the  
23036 same thing again.” Do it right, and you will help  
23037 and do him good. Do it wrong and you will do  
23038 ten times more hurt than good. Often young  
23039 converts will err, through ignorance; their  
23040 judgment is unripe, and they need time to think  
23041 and make up an enlightened judgment, on some  
23042 point that at first appears to them doubtful. In  
23043 such cases the church should treat them with  
23044 great kindness and forbearance. Should kindly  
23045 instruct them and not denounce them at once for  
23046 not seeing, at first, what perhaps they did not  
23047 themselves understand, for years after they were  
23048 converted.  
23049

23050 6. Do not speak of the faults of young converts,  
23051 behind their backs. This is quite too common  
23052 among old professors, and by and by they hear  
23053 of it; and what an influence it must have to  
23054 destroy the confidence of young converts in their  
23055 elder brethren, to grieve their hearts and  
23056 discourage them, and perhaps drive them away  
23057 from the good influence of the church.

23058

23059 III. I am to mention some of the evils of  
23060 defective instruction to young converts.

23061

23062 1. If not fully instructed, they never will be fully  
23063 grounded in right principles. If they have right  
23064 fundamental principles, this will lead them to  
23065 adopt a right course of conduct in all particular  
23066 cases. In forming a Christian character, a great  
23067 deal depends on establishing those fundamental  
23068 principles which are correct on all subjects. If  
23069 you look at the Bible you will see there, that God  
23070 teaches right principles which we can carry out  
23071 in detail in right conduct. If the education of  
23072 young converts is defective, either in kind or  
23073 degree, you will see it in their character all their  
23074 lives. This is the philosophical result, just what  
23075 might be expected, and must be always so. It  
23076 could be shown, if I had time, that almost all the  
23077 practical errors that have prevailed in the church,

23078 are the natural results of certain false dogmas,  
23079 which have been taught to young converts, and  
23080 which they have been made to swallow as the  
23081 truth of God, at a time when they were so  
23082 ignorant as not to know any better.

23083

23084 2. If the instruction given to young converts is  
23085 not correct and full, they will not grow in grace,  
23086 but their religion will dwindle away and decay.  
23087 Their course instead of being like the path of the  
23088 just, growing brighter and brighter to the perfect  
23089 day, will grow dimmer and dimmer, and decay  
23090 and finally perhaps go out in darkness. Wherever  
23091 you see young converts let their religion taper  
23092 off till it comes to nothing, you may understand  
23093 that it is the proper result of defective  
23094 instruction. The philosophical result of teaching  
23095 young converts the truth, and the whole truth, is  
23096 that they grow stronger and stronger. Truth is the  
23097 food for the mind—it is what gives the mind  
23098 strength. And where religious character grows  
23099 feeble, rely upon it, in nine cases out of ten it is  
23100 owing to their being neglected, or falsely  
23101 instructed, when they were young converts.

23102

23103 3. They will be left justly in doubt whether they  
23104 are Christians. If their early instruction is false,  
23105 or defective, there will be so much inconsistency

23106 in their lives, and so little real evidence of real  
23107 piety, that they themselves will finally doubt  
23108 whether they have any. Probably they will live  
23109 and die in doubt. You cannot make a little  
23110 evidence go a great way. If they do not see  
23111 clearly they will not live consistently, if they do  
23112 not live consistently they can have but little  
23113 evidence, and if they have not evidence they  
23114 must doubt, or live in presumption.

23115  
23116 4. If young converts are rightly instructed and  
23117 trained, it will generally be seen that they will  
23118 take the right side on all great subjects that come  
23119 before the church. Subjects are continually  
23120 coming up before the churches, on which they  
23121 have to take ground, and on many of them there  
23122 is often no little difficulty to make all the church  
23123 take right ground. Take the subject of Tracts, or  
23124 Missions, or Sabbath schools, or Temperance,  
23125 for instance, and what cavils and objections, and  
23126 resistance, and opposition, have been  
23127 encountered from members of the church in  
23128 different places. Go through the churches, and  
23129 where you find young converts have been well  
23130 taught, you never find them making difficulty, or  
23131 raising objections, or putting forth cavils. I do  
23132 not hesitate to charge it upon pastors and older  
23133 members of churches, that there are so many



23134 who have to be dragged up to the right ground  
23135 on all such subjects. If they had grounded them  
23136 well in the principles of the Gospel at the outset,  
23137 when they were first converted, they would have  
23138 seen the application of their principles to all  
23139 these things. It is curious to see, and I have had  
23140 great opportunity to see, how ready young  
23141 converts are to take right ground on any subject  
23142 that may be proposed. See what they are willing  
23143 to do for the education of ministers, for  
23144 missions, for moral reform, for the slaves. If the  
23145 great body of young converts from the late  
23146 revivals had been well grounded in Gospel  
23147 principles, you would have found in them,  
23148 throughout the church, but one heart and one  
23149 soul in regard to every question of duty that  
23150 occurs. Let their early education be right, and  
23151 you have got a body of Christians that you can  
23152 depend on. If it had been general in the church,  
23153 Oh, how much more strength there would have  
23154 been in all her great movements for the salvation  
23155 of the world.

23156  
23157 5. If young converts are not well instructed they  
23158 will inevitably backslide. If their instruction is  
23159 defective, they will probably live in such a way  
23160 as to disgrace religion. The truth, kept steadily  
23161 before the mind of a young convert, in proper

23162 proportions, has a natural tendency to make him  
23163 grow up into the fulness of the stature of a  
23164 perfect man in Christ Jesus. If any one point is  
23165 made too prominent in the instruction given,  
23166 there will probably be just that disproportion in  
23167 his character. If he is fully instructed on some  
23168 points and not in others, you will find a  
23169 corresponding defect in his life and character.

23170

23171 If the instruction of young converts is greatly  
23172 defective, they will press on in religion no  
23173 further than they are strongly propelled by the  
23174 emotions of their first conversion. As soon as  
23175 that is spent they will come to a stand, and then  
23176 they will decline and backslide. And ever after  
23177 you will find that they will go forward only  
23178 when aroused by some powerful excitement.

23179 These are your periodical Christians, that are so  
23180 apt to wake up in a time of revival, and bluster  
23181 about as if they had the zeal of an angel, a few  
23182 days, and then die away as dead and cold as a  
23183 northern winter. Oh how desirable, how  
23184 infinitely important it is, that young converts  
23185 should be so taught, that their religion will not  
23186 depend on impulses and excitements, but that  
23187 they will go steadily onward in the Christian  
23188 course, advancing from strength to strength,

23189 giving forth a clear and safe and steady light all  
23190 around.

23191

23192 REMARKS.

23193

23194 1. The church is verily guilty for her past  
23195 neglect, in regard to the instruction of young  
23196 converts.

23197

23198 Instead of bringing up their young converts to be  
23199 working Christians, the churches have generally  
23200 acted as if they did not know how to employ  
23201 young converts, or what use to make of them.

23202 They have acted like a mother, who has a great  
23203 family of daughters, and knows nothing how to  
23204 set them to work, and so suffers them to grow up  
23205 idle and untaught, useless and despised, and to  
23206 be the easy prey of every designing villain.

23207

23208 If the church had only done her duty in training  
23209 up young converts to work, and labor for Christ,  
23210 the world would have been converted long ago.  
23211 But instead of this, how many churches even  
23212 oppose young converts, when they attempt to set  
23213 themselves at work for Christ. Multitudes of old  
23214 professors look with suspicion upon every  
23215 movement of young converts, and talk against  
23216 them, and say, "They are too forward, they ought

23217 not to put themselves forward, but wait for those  
23218 who are older.” There is waiting again. Instead  
23219 of bidding young converts “God speed,” and  
23220 cheering them on when they take hold with  
23221 warm hearts and strong hands, very often they  
23222 hinder them and perhaps put them down. How  
23223 often have young converts been stopped from  
23224 going forward, and turned in behind a formal,  
23225 lazy, inefficient church. till their spirit is  
23226 crushed, and their zeal extinguished, and after a  
23227 few ineffectual struggles to throw off the cords,  
23228 they conclude to sit down with the rest and  
23229 WAIT. In many places, young converts cannot  
23230 even attempt to hold a prayer meeting by  
23231 themselves, but what the pastor, or some of the  
23232 deacons, rebukes them for being so forward, and  
23233 charge them with spiritual pride. “Oh, ho! you  
23234 are young converts, are you? and so you want to  
23235 get together and call all the neighbors together to  
23236 look at you, because you are young converts.”  
23237 You had better turn preachers at once. A  
23238 celebrated Doctor of Divinity in New England  
23239 boasted at a public table of his success in  
23240 keeping all his converts still. He had great  
23241 difficulty, he said, for they were in a terrible  
23242 fever to do something, to talk, or pray, or get up  
23243 meetings, but by the greatest vigilance he had  
23244 kept it all down, and now his church was just as

23245 quiet as it was before the revival. Wonderful  
23246 achievement for a minister of Jesus Christ! Was  
23247 that what the blessed Saviour meant when he  
23248 told Peter, "Feed my lambs?"

23249

23250 2. Young converts should be trained to labor,  
23251 just as carefully as young recruits in an army are  
23252 trained for war.

23253

23254 Suppose a captain in the army should get his  
23255 company enlisted, and then take no more pains  
23256 to teach and train and discipline them, than is  
23257 taken by many pastors to train and lead forward  
23258 their young converts. Why, the enemy would  
23259 laugh at such an army. Call them soldiers! Why,  
23260 as to any effective service, they are in a mere  
23261 state of babyhood, they know nothing what to do  
23262 or how to do it, and if you bring them up to the  
23263 CHARGE, where are they? Such an army would  
23264 resemble the church that does not train her  
23265 young converts. Instead of being trained to stand  
23266 shoulder to shoulder in the onset, they feel no  
23267 practical confidence in their leaders, no  
23268 confidence in their neighbors, no confidence in  
23269 themselves, and they scatter at the first shock of  
23270 battle. Look at the church now. Ministers are not  
23271 agreed as to what shall be done, and many of  
23272 them will turn and fight back against their

23273 brethren, quarreling about New Measures, or the  
23274 Act and Testimony, or something. And as to the  
23275 members, they cannot feel confidence when they  
23276 see their leaders so divided. And then if they  
23277 attempt to do anything—Alas! alas! what  
23278 ignorance, what awkwardness, what discord,  
23279 what weakness, what miserable work they make  
23280 of it. And so it must continue, until the church  
23281 shall train up young converts to be intelligent,  
23282 single-hearted, self-denying, working Christians.  
23283 Here is an enterprise now going on in this city,  
23284 which I rejoice to see. I mean the Tract  
23285 enterprise—a blessed work. And the plan is to  
23286 train up a body of devoted Christians to do—  
23287 what?—why to do what all the church ought to  
23288 have been trained to do long ago, to know how  
23289 to pray, and how to converse with people about  
23290 their soul’s salvation, and how to attend anxious  
23291 meetings, and how to deal with inquirers, and  
23292 how to SAVE SOULS.

23293  
23294 3. The church has entirely mistaken the manner  
23295 in which she is to be sanctified.

23296  
23297 The experiment has been carried on long  
23298 enough, of trying to sanctify the church, without  
23299 finding anything for them to do. But holiness  
23300 consists in obeying God. And sanctification, as a

23301 process, means obeying him more and more  
23302 perfectly. And the way to promote it in the  
23303 church, is to give every one something to do.  
23304 Look at these great churches, where they have  
23305 500 or 700 members, and get a minister to feed  
23306 them from Sabbath to Sabbath, while there are  
23307 so many of them together that the great part have  
23308 nothing at all to do, are never trained to make  
23309 any direct efforts for the salvation of souls. And  
23310 in that way they are expecting to be sanctified  
23311 and prepared for heaven. They never will be  
23312 sanctified so. That is not the way God has  
23313 appointed. Jesus Christ has made his people co-  
23314 workers with him in saving sinners, for this very  
23315 reason, because sanctification consists in doing  
23316 those things which are required to promote this  
23317 work. This is one reason why he has not  
23318 employed angels in the work, or carried it on by  
23319 direct revelation of truth to the minds of men. It  
23320 is because it is necessary as a means of  
23321 sanctification, that the church should sympathize  
23322 with Christ in his feelings and his labors for the  
23323 conversion of sinners. And in this way the entire  
23324 church must move, before the world will be  
23325 converted. When the day comes, that the whole  
23326 church shall realize that they are here on earth as  
23327 a body of missionaries, and shall live and labor

23328 accordingly, then will the day of man's  
23329 redemption draw nigh.

