

1 LECTURES ON REVIVALS OF RELIGION

2

3 BY

4

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6

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8 "Sermons on Gospel Themes," etc.

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19

20

21 THE LECTURER'S PREFACE.

22

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

31

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

43

44 I found a particular inducement to this course, in
45 the fact that on my return from the Mediterranean, I
46 learned, with pain, that the spirit of revival had
47 greatly declined in the United States, and that a

48 spirit of jangling and controversy alarmingly
49 prevailed.

50

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

58

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

65

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

75

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

80

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

91

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

102

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

109

110 In correcting the Lectures for a volume, I have not
111 had time, nor was it thought advisable to remodel
112 them, and change the style in which they had been
113 reported. I have, in some few instances, changed
114 the phraseology, when a thought had been very
115 awkwardly expressed, or when the true idea had
116 not been given. But I have, in nearly every
117 instance, left the sentences as they were reported
118 when the thought was perspicuously expressed,
119 although the style might have been improved by
120 emendation. They were the editor's reports, and as
121 such they must go before the public, with such little
122 additions and alterations, as I have had time to
123 make. Could I have written them out in full, I doubt
124 not but they might have been more acceptable to
125 many readers. But this was impossible, and the
126 only alternative was, to let the public have them as
127 they are, or refuse to let them go out in the form of
128 a volume at all. I am sorry they are not better
129 Lectures, and in a more attracting form; but I have
130 done what I could under the circumstances; and, as

131 it is the wish of many whom I love, and delight to
132 please and honor, to have them, although in this
133 imperfect form, they must have them.

134

135 C. G. FINNEY.

136

137

138 By perusing the above Preface, the reader will get a
139 clue to the time and circumstances that led to the
140 delivery and publication of these Lectures. In
141 revising them for a new edition, I have done little
142 more than correct the phraseology in a few
143 instances, add a few foot-notes, and replace the last
144 two Lectures by newly-written ones on the same
145 texts, and prepared especially for this edition.
146 These Lectures are distinct from the course I
147 deliver to my theological class upon the same
148 subject. That course I may publish before my
149 death. These Lectures have been translated in the
150 Welsh and French languages, and have been very
151 extensively circulated wherever the English or
152 either of those languages is understood. One house
153 in London published 80,000 copies In English.
154 They are still in type and in market in Europe, and I
155 have the great satisfaction of knowing that they
156 have been made a great blessing to thousands of
157 souls. Consequently, I have not thought it wise to
158 recast them for the sake of giving them a more
159 attractive form. God has owned and blessed the
160 reading of them as they have been, and with the
161 exceptions above noticed, I have given them to the
162 present and coming generations. If the reader will
163 peruse and remember the foregoing preface, he will
164 understand what I said of the church and some of
165 the ministers, and why I said it. I beseech my

166 brethren not to take amiss what I have said, but
167 rather to be assured that every sentence has been
168 spoken in love, and often with a sorrowful heart.
169 May God continue to add His blessing to the
170 reading of these Lectures.

171

172 THE AUTHOR.

173

174 OBERLIN COLLEGE, Oct. 22, 1868.

175

176 ADVERTISEMENT BY THE REPORTER

177

178 The work of reporting these Lectures was
179 undertaken for the purpose of increasing the
180 interest and usefulness of the New York
181 Evangelist. The Reporter is wholly unacquainted
182 with short-hand, and has, therefore, only aimed to
183 give a sketch of the leading thoughts of the
184 discourse. It is hardly necessary to mention that
185 Mr. Finney never writes his sermons, but guides his
186 course of argument by a skeleton, or brief,
187 carefully prepared, and so compact, that it can be
188 written on one side of a card, about half as large as
189 one of these printed pages. His manner is direct,
190 and his language colloquial and Saxon, and his
191 illustrations are drawn from the commonest
192 incidents and maxims of life. The Reporter has
193 aimed to preserve, as much as he could, the style of
194 the speaker, and is thought to have been in some
195 degree successful. If, in any cases, by letting his
196 language run in a colloquial strain, he has made the
197 copy more simple and homely than the original, he
198 hopes to be pardoned easily for a fault by no means
199 prevalent.

200

201 If any one should attempt to criticise the style of
202 these Reports, he will assuredly lose his labor; for
203 the only ambition of the Reporter has been, to

204 make such a use of language as should fully
205 convey the meaning, and fairly exhibit the manner,
206 of the Lecturer. When words have done this, they
207 have done their great work. The notes were taken
208 with a pencil, and transcribed in great haste, and
209 sent to the printer without revision. In preparing
210 them for publication, in this form, Mr. Finney has
211 reviewed them with reference only to this point—
212 the correct expression of the sentiment. The style
213 of an off-hand sketch has been preserved, partly of
214 choice, and partly from necessity. There was no
215 time to remodel the work, and the public voice
216 seemed to be, that it was more attractive and more
217 useful in its present condensed form. Mr. Finney
218 has, therefore, done little more than to amend
219 where the Reporter misapprehended the meaning,
220 or did not express it with sufficient distinctness. He
221 has enlarged in a few places where the illustrations,
222 as given by the Reporter, seemed to be incomplete.

223

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

231

232 J.L.

233

234

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284 LECTURE I.

285

286 WHAT A REVIVAL OF RELIGION IS

287

288 Text.—O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the

289 years, in the midst of the years make known; in

290 wrath remember mercy.—Hab. iii. 2.

291

292 IT is supposed that the prophet Habakkuk was

293 contemporary with Jeremiah, and that this

294 prophecy was uttered in anticipation of the

295 Babylonish captivity. Looking at the judgments

296 which were speedily to come upon his nation, the

297 soul of the prophet was wrought up to an agony,

298 and he cries out in his distress, “O Lord, revive thy

299 work.” As if he had said, “O Lord, grant that thy

300 judgments may not make Israel desolate. In the

301 midst of these awful years, let the judgments of

302 God be made the means of reviving religion among

303 us. In wrath remember mercy.”

304

305 Religion is the work of man. It is something for

306 man to do. It consists in obeying God with and

307 from the heart. It is man’s duty. It is true, God

308 induces him to do it. He influences him by his

309 Spirit, because of his great wickedness and

310 reluctance to obey. If it were not necessary for God

311 to influence men—if men were disposed to obey

312 God, there would be no occasion to pray, “O Lord,
313 revive thy work.” The ground of necessity for such
314 a prayer is, that men are wholly indisposed to obey;
315 and unless God interpose the influence of his Spirit,
316 not a man on earth will ever obey the commands of
317 God.

318

319 A “Revival of Religion” presupposes a declension.
320 Almost all the religion in the world has been
321 produced by revivals. God has found it necessary
322 to take advantage of the excitability there is in
323 mankind, to produce powerful excitements among
324 them, before he can lead them to obey. Men are so
325 spiritually sluggish, there are so many things to
326 lead their minds off from religion, and to oppose
327 the influence of the Gospel, that it is necessary to
328 raise an excitement among them, till the tide rises
329 so high as to sweep away the opposing obstacles.
330 They must be so excited that they will break over
331 these counteracting influences, before they will
332 obey God. Not that excited feeling is religion, for it
333 is not; but it is excited desire, appetite and feeling
334 that prevents religion. The will is, in a sense,
335 enslaved by the carnal and worldly desires. Hence
336 it is necessary to awaken men to a sense of guilt
337 and danger, and thus produce an excitement of
338 counter feeling and desire which will break the

339 power of carnal and worldly desire and leave the
340 will free to obey God.

341

342 Look back at the history of the Jews, and you will
343 see that God used to maintain religion among them
344 by special occasions, when there would be a great
345 excitement, and people would turn to the Lord.
346 And after they had been thus revived, it would be
347 but a short time before there would be so many
348 counteracting influences brought to bear upon
349 them, that religion would decline, and keep on
350 declining, till God could have time—so to speak—
351 to convict them of sin by his Spirit and rebuke
352 them by his providence, and thus so gain the
353 attention of the masses to the great subject of
354 salvation, as to produce a widespread awakening of
355 religious interest, and consequently a revival of
356 religion. Then the counteracting causes would
357 again operate, and religion would decline, and the
358 nation would be swept away in the vortex of
359 luxury, idolatry, and pride.

360

361 There is so little principle in the church, so little
362 firmness and stability of purpose, that unless the
363 religious feelings are awakened and kept excited,
364 counter worldly feeling and excitement will
365 prevail, and men will not obey God. They have so
366 little knowledge, and their principles are so weak,

367 that unless they are excited, they will go back from
368 the path of duty, and do nothing to promote the
369 glory of God. The state of the world is still such,
370 and probably will be till the millennium is fully
371 come, that religion must be mainly promoted by
372 means of revivals. How long and how often has the
373 experiment been tried, to bring the church to act
374 steadily for God, without these periodical
375 excitements. Many good men have supposed, and
376 still suppose, that the best way to promote religion,
377 is to go along uniformly, and gather in the ungodly
378 gradually, and without excitement. But however
379 sound such reasoning may appear in the abstract,
380 facts demonstrate its futility. If the church were far
381 enough advanced in knowledge, and had stability
382 of principle enough to keep awake, such a course
383 would do; but the church is so little enlightened,
384 and there are so many counteracting causes, that
385 she will not go steadily to work without a special
386 interest being awakened. As the millennium
387 advances, it is probable that these periodical
388 excitements will be unknown. Then the church will
389 be enlightened, and the counteracting causes
390 removed, and the entire church will be in a state of
391 habitual and steady obedience to God. The entire
392 church will stand and take the infant mind, and
393 cultivate it for God. Children will be trained up in
394 the way they should go, and there will be no such

395 torrents of worldliness, and fashion, and
396 covetousness, to bear away the piety of the church,
397 as soon as the excitement of a revival is withdrawn.
398
399 It is very desirable it should be so. It is very
400 desirable that the church should go on steadily in a
401 course of obedience without these excitements.
402 Such excitements are liable to injure the health.
403 Our nervous system is so strung that any powerful
404 excitement, if long continued, injures our health
405 and unfits us for duty. If religion is ever to have a
406 pervading influence in the world, it cannot be so;
407 this spasmodic religion must be done away. Then it
408 will be uncalled for. Christians will not sleep the
409 greater part of the time, and once in a while wake
410 up, and rub their eyes, and bluster about, and
411 vociferate a little while, and then go to sleep again.
412 Then there will be no need that ministers should
413 wear themselves out, and kill themselves, by their
414 efforts to roll back the flood of worldly influence
415 that sets in upon the church. But as yet the state of
416 the Christian world is such, that to expect to
417 promote religion without excitements is
418 unphilosophical and absurd. The great political,
419 and other worldly excitements that agitate
420 Christendom, are all unfriendly to religion, and
421 divert the mind from the interests of the soul. Now
422 these excitements can only be counteracted by

423 religious excitements. And until there is religious
424 principle in the world to put down irreligious
425 excitements, it is vain to try to promote religion,
426 except by counteracting excitements. This is true in
427 philosophy, and it is a historical fact.

428

429 It is altogether improbable that religion will ever
430 make progress among heathen nations except
431 through the influence of revivals. The attempt is
432 now making to do it by education, and other
433 cautious and gradual improvements. But so long as
434 the laws of mind remain what they are, it cannot be
435 done in this way. There must be excitement
436 sufficient to wake up the dormant moral powers,
437 and roll back the tide of degradation and sin. And
438 precisely so far as our own land approximates to
439 heathenism, it is impossible for God or man to
440 promote religion in such a state of things but by
441 powerful excitements. This is evident from the fact
442 that this has always been the way in which God has
443 done it. God does not create these excitements, and
444 choose this method to promote religion for nothing
445 or without reason. Where mankind are so reluctant
446 to obey God, they will not act until they are
447 excited. For instance, how many there are who
448 know that they ought to be religious, but they are
449 afraid if they become pious they shall be laughed at
450 by their companions. Many are wedded to idols,

451 others are procrastinating repentance, until they are
452 settled in life, or until they have secured some
453 favorite worldly interest. Such persons never will
454 give up their false shame, or relinquish their
455 ambitious schemes, till they are so excited by a
456 sense of guilt and danger that they cannot contain
457 themselves any longer.

458

459 These remarks are designed only as an introduction
460 to the discourse. I shall now proceed with the main
461 design, to show,

462

463 I. What a revival of religion is not;

464

465 II. What it is; and,

466

467 III. The agencies employed in promoting it.

468

469 I. A REVIVAL OF RELIGION IS NOT A
470 MIRACLE.

471

472 1. A miracle has been generally defined to be, a
473 Divine interference, setting aside or suspending the
474 laws of nature. It is not a miracle in this sense. All
475 the laws of matter and mind remain in force. They
476 are neither suspended nor set aside in a revival.

477

478 2. It is not a miracle according to another definition
479 of the term miracle—something above the powers
480 of nature. There is nothing in religion beyond the
481 ordinary powers of nature. It consists entirely in the
482 right exercise of the powers of nature. It is just that,
483 and nothing else. When mankind become religious,
484 they are not enabled to put forth exertions which
485 they were unable before to put forth . They only
486 exert the powers they had before in a different way,
487 and use them for the glory of God.

488
489 3. It is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle, in
490 any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the
491 right use of the constituted means—as much so as
492 any other effect produced by the application of
493 means. There may be a miracle among its
494 antecedent causes, or there may not. The apostles
495 employed miracles, simply as a means by which
496 they arrested attention to their message, and
497 established its divine authority. But the miracle was
498 not the revival. The miracle was one thing; the
499 revival that followed it was quite another thing.
500 The revivals in the apostles' days were connected
501 with miracles, but they were not miracles.

502
503 I said that a revival is the result of the right use of
504 the appropriate means. The means which God has
505 enjoined for the production of a revival, doubtless

506 have a natural tendency to produce a revival.
507 Otherwise God would not have enjoined them. But
508 means will not produce a revival, we all know,
509 without the blessing of God. No more will grain.
510 when it is sowed, produce a crop without the
511 blessing of God. it is impossible for us to say that
512 there is not as direct an influence or agency from
513 God, to produce a crop of grain, as there is to
514 produce a revival. What are the laws of nature
515 according to which it is supposed that grain yields
516 a crop? They are nothing but the constituted
517 manner of the operations of God. In the Bible, the
518 word of God is compared to grain, and preaching is
519 compared to sowing seed, and the results to the
520 springing up and growth of the crop. And the result
521 is just as philosophical in the one case, as in the
522 other, and is as naturally connected with the cause;
523 or, more correctly, a revival is as naturally a result
524 of the use of the appropriate means as a crop is of
525 the use of its appropriate means. It is true that
526 religion does not properly belong to the category of
527 cause and effect; but although It is not caused by
528 means, yet it has its occasion, and may as naturally
529 and certainly result from its occasion as a crop does
530 from its cause.