23330

23331 Christian! if you cannot go abroad to labor why  
23332 are you not a missionary in your own family? If  
23333 you are too feeble even to leave your room, be a  
23334 missionary there in your bed-chamber. How  
23335 many unconverted servants have you in your  
23336 house? Call in your unconverted servants, and  
23337 your unconverted children, and be a missionary  
23338 to them. Think of your physician, perhaps, who  
23339 is laying himself out to save your body, while he  
23340 is losing his own soul, and you receive his  
23341 kindness and never make him the greatest return  
23342 in your power.

23343

23344 It is necessary that the church should take hold  
23345 of her young converts at the outset, and set them  
23346 to work, and set them to work right. The hope of  
23347 the church is in the young converts.

23348

23349 4. We see what a responsibility rests on  
23350 ministers, and elders, and all who have  
23351 opportunity to assist in training young converts.  
23352 How distressing is the picture which often forces  
23353 itself upon the mind, where multitudes are  
23354 converted, and yet so little pains taken with the  
23355 young converts, that in a single year you cannot



23356 tell the young converts from the rest of the  
23357 church. And then to see the old church members  
23358 turn round and complain of these young  
23359 converts, and perhaps slander them, when in  
23360 truth these old professors themselves are most to  
23361 blame. Oh, it is too bad. This reaction that  
23362 people talk so much about after a revival, (as if  
23363 reaction was the necessary effect of a revival,)  
23364 would never come, young converts never would  
23365 backslide as they do, if the church were prompt  
23366 and faithful in attending to their instruction. If  
23367 they are truly converted, they can be made  
23368 thorough and energetic Christians. And if they  
23369 are not such, Jesus Christ will require it at the  
23370 hands of the church.

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23374 LECTURE XXI.

23375

23376 THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART.

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23378 Text.—The backslider in heart shall be filled  
23379 with his own ways.—Prov. xiv. 14.

23380

23381 I CANNOT conclude this course of lectures,  
23382 without warning converts against backsliding. In  
23383 discussing this subject, I will state,

- 23384  
23385 I. What backsliding in heart is not.  
23386  
23387 II. What backsliding in heart is.  
23388  
23389 III. What are evidences of backsliding in heart.  
23390  
23391 IV. Show what are consequences of backsliding  
23392 in heart.  
23393  
23394 V. How to recover from this state.  
23395  
23396 I. What backsliding in heart is not.  
23397  
23398 1. It does not consist in the subsidence of highly  
23399 excited religious emotions. The subsidence of  
23400 religious feeling may be an evidence of a  
23401 backslidden heart, but it does not consist in the  
23402 cooling off of religious feeling.  
23403  
23404 II. What backsliding in heart is.  
23405  
23406 1. It consists in taking back that consecration to  
23407 God and his service, that constitutes true  
23408 conversion.  
23409  
23410 2. It is the leaving, by a Christian, of his first  
23411 love.

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3. It consists in the Christian's withdrawing himself from that state of entire and universal devotion to God, which constitutes true religion, and coming again under the control of a self-pleasing spirit.

4. The text implies that there may be a backslidden heart, when the form of religion and obedience to God are maintained. As we know from consciousness that men perform the same, or similar acts from widely different, and often from opposite motives, we are certain that men may keep up all the outward forms and appearances of religion, when in fact, they are backslidden in heart. There is no doubt, that the most intense selfishness often takes on a religious type, and there are many considerations, that might lead a backslider in heart, to keep up the forms, while he had lost the power of godliness in his soul

III. What are evidences of a backslidden heart.

1. Manifest formality in religious exercises. A stereotyped formal way of saying and doing things, that is clearly the result of habit, rather than the outgushing of the religious life. This

23440 formality will be emotionless and cold as an  
23441 iceberg, and will evince a total want of  
23442 earnestness in the performance of religious duty.  
23443 In prayer and in religious exercises the  
23444 backslider in heart will pray or praise, or  
23445 confess, or give thanks with his lips, so that all  
23446 can hear him, perhaps, but in such a way that no  
23447 one can feel him. Such a formality would be  
23448 impossible where there existed a present, living  
23449 faith and love, and religious zeal.

23450

23451 2. A want of religious enjoyment is evidence of  
23452 a backslidden heart. We always enjoy the saying  
23453 and doing of those things that please those  
23454 whom we most love; furthermore, when the  
23455 heart is not backslidden, communion with God is  
23456 kept up, and therefore all religious duties are not  
23457 only performed with pleasure, but the  
23458 communion with God involved in them, is a  
23459 source of rich and continual enjoyment. If we do  
23460 not enjoy the service of God, it is because we do  
23461 not truly serve him. If we love Him supremely, it  
23462 is impossible that we should not enjoy His  
23463 service at every step. Always remember then,  
23464 whenever you lose your religious enjoyment, or  
23465 the enjoyment of serving God, you may know  
23466 that you are not serving Him right.

23467

23468 3. Religious bondage is another evidence of a  
23469 backslidden heart. God has no slaves. He does  
23470 not accept the service of bondmen, who serve  
23471 him because they must. He accepts none but a  
23472 love service. A backslider in heart, finds his  
23473 religious duties a burden to him. He has  
23474 promised to serve the Lord. He dare not wholly  
23475 break off from the form of service, and he tries  
23476 to be dutiful, while he has no heart in prayer, in  
23477 praise, in worship, in closet duties, or in any of  
23478 those exercises which are so spontaneous and  
23479 delightful, where there is true love to God. The  
23480 backslider in heart is often like a dutiful, but  
23481 unloving wife. She tries to do her duty to her  
23482 husband, but fails utterly because she does not  
23483 love him Her painstaking to please her husband  
23484 is constrained, not the spontaneous outburst of a  
23485 loving heart, and her relation, and her duties,  
23486 become the burden of her life. She goes about  
23487 complaining of the weight of care that is upon  
23488 her, and will not be likely to advise young ladies  
23489 to marry. She is committed for life, and must  
23490 therefore perform the duties of married life, but  
23491 oh, it is such a bondage! Just so with religious  
23492 bondage. The professor must perform his duty.  
23493 He drags painfully about it, and you will hear  
23494 him naturally sing backslider's hymns.  
23495

23496

23497 “Reason I hear, her counsels weigh,

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23499 And all her words approve;

23500

23501 And yet I find it hard to obey,

23502

23503 And harder still, to love.”

23504

23505 4. An ungoverned temper.

23506

23507 While the heart is full of love, the temper will

23508 naturally be chastened and sweet, or at any rate,

23509 the will will keep it under, and not suffer it to

23510 break out in outrageous abuse, or if at any time,

23511 it should so far escape from the control of the

23512 will as to break loose in hateful words, it will

23513 soon be brought under, and by no means

23514 suffered to take the control and manifest itself to

23515 the annoyance of others. Especially will a loving

23516 heart confess and break down, if at any time bad

23517 temper gets the control. Wherever, therefore,

23518 there is an irritable, uncontrolled temper allowed

23519 to manifest itself to those around one, you may

23520 know there is a backslidden heart.

23521

23522 5. A spirit of uncharitableness is evidence of a

23523 backslidden heart. By this, I mean a want of that

23524 disposition that puts the best construction upon  
23525 every one's conduct that can be reasonable—a  
23526 want of confidence in the good intentions and  
23527 professions of others. We naturally credit the  
23528 good professions of those whom we love. We  
23529 naturally attribute to them right motives, and put  
23530 the best allowable construction upon their words  
23531 and deeds. Where there is a want of this there is  
23532 evidence conclusive of a backslidden or  
23533 unloving heart.

23534

23535 6. A censorious spirit is conclusive evidence of a  
23536 backslidden heart. This is a spirit of fault-  
23537 finding, of impugning the motives of others,  
23538 when their conduct admits of a charitable  
23539 construction. It is a disposition to fasten blame  
23540 upon others, and judge them harshly. It is a spirit  
23541 of distrust of Christian character and professions.  
23542 It is a state of mind that reveals itself in harsh  
23543 judgments, harsh sayings, and the manifestation  
23544 of uncomfortable feelings toward individuals.  
23545 This state of mind is entirely incompatible with a  
23546 loving heart, and wherever a censorious spirit is  
23547 manifested by a professor of religion, you may  
23548 know there is a backslidden heart.

23549

23550 7. A want of interest in God's word, is also an  
23551 evidence of a backslidden heart. Perhaps nothing

23552 more conclusively proves that a professor has a  
23553 backslidden heart, than his losing his interest in  
23554 the Bible. While the heart is full of love, no book  
23555 in the world is so precious as the Bible. But  
23556 when the love is gone, the Bible becomes not  
23557 only uninteresting but often repulsive. There is  
23558 no faith to accept its promises, but conviction  
23559 enough left to dread its threatenings. But in  
23560 general the backslider in heart is apathetic as to  
23561 the Bible. He does not read it much, and when  
23562 he does read it, he has not interest enough to  
23563 understand it. Its pages become dark and  
23564 uninteresting, and therefore it is neglected.

23565

23566 8. A want of interest in secret prayer is also an  
23567 evidence of a backslidden heart.

23568

23569 Young Christian! If you find yourself losing  
23570 your interest in the Bible and in secret prayer,  
23571 stop short, return to God, and give yourself no  
23572 rest, till you enjoy the light of his countenance.  
23573 If you feel disinclined to pray, or read your  
23574 Bible, if when you pray and read your Bible, you  
23575 have no heart in it, no enjoyment, if you are  
23576 inclined to make your secret devotions short, or,  
23577 are easily induced to neglect them, if your  
23578 thoughts, affections and emotions wander, and  
23579 your closet duties become a burden, you may



23580 know that you are a backslider in heart, and your  
23581 first business is, to break down, and see that your  
23582 love and zeal are renewed.

23583

23584 9. A want of interest in the conversion of souls  
23585 and in efforts to promote revivals of religion.  
23586 This of course reveals a backslidden heart. There  
23587 is nothing in which a loving heart takes more  
23588 interest than in the conversion of souls in  
23589 revivals of religion, and in efforts to promote  
23590 them.

23591

23592 10. A want of interest in published accounts or  
23593 narratives of revivals of religion, is also an  
23594 evidence of a backslidden heart. While one  
23595 retains his interest in the conversion of souls,  
23596 and in revivals of religion he will, of course, be  
23597 interested in all accounts of revivals of religion  
23598 anywhere. If you find yourself, therefore,  
23599 disinclined to read such accounts, or find  
23600 yourself not interested in them, take it for  
23601 granted that you are backslidden in heart

23602

23603 11. The same is true of missions, and missionary  
23604 work and operations. If you lose your interest in  
23605 the work, and in the conversion of the heathen,  
23606 and do not delight to read and hear of the

23607 success of missions, you may know that you an  
23608 backslidden in heart.

23609

23610 12. The loss of interest in benevolent enterprises  
23611 generally is an evidence of a backslidden heart. I  
23612 say the loss of interest, for surely, if you were  
23613 ever converted to Christ, you have had an  
23614 interest in all benevolent enterprises that came  
23615 within your knowledge. Religion consists in  
23616 disinterested benevolence. Of course, a  
23617 converted soul takes the deepest interest in all  
23618 benevolent efforts to reform and save mankind.  
23619 In good government, in Christian education, in  
23620 the cause of temperance, in the abolition of  
23621 slavery, in provisions for the poor, and in short,  
23622 in every good word and work, just In proportion  
23623 as you have lost your interest in these, you have  
23624 evidence that you are backslidden in heart.

23625

23626 13. The loss of interest in truly spiritual  
23627 conversation is another evidence of a  
23628 backslidden heart. “Out of the abundance of the  
23629 heart the mouth speaketh.” This our Lord Jesus  
23630 Christ announced as a law of our nature. No  
23631 conversation is so sweet to a truly loving heart,  
23632 as that which relates to Christ, and to our living  
23633 Christian experience. If you find yourself losing  
23634 interest in conversing of heart religion, and of

23635 the various and wonderful experiences of  
23636 Christians, if you ever knew what the true love  
23637 of God is, you have fallen from it, and are a  
23638 backslider in heart.

23639

23640 14. A loss of interest in the conversation and  
23641 society of highly spiritual people, is an evidence  
23642 of a backslidden heart. We take the greatest  
23643 delight in the society of those who are most  
23644 interested in the things that are most dear to us.  
23645 Hence, a loving Christian heart will always seek  
23646 the society of those who are most spiritually-  
23647 minded, and whose conversation is most  
23648 evangelical and spiritual. If you find yourself  
23649 wanting in this respect, know for certain that you  
23650 are backslidden in heart.