531
532 I wish this idea to be impressed on all your minds,
533 for there has long been an idea prevalent that

534 promoting religion has something very peculiar in
535 it, not to be judged of by the ordinary rules of cause
536 and effect; in short, that there is no connection of
537 the means with the result, and no tendency in the
538 means to produce the effect. No doctrine is more
539 dangerous than this to the prosperity of the church,
540 and nothing more absurd.

541
542 Suppose a man were to go and preach this doctrine
543 among farmers, about their sowing grain. Let him
544 tell them that God is a sovereign, and will give
545 them a crop only when it pleases him, and that for
546 them to plow and plant and labor as if they
547 expected to raise a crop is very wrong, and taking
548 the work out of the hands of God, that it interferes
549 with his sovereignty, and is going on in their own
550 strength: and that there is no connection between
551 the means and the result on which they can depend.
552 And now, suppose the farmers should believe such
553 doctrine. Why, they would starve the world to
554 death.

555
556 Just such results will follow from the church's
557 being persuaded that promoting religion is
558 somehow so mysteriously a subject of Divine
559 sovereignty, that there is no natural connection
560 between the means and the end. What are the
561 results? Why, generation after generation has gone

562 down to hell. No doubt more than five thousand
563 millions have gone down to hell, while the church
564 has been dreaming, and waiting for God to save
565 them without the use of means. It has been the
566 devil's most successful means of destroying souls.
567 The connection is as clear in religion as it is when
568 the farmer sows his grain.

569
570 There is one fact under the government of God,
571 worthy of universal notice, and of everlasting
572 remembrance; which is, that the most useful and
573 important things are most easily and certainly
574 obtained by the use of the appropriate means. This
575 is evidently a principle in the Divine
576 administration. Hence, all the necessaries of life are
577 obtained with great certainty by the use of the
578 simplest means. The luxuries are more difficult to
579 obtain; the means to procure them are more
580 intricate and less certain in their results; while
581 things absolutely hurtful and poisonous, such as
582 alcohol and the like, are often obtained only by
583 torturing nature, and making use of a kind of
584 infernal sorcery to procure the death-dealing
585 abomination. This principle holds true in moral
586 government, and as spiritual blessings are of
587 surpassing importance, we should expect their
588 attainment to be connected with great certainty
589 with the use of the appropriate means; and such we

590 find to be the fact; and I fully believe that could
591 facts be known, it would be found that when the
592 appointed means have been rightly used, spiritual
593 blessings have been obtained with greater
594 uniformity than temporal ones.

595

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

597

598 It is the renewal of the first love of Christians,
599 resulting in the awakening and conversion of
600 sinners to God. In the popular sense, a revival of
601 religion in a community is the arousing,
602 quickening, and reclaiming of the more or less
603 backslidden church and the more or less general
604 awakening of all classes, and insuring attention to
605 the claims of God.

606

607 It presupposes that the church is sunk down in a
608 backslidden state, and a revival consists in the
609 return of a church from her backslidings, and in the
610 conversion of sinners.

611

612 I. A revival always includes conviction of sin on
613 the part of the church. Backslidden professors
614 cannot wake up and begin right away in the service
615 of God, without deep searchings of heart. The
616 fountains of sin need to be broken up. In a true
617 revival, Christians are always brought under such

618 convictions; they see their sins in such a light, that
619 often they find it impossible to maintain a hope of
620 their acceptance with God. It does not always go to
621 that extent; but there are always, in a genuine
622 revival, deep convictions of sin, and often cases of
623 abandoning all hope.

624

625 2. Backslidden Christians will be brought to
626 repentance. A revival is nothing else than a new
627 beginning of obedience to God. Just as in the case
628 of a converted sinner, the first step is a deep
629 repentance, a breaking down of heart, a getting
630 down into the dust before God, with deep humility,
631 and forsaking of sin.

632

633 3. Christians will have their faith renewed. While
634 they are in their backslidden state they are blind to
635 the state of sinners. Their hearts are as hard as
636 marble. The truths of the Bible only appear like a
637 dream. They admit it to be all true; their conscience
638 and their judgment assent to it; but their faith does
639 not see it standing out in bold relief, in all the
640 burning realities of eternity. But when they enter
641 into a revival, they no longer see men as trees
642 walking, but they see things in that strong light
643 which will renew the love of God in their hearts.
644 This will lead them to labor zealously to bring
645 others to him. They will feel grieved that others do

646 not love God, when they love him so much. And
647 they will set themselves feelingly to persuade their
648 neighbors to give him their hearts. So their love to
649 men will be renewed. They will be filled with a
650 tender and burning love for souls. They will have a
651 longing desire for the salvation of the whole world.
652 They will be in an agony for individuals whom
653 they want to have saved—their friends, relations,
654 enemies. They will not only be urging them to give
655 their hearts to God, but they will carry them to God
656 in the arms of faith, and with strong crying and
657 tears beseech God to have mercy on them, and save
658 their souls from endless burnings.

659

660 4. A revival breaks the power of the world and of
661 sin over Christians. It brings them to such vantage
662 ground that they get a fresh impulse towards
663 heaven. They have a new foretaste of heaven, and
664 new desires after union with God; and the charm of
665 the world is broken, and the power of sin
666 overcome.

667

668 5. When the churches are thus awakened and
669 reformed, the reformation and salvation of sinners
670 will follow, going through the same stages of
671 conviction, repentance, and reformation. Their
672 hearts will be broken down and changed. Very
673 often the most abandoned profligates are among the

674 subjects. Harlots, and drunkards, and infidels, and
675 all sorts of abandoned characters, are awakened
676 and converted. The worst among human beings are
677 softened, and reclaimed, and made to appear as
678 lovely specimens of the beauty of holiness.

679

680 III. I AM TO CONSIDER THE AGENCIES
681 EMPLOYED IN CARRYING FORWARD A
682 REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

683

684 Ordinarily, there are three agents employed in the
685 work of conversion, and one instrument. The
686 agents are God,—some person who brings the truth
687 to bear on the mind,—and the sinner himself. The
688 instrument is the truth. There are always two
689 agents, God and the sinner, employed and active in
690 every case of genuine conversion.

691

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

694

695 (1.) By his providential government, he so arranges
696 events as to bring the sinner's mind and the truth in
697 contact. He brings the sinner where the truth
698 reaches his ears or his eyes. It is often interesting to
699 trace the manner in which God arranges events so
700 as to bring this about, and how he sometimes
701 makes every thing seem to favor a revival. The

702 state of the weather, and of the public health, and
703 other circumstances concur to make every thing
704 just right to favor the application of truth with the
705 greatest possible efficacy. How he sometimes sends
706 a minister along, just at the time he is wanted! How
707 he brings out a particular truth, just at the particular
708 time when the individual it is fitted to reach is in
709 the way to hear!

710
711 (2.) God's special agency by his Holy Spirit.
712 Having direct access to the mind, and knowing
713 infinitely well the whole history and state of each
714 individual sinner, he employs that truth which is
715 best adapted to his particular case, and then sets it
716 home with Divine power. He gives it such
717 vividness, strength, and power, that the sinner
718 quails, and throws down his weapons of rebellion,
719 and turns to the Lord. Under his influence, the truth
720 burns and cuts its way like fire. He makes the truth
721 stand out in such aspects, that it crushes the
722 proudest man down with the weight of a mountain.
723 If men were disposed to obey God, the truth is
724 given with sufficient clearness in the Bible; and
725 from preaching they could learn all that is
726 necessary for them to know. But because they are
727 wholly disinclined to obey it, God clears it up
728 before their minds, and pours in a blaze of
729 convincing light upon their souls, which they

730 cannot withstand, and they yield to it, and obey
731 God, and are saved.

732

733 2. The agency of men is commonly employed. Men
734 are not mere instruments in the hands of God.

735 Truth is the instrument. The preacher is a moral
736 agent in the work; he acts; he is not a mere passive
737 instrument; he is voluntary in promoting the
738 conversion of sinners.

739

740 3. The agency of the sinner himself. The
741 conversion of a sinner consists in his obeying the
742 truth. It is therefore impossible it should take place
743 without his agency, for it consists in his acting
744 right. He is influenced to this by the agency of God,
745 and by the agency of men. Men act on their fellow-
746 men, not only by language, but by their looks, their
747 tears, their daily deportment. See that impenitent
748 man there, who has a pious wife. Her very looks,
749 her tenderness, her solemn, compassionate dignity,
750 softened and moulded into the image of Christ are
751 a sermon to him all the time. He has to turn his
752 mind away, because it is such a reproach to him.
753 He feels a sermon ringing in his ears all day long.

754

755 Mankind are accustomed to read the countenances
756 of their neighbors. Sinners often read the state of a
757 Christian's mind in his eyes. If his eyes are full of

758 levity, or worldly anxiety and contrivance, sinners
759 read it. If they are full of the Spirit of God, sinners
760 read it; and they are often led to conviction by
761 barely seeing the countenance of Christians.

762

763 An individual once went into a manufactory to see
764 the machinery. His mind was solemn, as he had
765 been where there was a revival. The people who
766 labored there all knew him by sight, and knew who
767 he was. A young lady who was at work saw him,
768 and whispered some foolish remark to her
769 companion, and laughed. The person stopped and
770 looked at her with a feeling of grief. She stopped,
771 her thread broke, and she was so much agitated she
772 could not join it. She looked out at the window to
773 compose herself, and then tried again; again and
774 again she strove to recover her self-command. At
775 length she sat down, overcome with her feelings.
776 The person then approached and spoke with her;
777 she soon manifested a deep sense of sin. The
778 feeling spread through the establishment like fire,
779 and in a few hours almost every person employed
780 there was under conviction, so much so, that the
781 owner, though a worldly man, was astounded, and
782 requested to have the works stop and have a prayer
783 meeting; for he said it was a great deal more
784 important to have these people converted than to
785 have the works go on. And in a few days, the

786 owner and nearly every person employed in the
787 establishment were hopefully converted. The eye
788 of this individual, his solemn countenance, his
789 compassionate feeling, rebuked the levity of the
790 young woman, and brought her under conviction of
791 sin: and this whole revival followed, probably in a
792 great measure, from so small an incident.

793

794 If Christians have deep feeling on the subject of
795 religion themselves, they will produce deep feeling
796 wherever they go. And if they are cold, or light and
797 trifling, they inevitably destroy all deep feeling,
798 even in awakened sinners.

799

800 I knew a case, once, of an individual who was very
801 anxious, but one day I was grieved to find that her
802 convictions seemed to be all gone. I asked her what
803 she had been doing. She told me she had been
804 spending the afternoon at such a place, among
805 some professors of religion, not thinking that it
806 would dissipate her convictions to spend an
807 afternoon with professors of religion. But they
808 were trifling and vain, and thus her convictions
809 were lost. And no doubt those professors of
810 religion, by their folly, destroyed a soul, for her
811 convictions did not return.

812

813 The church is required to use the means for the
814 conversion of sinners. Sinners cannot properly be
815 said to use the means for their own conversion. The
816 church uses the means. What sinners do is to
817 submit to the truth, or to resist it. It is a mistake of
818 sinners, to think they are using means for their own
819 conversion. The whole drift of a revival, and every
820 thing about it, is designed to present the truth to
821 your mind, for your obedience or resistance.

822

823 REMARKS.

824

825 1. Revivals were formerly regarded as miracles.
826 And it has been so by some even in our day. And
827 others have ideas on the subject so loose and
828 unsatisfactory, that if they would only think, they
829 would see their absurdity. For a long time, it was
830 supposed by the church, that a revival was a
831 miracle, an interposition of Divine power which
832 they had nothing to do with, and which they had no
833 more agency in producing, than they had in
834 producing thunder, or a storm of hail, or an
835 earthquake. It is only within a few years that
836 ministers generally have supposed revivals were to
837 be promoted, by the use of means designed and
838 adapted specially to that object. Even in New
839 England, it has been supposed that revivals came
840 just as showers do, sometimes in one town, and

841 sometimes in another, and that ministers and
842 churches could do nothing more to produce them
843 than they could to make showers of rain come on
844 their own town, when they are falling on a
845 neighboring town.

846
847 It used to be supposed that a revival would come
848 about once in fifteen years, and all would be
849 converted that God intended to save, and then they
850 must wait until another crop came forward on the
851 stage of life. Finally, the time got shortened down
852 to five years, and they supposed there might be a
853 revival about as often as that.

854
855 I have heard a fact in relation to one of these
856 pastors, who supposed revivals might come about
857 once in five years. There had been a revival in his
858 congregation. The next year, there was a revival in
859 a neighboring town, and he went there to preach,
860 and staid several days, till he got his soul all
861 engaged in the work. He returned home on
862 Saturday, and went into his study to prepare for the
863 Sabbath. And his soul was in an agony. He thought
864 how many adult persons there were in his
865 congregation at enmity with God—so many still
866 unconverted—so many persons die yearly—such a
867 portion of them unconverted—if a revival does not
868 come under five years, so many adult heads of

869 families will be in hell. He put down his
870 calculations on paper, and embodied them in his
871 sermon for the next day, with his heart bleeding at
872 the dreadful picture. As I understood it, he did not
873 do this with any expectation of a revival, but he felt
874 deeply, and poured out his heart to his people. And
875 that sermon awakened forty heads of families, and
876 a powerful revival followed; and so his theory
877 about a revival once in five years was all exploded.

878

879 Thus God has overthrown, generally, the theory
880 that revivals are miracles.

881

882 2. Mistaken notions concerning the sovereignty of
883 God have greatly hindered revivals.

884

885 Many people have supposed God's sovereignty to
886 be some thing very different from what it is. They
887 have supposed it to be such an arbitrary disposal of
888 events, and particularly of the gift of his Spirit, as
889 precluded a rational employment of means for
890 promoting a revival of religion. But there is no
891 evidence from the Bible that God exercises any
892 such sovereignty as that. There are no facts to
893 prove it. But every thing goes to show that God has
894 connected means with the end through all the
895 departments of his government—in nature and in
896 grace. There is no natural event in which his own

897 agency is not concerned. He has not built the
898 creation like a vast machine that will go on alone
899 without his further care. He has not retired from the
900 universe, to let it work for itself. This is mere
901 atheism. He exercises a universal superintendence
902 and control. And yet every event in nature has been
903 brought about by means. He neither administers
904 providence nor grace with that sort of sovereignty
905 that dispenses with the use of means. There is no
906 more sovereignty in one than in the other.

907
908 And yet some people are terribly alarmed at all
909 direct efforts to promote a revival, and they cry out,
910 “You are trying to get up a revival in your own
911 strength. Take care, you are interfering with the
912 sovereignty of God. Better keep along in the usual
913 course, and let God give a revival when he thinks it
914 is best. God is a sovereign, and it is very wrong for
915 you to attempt to get up a revival, just because you
916 think a revival is needed.” This is just such
917 preaching as the devil wants. And men cannot do
918 the devil’s work more effectually than by
919 preaching up the sovereignty of God, as a reason
920 why we should not put forth efforts to produce a
921 revival.