23651

23652 15. The loss of interest in the question of  
23653 sanctification is an evidence of a backslidden  
23654 heart. I say again, the loss of interest, for, if you  
23655 ever truly knew the love of God, you must have  
23656 had a great interest in the question of entire  
23657 consecration to God, or of entire sanctification.  
23658 If you are a Christian, you have felt that sin was  
23659 an abomination to your soul. You have had  
23660 inexpressible longings to be rid of it forever, and  
23661 everything that could throw light upon that  
23662 question of agonizing importance, was most

23663 intensely interesting to you. If this question has  
23664 been dismissed, and you no longer take an  
23665 interest in it, it is because you are backslidden in  
23666 heart.

23667

23668 16. The loss of interest in those newly converted,  
23669 is also an evidence of a backslidden heart. The  
23670 Psalmist says, "All who fear thee will be glad  
23671 when they see me, because I have hoped in thy  
23672 word." This he puts into the mouth of a convert,  
23673 and who does not know that this is true? Why,  
23674 there is joy in the presence of the angels of God,  
23675 over one sinner that repenteth, and is there not  
23676 joy among the saints on earth, over those that  
23677 come to Christ, and are as babes newly born into  
23678 the kingdom of heaven. Show me a professor of  
23679 religion, who does not manifest an absorbing  
23680 interest in converts to Christ, and I will show  
23681 you a backslider in heart, and a hypocrite; he  
23682 professes religion, and has none.

23683

23684 17. An uncharitable state of mind in regard to  
23685 professed converts, is also an evidence of a  
23686 backslidden heart. Charity or love, hopeth all  
23687 things, and believeth all things, and is very ready  
23688 to judge kindly and favorably of those who  
23689 profess to be converted to Christ, will naturally  
23690 watch over them with interest, pray for them,

23691 instruct them, and have as much confidence in  
23692 them as it is reasonable to have. A disposition  
23693 therefore, to pick at, criticise, and censure them,  
23694 is an evidence of a backslidden heart.

23695

23696 18. The want of the spirit of prayer is evidence  
23697 of a backslidden heart. While the love of Christ  
23698 remains fresh in the soul, the indwelling spirit of  
23699 Christ will reveal himself as the spirit of grace  
23700 and supplication. He will beget strong desires in  
23701 the soul for the salvation of sinners and the  
23702 sanctification of saints. He will often make  
23703 intercessions in them, with great longings, strong  
23704 crying and tears, and with groanings that cannot  
23705 be uttered in words, for those things that are  
23706 according to the will of God, or to express it in  
23707 Scripture language, according to Paul, Romans  
23708 viii. 26 and 27, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth  
23709 our infirmities, for we know not what we should  
23710 pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself, maketh  
23711 intercession for us, with groanings which cannot  
23712 be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts  
23713 knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he  
23714 maketh intercession for the saints, according to  
23715 the will of God.” If the spirit of prayer departs, it  
23716 is a sure indication of a backslidden heart, for  
23717 while the first love of a Christian continues he is

23718 sure to be drawn by the Holy Spirit to wrestle  
23719 much in prayer.  
23720  
23721 19. A backslidden heart often reveals itself by  
23722 the manner in which people pray. For example,  
23723 praying as if one was in a state of self-  
23724 condemnation, or very much like a convicted  
23725 sinner, is an evidence of a backslidden heart.  
23726 Such an one will reveal the fact, that he is not at  
23727 peace with God. His confessions and self-  
23728 accusations will show to others what perhaps he  
23729 does not well understand himself. His manner of  
23730 praying will reveal the fact, that he has not  
23731 communion with God; that instead of being  
23732 filled with faith and love, he is more or less  
23733 convicted of sin, and conscious that he is not in a  
23734 state of acceptance with God. He will naturally  
23735 pray more like a convicted sinner, than like a  
23736 Christian. It will be seen by his prayer that he is  
23737 not in a state of Christian liberty—that he is  
23738 having a 7th of Romans experience, instead of  
23739 that which is described in the 8th of Romans.  
23740  
23741 20. A backslidden heart will further reveal itself  
23742 in praying almost exclusively for self, and for  
23743 those friends that are regarded as parts of self. It  
23744 is often very striking and even shocking to  
23745 attend a backslider's prayer meeting, and I am

23746 very sorry to say that many prayer meetings of  
23747 the church are little else. Their prayers are timid  
23748 and hesitating, and reveal the fact that they have  
23749 little or no faith. Instead of surrounding the  
23750 throne of grace and pouring their hearts out for a  
23751 blessing on those around them, they have to be  
23752 urged up to duty, to take up their cross. Their  
23753 hearts do not, will not, spontaneously gush out to  
23754 God in prayer. They have very little concern for  
23755 others, and when they do, as they say, take up  
23756 their cross and do their duty, and pretend to lead  
23757 in prayer, it will be observed that they pray just  
23758 like a company of convicted sinners, almost  
23759 altogether for themselves. They will pray for  
23760 that, which, should they obtain it, would be  
23761 religion, just as a convicted sinner would pray  
23762 for a new heart, and praying for religion as they  
23763 do, manifests that they have none, in their  
23764 present state of mind. Ask them to pray for the  
23765 conversion of sinners, and they will either  
23766 wholly forget it, or just mention them in such a  
23767 way as will show that they have no heart to pray  
23768 for them. I have known professed Christian  
23769 parents to get into such a state that they had no  
23770 heart to pray for the conversion of their own  
23771 children, even when those children were under  
23772 conviction. They would keep up family prayer,  
23773 and attend a weekly prayer meeting, and never

23774 get out of the old rut, of praying round and round  
23775 for themselves. A few years since, I was  
23776 laboring in a revival in a Presbyterian church. At  
23777 the close of the evening sermon, I found that the  
23778 daughter of one of the elders of the church, was  
23779 in great distress of mind. I observed her  
23780 convictions were very deep. We had been  
23781 holding a meeting with inquirers in the vestry,  
23782 and I had just dismissed the inquirers, when this  
23783 young lady, came to me in great agitation, and  
23784 begged me to pray for her. The people had  
23785 mostly gone, except a few that were waiting in  
23786 the body of the church for those friends to be  
23787 dismissed that had attended the meeting of  
23788 inquiry. I called the father of this young lady  
23789 into the vestry that he might see the very anxious  
23790 state of his daughter's mind. After a short  
23791 personal conversation with her in the presence of  
23792 her father, I called on him to pray for her, and  
23793 said that I would follow him, and urged her to  
23794 give her heart to Christ. We all knelt, and he  
23795 went through with his prayer, kneeling by the  
23796 side of his sobbing daughter, without ever  
23797 mentioning her case. His prayer revealed that he  
23798 had no more religion than she had, and that he  
23799 was very much in her state of mind—under an  
23800 awful sense of condemnation. He had kept up  
23801 the appearance of religion. As an elder of the



23802 church, he was obliged to keep up appearances.  
23803 He had gone round and round upon the tread-  
23804 mill of his duties, while his heart was utterly  
23805 backslidden. It is often almost nauseating to  
23806 attend a prayer meeting of the backslidden in  
23807 heart. They will go round, round, one after the  
23808 other, in reality praying for their own  
23809 conversion. They do not so express it, but that is  
23810 the real import of the prayer. They could not  
23811 render it more evident that they are backsliders  
23812 in heart, if they were every one to take his oath  
23813 of it.

23814  
23815 21. Absence from stated prayer meetings for  
23816 slight reasons is a sure indication of a  
23817 backslidden heart. No meeting is more  
23818 interesting to a wakeful Christian than the prayer  
23819 meeting, and while they have any heart to pray,  
23820 they will not be absent from prayer meeting  
23821 unless prevented from attending by the  
23822 providence of God. If a call from a friend at the  
23823 hour of meeting, can prevent their attendance,  
23824 unless the call be made under very peculiar  
23825 circumstances, it is strong evidence that they do  
23826 not wish to attend, and hence, that they are  
23827 backsliders in heart. A call at such a time would  
23828 not prevent their attending a wedding, a party, a  
23829 pic-nic, or an amusing lecture. The fact is, it is

23830 hypocrisy for them to pretend that they really  
23831 want to go, while they can be kept away for  
23832 slight reasons. If it were any place where they  
23833 much desired to go, they would excuse  
23834 themselves, and say, "I was just going to ride,"  
23835 or, "I was just going to such a place," and away  
23836 they would go.

23837

23838 22. The same is true of the neglect of family  
23839 prayer, for slight reasons.

23840

23841 While the heart is engaged in religion, Christians  
23842 will not readily omit family devotions, and  
23843 whenever they are ready to find an excuse for the  
23844 omission, it is a sure evidence that they are  
23845 backslidden in heart.

23846

23847 23. When secret prayer is regarded more as a  
23848 duty than as a privilege, it is because the heart is  
23849 backslidden. It has always appeared to me  
23850 almost ridiculous, to hear Christians speak of  
23851 prayer as a duty. It is one of the greatest of  
23852 earthly privileges. What should we think of a  
23853 child's coming to its parent for its dinner, not  
23854 because it was hungry, but as a duty. How would  
23855 it strike us to hear a beggar speak of the duty of  
23856 asking alms of us. It is an infinite privilege to be  
23857 allowed to come to God, and ask for the supply

23858 of all our wants. But to pray because we must,  
23859 rather than because we may, seems unnatural. To  
23860 ask for what we want, and because we want it,  
23861 and because God has encouraged us to ask, and  
23862 has promised to answer our request, is natural  
23863 and reasonable. But to pray as a duty and as if  
23864 we were obliging God by our prayer, is quite  
23865 ridiculous, and is a certain indication of a  
23866 backslidden heart.

23867  
23868 24. Pleading for worldly amusements, is also an  
23869 indication of a backslidden heart. The most  
23870 grateful amusements possible, to a truly spiritual  
23871 mind, are those engagements that bring the soul  
23872 into the most direct communion with God.  
23873 While the heart is full of love and faith, an hour,  
23874 or an evening spent alone, in communion with  
23875 God, is more delightful than all the amusements  
23876 which the world can offer. A loving heart is  
23877 jealous of everything that will break up or  
23878 interfere with its communion with God. For  
23879 mere worldly amusements it has no relish. When  
23880 the soul does not find more delight in God than  
23881 in all worldly things, the heart is sadly  
23882 backslidden.

23883  
23884 25. Spiritual blindness is another evidence of a  
23885 backslidden heart. While the eye is single the

23886 whole body will be full of spiritual light, but if  
23887 the eye be evil, (which is a backslidden heart)  
23888 the whole body will be full of darkness.

23889

23890 Spiritual blindness reveals itself in a want of  
23891 interest in God's word, and in religious truth  
23892 generally. It will also manifest a want of spiritual  
23893 discrimination, and will be easily imposed upon  
23894 by the insinuations of Satan. A backslidden heart  
23895 will lead to the adoption of lax principles of  
23896 morality. It does not discern the spirituality of  
23897 God's law, and of His requirements generally.  
23898 When this spiritual blindness is manifest it is a  
23899 sure indication that the heart is backslidden.

23900

23901 26. Religious apathy, with worldly wakefulness  
23902 and sensibility, is a sure indication of a  
23903 backslidden heart. We sometimes see persons  
23904 who feel deeply and quickly on worldly subjects,  
23905 but who cannot be made to feel deeply on  
23906 religious subjects. This clearly indicates a  
23907 backslidden state of mind.

23908

23909 27. A self-indulgent spirit is a sure indication of  
23910 a backslidden heart. By self-indulgence, I mean  
23911 a disposition to gratify the appetites, passions  
23912 and propensities, "to fulfill the desires of the  
23913 flesh and of the mind."

23914

23915 This, in the Bible, is represented as a state of  
23916 spiritual death. I am satisfied that the most  
23917 common occasion of backsliding in heart, is to  
23918 be found in the clamor for indulgence of the  
23919 various appetites and propensities. The appetite  
23920 for food is frequently, and perhaps more  
23921 frequently than any other, the occasion of  
23922 backsliding. Few Christians, I fear, apprehend  
23923 any danger in this direction. God's injunction is,  
23924 "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do,  
23925 do all to the glory of God." Christians forget  
23926 this, and eat and drink to please themselves—  
23927 consult their appetites, instead of the laws of life  
23928 and health. More persons are ensnared by their  
23929 tables than the church is aware of. The table is a  
23930 snare of death to multitudes that no man can  
23931 number. A great many people who avoid  
23932 alcoholic drinks altogether, will indulge in tea  
23933 and coffee, and even tobacco, and in food, both  
23934 in quantity and quality that violates every law of  
23935 health. They seem to have no other law, than that  
23936 of appetite, and this they so deprave by abuse  
23937 that, to indulge it, is to ruin body and soul  
23938 together. Show me a gluttonous professor, and I  
23939 will show you a backslider.

23940

23941 28. A seared conscience is also an evidence of a  
23942 backslidden heart. While the soul is wakeful and  
23943 loving, the conscience is as tender as the apple  
23944 of the eye. But when the heart is backslidden, the  
23945 conscience is silent and seared, on many  
23946 subjects. Such an one will tell you that he is not  
23947 violating his conscience, in eating or drinking, or  
23948 in self-indulgence of any kind. You will find a  
23949 backslider has but little conscience. The same  
23950 will be true in regard to sins of omission very  
23951 generally. Multitudes of duties may be neglected  
23952 and a seared conscience will remain silent.  
23953 Where conscience is not awake, the heart is  
23954 surely backslidden.

23955  
23956 29. Loose moral principles are a sure indication  
23957 of a backslidden heart, A backslider in heart,  
23958 will write letters on the Sabbath, engage in  
23959 secular reading, and in much worldly  
23960 conversation. In business, such an one will take  
23961 little advantages, and play off business tricks,  
23962 conform to the habits of worldly business men,  
23963 in the transaction of business, will be guilty of  
23964 deception and misrepresentation in making  
23965 bargains, will demand exorbitant interest, and  
23966 take advantage of the necessities of his fellow  
23967 men.  
23968

23969 30. Prevalence of the fear of man, is an evidence  
23970 of a backslidden heart. While the heart is full of  
23971 the love of God, God is feared, and not man. A  
23972 desire for the applause of men is kept down, and  
23973 it is enough for such an one to please God,  
23974 whether men are pleased or displeased. But  
23975 when the love of God is abated, “the fear of  
23976 man, that bringeth a snare,” gets possession of  
23977 man. To please man rather than God, is then his  
23978 aim. In such a state he will sooner offend God  
23979 than man.

23980

23981 31. A sticklishness about forms, ceremonies, and  
23982 non-essentials, is evidence of a backslidden  
23983 heart. A loving heart, is particular only about the  
23984 substance and power of religion, and will not  
23985 stickle about its forms.

23986

23987 32. A captiousness about measures in promoting  
23988 revivals of religion, is a sure evidence of a  
23989 backslidden heart. Where the heart is fully set  
23990 upon the conversion of sinners, and the  
23991 sanctification of believers, it will naturally  
23992 approach the subject in the most direct manner,  
23993 and by means in the highest degree calculated to  
23994 accomplish the end. It will not object to, and  
23995 stumble at, measures that are evidently blessed  
23996 of God, but will exert its utmost sagacity in

23997 devising the most suitable means to accomplish  
23998 the great end on which the heart is set.

23999

24000 IV. Show what are consequences of backsliding  
24001 in heart. The text says, that the backslider in  
24002 heart shall be filled with his own ways.

24003

24004 1. He shall be filled with his own works. But  
24005 these are dead works, they are not works of faith  
24006 and love, which are acceptable to God, but are  
24007 the filthy rags of his own righteousness. If they  
24008 are performed as religious services, they are but  
24009 loathsome hypocrisy, and an abomination to  
24010 God, there is no heart in them, and to such a one,  
24011 God says, "Who hath required this at our  
24012 hands?" "Ye are they that justify yourselves  
24013 before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for  
24014 that which is highly esteemed among men, is an  
24015 abomination in the sight of God." "I know you,  
24016 that you have not the love of God in you."

24017

24018 2. He shall be filled with his own feelings.  
24019 Instead of that sweet peace and rest, and joy in  
24020 the Holy Ghost, that he once experienced, he  
24021 will find himself in a state of unrest, dissatisfied  
24022 with himself and everybody else, his feelings  
24023 often painful, humiliating, and as unpleasant and  
24024 unlovely, as can be well conceived. It is often



24025 very trying to live with a backslider. They are  
24026 often peevish, censorious, and irritating, in all  
24027 their ways. They have forsaken God, and in their  
24028 feelings is more of hell than heaven.

24029

24030 3. They will be filled with their own prejudices.  
24031 Their willingness to know and do the truth has  
24032 gone. They will very naturally commit  
24033 themselves against any truth that bears hard  
24034 upon their self-indulgent spirit. They will  
24035 endeavor to justify themselves, will neither read  
24036 nor hear that which will rebuke their backslidden  
24037 state, and they will become deeply prejudiced  
24038 against everyone that shall cross their path. If  
24039 anyone reproves them, they account him as an  
24040 enemy. They hedge themselves in, and shut their  
24041 eyes against the light, stand on the defensive,  
24042 and criticise everything that would search them  
24043 out.

24044

24045 4. A backslider in heart will be filled with his  
24046 own enmities. Such an one will almost surely lay  
24047 up things against those with whom he has any  
24048 business or other relations. He will chafe in  
24049 almost every relation of life, will allow him. self  
24050 to be vexed and angry, and get into such  
24051 relations with some, and perhaps many persons,  
24052 that he cannot pray for them honestly, and can

24053 hardly treat them with common civility. This is  
24054 an almost certain result of a backslidden heart.

24055

24056 5. The backslider in heart will be fall of his own  
24057 mistakes. He is not walking with God. He has  
24058 fallen out of the Divine order. He is not led by  
24059 the Spirit, but is walking in spiritual darkness. In  
24060 this state he is sure to fall into many and  
24061 grievous mistakes, and may get entangled in  
24062 such a way as to mar his happiness, and,  
24063 perhaps, destroy his usefulness for life. Mistakes  
24064 in business, mistakes in forming new relations in  
24065 life, mistakes in using his time, his tongue, his  
24066 money, his influence—all will go wrong with  
24067 him as long as he remains in a backslidden state.

24068

24069 6. The backslider in heart will be filled with his  
24070 own lustings. His appetites and passions, which  
24071 had been kept under, have now resumed their  
24072 control, and having been so long suppressed,  
24073 they will seem to avenge themselves by  
24074 becoming more clamorous and despotic than  
24075 ever. The animal appetites and passions will  
24076 burst forth, to the astonishment of the backslider,  
24077 and ten to one, if he does not find himself more  
24078 under their influence, and more enslaved by  
24079 them than ever before.

24080

24081 7. The backslider in heart will he filled with his  
24082 own words. While in that state, he will not, and  
24083 cannot, control his tongue. It will prove itself to  
24084 be an unruly member, full of deadly poison, will  
24085 set on fire the course of nature, and is itself set  
24086 on fire of hell. By his words he will involve  
24087 himself in many difficulties and perplexities,  
24088 from which he can never extricate himself, until  
24089 he comes back to God.

24090  
24091 8. He will be full of his own trials. Instead of  
24092 keeping out of temptation, he will run right into  
24093 temptation. He will bring upon himself  
24094 multitudes of trials that he never would have  
24095 had, had he not departed from God. He will  
24096 complain of his trials, and yet constantly  
24097 multiply them. A backslider feels his trials  
24098 keenly, and, while he complains of being so tried  
24099 by everything around him, he is constantly  
24100 aggravating them, and being the author of them,  
24101 he seems industrious to bring them upon himself  
24102 like an avalanche.

24103  
24104 9. The backslider in heart shall be full of his own  
24105 follies. Having rejected the Divine guidance, he  
24106 will evidently fall into the depths of his own  
24107 foolishness. He will inevitably say and do  
24108 multitudes of foolish and ridiculous things.

24109 Being a professor of religion, these things will  
24110 be all the more noticed, and of course bring him  
24111 all the more into ridicule and contempt. A  
24112 backslider is, indeed, the greatest fool in the  
24113 world. Having experimental knowledge of the  
24114 true way of life, he has the infinite folly to  
24115 abandon it. Knowing the fountain of living  
24116 water, he has forsaken it, and hewed out to  
24117 himself cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold  
24118 no water. Having been guilty of this infinite  
24119 folly, the whole course of his backslidden life  
24120 must be that of a fool, in the Bible sense of the  
24121 term.

24122

24123 10. The backslider in heart will be full of his  
24124 own troubles. God is against him, and he is  
24125 against himself. He is not at peace with God,  
24126 with himself, with the church, or with the world.  
24127 He has no inward rest. Conscience condemns  
24128 him. God condemns him. All that know his state  
24129 condemn him. “There is no peace to the wicked,  
24130 saith my God.” There is no position in time or  
24131 space in which he can be at rest.

24132

24133 11. The backslider in heart will be full of his  
24134 own cares. He has turned back to selfishness. He  
24135 counts himself and his possessions as his own.  
24136 He has everything to care for. He will not hold

24137 himself and his possessions as belonging to God,  
24138 and lay aside the responsibility of taking care of  
24139 himself and all that he possesses. He does not,  
24140 will not, cast his care upon the Lord, but  
24141 undertakes to manage everything for himself,  
24142 and in his own wisdom, and for his own ends.  
24143 Consequently, his cares will be multiplied, and  
24144 come upon him like a deluge.

24145  
24146 12. The backslider in heart will be full of his  
24147 own perplexities. Having forsaken God, having  
24148 fallen out of his order, and into the darkness of  
24149 his own folly, he will be filled with perplexities  
24150 and doubts in regard to what course he shall  
24151 pursue to accomplish his selfish ends. He is not  
24152 walking with, but contrary to God. Hence, the  
24153 providence of God will constantly cross his path,  
24154 and baffle all his schemes. God will frown  
24155 darkness upon his path, and take pains to  
24156 confound his projects, and blow his schemes to  
24157 the winds.

24158  
24159 13. The backslider in heart will be filled with his  
24160 own anxieties. He will be anxious about himself,  
24161 about his business, about his reputation, about  
24162 everything. He has taken all these things out of  
24163 the hands of God, and claims them and treats  
24164 them as his own, and having faith in God no

24165 longer, and being unable to control events, he  
24166 must of necessity be filled with anxiety with  
24167 regard to the future. These anxieties are the  
24168 inevitable result of his madness and folly in  
24169 forsaking God.

24170

24171 14. The backslider in heart will be filled with his  
24172 own disappointments. Having forsaken God, and  
24173 taken the attitude of self-will before him, God  
24174 will inevitably disappoint him in pursuing his  
24175 selfish ends. He will frame his ways to please  
24176 himself, without consulting God. Of course God  
24177 will frame his ways so as to disappoint him.  
24178 Determined to have his own way, he will be  
24179 greatly disappointed if his plans are frustrated,  
24180 and the certain course of events under the  
24181 government of God must of course bring a series  
24182 of disappointments upon subjects that have  
24183 rebelled against him.

24184

24185 15. The backslider in heart must be full of his  
24186 own losses. He regards his possessions as his  
24187 own, his time as his own, his influence as his  
24188 own, his reputation as his own. The loss of any  
24189 of these he accounts as his own loss. Having  
24190 forsaken God, and being unable to control the  
24191 events upon which the continuance of those  
24192 things is conditioned, he will find himself

24193 suffering losses on every side. He loses his  
24194 peace. He loses his property. He loses much of  
24195 his time. He loses his Christian reputation. He  
24196 loses his Christian influence, and if he persists he  
24197 loses his soul.

24198

24199 16. The backslider in heart shall be full of his  
24200 own crosses. All religious duty will be irksome,  
24201 and, therefore, a cross to him. His state of mind  
24202 will make multitudes of things crosses that in a  
24203 Christian state of mind would have been pleasant  
24204 in a high degree. Having lost all heart in religion,  
24205 the performance of all religious duties are  
24206 crossing to his feelings. There in no help for  
24207 him, unless he returns to God. The whole course  
24208 of Divine providence will run across his path,  
24209 and his whole life will be a series of crosses and  
24210 trials. He cannot have his own way. He cannot  
24211 gratify himself by accomplishing his own wishes  
24212 and desires. He may beat and dash himself  
24213 against the everlasting rocks of God's will and  
24214 God's way, but break through and carry all  
24215 before him he cannot. He must be crossed and  
24216 recrossed, and crossed again, until he will fall  
24217 into the Divine order, and sink into the will of  
24218 God.

24219

24220 17. The backslider in heart will be filled with his  
24221 own tempers. Having forsaken God, he will be  
24222 sure to have much to irritate him. In a  
24223 backslidden state, he cannot possess his soul in  
24224 patience. The vexations of his backslidden life  
24225 will make him nervous and irritable; his temper  
24226 will become explosive and uncontrollable.

24227

24228 18. The backslider in heart shall be full of his  
24229 own disgraces. He is a professor of religion. The  
24230 eyes of the world are upon him, and all his  
24231 inconsistencies, worldly-mindedness, follies, bad  
24232 tempers, and hateful words and deeds, disgrace  
24233 him in the estimation of all men who know him.