922
923 3. You see the error of those who are beginning to
924 think that religion can be better promoted in the

925 world without revivals, and who are disposed to
926 give up all efforts to produce religious awakenings.
927 Because there are evils arising in some instances
928 out of great excitements on the subject of religion,
929 they are of opinion that it is best to dispense with
930 them altogether. This cannot, and must not be.
931 True, there is danger of abuses. In cases of great
932 religious as well as all other excitements, more or
933 less incidental evils may be expected of course. But
934 this is no reason why they should be given up. The
935 best things are always liable to abuses. Great and
936 manifold evils have originated in the providential
937 and moral governments of God. But these foreseen
938 perversions and evils were not considered a
939 sufficient reason for giving them up. For the
940 establishment of these governments was on the
941 whole the best that could be done for the
942 production of the greatest amount of happiness. So
943 in revivals of religion, it is found by experience,
944 that in the present state of the world, religion
945 cannot be promoted to any considerable extent
946 without them. The evils which are sometimes
947 complained of, when they are real, are incidental,
948 and of small importance when compared with the
949 amount of good produced by revivals. The
950 sentiment should not be admitted by the church for
951 a moment, that revivals may be given up. It is
952 fraught with all that is dangerous to the interests of

953 Zion, is death to the cause of missions, and brings
954 in its train the damnation of the world.

955

956 Finally.—I have a proposal to make to you who are
957 here present. I have not commenced this course of
958 Lectures on Revivals to get up a curious theory of
959 my own on the subject. I would not spend my time
960 and strength merely to give you instructions, to
961 gratify your curiosity, and furnish you something to
962 talk about. I have no idea of preaching about
963 revivals. It is not my design to preach so as to have
964 you able to say at the close, “We understand all
965 about revivals now,” while you do nothing. But I
966 wish to ask you a question. What do you hear
967 lectures on revivals for? Do you mean that
968 whenever you are convinced what your duty is in
969 promoting a revival, you will go to work and
970 practise it?

971

972 Will you follow the instructions I shall give you
973 from the word of God, and put them in practise in
974 your own lives? Will you bring them to bear upon
975 your families, your acquaintance, neighbors, and
976 through the city? Or will you spend the winter in
977 learning about revivals, and do nothing for them? I
978 want you, as fast as you learn any thing on the
979 subject of revivals, to put it in practice, and go to
980 work and see if you cannot promote a revival

981 among sinners here. If you will not do this, I wish
982 you to let me know at the beginning, so that I need
983 not waste my strength. You ought to decide now
984 whether you will do this or not. You know that we
985 call sinners to decide on the spot whether they will
986 obey the Gospel. And we have no more authority to
987 let you take time to deliberate whether you will
988 obey God, than we have to let sinners do so. We
989 call on you to unite now in a solemn pledge to God,
990 that you will do your duty as fast as you learn what
991 it is, and to pray that He will pour out his Spirit
992 upon this church and upon all the city this winter.

993

994

995

996 LECTURE II.

997

998 WHEN A REVIVAL IS TO BE EXPECTED.

999

1000 Text.—Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy
1001 people may rejoice in thee?—Psalm lxxxv. 6.

1002

1003 THIS Psalm seems to have been written soon after
1004 the return of the people of Israel from the
1005 Babylonish captivity; as you will easily see from
1006 the language at the commencement of it. The
1007 Psalmist felt that God had been very favorable to
1008 the people, and while contemplating the goodness

1009 of the Lord in bringing them back from the land
1010 where they had been carried away captive, and
1011 while looking at the prospects before them, he
1012 breaks out into a prayer for a Revival of Religion.
1013 “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may
1014 rejoice in thee?” Since God in his providence had
1015 re-established the ordinances of his house among
1016 them, he prays that there may be also a revival of
1017 religion, to crown the work.

1018

1019 Last Friday evening I attempted to show what a
1020 Revival of Religion is not; what a Revival is; and
1021 the agencies to be employed in promoting it. The
1022 topics to which I wish to call your attention to-
1023 night, are,

1024

1025 I. When a Revival of Religion is needed.

1026

1027 II. The importance of a Revival when it is needed.

1028

1029 III. When a Revival of Religion may be expected.

1030

1031 I. WHEN IS A REVIVAL OF RELIGION
1032 NEEDED?

1033

1034 1. When there is a want of brotherly love and
1035 Christian confidence among professors of religion,
1036 then a revival is needed. Then there is a loud call

1037 for God to revive his work. When Christians have
1038 sunk down into a low and backslidden state, they
1039 neither have, nor ought to have, nor is there reason
1040 to have, the same love and confidence toward each
1041 other, as when they are all alive, and active, and
1042 living holy lives. The love of benevolence may be
1043 the same, but not the love of complacency. God
1044 loves all men with the love of benevolence, but he
1045 does not feel the love of complacency toward any
1046 but those who live holy. Christians do not and
1047 cannot love each other with the love of
1048 complacency, only in proportion to their holiness.
1049 If Christian love is the love of the image of Christ
1050 in his people, then it never can be exercised only
1051 where that image really or apparently exists. A
1052 person must reflect the image of Christ, and show
1053 the spirit of Christ, before other Christians can love
1054 him with the love of complacency. It is in vain to
1055 call on Christians to love one another with the love
1056 of complacency, as Christians, when they are sunk
1057 down in stupidity. They see nothing in each other
1058 to produce this love. It is next to impossible that
1059 they should feel otherwise toward each other, than
1060 they do toward sinners. Merely knowing that they
1061 belong to the church, or seeing them occasionally
1062 at the communion table, will not produce Christian
1063 love, unless they see the image of Christ.
1064

- 1065 2. When there are dissensions, and jealousies, and
1066 evil speakings among professors of religion, then
1067 there is great need of a revival. These things show
1068 that Christians have got far from God, and it is time
1069 to think earnestly of a revival. Religion cannot
1070 prosper with such things in the church, and nothing
1071 can put an end to them like a revival.
1072
- 1073 3. When there is a worldly spirit in the church. It is
1074 manifest that the church is sunk down into a low
1075 and backslidden state, when you see Christians
1076 conform to the world in dress, equipage, parties,
1077 seeking worldly amusements, reading novels, and
1078 other books such as the world read. It shows that
1079 they are far from God, and that there is great need
1080 of a Revival of Religion.
1081
- 1082 4. When the church finds its members falling into
1083 gross and scandalous sins, then it is time for the
1084 church to awake and cry to God for a Revival of
1085 Religion. When such things are taking place, as
1086 give the enemies of religion an occasion for
1087 reproach, it is time for the church to ask God,
1088 “What will become of thy great name?”
1089
- 1090 5. When there is a spirit of controversy in the
1091 church or in the land, a revival is needful. The
1092 spirit of religion is not the spirit of controversy.

1093 There can be no prosperity in religion, where the
1094 spirit of controversy prevails.

1095

1096 6. When the wicked triumph over the church, and
1097 revile them, it is time to seek for a Revival of
1098 Religion.

1099

1100 7. When sinners are careless and stupid, and
1101 sinking into hell unconcerned, it is time the church
1102 should bestir themselves. It is as much the duty of
1103 the church to awake, as it is of the firemen to
1104 awake when a fire breaks out in the night in a great
1105 city. The church ought to put out the fires of hell
1106 which are laying hold of the wicked. Sleep! Should
1107 the firemen sleep, and let the whole city burn
1108 down: what would be thought of such firemen?
1109 And yet their guilt would not compare with the
1110 guilt of Christians who sleep while sinners around
1111 them are sinking stupid into the fires of hell.

1112

1113 II. I AM TO SHOW THE IMPORTANCE OF A
1114 REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN SUCH
1115 CIRCUMSTANCES.

1116

1117 1. A Revival of Religion is the only possible thing
1118 that can wipe away the reproach which covers the
1119 church, and restore religion to the place it ought to
1120 have in the estimation of the public. Without a

1121 revival, this reproach will cover the church more
1122 and more, until it is overwhelmed with universal
1123 contempt. You may do any thing else you please,
1124 and you can change the aspects of society in some
1125 respects, but you will do no real good; you only
1126 make it worse without a Revival of Religion. You
1127 may go and build a splendid new house of worship,
1128 and line your seats with damask, put up a costly
1129 pulpit, and get a magnificent organ, and every thing
1130 of that kind, to make a show and dash, and in that
1131 way you may procure a sort of respect for religion
1132 among the wicked, but it does no good in reality. It
1133 rather does hurt. It misleads them as to the real
1134 nature of religion; and so far from converting them,
1135 it carries them farther away from salvation. Look
1136 wherever they have surrounded the altar of
1137 Christianity with splendor, and you will find that
1138 the impression produced is contrary to the true
1139 nature of religion. There must be a waking up of
1140 energy, on the part of Christians, and an outpouring
1141 of God's Spirit, or the world will laugh at the
1142 church.

1143
1144 2. Nothing else will restore Christian love and
1145 confidence among church members. Nothing but a
1146 Revival of Religion can restore it, and nothing else
1147 ought to restore it. There is no other way to wake
1148 up that love of Christians for one another, which is

1149 sometimes felt, when they have such love as they
1150 cannot express. You cannot have such love without
1151 confidence; and you cannot restore confidence
1152 without such evidence of piety as is seen in a
1153 revival. If a minister finds he has lost in any degree
1154 the confidence of his people, he ought to labor for a
1155 revival as the only means of regaining their
1156 confidence. I do not mean that this should be his
1157 motive in laboring for a revival, to regain the
1158 confidence of his people, but that a revival through
1159 his instrumentality, and ordinarily nothing else,
1160 will restore to him the confidence of the praying
1161 part of his people. So if an elder or private member
1162 of the church finds his brethren cold towards him,
1163 there is but one way to remedy it. It is by being
1164 revived himself, and pouring out from his eyes and
1165 from his life the splendor of the image of Christ.
1166 This spirit will catch and spread in the church, and
1167 confidence will be renewed, and brotherly love
1168 prevail again.

1169
1170 3. At such a time a Revival of Religion is
1171 indispensable to avert the judgments of God from
1172 the church. This would be strange preaching, if
1173 revivals are only miracles, and if the church has no
1174 more agency in producing them, than it has in
1175 making a thunder storm. To say to the church, that
1176 unless there is a revival you may expect judgments,

1177 would then be as ridiculous as to say, If you do not
1178 have a thunder storm, you may expect judgments.
1179 The fact is, that Christians are more to blame for
1180 not being revived, than sinners are for not being
1181 converted. And if they are not awakened, they may
1182 know assuredly that God will visit them with his
1183 judgments. How often God visited the Jewish
1184 church with judgments, because they would not
1185 repent and be revived at the call of his prophets!
1186 How often have we seen churches, and even whole
1187 denominations, cursed with a curse, because they
1188 would not wake up and seek the Lord, and pray,
1189 “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may
1190 rejoice in thee?”

1191
1192 4. Nothing but a Revival of Religion can preserve
1193 such a church from annihilation. A church
1194 declining in this way cannot continue to exist
1195 without a revival. If it receives new members, they
1196 will, for the most part, be made up of ungodly
1197 persons. Without revivals there will not ordinarily
1198 be as many persons converted as will die off in a
1199 year. There have been churches in this country
1200 where the members have died off, and there were
1201 no revivals to convert others in their place, till the
1202 church has run out, and the organization has been
1203 dissolved.
1204

1205 A minister told me that he once labored as a
1206 missionary in Virginia, on the ground where such a
1207 man as Samuel Davies once flashed and shone like
1208 a flaming torch; and that Davies's church was so
1209 reduced as to have but one male member, and he, if
1210 I remember right, was a colored man. The church
1211 had got proud, and was all run out. I have heard of
1212 a church in Pennsylvania, that was formerly
1213 flourishing, but neglected revivals, and it became
1214 so reduced that the pastor had to send to a
1215 neighboring church for a ruling elder when he
1216 administered the communion. [1]

1217
1218 5. Nothing but a Revival of Religion can prevent
1219 the means of grace from doing a great injury to the
1220 ungodly. Without a revival, they will grow harder
1221 and harder under preaching, and will experience a
1222 more horrible damnation than they would if they
1223 had never heard the Gospel. Your children and
1224 your friends will go down to a much more horrible
1225 fate in hell, in consequence of the means of grace,
1226 if there are no revivals to convert them to God.
1227 Better were it for them if there were no means of
1228 grace, no sanctuary, no Bible, no preaching, and if
1229 they had never heard the Gospel, than to live and
1230 die where there is no revival. The Gospel is the
1231 savor of death unto death, if it is not made a savor
1232 of life unto life.

1233

1234 6. There is no other way in which a church can be
1235 sanctified, grow in grace, and be fitted for heaven.
1236 What is growing in grace? Is it hearing sermons
1237 and getting some new notions about religion? No—
1238 no such thing. The Christian who does this, and
1239 nothing more, is getting worse and worse, more
1240 and more hardened, and every week it is more
1241 difficult to rouse him up to duty.

1242

1243 III. I AM TO SHOW WHEN A REVIVAL OF
1244 RELIGION MAY BE EXPECTED.

1245

1246 1. When the providence of God indicates that a
1247 revival is at hand. The indications of God's
1248 providence are sometimes so plain as to amount to
1249 a revelation of his will. There is a conspiring of
1250 events to open the way, a preparation of
1251 circumstances to favor a revival, so that those who
1252 are looking out can see that a revival is at hand, just
1253 as plainly as if it had been revealed from Heaven.
1254 Cases have occurred in this country, where the
1255 providential manifestations were so plain, that
1256 those who are careful observers, felt no hesitation
1257 in saying that God was coming to pour out his
1258 Spirit, and grant a revival of religion. There are
1259 various ways for God to indicate his will to a
1260 people—sometimes by giving them peculiar

1261 means, sometimes by peculiar and alarming events,
1262 sometimes by remarkably favoring the employment
1263 of means, by the weather, health, etc.