24234

24235 19. The backslider in heart will be full of his  
24236 own delusions. Having an evil eye, his whole  
24237 body will be full of darkness. He will almost  
24238 certainly fall into delusions in regard to  
24239 doctrines, and in regard to practices. Wandering  
24240 on in darkness, as he does, he will, very likely,  
24241 swallow the grossest delusions. Spiritism,  
24242 Mormonism, Universalism, and every other ism  
24243 that is wide from the truth, will be very likely to  
24244 gain possession of him. Who has not observed  
24245 this of backsliders in heart.

24246



24247 20. The backslider in heart will be filled with his  
24248 own bondage. His profession of religion brings  
24249 him into bondage to the church. He has no heart  
24250 to consult the interests of the church, or to labor  
24251 for its up-building, and yet he is under covenant  
24252 obligation to do so, and his reputation is at stake.  
24253 He must do something to sustain religious  
24254 institutions, but to do so, is a bondage. If he does  
24255 it, it is because he must and not because he may.  
24256 Again, he is in bondage to God. If he performs  
24257 any, that he calls religious duty, it is rather as a  
24258 slave than as a freeman. He serves from fear or  
24259 hope, just like a slave, and not from love. Again,  
24260 he is in bondage to his own conscience. To avoid  
24261 conviction and remorse, he will do or omit many  
24262 things, but it is all with reluctance, and not at all  
24263 of his own cordial good will.

24264  
24265 21. The backslider in heart is full of his own  
24266 self-condemnation. Having enjoyed the love of  
24267 God, and forsaken him, he feels condemned for  
24268 everything. If he attempts religious duty, he  
24269 knows there is no heart in it, and hence  
24270 condemns himself. If he neglects religious duty,  
24271 he of course condemns himself. If he reads his  
24272 Bible, it condemns him. If he does not read it, he  
24273 feels condemned. If he goes to meeting, the  
24274 services condemn him, and if he stays away, he

24275 is condemned. If he prays in secret, in his  
24276 family, or in public, he knows he is not sincere,  
24277 and feels condemned. If he neglects or refuses to  
24278 pray, he feels condemned. Everything condemns  
24279 him. His conscience is up in arms against him,  
24280 and the thunders and lightnings of condemnation  
24281 follow him, whithersoever he goes.

24282

24283 V. How to recover from a state of backsliding.

24284

24285 1. Remember whence you are fallen. Take up the  
24286 question at once, and deliberately contrast your  
24287 present state with that in which you walked with  
24288 God.

24289

24290 2. Take home the conviction of your true  
24291 position. No longer delay to understand the exact  
24292 situation between God and your soul.

24293

24294 3. Repent at once, and do your first work over  
24295 again.

24296

24297 4. Do not attempt to get back, by reforming your  
24298 mere outside conduct. Begin with your heart,  
24299 and at once set yourself right with God.

24300

24301 5. Do not act like a mere convicted sinner, and  
24302 attempt to recommend yourself to God, by any

24303 impenitent works or prayers. Do not think that  
24304 you must reform, and make yourself better  
24305 before you can come to Christ, but understand  
24306 distinctly, that coming to Christ, alone, can make  
24307 you better. However much distressed you may  
24308 feel, know for a certainty that until you repent  
24309 and accept his will, unconditionally, you are no  
24310 better, but are constantly growing worse. Until  
24311 you throw yourself upon his sovereign mercy,  
24312 and thus return to God, he will accept nothing at  
24313 your hands.

24314

24315 6. Do not imagine yourself to be in a justified  
24316 state, for you know you are not. Your conscience  
24317 condemns you, and you know that God ought to  
24318 condemn you, and if he justified you in your  
24319 present state, your conscience could not justify  
24320 him. Come, then, to Christ at once, like a guilty,  
24321 condemned sinner, as you are, own up, and take  
24322 all the shame and blame to yourself and believe  
24323 that notwithstanding all your wanderings from  
24324 God, he loves you still—that he has loved you  
24325 with an everlasting love, and, therefore, with  
24326 loving kindness is drawing you.

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LECTURE XXII.

24331

24332 GROWTH IN GRACE.

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24334 Text—But grow in grace and in the knowledge  
24335 of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 Pet. iii.  
24336 18.

24337

24338 I MUST conclude this Course of Lectures by  
24339 giving converts instructions on the subject of  
24340 growth in grace. I shall pursue the following  
24341 method:

24342

24343 I. What is grace, as the term is here used?

24344

24345 II. What the injunction “to grow in grace” does  
24346 not mean.

24347

24348 III. What it does mean.

24349

24350 IV. Conditions of growth in grace.

24351

24352 V. What is not proof of growth in grace.

24353

24354 VI. What is proof of growth in grace.

24355

24356 VII How to grow in grace.

24357

24358 I. What is grace, as the term is here used?

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1. Grace is favor. It is often used in the Bible to signify a free gift. The grace of God is the favor of God, His free gifts.

II. What the injunction “to grow in grace” does not mean.

1. It does not enjoin the gradual giving up of sin. Strange to tell, it would seem that some have so understood it; but we are nowhere in the Bible commanded to give up sin gradually, we are everywhere commanded to give it up instantly and wholly.

III. What it does mean.

1. It enjoins upon us the duty of growing in the favor of God, of growing in his esteem, in a worthiness of his favor, and in his love of complacency in us.

IV. Conditions of growth in grace.

1. Growth or increase in anything implies a beginning. Growth in the favor of God implies that we have already found favor in his sight, and that we are already indebted for grace

24387 received, and that we are already in grace, in the  
24388 sense of having a place among his favored ones.  
24389  
24390 2. Consequently, growth in grace implies that we  
24391 have already repented of our sin, have actually  
24392 and practically abandoned all known sin. It  
24393 cannot be that we are in favor with God if we are  
24394 still indulging in known sin against him. Being  
24395 in favor with God implies, of course, that we are  
24396 pardoned and favored by him, for the sake of our  
24397 Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Pardon is favor,  
24398 and implies the renunciation of rebellion against  
24399 God. The conditions of the Divine favor, as  
24400 revealed in the Bible, are repentance and  
24401 abandonment of all known sin, and faith in our  
24402 Lord Jesus Christ. I said, as a condition of  
24403 growth in grace, we must have the  
24404 commencement of grace; in other words, we  
24405 must be already Christians, must be in a state of  
24406 acceptance with God, must have accepted Christ,  
24407 so far as he is understood, must be in a state of  
24408 obedience to all the recognized will of God.  
24409 Without this, we cannot be in a state of grace, or  
24410 in the favor of God. But being in this state, there  
24411 is room for everlasting growth. As we know  
24412 more of God, we shall be capable of loving him  
24413 more, of having a more universal and implicit  
24414 confidence in him. And there can be no end to

24415 this while we have any being, either in this or  
24416 any other world. Our love and confidence in him  
24417 may be complete, so far as we know him. This  
24418 love and confidence will secure his favor; but  
24419 there will be no end to our growth in knowledge  
24420 of him, and, consequently, there is room for  
24421 eternal growth in grace. The more we love, the  
24422 more we believe, the more we know of God, if  
24423 we conform to all this knowledge, the more God  
24424 must be pleased with us, the higher shall we  
24425 stand in his favor, and more and greater gifts he  
24426 will continue to bestow upon us.

24427  
24428 3. Of course, growth in the knowledge of God is  
24429 a condition of growth in his favor. We might  
24430 grow in knowledge, without growing in his  
24431 favor, because we might not love and trust him  
24432 in accordance with this increased knowledge.  
24433 But we cannot love and trust him more perfectly,  
24434 unless we become more perfectly acquainted  
24435 with him. If our love and faith keep pace with  
24436 our growing knowledge, we must grow in his  
24437 favor. But growth in knowledge must be a  
24438 condition of growth in love and faith.

24439  
24440 4. Growth in the knowledge of God, as revealed  
24441 in Christ Jesus, must be a condition of growth in  
24442 his favor. It is in and through Christ Jesus that

24443 God reveals himself to man. It is in Christ Jesus  
24444 that we got the true idea of the personality of the  
24445 infinite God. Hence, the text says, “Grow in  
24446 grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and  
24447 Saviour Jesus Christ.”

24448

24449 5. Growth in grace is conditioned on increased  
24450 knowledge of what is involved in entire  
24451 consecration to God.

24452

24453 True conversion to God involves the  
24454 consecration of our, selves and of all that we  
24455 have to him, so far as we understand what is  
24456 implied in this. But, at first, converts are by no  
24457 means aware of all that is involved in the highest  
24458 forms of consecration. They will soon learn that  
24459 there are certain things that they did not think of,  
24460 and that they did not give up to God. At first,  
24461 perhaps, all that was in their thought was, to lay  
24462 their naked soul upon the altar, and give up their  
24463 whole heart to God. But soon they may learn  
24464 that they did not think of all their possessions  
24465 and everything that was dear to them, they did  
24466 not surrender all, and leave not a hoof behind.  
24467 They surrendered all of which they thought at  
24468 the time, but they were not fully enlightened,  
24469 they did not think, nor could they think, at the  
24470 time, of every appetite, passion, propensity, of



24471 every desire and affection, of everything they  
24472 call their own, and which is dear to them, in the  
24473 whole creation, to make a thorough surrender  
24474 and delivery of them all to God. To gain such  
24475 knowledge is a work of time; and growth in the  
24476 favor of God is conditioned on making a full  
24477 surrender and consecration to God of everything  
24478 we are, and have, and desire, and love, as fast as  
24479 these objects are presented to thought. As long  
24480 as we exist, and knowledge increases, there is no  
24481 doubt that we shall be called upon to grow in  
24482 grace, by consecrating to God every new object  
24483 of knowledge, of desire, and of affection, that we  
24484 may come to know, and desire, and love, to all  
24485 eternity. As you get new light, you must enlarge  
24486 your consecration from day to day, and from  
24487 hour to hour, or you will cease to grow in grace.  
24488 Whenever you stop short, and do not lay and  
24489 leave everything that you are, that you possess,  
24490 or that you love, upon the altar of consecration,  
24491 that moment you cease to grow in grace. I pray  
24492 you let this saying sink deep into your hearts.

24493

24494 6. Another condition of growth in grace is  
24495 intense earnestness and constancy in seeking  
24496 increased religious light, by the illumination of  
24497 the Holy Spirit. You will gain no effectual  
24498 religious light except by the inward showing and

24499 teaching of the Holy Spirit, This you will not  
24500 obtain unless you continue in the true attitude of  
24501 a disciple of Christ. Remember, he says, “Except  
24502 a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my  
24503 disciple.” He will not, by his Holy Spirit, be  
24504 your Divine teacher unless you renounce self,  
24505 and live in a state of continual consecration to  
24506 him. To obtain and preserve the teachings of  
24507 Christ, by his Holy Spirit, you must continually  
24508 and earnestly pray for his Divine teaching, and  
24509 watch against resisting and grieving him.

24510  
24511 7. Another condition of growth in grace is a  
24512 constant conformity to all the teachings of the  
24513 Holy Spirit, keeping up with our convictions of  
24514 duty, and with our growing knowledge of the  
24515 will of God.

24516  
24517 8. A more and more implicit faith in God is a  
24518 condition of growth in grace. By implicit, I mean  
24519 an unreasoning faith, a confidence in God’s  
24520 character so profound that we trust him in the  
24521 dark as well as in the light, as well when we do  
24522 not understand the reasons of His dealings with  
24523 us, or of His requirements, as when we do. A  
24524 faith like that of Abraham, that staggered not at a  
24525 promise, through unbelief, though the thing  
24526 promised seemed most irrational and impossible.

24527 An implicit faith is an unwavering,  
24528 unquestioning faith, a state of mind that will rest  
24529 in God, in his promises, in his faithfulness, in his  
24530 love, whatever appearances may be, and  
24531 however trying and apparently unreasonable his  
24532 commands or providential dealings may be.  
24533 Abraham's faith is often commended in the  
24534 Bible. God had promised him a son, but did not  
24535 give him the promised seed until he was a  
24536 hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety. But  
24537 notwithstanding Sarah was past age, and he as  
24538 good as dead, he believed that God was able to  
24539 fulfill his promise, and when he had received his  
24540 beloved son, with the assurance that this was to  
24541 be his heir, and that through him the promise  
24542 was to be fulfilled through all generations, God  
24543 tried his faith severely, by commanding him to  
24544 offer his Isaac as a burnt sacrifice. He without  
24545 the least hesitation obeyed, believing that God  
24546 was able to raise him from the dead. He made all  
24547 his arrangements to obey this trying command,  
24548 with such calmness that neither Sarah nor Isaac  
24549 suspected that any such thing was in  
24550 contemplation. This was an instance of the  
24551 exercise of implicit faith. Growth in grace, or in  
24552 the favor of God, is conditioned upon growth in  
24553 implicit confidence in Him.  
24554

24555 9. A more thoroughly sanctified sensibility is a  
24556 condition of growth in the favor of God. By the  
24557 sensibility, I mean that department of our nature  
24558 that feels, desires, and to which belongs all that  
24559 we call desire, affection, emotion, feeling,  
24560 appetite, passion, propensity, lust. The  
24561 sensibility is an involuntary power, and moral  
24562 actions and qualities cannot, with strict  
24563 propriety, be predicated of it. The states of the  
24564 sensibility have moral character only as they  
24565 derive it directly or indirectly from the action of  
24566 the will. The nature of man, as a whole, in his  
24567 depraved condition, is in a very unlovely state,  
24568 and although the will maybe given up to God,  
24569 the sensibility may be in such a state as to be  
24570 very unlovely in the sight of one that looks  
24571 directly upon it, and knows perfectly every  
24572 excited desire, passion, propensity, lust. It is  
24573 through the sensibility, mainly, that we are  
24574 assailed with temptations. It is through this that  
24575 the Christian warfare is kept up. The Christian  
24576 warfare consists in the battle of the will with  
24577 these various appetites, passions, propensities  
24578 and lusts, to keep them in subjection to the will  
24579 of God. If the will maintains its integrity, and  
24580 cleaves to the will of God, the soul does not sin  
24581 in its battle with the excited states of the  
24582 sensibility. But these rebellious propensities

24583     embarrass the will in the service it renders to  
24584     God. To keep them under, occupies much time,  
24585     and thought, and strength. Hence the soul cannot  
24586     render to God so complete a service, while  
24587     exerting the full strength of the will to subjugate  
24588     these propensities, as it otherwise might and  
24589     would render. These appetites, passions, and  
24590     propensities, although not sinful in themselves,  
24591     have been regarded and spoken of as indwelling  
24592     sin. Strictly, they cannot be sin, because they are  
24593     involuntary. But they are often a great hindrance  
24594     to our growth in the favor of God. “For the flesh  
24595     lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth  
24596     against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one  
24597     to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that  
24598     ye would.” This means that we cannot do for  
24599     God what we otherwise would, because we have  
24600     to battle so much with the states of the  
24601     sensibility, to keep them under. As the  
24602     sensibility becomes more and more subdued and  
24603     in harmony with the will’s devotion to God, we  
24604     are left free to render to God a more  
24605     unembarrassed service. Therefore, the more  
24606     thorough the sanctification of the sensibility, the  
24607     more thoroughly we are in favor with God.  
24608  
24609     10. A growing thoroughness and universality of  
24610     consecration, of spirit, soul, and body, is the

24611 condition of more and more growth in the favor  
24612 of God. It is common, at first, for the  
24613 steadfastness of the will's devotion to God to be  
24614 overcome by the clamor of the excited appetites,  
24615 passions, and propensities, or by the various  
24616 states of the sensibility. Whenever the will yields  
24617 to these excited states, you sin. But, in such  
24618 cases, the sin is not willful, in the sense of being  
24619 deliberate and intentional; it is rather a slip, an  
24620 inadvertency, a momentary yielding under the  
24621 pressure of highly excited feeling. Nevertheless,  
24622 this yielding is sin. However excited the states of  
24623 the sensibility may be, if the will does not yield,  
24624 there is strictly no sin. Still, while the will is  
24625 steadfast, maintains its consecration, its  
24626 obedience to God, the appetites originating in  
24627 the body, and the various propensities of the  
24628 soul, which inhere in the sensibility, may be so  
24629 ajar, in such confusion, and in such a state of  
24630 morbid development, that the soul may be  
24631 unfitted for the employments and enjoyments of  
24632 heaven.

24633

24634 11. Hence, the taking on of a greater fullness of  
24635 the Divine nature is a condition of growth in the  
24636 favor of God. Both the will and the sensibility of  
24637 God must be in a state of utmost perfection and  
24638 accord. All of his desires and feelings must be in

24639 perfect harmony with his intelligence and his  
24640 will. Not so with us, in our state of physical  
24641 depravity. The depravity of sensibility must be  
24642 physical, because it is involuntary. Still, it is  
24643 depravity, it is a lapsed or fallen state of the  
24644 sensibility. This lapsed department of our nature  
24645 must be recovered, sanctified, or completely  
24646 restored to harmony with a consecrated will, and  
24647 an enlightened intelligence, or we are never  
24648 fitted for heaven. As we become more and more  
24649 the partakers of the Divine nature, and of the  
24650 Divine holiness, we are more fully sanctified in  
24651 spirit, soul, and body, and of course grow more  
24652 and more in the favor of God.

24653

24654 12. A greater and more all-pervading fullness of  
24655 the Holy Spirit's residence is another condition  
24656 of growth in the favor of God. You cannot have  
24657 it too thoroughly impressed upon you that every  
24658 step in the Christian life is to be taken under the  
24659 influence of the Holy Spirit. The thing to be  
24660 attained is the universal teaching and guidance  
24661 of the Holy Spirit, so that in all things you shall  
24662 be led by the Spirit of God. "If ye are led by the  
24663 Spirit, ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh,"  
24664 "If through the Spirit ye do mortify the deeds of  
24665 the body, ye shall live." "To be spiritually  
24666 minded is life and peace, but to be carnally

24667 minded is death.” Always remember, therefore,  
24668 that to grow in grace, you must grow in the  
24669 possession of the fullness of the Holy Ghost in  
24670 your heart.

24671

24672 13. A deeper personal acquaintance with the  
24673 Lord Jesus Christ, in all his official work and  
24674 relations, is a condition of growth in grace. His  
24675 nature, work, and relations are the theme of the  
24676 Bible. The Bible presents him to us in a great  
24677 variety of relations. In my Systematic Theology  
24678 I have considered some sixty or more of these  
24679 official relations of Christ to the human race, and  
24680 these are presented rather as specimens and  
24681 illustrations than as covering the whole ground  
24682 of his relations to us. Now, it is one thing to  
24683 know Christ simply on paper, and as spoken of  
24684 in the Bible, by reading or hearing of Christ, and  
24685 quite another thing to know him personally, in  
24686 these relations. The Bible is the medium of  
24687 introduction to him personally. What is there  
24688 said of him is designed to lead us to seek after a  
24689 personal acquaintance with him. It is by this  
24690 personal acquaintance with him that we are  
24691 made like him. It is by direct, personal,  
24692 individual intercourse with his Divine mind that  
24693 we take on his image. “All we, beholding as in a  
24694 glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the



24695 same image, from glory to glory, even as by the  
24696 Spirit of the Lord.” “Faith comes by hearing,”  
24697 and faith secures for us a personal acquaintance  
24698 with Christ. Christ has promised to manifest  
24699 himself personally to those who love and obey  
24700 him. Do not, my dear children, stop short of  
24701 securing this personal manifestation of Christ to  
24702 your souls. Your growth in grace will depend  
24703 upon this. Think not of stopping short of  
24704 personally knowing Christ, not only in all these  
24705 relations, but in the fullness of these relations.  
24706 Do not overlook the fact that the appropriation  
24707 of Christ, in each of these relations, is a personal  
24708 act of faith. It is a putting on of the Lord Jesus  
24709 Christ, a taking of him as yours, in each of these  
24710 relations, as your wisdom, righteousness,  
24711 sanctification, and redemption; your prophet, to  
24712 teach you, your king, to govern you, your high  
24713 priest, to atone for you, your mediator, your  
24714 advocate, your strength, your Saviour, your  
24715 hiding-place, your high tower, your captain and  
24716 leader, your shield, your defence, your  
24717 exceeding great reward. In each of these  
24718 relations, and in all other of his official relations,  
24719 you need to appropriate him by faith so as to  
24720 secure to you personal intercourse with him in  
24721 these relations. Growing in a personal  
24722 acquaintance with him, in these relations,

24723 remember, is an indispensable condition of  
24724 growth in his favor.

24725

24726 V. I am to notice some things that are not proof  
24727 of growth in grace.

24728

24729 1. Growth in knowledge is not conclusive  
24730 evidence of growth in grace. Some degree of  
24731 knowledge is indispensable to our being in favor  
24732 with God; and growth in knowledge, as I have  
24733 shown, is a condition of growth in grace, but  
24734 knowledge is not grace, and growth in  
24735 knowledge does not constitute growth in grace.

24736 A person may grow ever so much in knowledge,  
24737 and have no grace at all. In hell, they cannot but  
24738 grow in knowledge, as they grow in experience,  
24739 and in the knowledge of God's justice. But there,  
24740 their growth in knowledge but aggravates the  
24741 guilt and misery of hell. They know more and  
24742 more of God and his law, and their own guilt,  
24743 and the more they know, the more wretched they  
24744 are. From their increased knowledge they never  
24745 learn piety.

24746

24747 2. It is not certain evidence that an individual  
24748 grows in grace, because he grows in gifts.

24749

24750 A professor of religion may increase in gifts, that  
24751 is, he may become more fluent in prayer, and  
24752 more eloquent in preaching, or more pathetic in  
24753 exhortation without being any more holy. We  
24754 naturally increase in that in which we exercise  
24755 ourselves. And if any person often exercises  
24756 himself in exhortation, he will naturally, if he  
24757 makes any effort or lays himself out, increase in  
24758 fluency and pungency. But he may do all this,  
24759 and yet have no grace at all. He may pray ever so  
24760 engagedly, and increase in fluency and apparent  
24761 pathos, and yet have no grace. People who have  
24762 no grace often do so. It is true, if he has grace,  
24763 and exercises himself in these things, as he  
24764 grows in grace, he will grow in gifts. No person  
24765 can exercise himself in obeying God, without  
24766 improving in those exercises. If he does not  
24767 improve in gifts, it is a true sign he does not  
24768 grow in grace. But, on the other hand, it is not  
24769 sure evidence that he grows in grace because he  
24770 improves in certain exercises, for he will  
24771 naturally improve by practice, whether he is a  
24772 Christian or a hypocrite.

24773

24774 3. It is not proof that a person grows in grace,  
24775 because he thinks he is doing so. One may be  
24776 very favorably impressed with regard to his own  
24777 progress in religion, when it is evident to others

24778 that he is not only making no progress, but is, in  
24779 fact, declining. An individual who is growing  
24780 worse and worse, is not ordinarily well aware of  
24781 the fact. It is not uncommon for both impenitent  
24782 sinners and Christians to think they are growing  
24783 better, when they are growing no better This  
24784 results from the very nature of the case. If any  
24785 person is growing worse, his conscience will, for  
24786 the time being, be come more and more seared,  
24787 and his mind more and more dark, as he stifles  
24788 conscience and resists the light. Then he may  
24789 think he is growing better, just because he has  
24790 less sense of sin, and while his conscience  
24791 continues to sleep, he may continue under a fatal  
24792 delusion. A man will judge of his own spiritual  
24793 state as he compares himself with a high or low  
24794 standard. If he keeps Christ before him, in his  
24795 fullness, as his standard, he will doubtless  
24796 always, at least in this state of existence, have  
24797 but a low estimate of his own attainments. While  
24798 at the same time, if he sets before himself the  
24799 church, or any of the members of the church as a  
24800 standard, he will be very likely to form a high  
24801 estimate of his progress in religion, and be very  
24802 well satisfied with himself. This is the reason  
24803 why there is such a difference in people's views  
24804 of their own state and of the state of the church.  
24805 They compare themselves and the state of the

24806 church with different standards. Hence, one  
24807 takes a very humbling view of his own state, and  
24808 complains of that of the church; another thinks  
24809 such complaints of the church censorious. To  
24810 him the church appears to be doing very well.  
24811 The reason why he does not think the church  
24812 cold, and in a low state, is that Christ is not his  
24813 standard of comparison. If a man shuts his eyes,  
24814 he will not see the defilement on him, and may  
24815 think he is clean, while to all around he appears  
24816 loathsome.

24817

24818 VI. What is proof of growth in grace.

24819

24820 1. The manifestation of more implicit and  
24821 universal trust in God is an evidence of growth  
24822 in grace. The exercise of greater and more  
24823 implicit confidence, as I have said, is the  
24824 condition of growing in the favor of God. Here, I  
24825 say, that the manifestation of this implicit and  
24826 universal confidence is proof that this growing  
24827 confidence exists, and is, therefore, satisfactory  
24828 evidence of growth in the favor of God. If you  
24829 are conscious in your own soul that you do  
24830 exercise more implicit and universal confidence  
24831 in God, this is conclusive proof to you that you  
24832 are growing in grace, and as you manifest in  
24833 your life, and temper, and spirit, this growing

24834 confidence, you prove to yourself and to others  
24835 that you are growing in the favor of God. For as  
24836 you grow in implicit confidence in him you must  
24837 grow in his favor.