1264

1265 2. When the wickedness of the wicked grieves and
1266 humbles and distresses Christians. Sometimes
1267 Christians do not seem to mind any thing about the
1268 wickedness around them. Or if they talk about it, it
1269 is in a cold, and callous, and unfeeling way, as if
1270 they despaired of a reformation: they are disposed
1271 to scold at sinners—not to feel the compassion of
1272 the Son of God for them. But sometimes the
1273 conduct of the wicked drives Christians to prayer,
1274 and breaks them down, and makes them sorrowful
1275 and tender-hearted, so that they can weep day and
1276 night, and instead of scolding and reproaching
1277 them, they pray earnestly for them. Then you may
1278 expect a revival. Indeed this is a revival begun
1279 already. Sometimes the wicked will get up an
1280 opposition to religion. And when this drives
1281 Christians to their knees in prayer to God, with
1282 strong crying and tears, you may be certain there is
1283 going to be a revival. The prevalence of
1284 wickedness is no evidence at all that there is not
1285 going to be a revival. That is often God's time to
1286 work. When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the
1287 Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him.
1288 Often the first indication of a revival, is the devil's

1289 getting up something new in opposition. It will
1290 invariably have one of two effects. It will either
1291 drive Christians to God, or it will drive them
1292 farther away from God, to some carnal policy or
1293 other that will only make things worse. Frequently
1294 the most outrageous wickedness of the ungodly is
1295 followed by a revival. If Christians are made to feel
1296 that they have no hope but in God, and if they have
1297 sufficient feeling left to care for the honor of God
1298 and the salvation of the souls of the impenitent,
1299 there will certainly be a revival. Let hell boil over if
1300 it will, and spew out as many devils as there are
1301 stones in the pavements, if it only drives Christians
1302 to God in prayer—they cannot hinder a revival. Let
1303 Satan get up a row, and sound his horn as loud as
1304 he pleases; if Christians will only be humbled and
1305 pray, they shall soon see God's naked arm in a
1306 revival of religion. I have known instances where a
1307 revival has broken in upon the ranks of the enemy,
1308 almost as suddenly as a clap of thunder, and
1309 scattered them—taken the very ringleaders as
1310 trophies, and broken up their party in an instant.

1311

1312 3. A revival may be expected when Christians have
1313 a spirit of prayer for a revival. That is, when they
1314 pray as if their hearts were set upon a revival.
1315 Sometimes Christians are not engaged in prayer for
1316 a revival, not even when they are warm in prayer.

1317 Their minds are upon something else; they are
1318 praying for something else—the salvation of the
1319 heathen and the like—and not for a revival among
1320 themselves. But when they feel the want of a
1321 revival, they pray for it; they feel for their own
1322 families and neighborhoods, and pray for them as if
1323 they could not be denied. What constitutes a spirit
1324 of prayer? Is it many prayers and warm words? No.
1325 Prayer is the state of the heart. The spirit of prayer
1326 is a state of continual desire and anxiety of mind
1327 for the salvation of sinners. It is something that
1328 weighs them down. It is the same, so far as the
1329 philosophy of the mind is concerned, as when a
1330 man is anxious for some worldly interest. A
1331 Christian who has this spirit of prayer feels anxious
1332 for souls. It is the subject of his thoughts all the
1333 time, and makes him look and act as if he had a
1334 load on his mind. He thinks of it by day, and
1335 dreams of it by night. This is properly praying
1336 without ceasing. The man's prayers seem to flow
1337 from his heart liquid as water—"O Lord, revive thy
1338 work." Sometimes this feeling is very deep;
1339 persons have been bowed down, so that they could
1340 neither stand nor sit. I can name men in this state,
1341 of firm nerves, who stand high in character, who
1342 have been absolutely crushed with grief for the
1343 state of sinners. They have had an actual travail of
1344 soul for sinners, till they were as helpless as

1345 children. The feeling is not always so great as this,
1346 but such things are much more common than is
1347 supposed. In the great revivals in 1826, they were
1348 common. This is by no means enthusiasm. It is just
1349 what Paul felt, when he says, “My little children, of
1350 whom I travail in birth.” I heard of a person in this
1351 State, who prayed for sinners, and finally got into
1352 such a state of mind, that she could not live without
1353 prayer. She could not rest day nor night, unless
1354 there was somebody praying. Then she would be at
1355 ease; but if they ceased, she would shriek in agony
1356 till there was prayer again. And this continued for
1357 two days, until she prevailed in prayer, and her soul
1358 was relieved. This travail of soul, is that deep
1359 agony, which persons feel when they lay hold on
1360 God for such a blessing, and will not let him go till
1361 they receive it. I do not mean to be understood that
1362 it is essential to a spirit of prayer, that the distress
1363 should be so great as this. But this deep, continual,
1364 earnest desire for the salvation of sinners, is what
1365 constitutes the spirit of prayer for a revival. It is a
1366 revival begun so far as this spirit of prayer extends.

1367
1368 When this feeling exists in a church, unless the
1369 Spirit is grieved away by sin, there will infallibly
1370 be a revival of Christians generally, and it will
1371 involve the conversion of sinners to God. This
1372 anxiety and distress increases till the revival

1373 commences. A clergyman in W——n told me of a
1374 revival among his people, which commenced with
1375 a zealous and devoted woman in the church. She
1376 became anxious about sinners, and went to praying
1377 for them, and she prayed and her distress increased;
1378 and she finally came to her minister, and talked
1379 with him, and asked him to appoint an anxious
1380 meeting, for she felt that one was needed. The
1381 minister put her off, for he felt nothing of it. The
1382 next week she came again, and besought him to
1383 appoint an anxious meeting; she knew there would
1384 be somebody to come, for she felt as if God was
1385 going to pour out his Spirit. He put her off again.
1386 And finally she said to him, “If you do not appoint
1387 an anxious meeting I shall die, for there is certainly
1388 going to be a revival.” The next Sabbath he
1389 appointed a meeting, and said that if there were any
1390 who wished to converse with him about the
1391 salvation of their souls, he would meet them on
1392 such an evening. He did not know of one, but when
1393 he went to the place, to his astonishment he found a
1394 large number of anxious inquirers. Now do not you
1395 think that woman knew there was going to be a
1396 revival? Call it what you please, a new revelation,
1397 or an old revelation, or any thing else. I say it was
1398 the Spirit of God that taught that praying woman
1399 there was going to be a revival. “The secret of the
1400 Lord” was with her, and she knew it. She knew

1401 God had been in her heart, and filled it so full that
1402 she could contain no longer.

1403

1404 Sometimes ministers have had this distress about
1405 their congregations, so that they felt as if they
1406 could not live unless they could see a revival.

1407 Sometimes elders and deacons, or private members
1408 of the church, men or women, have the spirit of
1409 prayer for a revival of religion, so that they will
1410 hold on and prevail with God, till he pours out his
1411 Spirit. The first ray of light that broke in upon the
1412 midnight which rested on the churches in Oneida
1413 county, in the fall of 1825, was from a woman in
1414 feeble health, who, I believe, had never been in a
1415 powerful revival. Her soul was exercised about
1416 sinners. She was in an agony for the land. She did
1417 not know what ailed her, but she kept praying more
1418 and more, till it seemed as if her agony would
1419 destroy her body. At length she became full of joy,
1420 and exclaimed, "God has come! God has come!
1421 There is no mistake about it, the work is begun, and
1422 is going over all the region." And sure enough, the
1423 work began, and her family were almost all
1424 converted, and the work spread all over that part of
1425 the country. Now, do you think that woman was
1426 deceived? I tell you, no. She knew she had
1427 prevailed with God in prayer. She had travailed in

1428 birth for souls, and she knew it. This was not the
1429 only instance, by many, that I knew in that region.
1430
1431 Generally, there are but few professors of religion
1432 that know any thing about this spirit of prayer
1433 which prevails with God. I have been amazed to
1434 see such accounts as are often published about
1435 revivals, as if the revival had come without any
1436 cause—nobody knew why or wherefore. I have
1437 sometimes inquired into such cases; when it had
1438 been given out that nobody knew any thing about it
1439 until one Sabbath they saw in the face of the
1440 congregation that God was there, or they saw it in
1441 their conference room, or prayer meeting, and were
1442 astonished at the mysterious sovereignty of God, in
1443 bringing in a revival without any apparent
1444 connection with means. Now mark me. Go and
1445 inquire among the obscure members of the church,
1446 and you will always find that somebody had been
1447 praying for a revival, and was expecting it—some
1448 man or woman had been agonizing in prayer, for
1449 the salvation of sinners, until they gained the
1450 blessing. It may have found the minister and the
1451 body of the church fast asleep, and they would
1452 wake up all of a sudden, like a man just rubbing his
1453 eyes open, and running round the room pushing
1454 things over, and wondering where all this
1455 excitement came from. But though few knew it,

1456 you may be sure there has been somebody on the
1457 watch-tower; constant in prayer till the blessing
1458 came. Generally, a revival is more or less
1459 extensive, as there are more or less persons who
1460 have the spirit of prayer. But I will not dwell on
1461 this subject any further at present, as the subject of
1462 prayer will come up again in this course of lectures.

1463
1464 4. Another sign that a revival may be expected, is
1465 when the attention of ministers is especially
1466 directed to this particular object, and when their
1467 preaching and other efforts are aimed particularly
1468 at the conversion of sinners. Most of the time the
1469 labors of ministers are, it would seem, directed to
1470 other objects. They seem to preach and labor with
1471 no particular design to effect the immediate
1472 conversion of sinners. And then it need not be
1473 expected that there will be a revival under their
1474 preaching. There never will be a revival till
1475 somebody makes particular efforts for this end. But
1476 when the attention of a minister is directed to the
1477 state of the families in his congregation, and his
1478 heart is full of feeling of the necessity of a revival,
1479 and when he puts forth the proper efforts for this
1480 end, then you may be prepared to expect a revival.
1481 As I explained last week, the connection between
1482 the right use of means for a revival, and a revival,
1483 is as philosophically sure as between the right use

1484 of means to raise grain, and a crop of wheat. I
1485 believe, in fact, it is more certain, and that there are
1486 fewer instances of failure. The effect is more
1487 certain to follow. The paramount importance of
1488 spiritual things makes it reasonable that it should
1489 be so. Take the Bible, the nature of the case, and
1490 the history of the church all together, and you will
1491 find fewer failures in the use of means for a revival,
1492 than in farming, or any other worldly business. In
1493 worldly business there are sometimes cases where
1494 counteracting causes annihilate all a man can do. In
1495 raising grain, for instance, there are cases which are
1496 beyond the control of man, such as drought, hard
1497 winter, worms, and so on. So in laboring to
1498 promote a revival, there may things occur to
1499 counteract it, something or other turning up to
1500 divert the public attention from religion, which
1501 may baffle every effort. But I believe there are
1502 fewer such cases in the moral than in the natural
1503 world. I have seldom seen an individual fail, when
1504 he used the means for promoting a revival in
1505 earnest, in the manner pointed out in the word of
1506 God. I believe a man may enter on the work of
1507 promoting a revival, with as reasonable an
1508 expectation of success, as he can enter on any other
1509 work with an expectation of success; with the same
1510 expectation as the farmer has of a crop when he
1511 sows his grain. I have sometimes seen this tried and

1512 succeed under circumstances the most forbidding
1513 that can be conceived.

1514

1515 The great revival in Rochester began under the
1516 most disadvantageous circumstances that could
1517 well be imagined. It seemed as though Satan had
1518 interposed every possible obstacle to a revival. The
1519 three churches were at variance; one had no
1520 minister, one was divided and about to dismiss
1521 their minister. An elder of the third Presbyterian
1522 church had brought a charge of unchristian conduct
1523 against the pastor of the first church, and they were
1524 just going to have a trial before the presbytery.

1525 After the work began, one of the first things was,
1526 the great stone church gave way, and created a
1527 panic. Then one of the churches went on and
1528 dismissed their minister right in the midst of it.
1529 Another church nearly broke down. Many other
1530 things occurred, so that it seemed as if the devil
1531 was determined to divert the public attention from
1532 the subject of religion. But there were a few
1533 remarkable cases of the spirit of prayer, which
1534 assured us that God was there, and we went on: and
1535 the more Satan opposed, the Spirit of the Lord
1536 lifted up the standard higher and higher, till finally
1537 a wave of salvation rolled over the place.

1538

1539 5. A revival of religion may be expected when
1540 Christians begin to confess their sins to one
1541 another. At other times, they confess in a general
1542 manner, as if they were only half in earnest. They
1543 may do it in eloquent language, but it does not
1544 mean any thing. But when there is an ingenuous
1545 breaking down, and a pouring out of the heart in
1546 making a confession of their sins, the flood-gates
1547 will soon burst open, and salvation will flow over
1548 the place.

1549
1550 6. A revival may be expected whenever Christians
1551 are found willing to make the sacrifice necessary to
1552 carry it on. They must be willing to sacrifice their
1553 feelings, their business, their time, to help forward
1554 the work. Ministers must be willing to lay out their
1555 strength, and to jeopard their health and life. They
1556 must be willing to offend the impenitent by plain
1557 and faithful dealing, and perhaps offend many
1558 members of the church who will not come up to the
1559 work. They must take a decided stand with the
1560 revival, be the consequences what they may. They
1561 must be prepared to go on with the work, even
1562 though they should lose the affections of all the
1563 impenitent, and of all the cold part of the church.
1564 The minister must be prepared, if it is the will of
1565 God, to be driven away from the place. He must be

1566 determined to go straight forward, and leave the
1567 entire event with God.
1568
1569 I knew a minister who had a young man laboring
1570 with him in a revival. The young man preached
1571 pretty plain, and the wicked did not like him. They
1572 said, We like our minister, and we wish to have
1573 him preach. They finally said so much that the
1574 minister told the young man, “Mr. Such-a-one, that
1575 gives so much towards my support, says so and so.
1576 Mr. A. says so, and Mr. B. says so. They think it
1577 will break up the society if you continue to preach,
1578 and I think you had better not preach any more.”
1579 The young man went away, but the Spirit of God
1580 immediately withdrew from the place, and the
1581 revival stopped short. The minister, by yielding to
1582 the wicked desires of the wicked, drove him away.
1583 He was afraid the devil would drive him away from
1584 his people, and by undertaking to satisfy the devil,
1585 he offended God. And God so ordered events, that
1586 in a short time he had to leave his people after all.
1587 He undertook to go between the devil and God, and
1588 God dismissed him.
1589
1590 The people, also, must be willing to have a revival,
1591 let the sacrifice be what it may. It will not do for
1592 them to say, “We are willing to attend so many
1593 meetings, but we cannot attend any more.” Or, “We

1594 are willing to have a revival if it will not disturb
1595 our arrangements about our business, or prevent
1596 our making money.” I tell you, such people will
1597 never have a revival, till they are willing to do any
1598 thing, and sacrifice any thing, that God indicates to
1599 be their duty. Christian merchants must feel willing
1600 to lock up their stores for six months, if it is
1601 necessary to carry on a revival. I do not mean to
1602 say any such thing is called for, or that it is their
1603 duty to do so. But if there should be such a state of
1604 feeling as to call for it, then it would be their duty,
1605 and they ought to be willing to do it. They ought to
1606 be willing to do it if God calls, and he can easily
1607 burn down their stores if they do not. In fact, I
1608 should not be sorry to see such a revival in New
1609 York, as would make every merchant in the city
1610 lock up his store till spring, and say he had sold
1611 goods enough, and now he would give up his
1612 whole time to lead sinners to Christ.