24838

24839 2. Another evidence of growth in grace, is an  
24840 increasing weanedness from the world. The will  
24841 may be in an attitude of devotion to God, while  
24842 the world's seductive charms very much  
24843 embarrass the healthy action of the Christian  
24844 life. All the soul becomes crucified and dead to  
24845 the world, it grows in the favor of God.

24846

24847 3. Less reluctance of feeling, when called to the  
24848 exercise of self-denial, is an evidence of growth  
24849 in grace. It shows that the feelings are becoming  
24850 less and less despotic, that the will is getting  
24851 more the mastery of them, that the sensibility is  
24852 getting more into harmony with the devotion of  
24853 the will, and the dictates of the intelligence.

24854

24855 4. Less temptation to sins of omission, is another  
24856 evidence of growth in grace, e.g., less temptation  
24857 to shun the cross, to neglect unpleasant duties,  
24858 less temptation to indolence, less temptation to  
24859 shirk responsibility, less temptation to neglect  
24860 prayer, reading the Scriptures, private and family  
24861 devotions, in short, less and less temptation to

24862 shun the performance of any duty, is evidence of  
24863 growth in grace. These temptations consist in the  
24864 excited states of the sensibility. As these become  
24865 less in strength and frequency, we learn that our  
24866 sensibility is becoming more completely  
24867 subjugated to the law of the intelligence, and the  
24868 decisions of the will, and consequently, that the  
24869 work of the sanctification of the spirit, soul and  
24870 body is progressing, and that therefore we are  
24871 growing in the favor of God.

24872

24873 5. A growing intensity and steadiness of zeal in  
24874 promoting the cause of God, is evidence of  
24875 growth in the favor of God. Sometimes Christian  
24876 zeal is comparatively cool, at other times deep  
24877 and intense, sometimes it will be steady, at other  
24878 times fitful and evanescent. As Christians grow  
24879 in piety, their zeal becomes deep, intense and  
24880 steady, and as you are conscious of this, and in  
24881 your life and spirit give evidence of it to others,  
24882 you have, and give proof, that you are growing  
24883 in the favor of God.

24884

24885 6. Losing more and more the consciousness of  
24886 self, and respect to self, in every action of life, is  
24887 an evidence of growth in the favor of God. Some  
24888 have so much consciousness of self in  
24889 everything, and so much respect to self in

24890 everything they say and do, as to be embarrassed  
24891 in all their Christian life, whenever they attempt  
24892 to act or speak in the presence of others. As they  
24893 lose this self-consciousness, and have less  
24894 respect to self, their service of God becomes  
24895 more free and unembarrassed, and they are all  
24896 the better servants by how much less they think  
24897 of self. Sometimes young converts cannot speak  
24898 or pray, or perform any public duty, without  
24899 being either proud or ashamed, as they think  
24900 themselves to have performed those duties with  
24901 more or low acceptance to those around them.  
24902 While this is so, their piety is in a feeble state.  
24903 They must lose sight of their own glory, and  
24904 have a single eye to the glory of God, to find  
24905 acceptance with him. But as they lose sight of  
24906 self, and set God always before them, having an  
24907 eye single to his glory, they grow more and more  
24908 in his favor.

24909

24910 7. Consequently, a growing deadness to the  
24911 flattery or the censure of men, is an evidence of  
24912 growth in grace. Paul had grown in grace so  
24913 much, that he counted it a light thing to be  
24914 judged of man, he only sought to commend  
24915 himself to God. As you find yourself growing in  
24916 this state of deadness to the flatteries or censures



24917 of men, you have evidence that you grow in  
24918 grace.

24919

24920 8. A growing cordiality in the acceptance of the  
24921 whole will of God, is evidence of growth in his  
24922 favor. Some rebel against his will as revealed in  
24923 his word, and in his providence. Others, under  
24924 trying circumstances will barely tolerate his will,  
24925 as revealed in his word and in providence; but  
24926 those who are growing in grace, find it more  
24927 natural to them, to embrace his whole revealed  
24928 will, with greater and greater cordiality.

24929

24930 9. Growing calmness and quietness under great  
24931 afflictions, is an evidence of growth in the favor  
24932 of God. This evinces a broader and more implicit  
24933 faith. a fuller and more cordial acceptance of the  
24934 will of God, as revealed in these afflictions, and  
24935 shows that the soul is more steadily and firmly at  
24936 anchor upon its rock, Christ.

24937

24938 10. A growing tranquility under sudden and  
24939 crushing disasters and bereavements, is an  
24940 evidence of growth in grace. The more tranquil  
24941 the soul can remain, when sudden storms of  
24942 providence come upon it, sweeping away its  
24943 loved ones, and blighting its earthly hopes, the  
24944 greater is its evidence of being under the

24945 particular favor of God. This tranquillity is both  
24946 a result and an evidence of the favor of God.  
24947  
24948 11. Growing patience under much provocation,  
24949 is an evidence of growth in the favor of God.  
24950  
24951 12. “Long suffering with joyfulness,” is an  
24952 evidence of growing in favor with God. When  
24953 you find that you cannot only tolerate, but accept  
24954 the will of God, as revealed in calling you to  
24955 suffer, and especially, when you can accept these  
24956 sufferings, and endure them long and with  
24957 joyfulness, you have evidence that you are  
24958 growing in the favor of God.  
24959  
24960 13. A growing cordiality and joyfulness under  
24961 crosses and disappointments, and severe pain, is  
24962 evidence of growth in the favor of God.  
24963  
24964 14. An increasing deadness to all that the world  
24965 has to offer, or to threaten, is an evidence of  
24966 growth in the favor of God.  
24967  
24968 15. A growing repose in, and satisfaction with,  
24969 all the allotments of providence, is an evidence  
24970 of growth in grace.  
24971

24972 16. Less temptation to murmur or repine at any  
24973 allotment of providence, is evidence of growth  
24974 in grace.  
24975

24976 17. Lest temptation to fret, when we are crossed  
24977 or disappointed in any respect, is an evidence of  
24978 growth in grace.  
24979

24980 18. Less and less temptation to resentment, and  
24981 the spirit of retaliation, when we are in anywise  
24982 insulted or abused, is evidence that the  
24983 sensibility is becoming more and more  
24984 thoroughly subdued, and consequently, that we  
24985 are growing in favor with God.  
24986

24987 19. Less temptation to dwell upon, and to  
24988 magnify our trials and troubles, to think of them,  
24989 and speak of them to others, is evidence that we  
24990 think less and less of self, and accept our trials  
24991 and troubles with more and more complacency  
24992 in God. It is sad to hear some professedly good  
24993 people, dwelling ever upon and magnifying their  
24994 own troubles and trials. But, if they grow in  
24995 grace, they will think less and less of these, be  
24996 more inclined to think of them as “light  
24997 afflictions.” The more we grow in grace, the less  
24998 stress we lay upon the evils we meet with in the  
24999 way. Said a good man to me once, who was

25000 really passing through what the world would call  
25001 very severe trials and afflictions (he had lost a  
25002 beloved wife, and his children had died one after  
25003 another), “I have many mercies, and few  
25004 afflictions.” When, under such circumstances, a  
25005 man can say, “the lines have fallen unto me in  
25006 pleasant places, I have a goodly heritage,” he has  
25007 the most satisfactory evidence that he is growing  
25008 in the favor of God. For this state of mind is both  
25009 a result and an evidence of the favor of God.

25010

25011 20. A growing disposition to make light of our  
25012 trials and to magnify our blessings, is an  
25013 evidence that we are growing in the favor of  
25014 God.

25015

25016 21. Less and less anxiety and carefulness about  
25017 the events of providence, and especially about  
25018 the things that nearly and deeply affect  
25019 ourselves, is evidence of growth in grace. This is  
25020 an evidence of a broader and more implicit faith,  
25021 of a more submissive will, and of a diminishing  
25022 tendency to self-seeking; and is, therefore, an  
25023 evidence of growing favor with God.

25024

25025 22. Being less and less disturbed and troubled by  
25026 the events of life, especially those that go  
25027 counter to our own plans, and hopes, and

25028 expectations, and desires, and that thwart our  
25029 most cherished aims, is an evidence of growth in  
25030 grace.

25031

25032 23. A growing and realizing confidence in the  
25033 wisdom, benevolence, and universality of the  
25034 providence of God, a state of mind that sees God  
25035 in everything, is evidence of growth in grace.

25036 Some minds become so spiritual that they hardly  
25037 seem to reside in the body, and appear

25038 continually to perceive the presence of God in  
25039 every event, almost as if they were disembodied,

25040 and beheld God, face to face. They seem to

25041 dwell, live, move, and have their being, rather in

25042 the spiritual, than in the natural world. They are

25043 continually under such a sense of the Divine

25044 presence, agency, and protection, as hardly to

25045 appear like inhabitants of earth. They are a

25046 living, walking mystery to those in the midst of

25047 whom they dwell. The springs of their activity

25048 are so divine, their life is so much hidden in

25049 God, they act under influences so far above the

25050 world, that they cannot be judged by the same

25051 standards as other men. Carnal minds cannot

25052 understand them. Their hidden life is so

25053 unknown, and so unknowable to those who are

25054 far below them in their spiritual life, that they

25055 are necessarily regarded as quite eccentric, as

25056 being mystics or monomaniacs, and as having  
25057 very peculiar religious views, as being  
25058 enthusiasts, and perhaps fanatics. These persons  
25059 are in the world, but they live above the world.  
25060 They have so far escaped from the pollutions  
25061 that are in the world, that they can truly, and  
25062 understandingly say with Paul, in Gal. vi.14,  
25063 “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the  
25064 cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the  
25065 world is crucified unto me, and I unto the  
25066 world.” Such persons are evidently growing in  
25067 the grace of God.

25068  
25069 24. Being less and less disposed to dwell upon  
25070 the faults and foibles of others, is an evidence of  
25071 growth in grace.

25072  
25073 25. Being less and less disposed to speak  
25074 sarcastically or severely, or to judge uncharitably  
25075 of others. A growing delicacy, or tenderness in  
25076 speaking of their real or supposed faults, behind  
25077 their back, is an evidence of growth in grace.

25078  
25079 26. An increasing reluctance to regard or treat  
25080 anyone as an enemy, and an increasing ease and  
25081 naturalness in treating them kindly, in praying  
25082 for them heartily, and in efforts to do them good,  
25083 is an evidence of growing in grace.

25084

25085 27. Less and less temptation to remember an  
25086 injury, and the abatement of all desire to retaliate  
25087 when injured, is an evidence of growth in grace.

25088

25089 28. A growing readiness and cordiality in  
25090 forgiving and burying an injury out of sight, and  
25091 a kind of moral inability to do otherwise than  
25092 seek the highest good of those who have injured  
25093 us most deeply, is an evidence of growth in  
25094 grace.

25095

25096 29. When we find in our own experience, and  
25097 manifest to others, that it is more and more  
25098 natural to regard all men as our brethren,  
25099 especially to drop out of view all sectarian  
25100 discriminations, all ideas and prejudices of caste,  
25101 and of color, of poverty, and of riches, of blood  
25102 relation, and of natural, rather than of spiritual  
25103 ties, and to make common cause with God, in  
25104 aiming to do good to all men, to enemies and  
25105 friends alike, we have then ourselves, and give  
25106 to others, the highest evidence of our growing in  
25107 the favor of God.

25108

25109 30. Especially is it true, when we find ourselves  
25110 very cordial and full-hearted, in making great  
25111 sacrifices for those that hate us, and having a

25112 willingness to lay down our lives, to promote  
25113 their eternal salvation, that we have evidence of  
25114 growth in grace.

25115

25116 31. Still more especially, when we find ourselves  
25117 less and less inclined to account anything a  
25118 sacrifice that we can do for God, or the souls of  
25119 men; when we can account our lives not dear  
25120 unto us, if called to lay them down to save the  
25121 souls of enemies, when, for the “joy of saving  
25122 them,” “we can endure the cross, and despise the  
25123 shame,” or any sacrifice that we are called to  
25124 make, we have evidence that we are growing in  
25125 favor with God.