1613
1614 7. A revival may be expected when ministers and
1615 professors are willing to have God promote it by
1616 what instruments he pleases. Sometimes ministers
1617 are not willing to have a revival unless they can
1618 have the management of it, or unless their agency
1619 can be conspicuous in promoting it. They wish to
1620 prescribe to God what he shall direct and bless, and
1621 what men he shall put forward. They will have no

1622 new measures. They cannot have any of this new-
1623 light preaching, or of these evangelists that go
1624 about the country preaching. They have a great deal
1625 to say about God's being a sovereign, and that he
1626 will have revivals come in his own way and time.
1627 But then he must choose to have it just in their
1628 way, or they will have nothing to do with it. Such
1629 men will sleep on till they are awakened by the
1630 judgment trumpet, without a revival, unless they
1631 are willing that God should come in his own way—
1632 unless they are willing to have any thing or any
1633 body employed, that will do the most good.

1634
1635 8. Strictly I should say that when the foregoing
1636 things occur, a revival, to the same extent, already
1637 exists. In truth a revival should be expected
1638 whenever it is needed. If we need to be revived it is
1639 our duty to be revived. If it is duty it is possible,
1640 and we should set about being revived ourselves,
1641 and, relying on the promise of Christ to be with us
1642 in making disciples always and everywhere, we
1643 ought to labor to revive Christians and convert
1644 sinners, with confident expectation of success.
1645 Therefore, whenever the church needs reviving
1646 they ought and may expect to be revived, and to
1647 see sinners converted to Christ. When those things
1648 are seen which are named under the foregoing
1649 heads, let Christians and ministers be encouraged

1650 and know that a good work is already begun.

1651 Follow it up.

1652

1653 REMARKS.

1654

1655 1. Brethren, you can tell from our subject, whether
1656 you need a revival here or not, in this church, and
1657 in this city; and whether you are going to have one
1658 or not. Elders of the church, men, women, any of
1659 you, and all of you—what do you say?

1660

1661 Do you need a revival here?

1662

1663 Do you expect to have one?

1664

1665 Have you any reason to expect one?

1666

1667 You need not make any mist about it; for you
1668 know, or can know if you will, whether you have
1669 any reason to look for a revival here.

1670

1671 2. You see why you have not a revival. It is only
1672 because you do not want one. Because you are not
1673 praying for it; nor anxious for it, nor putting forth
1674 efforts for it. I appeal to your own consciences. Are
1675 you making these efforts now, to promote a
1676 revival? You know, brethren, what the truth is
1677 about it. Will you stand up and say that you have

1678 made the efforts for a revival and been
1679 disappointed—that you have cried to God, “Wilt
1680 thou not revive us?” and God would not do it?

1681

1682 3. Do you wish for a revival? Will you have one? If
1683 God should ask you this moment, by an audible
1684 voice from heaven, “Do you want a revival?”
1685 would you dare to say, Yes? “Are you willing to
1686 make the sacrifices?” would you answer, Yes?
1687 “When shall it begin?” would you answer, Let it
1688 begin to-night—let it begin here—let it begin in my
1689 heart NOW? Would you dare to say so to God, if
1690 you should hear his voice to-night?

1691

1692 [1] Why not, in such a case, let any member of the
1693 church, male or female, distribute the elements? Is
1694 it indispensable to have an elder?

1695

1696

1697

1698 LECTURE III.

1699

1700 HOW TO PROMOTE A REVIVAL.

1701

1702 Text.—Break up your fallow ground; for it is time
1703 to seek the Lord, till he come and rain
1704 righteousness upon you.—Hosea x. 12.

1705

1706 THE Jews were a nation of farmers, and it is
1707 therefore a common thing in the Scriptures to refer
1708 for illustrations to their occupation, and to the
1709 scenes with which farmers and shepherds are
1710 familiar. The prophet Hosea addresses them as a
1711 nation of backsliders, and reproves them for their
1712 idolatry, and threatens them with the judgments of
1713 God. I have showed you in my first lecture what a
1714 revival is not—what it is—and the agencies to be
1715 employed in promoting it; and in my second, when
1716 it is needed—its importance—and when it may be
1717 expected. My design in this lecture is to show,

1718

1719 HOW A REVIVAL IS TO BE PROMOTED.

1720

1721 A revival consists of two parts; as it respects the
1722 church, and as it respects the ungodly. I shall speak
1723 to-night of a revival in the church. Fallow ground is
1724 ground which has once been tilled, but which now
1725 lies waste, and needs to be broken up and
1726 mellowed, before it is suited to receive grain. I
1727 shall show, as it respects a revival in the church,

1728

1729 1. What it is to break up the fallow ground, in the
1730 sense of the text.

1731

1732 2. How it is to be performed.

1733

1734 I. WHAT IS IT TO BREAK UP THE FALLOW
1735 GROUND?

1736

1737 To break up the fallow ground, is to break up your
1738 hearts—to prepare your minds to bring forth fruit
1739 unto God. The mind of man is often compared in
1740 the Bible to ground, and the word of God to seed
1741 sown in it, and the fruit represents the actions and
1742 affections of those who receive it. To break up the
1743 fallow ground, therefore, is to bring the mind into
1744 such a state, that it is fitted to receive the word of
1745 God. Sometimes your hearts get matted down hard
1746 and dry, and all run to waste, till there is no such
1747 thing as getting fruit from them till they are all
1748 broken up, and mellowed down, and fitted to
1749 receive the word of God. It is this softening of the
1750 heart, so as to make it feel the truth, which the
1751 prophet calls breaking up your fallow ground.

1752

1753 II. HOW IS THE FALLOW GROUND TO BE
1754 BROKEN UP?

1755

1756 1. It is not by any direct efforts to feel. People run
1757 into a mistake on this subject, from not making the
1758 laws of mind the object of thought. There are great
1759 errors on the subject of the laws which govern the
1760 mind. People talk about religious feeling, as if they
1761 thought they could, by direct effort, call forth

1762 religious affection. But this is not the way the mind
1763 acts. No man can make himself feel in this way,
1764 merely by trying to feel. The feelings of the mind
1765 are not directly under our control. We cannot by
1766 willing, or by direct volition, call forth religious
1767 feelings. We might as well think to call spirits up
1768 from the deep. They are purely involuntary states
1769 of mind. They naturally and necessarily exist in the
1770 mind under certain circumstances calculated to
1771 excite them. But they can be controlled indirectly.
1772 Otherwise there would be no moral character in our
1773 feelings, if there were not a way to control them.
1774 We cannot say, “Now I will feel so and so towards
1775 such an object.” But we can command our attention
1776 to it, and look at it intently, till the involuntary
1777 affections arise. Let a man who is away from his
1778 family, bring them up before his mind, and will he
1779 not feel? But it is not by saying to himself, “Now I
1780 will feel deeply for my family.” A man can direct
1781 his attention to any object, about which he ought to
1782 feel and wishes to feel, and in that way he will call
1783 into existence the proper emotions. Let a man call
1784 up his enemy before his mind, and his feelings of
1785 enmity will rise. So if a man thinks of God, and
1786 fastens his mind on any parts of God’s character,
1787 he will feel—emotions will come up, by the very
1788 laws of mind. If he is a friend of God, let him
1789 contemplate God as a gracious and holy being, and

1790 he will have emotions of friendship kindled up in
1791 his mind. If he is an enemy of God, only let him get
1792 the true character of God before his mind, and look
1793 at it, and fasten his attention on it, and his enmity
1794 will rise against God, or he will break down and
1795 give his heart to God.

1796

1797 If you wish to break up the fallow ground of your
1798 hearts, and make your minds feel on the subject of
1799 religion, you must go to work just as you would to
1800 feel on any other subject. Instead of keeping your
1801 thoughts on every thing else, and then imagine that
1802 by going to a few meetings you will get your
1803 feelings enlisted, go the common sense way to
1804 work, as you would on any other subject. It is just
1805 as easy to make your minds feel on the subject of
1806 religion as it is on any other subject. God has put
1807 these states of mind under your control. If people
1808 were as unphilosophical about moving their limbs,
1809 as they are about regulating their emotions, you
1810 would never have got here to meeting to-night.

1811

1812 If you mean to break up the fallow ground of your
1813 hearts, you must begin by looking at your hearts—
1814 examine and note the state of your minds, and see
1815 where you are. Many never seem to think about
1816 this. They pay no attention to their own hearts, and
1817 never know whether they are doing well in religion

1818 or not—whether they are gaining ground or going
1819 back—whether they are fruitful, or lying waste like
1820 the fallow ground. Now you must draw off your
1821 attention from other things, and look into this.
1822 Make a business of it. Do not be in a hurry.
1823 Examine thoroughly the state of your hearts, and
1824 see where you are—whether you are walking with
1825 God every day, or walking with the devil—whether
1826 you are serving God or serving the devil most—
1827 whether you are under the dominion of the prince
1828 of darkness, or the Lord Jesus Christ.

1829
1830 To do all this, you must set yourself at work to
1831 consider your sins. You must examine yourselves.
1832 And by this I do not mean, that you must stop and
1833 look directly within to see what is the present state
1834 of your feelings. That is the very way to put a stop
1835 to all feeling. This is just as absurd as it would be
1836 for a man to shut his eyes on the lamp, and try to
1837 turn his eyes inward to find out whether there was
1838 any image painted on the retina. The man
1839 complains that he does not see anything! And why?
1840 Because he has turned his eyes away from the
1841 objects of sight. The truth is, our moral feelings are
1842 as much an object of consciousness as our
1843 sensations. And the way to excite is to go on
1844 acting, and employing our minds. Then we can tell
1845 our moral feelings by consciousness, just as I could

1846 tell my natural feelings by consciousness, if I
1847 should put my hand in the fire.

1848

1849 Self-examination consists in looking at your lives,
1850 in considering your actions, in calling up the past,
1851 and learning its true character. Look back over your
1852 past history. Take up your individual sins one by
1853 one, and look at them. I do not mean that you
1854 should just cast a glance at your past life, and see
1855 that it has been full of sins, and then go to God and
1856 make a sort of general confession, and ask for
1857 pardon. That is not the way. You must take them
1858 up one by one. It will be a good thing to take a pen
1859 and paper, as you go over them, and write them
1860 down as they occur to you. Go over them as
1861 carefully as a merchant goes over his books; and as
1862 often as a sin comes before your memory, add it to
1863 the list. General confessions of sin will never do.
1864 Your sins were committed one by one; and as far as
1865 you can come at them, they ought to be reviewed
1866 and repented of one by one. Now begin; and take
1867 up first what are commonly, but improperly, called
1868 your

1869

1870 SINS OF OMISSION.

1871

1872 1. Ingratitude. Take this sin, for instance, and write
1873 down under it all the instances you can remember,

1874 wherein you have received favors from God, for
1875 which you have never exercised gratitude. How
1876 many cases can you remember? Some remarkable
1877 providence, some wonderful turn of events, that
1878 saved you from ruin. Set down the instances of
1879 God's goodness to you when you were in sin,
1880 before your conversion. Then the mercy of God in
1881 the circumstances of your conversion, for which
1882 you have never been half thankful enough. The
1883 numerous mercies you have received since. How
1884 long the catalogue of instances, where your
1885 ingratitude is so black that you are forced to hide
1886 your face in confusion! Now go on your knees, and
1887 confess them one by one to God, and ask
1888 forgiveness. The very act of confession, by the
1889 laws of suggestion, will bring up others to your
1890 memory. Put down these. Go over these three or
1891 four times in this way, and you will find an
1892 astonishing amount of mercies, for which you have
1893 never thanked God. Then take another sin. Let it
1894 be,

1895
1896 2. Want of love to God. Write that down, and go
1897 over all the instances you can remember, when you
1898 did not give to the blessed God that hearty love
1899 which you ought.
1900

1901 Think how grieved and alarmed you would be, if
1902 you discovered any flagging of affection for you in
1903 your wife, husband, or children; if you saw
1904 somebody else engrossing their hearts, and
1905 thoughts, and time. Perhaps, in such a case, you
1906 would well nigh die with a just and virtuous
1907 jealousy. Now, God styles himself a jealous God;
1908 and have you not given your heart to other loves:
1909 played the harlot, and infinitely offended him?
1910

1911 3. Neglect of the Bible. Put down the cases, when
1912 for days, and perhaps for weeks—yea, it may be,
1913 even for months together, you had no pleasure in
1914 God's word. Perhaps you did not read a chapter, or
1915 if you read it, it was in a way that was still more
1916 displeasing to God. Many people read over a whole
1917 chapter in such a way, that if they were put under
1918 oath when they have done, they could not tell what
1919 they have been reading. With so little attention do
1920 they read, that they cannot remember where they
1921 have read from morning till evening, unless they
1922 put in a string or turn down a leaf. This
1923 demonstrates that they did not lay to heart what
1924 they read, that they did not make it a subject of
1925 reflection. If you were reading a novel, or any other
1926 piece of intelligence that greatly interested you,
1927 would you not remember what you read last? And
1928 the fact that you fold a leaf or put in a string,

1929 demonstrates that you read rather as a task, than
1930 from love or reverence for the word of God. The
1931 word of God is the rule of your duty. And do you
1932 pay so little regard to it as not to remember what
1933 you read? If so, no wonder that you live so at
1934 random, and that your religion is such a miserable
1935 failure.

1936
1937 4. Unbelief. Instances in which you have virtually
1938 charged the God of truth with lying, by your
1939 unbelief of his express promises and declarations.
1940 God has promised to give the Holy Spirit to them
1941 that ask him. Now, have you believed this? Have
1942 you expected him to answer? Have you not
1943 virtually said in your hearts, when you prayed for
1944 the Holy Spirit, "I do not believe that I shall
1945 receive it?" If you have not believed nor expected
1946 you should receive the blessing, which God has
1947 expressly promised, you have charged him with
1948 lying.

1949
1950 5. Neglect of prayer. Times when you omitted
1951 secret prayer, family prayer, and prayer meetings,
1952 or have prayed in such a way as more grievously to
1953 offend God, than to have neglected it altogether.

1954
1955 6. Neglect of the means of grace. When you have
1956 suffered trifling excuses to prevent your attending

1957 meetings, have neglected and poured contempt
1958 upon the means of salvation, merely from disrelish
1959 of spiritual duties.

1960

1961 7. The manner in which you have performed those
1962 duties—want of feeling—want of faith—worldly
1963 frame of mind—so that your words were nothing
1964 but the mere chattering of a wretch, that did not
1965 deserve that God should feel the least care for him.
1966 When you have fallen down upon your knees, and
1967 said your prayers, in such an unfeeling and careless
1968 manner, that if you had been put under oath five
1969 minutes after you left your closet, you could not
1970 have told what you had been praying for.