25126

25127 32. Again, when we find ourselves more and  
25128 more inclined to “count it all joy, when we fall  
25129 into divers temptations,” and when we are  
25130 disposed to look upon our trials, vexations,  
25131 losses, and crosses, in such a light as to lay less  
25132 and less stress upon them, we have evidence that  
25133 we are growing in patience, and therefore, in  
25134 favor with God.

25135

25136 33. When we find less and less reluctance to  
25137 making fall confession to those whom we have  
25138 injured, when with increasing readiness and  
25139 cordiality we lay our hearts open to be searched,



25140 take home conviction of wrong-doing, and when  
25141 in such cases, we cannot rest till we have made  
25142 the fullest confession and reparation within our  
25143 power, when to own up, and confess, and make  
25144 the fullest satisfaction, is a luxury to us, rather  
25145 than a trial and a cross, we have evidence that  
25146 we are growing in the favor of God.

25147

25148 34. When we are more and more impressed and  
25149 affected by the mercies of God, and by the  
25150 kindnesses of our fellow-men and those around  
25151 us, when we more deeply and thoroughly  
25152 appreciate manifestations of kindness in God, or  
25153 in any one else, when we are more and more  
25154 humbled and affected by these kindnesses, and  
25155 find it more and more natural to “walk humbly,  
25156 love mercy, and do justly,” and live gratefully,  
25157 we have evidence that we are growing in favor  
25158 with God.

25159

25160 35. When we find ourselves drawn, with  
25161 increasing earnestness to follow on to know  
25162 more of the Lord, we have evidence of growth in  
25163 grace.

25164

25165 36. When we find ourselves more and more  
25166 readily impressed and affected, quickened and  
25167 stimulated by religious truth, and when we find

25168 an increasing harmony in the action of all our  
25169 powers, intellectual, voluntary, and sensitive, in  
25170 accepting, and resting in, the whole will and  
25171 providence of God, however afflictive they may  
25172 at present be, we have evidence that we are  
25173 growing in grace.

25174  
25175 37. A growing jealousy for the honor of God,  
25176 for the purity and honor of his church, for the  
25177 rights of God, and for the rights of all men, is  
25178 evidence of growing in conformity to God, and,  
25179 of course, of growing in his favor.

25180  
25181 VII. How to grow in grace.

25182  
25183 1. Fulfill the conditions noticed under the fourth  
25184 head of this lecture. I need not repeat them.

25185  
25186 2. Remember that every stop of progress must be  
25187 made by faith, and not by works. The mistake  
25188 that some good men have made upon this  
25189 subject, is truly amazing. Dr. Chalmers affirms,  
25190 that the way to be sanctified is to work for it. A  
25191 few years since, Dr. Pond published a pamphlet,  
25192 in which he took ground on this subject, with Dr.  
25193 Chalmers, and affirmed that the idea of being  
25194 sanctified by faith was an absurdity. Indeed, the  
25195 custom has been almost universal, to represent

25196 growth in grace as consisting in the formation of  
25197 habits of obedience to God. Now, it is quite  
25198 surprising that so many good men have fallen  
25199 into this mistake. The fact is, that every step of  
25200 progress in the Christian life, is taken by a fresh  
25201 and fuller appropriation of Christ by faith, a  
25202 fuller baptism of the Holy Spirit. As our  
25203 weaknesses, infirmities, besetting sins, and  
25204 necessities, are revealed to us, by the  
25205 circumstances of temptation through which we  
25206 pass, our only efficient help is found in Christ,  
25207 and we grow only as we step by step more fully  
25208 appropriate him, in one relation or another, and  
25209 more fully “put him on.” As we are more and  
25210 more emptied of self-dependence, as we more  
25211 and more renounce and discard all expectation of  
25212 forming holy habits by any obedience of ours,  
25213 and as by faith we secure deeper and deeper  
25214 baptisms of the Holy Ghost, and put on the Lord  
25215 Jesus Christ, more and more thoroughly, and in  
25216 more of his official relations, by just so much the  
25217 faster do we grow in the favor of God. Nothing  
25218 can be more erroneous and dangerous than the  
25219 commonly received idea of growing in grace by  
25220 the formation of holy habits. By acts of faith  
25221 alone, we appropriate Christ, and we are as truly  
25222 sanctified by faith as we are justified by faith. In  
25223 my Systematic Theology, in pointing out the

25224 conditions of entire or permanent sanctification,  
25225 I have noticed some sixty of the official relations  
25226 of Christ, as I have before said, and have there  
25227 insisted, as I here insist, that growth in holiness,  
25228 and consequently, in the favor of God, is secured  
25229 only by fresh, fuller, and more thorough  
25230 appropriations of Christ, in all these official  
25231 relations. If you would grow in grace you must  
25232 do it through faith. You must pray in faith for the  
25233 Holy Spirit. You must appropriate and put on  
25234 Christ through the Holy Spirit. At every forward  
25235 step in your progress, you must have a fresh  
25236 anointing of the Holy Spirit through faith.

25237

25238 REMARKS

25239

25240 1. We see, from this subject, the vast importance  
25241 of rightly instructing young converts. In many  
25242 cases, they have very little instruction suited to  
25243 their experience and degree of Christian  
25244 intelligence. By some, such views are taken of  
25245 the Perseverance of the Saints, that it is assumed  
25246 that babes in Christ will grow without nursing,  
25247 and without that sincere milk of the word, by  
25248 means of which they must grow. Some, taking it  
25249 for granted that they need instruction,  
25250 unwittingly give them false instruction, set them  
25251 to work outwardly and zealously, without paying

25252 much regard to the strengthening and developing  
25253 of their inward life. They do not teach them how  
25254 to appropriate and live on Christ as their life, but  
25255 continually press them up, to do their duty, to  
25256 labor for God, and labor for souls, not  
25257 sufficiently impressing upon them the idea that  
25258 their doing is of no account, unless it proceeds  
25259 from the life of God in their own souls. The  
25260 result of this is a bustling, outward activity,  
25261 while the inward spiritual life is decaying. This  
25262 must end in disgust at one's own want of heart,  
25263 and a settling back into apathy and neglect.

25264  
25265 2. Sometimes there is a mistake made in the  
25266 opposite direction. They are taught to rest in  
25267 Christ, in such a sense as to take on a type of  
25268 quietism and antinomian inactivity. They are  
25269 exhorted to exercise faith, but they are not  
25270 earnestly impressed with the conviction that it  
25271 must be a faith that works and works by love,  
25272 that purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.  
25273 The result is, they do nothing in religion. Sinners  
25274 are allowed to sleep on, and go to hell, in their  
25275 midst, and they make no effort to save them.

25276  
25277 3. We see the importance of a Holy Ghost  
25278 anointed ministry. The great want of the church  
25279 is a ministry so thoroughly anointed by the Holy

25280 Ghost as to know how to lead the church onward  
25281 and upward, to the fullest development of  
25282 Christian piety. In order to instruct converts, and  
25283 keep the church progressing in holiness, the  
25284 minister must progress himself. He must be a  
25285 truly living, growing Christian. I have good  
25286 reason to know that the churches in many places  
25287 are deeply pained by the want of living piety and  
25288 growth in their ministers. Their ministers are  
25289 intellectual, literary, philosophical, theological,  
25290 in their teaching, but they are sadly deficient in  
25291 unction. They have but little power with God or  
25292 with man. They instruct the intellect to a certain  
25293 extent, but they do not meet the wants of the  
25294 heart. Converts starve under their preaching.  
25295 They preach an intellectual, rather than a  
25296 spiritual Gospel. They preach religion as a  
25297 theory, a doctrine, a philosophy, and not as a real  
25298 living experience. It is often exceedingly painful  
25299 to hear ministers preach who manifestly do not  
25300 know what they say, or whereof they affirm.  
25301 They speak of religion as an inward sentiment,  
25302 instead of heart devotion to God; as an emotion,  
25303 a feeling, instead of an all-embracing and  
25304 efficient love, a voluntary state and attitude of  
25305 the mind, from which necessarily proceeds a  
25306 holy life. They speak of faith as a mere  
25307 intellectual state or conviction, and not as an act

25308 of trust, and of committal of the whole being, to  
25309 do and suffer all the will of God. They speak of  
25310 repentance as if it were a mere involuntary  
25311 sorrow for sin. They do not teach that repentance  
25312 is a change of mind towards God, a renunciation  
25313 of the self-seeking spirit, and a turning of the  
25314 whole mind to God. They speak of holiness, as if  
25315 it were a state utterly unattainable in this life.  
25316 Indeed, I say it with sorrow, but I must say it, the  
25317 teachings, of a great many ministers is but a  
25318 stumbling-block to the church. Under their  
25319 instruction, converts do not, and cannot get so  
25320 established in grace as to be greatly useful, or to  
25321 live lives that are honorable to Christ. Just think  
25322 in the Nineteenth Century, ministers preach to  
25323 converts that they must grow in grace by works.  
25324 Be heaven and earth amazed at this! Such  
25325 teachers do not know how to grow in grace  
25326 themselves. Shall I be accounted harsh if I say,  
25327 “They be blind leaders of the blind.”

25328  
25329 4. We see the reason of so much backsliding.  
25330 Converts will of course backslide who are led by  
25331 false instruction. It on the one hand, they are set  
25332 to work out sanctification by works, their works  
25333 will soon become dead works, and not be the  
25334 result of that faith that works by love. If, on the  
25335 other hand, they are crammed with abstract

25336 notions and doctrines, and taught to rest in an  
25337 antinomian faith, they will sink into supineness  
25338 and inactivity. I fully believe that in nearly all  
25339 cases where there has been disastrous reaction  
25340 after a revival, it has been owing to the want of  
25341 timely and proper instruction. But to be timely  
25342 and proper, it must be anointed instruction.

25343

25344 5. The Theological Seminaries need to pay  
25345 vastly more attention to the growth in grace of  
25346 their students. They need a professor of  
25347 experimental religion, who has experience and  
25348 power enough to press them along into those  
25349 higher regions of Christian experience which are  
25350 essential to their being able to lead the church on  
25351 to victory. It is amazing to see how little effort is  
25352 made to cultivate the heart of young men  
25353 studying for the ministry. We must have a  
25354 change in this respect. A much higher standard  
25355 of Christian experience must be required as a  
25356 condition of ordination. It is painful to see how  
25357 carefully men will be examined in regard to their  
25358 intellectual attainments, while the accounts they  
25359 give of their Christian experience will barely  
25360 allow us to hope that they have been converted.  
25361 How sad it is to set such young men to feed the  
25362 church of God. How do old Christians mourn,



25363 when they see the appointed leaders in the  
25364 church of God but spiritual babes.  
25365  
25366 6. I have never been present at the examination  
25367 of a candidate for ordination where anything  
25368 more than simple evidence of conversion was  
25369 required of him. I never heard them questioned  
25370 touching their progress in Christian experience,  
25371 and regarding their spiritual ability to lead the  
25372 flock of God into green pastures and beside the  
25373 still waters. I never heard them questioned in a  
25374 manner that manifested the slightest conception  
25375 of what are the indispensable spiritual  
25376 qualifications of a man who is to stand forth as  
25377 the leader and spiritual instructor of the church  
25378 of God. More hours are spent in ascertaining the  
25379 intellectual attainments of a candidate than  
25380 minutes to ascertain his spiritual and  
25381 experimental attainments. The whole  
25382 examination will plainly indicate that the  
25383 ordaining body lay very little stress on this part  
25384 of a minister's education. Is it any wonder that  
25385 the church of God is so feeble and inefficient,  
25386 while its leaders and teachers are, many of them,  
25387 mere children in spiritual knowledge, while a  
25388 ripe Christian experience is made no part of the  
25389 indispensable education of a minister. Why, this  
25390 is infinitely more dangerous and ridiculous than

25391 to intrust men to lead an army in the field, while  
25392 they merely understand mathematics, and never  
25393 have had any training or experience in military  
25394 matters.

25395

25396 In this respect, too, there must be a great change.  
25397 Churches should refuse to ordain and receive  
25398 pastors, unless they an fully satisfied of their  
25399 having made much progress in Christian  
25400 experience, so as to be able to lead on, and keep  
25401 the church awake.

25402

25403 They should insist upon the education of his  
25404 heart as well as his head; upon his ability to take  
25405 young converts, and conduct them on to those  
25406 deep experiences that will make them stable and  
25407 efficient workers in the cause of God. Think of  
25408 theological seminaries like those over which Dr.  
25409 Chalmers and Dr. Pond have presided, where the  
25410 leaders of the church of God are taught that  
25411 sanctification or growth in grace is attained by  
25412 works and not by faith. Tell it not in Gath. Alas  
25413 for Zion, when her great and good men fall into  
25414 such mistakes.

25415

25416 THE END.