1971

1972 8. Your want of love for the souls of your fellow-
1973 men. Look round upon your friends and relations,
1974 and remember how little compassion you have felt
1975 for them. You have stood by and seen them going
1976 right to hell, and it seems as though you did not
1977 care if they did. How many days have there been,
1978 in which you did not make their condition the
1979 subject of a single fervent prayer, or even an ardent
1980 desire for their salvation?

1981

1982 9. Your want of care for the heathen. Perhaps you
1983 have not cared enough for them to attempt to learn
1984 their condition; perhaps not even to take a

1985 Missionary paper. Look at this, and see how much
1986 you do really care for the heathen, and set down
1987 honestly the real amount of your feelings for them,
1988 and your desire for their salvation. Measure your
1989 desire for their salvation by the self-denial you
1990 practise, in giving of your substance to send them
1991 the Gospel. Do you deny yourself even the hurtful
1992 superfluities of life, such as tea, coffee, and
1993 tobacco? Do you retrench your style of living, and
1994 really subject yourself to any inconvenience to save
1995 them? Do you daily pray for them in your closet?
1996 Do you statedly attend the monthly concert? Are
1997 you from month to month laying by something to
1998 put into the treasury of the Lord, when you go up to
1999 pray? If you are not doing these things, and if your
2000 soul is not agonized for the poor benighted
2001 heathen, why are you such a hypocrite as to pretend
2002 to be a Christian? Why, your profession is an insult
2003 to Jesus Christ!

2004
2005 10. Your neglect of family duties. How you have
2006 lived before them, how you have prayed, what an
2007 example you have set before them. What direct
2008 efforts do you habitually make for their spiritual
2009 good? What duty have you not neglected?

2010
2011 11. Neglect of social duties.
2012

2013 12. Neglect of watchfulness over your own life.
2014 Instances in which you have hurried over your
2015 private duties, and not taken yourself to task, nor
2016 honestly made up your accounts with God. Where
2017 you have entirely neglected to watch your conduct,
2018 and have been off your guard, and have sinned
2019 before the world, and before the church, and before
2020 God.

2021
2022 13. Neglect to watch over your brethren. How often
2023 have you broken your covenant, that you would
2024 watch over them in the Lord! How little do you
2025 know or care about the state of their souls! And yet
2026 you are under a solemn oath to watch over them.
2027 What have you done to make yourself acquainted
2028 with them? How many of them have you interested
2029 yourself for, to know their spiritual state? Go over
2030 the list, and wherever you find there has been a
2031 neglect, write it down. How many times have you
2032 seen your brethren growing cold in religion, and
2033 have not spoken to them about it? You have seen
2034 them beginning to neglect one duty after another,
2035 and you did not reprove them in a brotherly way.
2036 You have seen them falling into sin, and you let
2037 them go on. And yet you pretend to love them.
2038 What a hypocrite! Would you see your wife or
2039 child going into disgrace, or into the fire, and hold
2040 your peace? No, you would not. What do you think

2041 of yourself, then, to pretend to love Christians, and
2042 to love Christ, while you can see them going into
2043 disgrace, and say nothing to them?
2044

2045 14. Neglect of self-denial. There are many
2046 professors who are willing to do almost any thing
2047 in religion, that does not require self-denial. But
2048 when they are called to do any thing that requires
2049 them to deny themselves, Oh! that is too much.
2050 They think they are doing a great deal for God, and
2051 doing about as much as he ought to ask in reason, if
2052 they are only doing what they can do about as well
2053 as not; but they are not willing to deny themselves
2054 any comfort or convenience whatever, for the sake
2055 of serving the Lord. They will not willingly suffer
2056 reproach for the name of Christ. Nor will they deny
2057 themselves the luxuries of life, to save a world
2058 from hell. So far are they from remembering that
2059 self-denial is a condition of discipleship, that they
2060 do not know what self-denial is. They never have
2061 really denied themselves a ribband or a pin for
2062 Christ, and for the Gospel. Oh, how soon such
2063 professors will be in hell! Some are giving of their
2064 abundance, and are giving much, and are ready to
2065 complain that others don't give more; when, in
2066 truth, they do not give any thing that they need, any
2067 thing that they could enjoy, if they kept it. They
2068 only give of their surplus wealth; and perhaps that

2069 poor woman, who puts in twelve and a half cents at
2070 the monthly concert, has exercised more self-
2071 denial, than they have in giving thousands.

2072

2073 From these we now turn to

2074

2075 SINS OF COMMISSION.

2076

2077 1. Worldly mindedness. What has been the state of
2078 your heart in regard to your worldly possessions?
2079 Have you looked at them as really yours—as if you
2080 had a right to dispose of them as your own,
2081 according to your own will? If you have, write that
2082 down. If you have loved property, and sought after
2083 it for its own sake, or to gratify lust or ambition, or
2084 a worldly spirit, or to lay it up for your families,
2085 you have sinned, and must repent.

2086

2087 2. Pride. Recollect all the instances you can, in
2088 which you have detected yourself in the exercise of
2089 pride. Vanity is a particular form of pride. How
2090 many times have you detected yourself in
2091 consulting vanity, about your dress and
2092 appearance? How many times have you thought
2093 more, and taken more pains, and spent more time,
2094 about decorating your body to go to church, than
2095 you have about preparing your mind for the
2096 worship of God? You have gone to the house of

2097 God caring more how you appear outwardly in the
2098 sight of mortal men, than how your soul appears in
2099 the sight of the heart-searching God. You have in
2100 fact set up yourself to be worshipped by them,
2101 rather than prepared to worship God yourself. You
2102 came to divide the worship of God's house, to draw
2103 off the attention of God's people to look at your
2104 pretty appearance. It is in vain to pretend now, that
2105 you don't care any thing about having people look
2106 at you. Be honest about it. Would you take all this
2107 pains about your looks if every body was blind?

2108
2109 3. Envy. Look at the cases in which you were
2110 envious at those who you thought were above you
2111 in any respect. Or perhaps you have envied those
2112 who have been more talented or more useful than
2113 yourself. Have you not so envied some, that you
2114 have been pained to hear them praised? It has been
2115 more agreeable to you to dwell upon their faults,
2116 than upon their virtues, upon their failures, than
2117 upon their success. Be honest with yourself, and if
2118 you have harbored this spirit of hell, repent deeply
2119 before God, or he will never forgive you.

2120
2121 4. Censoriousness. Instances in which you have
2122 had a bitter spirit, and spoken of Christians in a
2123 manner entirely devoid of charity and love—
2124 charity, which requires you always to hope the best

2125 the case will admit, and to put the best construction
2126 upon any ambiguous conduct.

2127

2128 5. Slander. The times you have spoken behind
2129 people's backs of their faults, real or supposed, of
2130 members of the church or others, unnecessarily or
2131 without good reason. This is slander. You need not
2132 lie to be guilty of slander;—to tell the truth with the
2133 design to injure, is slander.

2134

2135 6. Levity. How often have you trifled before God,
2136 as you would not have dared to trifle in the
2137 presence of an earthly sovereign? You have either
2138 been an Atheist, and forgotten that there was a
2139 God, or have had less respect for him, and his
2140 presence, than you would have had for an earthly
2141 judge.

2142

2143 7. Lying. Understand now what lying is. Any
2144 species of designed deception for a selfish reason is
2145 lying. If the deception is not a design it is not lying.
2146 But if you design to make an impression contrary
2147 to the naked truth, you lie. Put down all those cases
2148 you can recollect. Don't call them by any soft
2149 name. God calls them LIES, and charges you with
2150 LYING, and you had better charge yourself
2151 correctly.

2152

2153 How innumerable are the falsehoods perpetrated
2154 every day in business, and in social intercourse, by
2155 words, and looks, and actions—designed to make
2156 an impression on others contrary to the truth for
2157 selfish reasons.

2158

2159 8. Cheating. Set down all the cases in which you
2160 have dealt with an individual, and done to him that
2161 which you would not like to have done to you. That
2162 is cheating. God has laid down a rule in the case;
2163 “All things whatsoever ye would that men should
2164 do to you, do ye even so to them.” That is the rule;
2165 and now if you have not done so you are a cheat.
2166 Mind, the rule is not that you should do what you
2167 might reasonably expect them to do to you. That is
2168 a rule which would admit of every degree of
2169 wickedness. But it is “As ye WOULD they should
2170 do to you.”

2171

2172 9. Hypocrisy. For instance, in your prayers and
2173 confessions to God. Set down the instances in
2174 which you have prayed for things you did not
2175 really want. And the evidence is, that when you
2176 had done praying, you could not tell what you had
2177 prayed for. How many times have you confessed
2178 sins that you did not mean to break off, and when
2179 you had no solemn purpose not to repeat them?
2180 Yes, have confessed sins when you knew you as

2181 much expected to go and repeat them as you
2182 expected to live.

2183

2184 10. Robbing God. Instances in which you have
2185 misspent your time, and squandered hours which
2186 God gave you to serve him and save souls, in vain
2187 amusements or foolish conversation, reading
2188 novels, or doing nothing; cases where you have
2189 misapplied your talents and powers of mind; where
2190 you have squandered money on your lusts, or spent
2191 it for things you did not need, and which neither
2192 contributed to your health, comfort or usefulness.
2193 Perhaps some of you who are here to-night have
2194 laid out God's money for TOBACCO. I will not
2195 speak of rum, for I presume there is no professor of
2196 religion here to-night that would drink rum. I hope
2197 there is no one that uses that filthy poison, tobacco.
2198 Think of a professor of religion, using God's
2199 money to poison himself with tobacco!

2200

2201 11. Bad temper. Perhaps you have abused your
2202 wife, or your children, or your family, or servants,
2203 or neighbors. Write it all down.

2204

2205 12. Hindering others from being useful. Perhaps
2206 you have weakened their influence by insinuations
2207 against them. You have not only robbed God of
2208 your own talents, but tied the hands of somebody

2209 else. What a wicked servant is he that loiters
2210 himself, and hinders the rest! This is done
2211 sometimes by taking their time needlessly;
2212 sometimes by destroying Christian confidence in
2213 them. Thus you have played into the hands of
2214 Satan, and not only showed yourself an idle
2215 vagabond, but prevented others from working.

2216
2217 If you find you have committed a fault against an
2218 individual, and that individual is within your reach,
2219 go and confess it immediately, and get that out of
2220 the way. If the individual you have injured is too
2221 far off for you to go and see him, sit down and
2222 write him a letter, and confess the injury, pay the
2223 postage, and put it into the mail immediately. I say,
2224 pay the postage, or otherwise you will only make
2225 the matter worse. You will add to the former
2226 injury, by making him a bill of expense. The man
2227 that writes a letter on his own business, and sends it
2228 to another without paying the postage, is dishonest,
2229 and has cheated him out of so much. And if he
2230 would cheat a man out of a sixpence or shilling,
2231 when the temptation is so small, what would he not
2232 do were the temptation greater, if he had the
2233 prospect of impunity? If you have defrauded any
2234 body, send the money, the full amount and the
2235 interest.
2236

2237 Go thoroughly to work in all this. Go now. Don't
2238 put it off; that will only make the matter worse.
2239 Confess to God those sins that have been
2240 committed against God, and to man those sins that
2241 have been committed against man. Don't think of
2242 getting off by going round the stumbling blocks.
2243 Take them up out of the way. In breaking up your
2244 fallow ground, you must remove every obstruction.
2245 Things may be left that you may think little things,
2246 and you may wonder why you do not feel as you
2247 wish to in religion, when the reason is that your
2248 proud and carnal mind has covered up something
2249 which God required you to confess and remove.
2250 Break up all the ground and turn it over. Do not
2251 balk it, as the farmers say; do not turn aside for
2252 little difficulties; drive the plow right through them,
2253 beam deep, and turn the ground all up, so that it
2254 may all be mellow and soft, and fit to receive the
2255 seed and bear fruit a hundred fold.
2256
2257 When you have gone over your whole history in
2258 this way, thoroughly, if you will then go over the
2259 ground the second time, and give your solemn and
2260 fixed attention to it, you will find that the things
2261 you have put down will suggest other things of
2262 which you have been guilty, connected with them,
2263 or near them. Then go over it a third time, and you
2264 will recollect other things connected with these.

2265 And you will find in the end that you can remember
2266 an amount of your history, and particular actions,
2267 even in this life, which you did not think you
2268 should remember in eternity. Unless you do take up
2269 your sins in this way, and consider them in detail,
2270 one by one, you can form no idea of the amount of
2271 your sins. You should go over it as thoroughly and
2272 as carefully, and as solemnly, as you would if you
2273 were just preparing yourself for the judgment.

2274

2275 As you go over the catalogue of your sins, be sure
2276 to resolve upon present and entire reformation.

2277 Wherever you find any thing wrong, resolve at
2278 once, in the strength of God, to sin no more in that
2279 way. It will be of no benefit to examine yourself,
2280 unless you determine to amend in every particular
2281 that you find wrong in heart, temper, or conduct.

2282

2283 If you find, as you go on with this duty, that your
2284 mind is still all dark, cast about you, and you will
2285 find there is some reason for the Spirit of God to
2286 depart from you. You have not been faithful and
2287 thorough. In the progress of such a work you have
2288 got to do violence to yourself, and bring yourself as
2289 a rational being up to this work, with the Bible
2290 before you, and try your heart till you do feel. You
2291 need not expect that God will work a miracle for
2292 you to break up your fallow ground. It is to be done

2293 by means. Fasten your attention to the subject of
2294 your sins. You cannot look at your sins long and
2295 thoroughly, and see how bad they are, without
2296 feeling, and feeling deeply. Experience abundantly
2297 proves the benefit of going over our history in this
2298 way. Set yourself to the work now; resolve that you
2299 never will stop till you find you can pray. You
2300 never will have the spirit of prayer, till you
2301 examine yourself, and confess your sins, and break
2302 up your fallow ground. You never will have the
2303 Spirit of God dwelling in you, till you have
2304 unraveled this whole mystery of iniquity, and
2305 spread out your sins before God. Let there be this
2306 deep work of repentance, and full confession, this
2307 breaking down before God, and you will have as
2308 much of the spirit of prayer as your body can bear
2309 up under. The reason why so few Christians know
2310 any thing about the spirit of prayer, is because they
2311 never would take the pains to examine themselves
2312 properly, and so never knew what it was to have
2313 their hearts all broken up in this way.

2314
2315 You see I have only begun to lay open this subject
2316 to-night. I want to lay it out before you, in the
2317 course of these lectures, so that if you will begin
2318 and go on to do as I say, the results will be just as
2319 certain as they are when the farmer breaks up a
2320 fallow field, and mellows it, and sows his grain. It

2321 will be so, if you will only begin in this way, and
2322 hold on till all your hardened and callous hearts
2323 break up.

2324

2325 REMARKS.

2326

2327 1. It will do no good to preach to you while your
2328 hearts are in this hardened, and waste, and fallow
2329 state. The farmer might just as well sow his grain
2330 on the rock. It will bring forth no fruit. This is the
2331 reason why there are so many fruitless professors
2332 in the church, and why there is so much outside
2333 machinery, and so little deep-toned feeling in the
2334 church. Look at the Sabbath-school for instance,
2335 and see how much machinery there is, and how
2336 little of the power of godliness. If you go on in this
2337 way, the word of God will continue to harden you,
2338 and you will grow worse and worse, just as the rain
2339 and snow on an old fallow field makes the turf
2340 thicker, and the clods stronger.

2341

2342 2. See why so much preaching is wasted, and
2343 worse than wasted. It is because the church will not
2344 break up their fallow ground. A preacher may wear
2345 out his life, and do very little good, while there are
2346 so many stony-ground hearers, who have never had
2347 their fallow ground broken up. They are only half
2348 converted, and their religion is rather a change of

2349 opinion than a change of the feeling of their hearts.
2350 There is mechanical religion enough, but very little
2351 that looks like deep heart-work.

2352

2353 3. Professors of religion should never satisfy
2354 themselves, or expect a revival, just by starting out
2355 of their slumbers, and blustering about, and making
2356 a noise, and talking to sinners. They must get their
2357 fallow ground broken up. It is utterly
2358 unphilosophical to think of getting engaged in
2359 religion in this way. If your fallow ground is
2360 broken up, then the way to get more feeling, is to
2361 go out and see sinners on the road to hell, and talk
2362 to them, and guide inquiring souls, and you will get
2363 more feeling. You may get into an excitement
2364 without this breaking up; you may show a kind of
2365 zeal, but it will not last long, and it will not take
2366 hold of sinners, unless your hearts are broken up.
2367 The reason is, that you go about it mechanically,
2368 and have not broken up your fallow ground.

2369

2370 4. And now, finally, will you break up your fallow
2371 ground? Will you enter upon the course now
2372 pointed out, and persevere till you are thoroughly
2373 awake? If you fail here, if you do not do this, and
2374 get prepared, you can go no further with me in this
2375 course of lectures. I have gone with you as far as it
2376 is of any use to go, until your fallow ground is

2377 broken up. Now, you must make thorough work
2378 upon this point, or all I have further to say will do
2379 you little good. Nay, it will only harden and make
2380 you worse. If, when next Friday night arrives, it
2381 finds you with unbroken hearts, you need not
2382 expect to be benefited by what I shall say. If you do
2383 not set about this work immediately, I shall take it
2384 for granted that you do not mean to be revived, that
2385 you have forsaken your minister, and mean to let
2386 him go up to battle alone. If you do not do this, I
2387 charge you with having forsaken Christ, with
2388 refusing to repent and do your first work. But if
2389 you will be prepared to enter upon the work, I
2390 propose, God willing, next Friday evening, to lead
2391 you into the work of saving sinners.

2392

2393

2394

2395 LECTURE IV.

2396

2397 PREVAILING PRAYER.

2398

2399 Text.—The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous
2400 man availeth much.—James v. 16.

2401

2402 THE last lecture referred principally to the
2403 confession of sin. To-night my remarks will be
2404 chiefly confined to the subject of intercession, or

2405 prayer. There are two kinds of means requisite to
2406 promote a revival; one to influence men, the other
2407 to influence God. The truth is employed to
2408 influence men, and prayer to move God. When I
2409 speak of moving God, I do not mean that God's
2410 mind is changed by prayer, or that his disposition
2411 or character is changed. But prayer produces such a
2412 change in us and fulfils such conditions as renders
2413 it consistent for God to do as it would not be
2414 consistent for him to do otherwise. When a sinner
2415 repents, that state of mind makes it proper for God
2416 to forgive him. God has always been ready to
2417 forgive him on that condition, so that when the
2418 sinner changes his mind towards God, it requires
2419 no change of feeling in God to pardon him. It is the
2420 sinner's repentance that renders his forgiveness
2421 proper, and is the occasion of God's acting as he
2422 does. So when Christians offer effectual prayer,
2423 their state of mind renders it proper for God to
2424 answer them. He was always ready to bestow the
2425 blessing, on the condition that they felt right, and
2426 offered the right kind of prayer. Whenever this
2427 change takes place in them, and they offer the right
2428 kind of prayer, then God, without any change in
2429 himself, can answer them. When we offer effectual
2430 fervent prayer for others, the fact that we offer such
2431 prayer renders it consistent for him to do what we

2432 pray for, when otherwise it would not have been
2433 consistent.

2434

2435 Prayer is an essential link in the chain of causes
2436 that lead to a revival; as much so as truth is. Some
2437 have zealously used truth to convert men, and laid
2438 very little stress on prayer. They have preached,
2439 and talked, and distributed tracts with great zeal,
2440 and then wondered that they had so little success.
2441 And the reason was, that they forgot to use the
2442 other branch of the means, effectual prayer. They
2443 overlooked the fact, that truth by itself will never
2444 produce the effect, without the Spirit of God, and
2445 that Spirit is given in answer to earnest prayer.

2446

2447 Sometimes it happens that those who are the most
2448 engaged in employing truth, are not the most
2449 engaged in prayer. This is always unhappy.—For
2450 unless they, or somebody else have the spirit of
2451 prayer, the truth by itself will do nothing but
2452 harden men in impenitence. Probably in the day of
2453 judgment it will be found that nothing is ever done
2454 by the truth, used ever so zealously, unless there is
2455 a spirit of prayer somewhere in connection with the
2456 presentation of truth.

2457

2458 Others err on the other side. Not that they lay too
2459 much stress on prayer. But they overlook the fact

2460 that prayer might be offered for ever, by itself, and
2461 nothing would be done. Because sinners are not
2462 converted by direct contact of the Holy Ghost, but
2463 by the truth, employed as a means. To expect the
2464 conversion of sinners by prayer alone, without the
2465 employment of truth, is to tempt God.

2466

2467 The subject of discourse this evening, is

2468

2469 PREVAILING PRAYER.

2470

2471 I. I propose to show what is effectual or prevailing
2472 prayer.

2473

2474 II. State some of the most essential attributes of
2475 prevailing prayer.

2476

2477 III. Give some reasons why God requires this kind
2478 of prayer.

2479

2480 IV. Show that such prayer will avail much.

2481

2482 I. I proceed to show what is prevailing prayer.

2483

2484 1. Effectual, prevailing prayer, does not consist in
2485 benevolent desires merely. Benevolent desires are
2486 doubtless pleasing to God. Such desires pervade
2487 heaven, and are found in all holy beings. But they

2488 are not prayer. Men may have these desires as the
2489 angels and glorified spirits have them. But this is
2490 not the effectual, prevailing prayer, spoken of in
2491 the text. Prevailing prayer is something more than
2492 this.

2493
2494 2. Prevailing, or effectual prayer, is that prayer
2495 which obtains the blessing that it seeks. It is that
2496 prayer which effectually moves God. The very idea
2497 of effectual prayer is, that it effects its object.

2498
2499 II. I will state some of the most essential attributes
2500 of prevailing prayer. I cannot detail in full all the
2501 things that go to make up prevailing prayer. But I
2502 will mention some things that are essential to it;
2503 some things which a person must do in order to
2504 prevail in prayer.

2505
2506 1. He must pray for a definite object. He need not
2507 expect to offer such prayer, if he prays at random,
2508 without any distinct or definite object. He must
2509 have an object distinctly before his mind. I speak
2510 now of secret prayer. Many people go away into
2511 their closets, because they must say their prayers.
2512 The time has come that they are in the habit of
2513 going by themselves for prayer, in the morning, or
2514 at noon, or at whatever time of day it may be. And
2515 instead of having any thing to say, any definite

2516 object before their mind, they fall down on their
2517 knees, and pray for just what comes into their
2518 minds, for everything that floats in their
2519 imagination at the time, and when they have done,
2520 they could not tell hardly a word of what they have
2521 been praying for. This is not effectual prayer. What
2522 should we think of any body who should try to
2523 move a legislature so, and should say, “Now it is
2524 winter, and the legislature is in session, and it is
2525 time to send up petitions,” and should go up to the
2526 legislature and petition at random, without any
2527 definite object? Do you think such petitions would
2528 move the legislature?

2529
2530 A man must have some definite object before his
2531 mind. He cannot pray effectually for a variety of
2532 objects at once. The mind of man is so constituted
2533 that it cannot fasten its desires intensely upon many
2534 things at the same time. All the instances of
2535 effectual prayer recorded in the Bible were of this
2536 kind. Wherever you see that the blessing sought for
2537 in prayer was attained, you will find that the prayer
2538 which was offered was prayer for that definite
2539 object.

2540
2541 2. Prayer, to be effectual, must be in accordance
2542 with the revealed will of God. To pray for things
2543 contrary to the revealed will of God, is to tempt

2544 God. There are three ways in which God's will is
2545 revealed to men for their guidance in prayer.

2546

2547 (1.) By express promises or predictions in the
2548 Bible, that he will give or do certain things. Either
2549 by express promises in regard to particular things,
2550 or promises in general terms, so that we may apply
2551 them to particular things. For instance, there is this
2552 promise: "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye
2553 pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall
2554 have them."

2555

2556 (2.) Sometimes God reveals his will by his
2557 providence. When he makes it clear that such and
2558 such events are about to take place, it is as much a
2559 revelation as if he had written it in his word. It
2560 would be impossible to reveal every thing in the
2561 Bible. But God often makes it clear to those who
2562 have spiritual discernment, that it is his will to
2563 grant such and such blessings.

2564

2565 (3.) By his Spirit. When God's people are at a loss
2566 what to pray for, agreeable to his will, his Spirit
2567 often instructs them. Where there is no particular
2568 revelation, and providence leaves it dark, and we
2569 know not what to pray for as we ought, we are
2570 expressly told, that "the Spirit also helpeth our
2571 infirmities," and "the Spirit itself maketh

2572 intercession for us with groanings that cannot be
2573 uttered.” A great deal has been said on the subject
2574 of praying in faith for things not revealed. It is
2575 objected, that this doctrine implies a new
2576 revelation. I answer, that, new or old, it is the very
2577 revelation that Jehovah says he makes. It is just as
2578 plain here, as if it were now revealed by a voice
2579 from heaven, that the Spirit of God helps the
2580 people of God to pray according to the will of God,
2581 when they themselves know not what things they
2582 ought to pray for. “And he that searcheth the heart
2583 knoweth the mind of the Spirit,” because he
2584 maketh intercession for the saints according to the
2585 will of God, and he leads Christians to pray for just
2586 those things, with groanings that cannot be uttered.
2587 When neither the word nor providence enables
2588 them to decide, then let them be filled with the
2589 Spirit, as God commands them to be. He says, “Be
2590 ye filled with the Spirit.” And He will lead their
2591 mind to such things as God is willing to grant.

2592

2593 3. To pray effectually, you must pray with
2594 submission to the will of God. Do not confound
2595 submission with indifference. No two things are
2596 more unlike. I once knew an individual come
2597 where there was a revival. He himself was cold,
2598 and did not enter into the spirit of it, and had no
2599 spirit of prayer; and when he heard the brethren

2600 pray as if they could not be denied, he was shocked
2601 at their boldness, and kept all the time insisting on
2602 the importance of praying with submission; when it
2603 was as plain as any thing could be, that he
2604 confounded submission with indifference

2605

2606 So again, do not confound submission in prayer
2607 with a general confidence that God will do what is
2608 right. It is proper to have this confidence that God
2609 will do what is right in all things. But this is a
2610 different thing from submission. What I mean by
2611 submission in prayer, is, acquiescence in the
2612 revealed will of God. To submit to any command
2613 of God is to obey it. Submission to some
2614 supposable or possible, but secret decree of God, is
2615 not submission. To submit to any dispensation of
2616 Providence is impossible till it comes. For we
2617 never can know what the event is to be, till it takes
2618 place. Take a case: David, when his child was sick,
2619 was distressed, and agonized in prayer, and refused
2620 to be comforted. He took it so much to heart, that
2621 when the child died, his servants were afraid to tell
2622 him the child was dead, for fear he would vex
2623 himself still worse. But as soon as he heard that the
2624 child was dead, he laid aside his grief, and arose,
2625 and asked for food, and ate and drank as usual.
2626 While the child was yet alive, he did not know
2627 what was the will of God, and so he fasted and

2628 prayed, and said, “Who can tell whether God will
2629 be gracious to me, that my child may live?” He did
2630 not know but that his prayer and agony was the
2631 very thing on which it turned, whether the child
2632 was to live or not. He thought that if he humbled
2633 himself and entreated God, perhaps God would
2634 spare him this blow. But as soon as God’s will
2635 appeared, and the child was dead, he bowed like a
2636 saint. He seemed not only to acquiesce, but actually
2637 to take a satisfaction in it. “I shall go to him, but he
2638 shall not return to me.” This was true submission.
2639 He reasoned correctly in the case. While he had no
2640 revelation of the will of God, he did not know but
2641 what the child’s recovery depended on his prayer.
2642 But when he had a revelation of the will of God, he
2643 submitted. While the will of God is not known, to
2644 submit, without prayer, is tempting God. Perhaps,
2645 and for aught you know, the fact of your offering
2646 the right kind of prayer, may be the thing on which
2647 the event turns. In the case of an impenitent friend,
2648 the very condition on which he is to be saved from
2649 hell, may be the fervency and importunity of your
2650 prayer for that individual.

2651

2652 4. Effectual prayer for an object implies a desire for
2653 that object commensurate with its importance. If a
2654 person truly desires any blessing, his desires will
2655 bear some proportion to the greatness of the

2656 blessing. The desires of the Lord Jesus Christ for
2657 the blessing he prayed for, were amazingly strong,
2658 and amounted even to agony. If the desire for an
2659 object is strong, and is a benevolent desire, and the
2660 thing not contrary to the will and providence of
2661 God, the presumption is, that it will be granted.
2662 There are two reasons for this presumption:

2663
2664 (1.) From the general benevolence of God. If it is a
2665 desirable object; if, so far as we can see, it would
2666 be an act of benevolence in God to grant it, his
2667 general benevolence is presumptive evidence that
2668 he will grant it.

2669
2670 (2.) If you find yourself exercised with benevolent
2671 desires for any object, there is a strong presumption
2672 that the Spirit of God is exciting these very desires,
2673 and stirring you up to pray for that object, so that it
2674 may be granted in answer to prayer. In such a case
2675 no degree of desire or importunity in prayer is
2676 improper. A Christian may come up, as it were, and
2677 take hold of the hand of God. See the case of
2678 Jacob, when he exclaimed, in an agony of desire, “I
2679 will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” Was
2680 God displeased with his boldness and importunity?
2681 Not at all; but he granted him the very thing he
2682 prayed for. So in the case of Moses. God said to
2683 Moses, “Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and

2684 blot out their name from under heaven, and I will
2685 make of thee a nation mightier and greater than
2686 they.” What did Moses do? Did he stand aside and
2687 let God do as he said? No, his mind runs back to
2688 the Egyptians, and he thinks how they will triumph.
2689 “Wherefore should the Egyptians say, For mischief
2690 did he bring them out.” It seemed as if he took hold
2691 of the uplifted hand of God, to avert the blow. Did
2692 God rebuke him for his interference, and tell him
2693 he had no business to interfere? No; it seemed as if
2694 he was unable to deny any thing to such
2695 importunity, and so Moses stood in the gap, and
2696 prevailed with God.

2697
2698 It is said of Xavier, the missionary, that he was
2699 once called to pray for a man who was sick, and he
2700 prayed so fervently that he seemed as it were to do
2701 violence to heaven—so the writer expresses it. And
2702 he prevailed, and the man recovered.

2703
2704 Such prayer is often offered in the present day,
2705 when Christians have been wrought up to such a
2706 pitch of importunity and such a holy boldness, that
2707 afterwards, when they looked back upon it, they
2708 were frightened and amazed at themselves, to think
2709 they should dare to exercise such importunity with
2710 God. And yet these prayers have prevailed, and
2711 obtained the blessing. And many of these persons,

2712 that I am acquainted with, are among the holiest
2713 persons I know in the world.

2714

2715 5. Prayer, to be effectual, must be offered from
2716 right motives. Prayer should not be selfish, but
2717 dictated by a supreme regard for the glory of God.
2718 A great deal of prayer is offered from pure
2719 selfishness. Women sometimes pray for their
2720 husbands, that they may be converted, because they
2721 say, “It would be so much more pleasant to have
2722 my husband go to meeting with me,” and all that.
2723 And they seem never to lift up their thoughts above
2724 self at all. They do not seem to think how their
2725 husbands are dishonoring God by their sins, and
2726 how God would be glorified in their conversion. So
2727 it is with parents very often. They cannot bear to
2728 think that their children should be lost. They pray
2729 for them very earnestly indeed. But if you go to
2730 talk with them, they are very tender, and tell you
2731 how good their children are, how they respect
2732 religion, and they think they are almost Christians
2733 now; and so they talk as if they were afraid you
2734 would hurt their children if you should tell them
2735 the truth. They do not think how such amiable and
2736 lovely children are dishonoring God by their sins;
2737 they are only thinking what a dreadful thing it will
2738 be for them to go to hell. Ah! unless their thoughts
2739 rise higher than this, their prayers will never

2740 prevail with a holy God. The temptation to selfish
2741 motives is so strong, that there is reason to fear a
2742 great many parental prayers never rise above the
2743 yearnings of parental tenderness. And that is the
2744 reason why so many prayers are not heard, and
2745 why so many pious, praying parents have ungodly
2746 children. Much of the prayer for the heathen world
2747 seems to be based on no higher principle than
2748 sympathy. Missionary agents, and others, are
2749 dwelling almost exclusively upon the six hundred
2750 millions of heathens going to hell, while little is
2751 said of their dishonoring God. This is a great evil;
2752 and until the church have higher motives for prayer
2753 and missionary effort than sympathy for the
2754 heathen, their prayers and efforts will never amount
2755 to much.

2756
2757 6. Prayer, to be effectual, must be by the
2758 intercession of the Spirit. You never can expect to
2759 offer prayer according to the will of God without
2760 the Spirit. In the first two cases, it is not because
2761 Christians are unable to offer such prayer, where
2762 the will of God is revealed in his word, or indicated
2763 by his providence. They are able to do it, just as
2764 they are able to be holy. But the fact is, that they
2765 are so wicked, that they never do offer such prayer,
2766 without they are influenced by the Spirit of God.

2767 There must be a faith, such as produced by the
2768 effectual operation of the Holy Ghost.

2769

2770 7. It must be persevering prayer. As a general
2771 thing, Christians who have backslidden and lost the
2772 spirit of prayer, will not get at once into the habit of
2773 persevering prayer. Their minds are not in a right
2774 state, and they cannot fix their minds, and hold on
2775 till the blessing comes. If their minds were in that
2776 state, that they would persevere till the answer
2777 comes, effectual prayer might be offered at once, as
2778 well as after praying ever so many times for an
2779 object. But they have to pray again and again,
2780 because their thoughts are so apt to wander away,
2781 and are so easily diverted from the object to
2782 something else. Until their minds get imbued with
2783 the spirit of prayer, they will not keep fixed to one
2784 point, and push their petition to an issue on the
2785 spot. Do not think you are prepared to offer
2786 prevailing prayer, if your feelings will let you pray
2787 once for an object, and then leave it. Most
2788 Christians come up to prevailing prayer by a
2789 protracted process. Their minds gradually become
2790 filled with anxiety about an object, so that they will
2791 even go about their business, sighing out their
2792 desires to God. Just as the mother whose child is
2793 sick, goes round her house, sighing as if her heart
2794 would break. And if she is a praying mother, her

2795 sighs are breathed out to God all the day long. If
2796 she goes out of the room where her child is, her
2797 mind is still on it; and if she is asleep, still her
2798 thoughts are on it, and she starts in her dreams,
2799 thinking it is dying. Her whole mind is absorbed in
2800 that sick child. This is the state of mind in which
2801 Christians offer prevailing prayer.

2802
2803 What was the reason that Jacob wrestled all night
2804 in prayer with God? He knew that he had done his
2805 brother Esau a great injury, in getting away the
2806 birthright a long time ago. And now he was
2807 informed that his injured brother was coming to
2808 meet him, with an armed force altogether too
2809 powerful for him to contend against. And there was
2810 great reason to suppose he was coming with a
2811 purpose of revenge. There were two reasons then
2812 why he should be distressed. The first was, that he
2813 had done this great injury, and had never made any
2814 reparation. The other was, that Esau was coming
2815 with a force sufficient to crush him. Now, what
2816 does he do? Why, he first arranges everything in
2817 the best manner he can to meet his brother, sending
2818 his present first, then his property, then his family,
2819 putting those he loved most farthest behind. And
2820 by this time his mind was so exercised that he
2821 could not contain himself. He goes away alone
2822 over the brook, and pours out his very soul in an

2823 agony of prayer all night. And just as the day was
2824 breaking, the angel of the covenant said, "Let me
2825 go;" and his whole being was, as it were, agonized
2826 at the thought of giving up, and he cried out, "I will
2827 not let thee go except thou bless me." His soul was
2828 wrought up into an agony, and he obtained the
2829 blessing, but he always bore the marks of it, and
2830 showed that his body had been greatly affected by
2831 this mental struggle. This is prevailing prayer.

2832

2833 Now, do not deceive yourselves with thinking that
2834 you offer effectual prayer, unless you have this
2835 intense desire for the blessing. I do not believe in it.
2836 Prayer is not effectual unless it is offered up with
2837 an agony of desire. The apostle Paul speaks of it as
2838 a travail of the soul. Jesus Christ, when he was
2839 praying in the garden, was in such an agony, that
2840 he sweat as it were great drops of blood falling
2841 down to the ground. I have never known a person
2842 sweat blood; but I have known a person pray till
2843 the blood started from the nose. And I have known
2844 persons pray till they were all wet with
2845 perspiration, in the coldest weather in winter. I
2846 have known persons pray for hours, till their
2847 strength was all exhausted with the agony of their
2848 minds. Such prayers prevailed with God.

2849

2850 This agony in prayer was prevalent in President
2851 Edwards' day, in the revivals that then took place.
2852 It was one of the great stumbling blocks in those
2853 days, to persons who were opposed to the revival,
2854 that people used to pray till their bodies were
2855 overpowered with their feelings. I will read a
2856 paragraph of what President Edwards says on the
2857 subject, to let you see that this is not a new thing in
2858 the Church, but has always prevailed wherever
2859 revivals prevailed with power. It is from his
2860 Thoughts on Revivals.

2861
2862 “We cannot determine that God never shall give
2863 any person so much of a discovery of himself, not
2864 only as to weaken their bodies, but to take away
2865 their lives. It is supposed by very learned and
2866 judicious divines, that Moses' life was taken away
2867 after this manner; and this has also been supposed
2868 to be the case with some other saints. Yea, I do not
2869 see any solid, sure grounds any have to determine,
2870 that God shall never make such strong impressions
2871 on the mind by his Spirit, that shall be an occasion
2872 of so impairing the frame of the body, and
2873 particularly that part of the body, the brain, that
2874 persons shall be deprived of the use of reason. As I
2875 said before, It is too much for us to determine, that
2876 God will not bring an outward calamity in
2877 bestowing spiritual and eternal blessings: so it is

2878 too much for us to determine, how great an
2879 outward calamity he will bring. If God give a great
2880 increase of discoveries of himself, and of love to
2881 him, the benefit is infinitely greater than the
2882 calamity, though the life should presently after be
2883 taken away; yea, though the soul should not
2884 immediately be taken to heaven, but should lie
2885 some years in a deep sleep, and then be taken to
2886 heaven; or, which is much the same thing, if it be
2887 deprived of the use of its faculties, and be inactive
2888 and unserviceable, as if it lay in a deep sleep for
2889 some years, and then should pass into glory. We
2890 cannot determine how great a calamity distraction
2891 is, when considered with all its consequences, and
2892 all that might have been consequent, if the
2893 distraction had not happened; nor indeed whether
2894 (thus considered) it be any calamity at all, or
2895 whether it be not a mercy, by preventing some
2896 great sin, or some more dreadful thing, if it had not
2897 been. It were a great fault in us to limit a sovereign,
2898 all-wise God, whose judgments are a great deep,
2899 and his ways past finding out, where he has not
2900 limited himself, and in things concerning which he
2901 has not told us what his way shall be. It is
2902 remarkable, considering in what multitudes of
2903 instances, and to how great a degree, the frame of
2904 the body has been overpowered of late, that
2905 persons' lives have, notwithstanding, been

2906 preserved, and that the instances of those that have
2907 been deprived of reason, have been so very few,
2908 and those, perhaps all of them, persons under the
2909 peculiar disadvantage of a weak, vapory habit of
2910 body. A merciful and careful Divine hand is very
2911 manifest in it, that in so many instances where the
2912 ship has begun to sink, yet it has been upheld, and
2913 has not totally sunk. The instances of such as have
2914 been deprived of reason are so few, that certainly
2915 they are not enough to cause us to be in any fright,
2916 as though this work that has been carried on in the
2917 country was like to be of baneful influence; unless
2918 we are disposed to gather up all that we can to
2919 darken it, and set it forth in frightful colors.

2920
2921 “There is one particular kind of exercise and
2922 concern of mind, that many have been
2923 overpowered by, that has been especially stumbling
2924 to some; and that is, the deep concern and distress
2925 that they have been in for the souls of others. I am
2926 sorry that any put us to the trouble of doing that
2927 which seems so needless, as defending such a thing
2928 as this. It seems like mere trifling, in so plain a
2929 case, to enter into a formal and particular debate, in
2930 order to determine whether there be anything in the
2931 greatness and importance of the case that will
2932 answer and bear a proportion to the greatness of the
2933 concern that some have manifested. Men may be

2934 allowed, from no higher a principle than common
2935 ingenuity and humanity, to be very deeply
2936 concerned and greatly exercised in mind at seeing
2937 others in great danger of no greater a calamity than
2938 drowning, or being burnt up in a house on fire. And
2939 if so, then doubtless it will be allowed to be equally
2940 reasonable, if they saw them in danger of a
2941 calamity ten times greater, to be still much more
2942 concerned; and so much more still, if the calamity
2943 was still vastly greater. And why, then, should it be
2944 thought unreasonable, and looked upon with a very
2945 suspicious eye, as if it must come from some bad
2946 cause, when persons are extremely concerned at
2947 seeing others in very great danger of suffering the
2948 fierceness and wrath of Almighty God to all
2949 eternity? And besides, it will doubtless be allowed
2950 that those that have very great degrees of the Spirit
2951 of God, that is, a spirit of love, may well be
2952 supposed to have vastly more of love and
2953 compassion to their fellow creatures, than those
2954 that are influenced only by common humanity.
2955 Why should it be thought strange that those that are
2956 full of the Spirit of Christ should be
2957 proportionably, in their love to souls, like to
2958 Christ? who had so strong a love to them and
2959 concern for them as to be willing to drink the dregs
2960 of the cup of God's fury for them; and at the same
2961 time that he offered up his blood for souls, offered

2962 up also, as their high priest, strong crying and tears,
2963 with an extreme agony, when the soul of Christ
2964 was, as it were, in travail for the souls of the elect;
2965 and, therefore, in saving them, he is said to see of
2966 the travail of his soul. As such a spirit of love to
2967 and concern for souls was the spirit of Christ, so it
2968 is the spirit of the church; and, therefore, the
2969 church, in desiring and seeking that Christ might be
2970 brought forth in the world and in the souls of men,
2971 is represented, Rev. xii., as a woman crying,
2972 travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.’ The
2973 spirit of those that have been in distress for the
2974 souls of others, so far as I can discern, seems not to
2975 be different from that of the apostle, who travailed
2976 for souls, and was ready to wish himself accursed
2977 from Christ for others. And that of the Psalmist,
2978 Psalm cxix. 53, Horror hath taken hold upon me,
2979 because of the wicked that forsake the law.’ And v.
2980 136, Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because
2981 they keep not thy law.’ And that of the prophet
2982 Jeremiah, Jer. iv. 19, My bowels! my bowels! I am
2983 pained at my very heart; My heart maketh a noise
2984 in me: I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast
2985 heard. O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the
2986 alarm of war!’ And so, chap. ix. 1, and xiii. 17, and
2987 Isa. xxii. 4. We read of Mordecai, when he saw his
2988 people in danger of being destroyed with a
2989 temporal destruction, Esther iv. 1, that he rent his

2990 clothes, and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went
2991 out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud
2992 and bitter cry. And why, then, should persons be
2993 thought to be distracted, when they cannot forbear
2994 crying out at the consideration of the misery of
2995 those that are going to eternal destruction?" [2]

2996

2997 I have read this to show that this thing was
2998 common in the great revivals of those days. It has
2999 always been so in all great revivals, and has been
3000 more or less common in proportion to the
3001 greatness, and extent, and depth of the work. It was
3002 so in the great revivals in Scotland, and multitudes
3003 used to be overpowered, and some almost died, by
3004 the depth of their agony.

3005

3006 9. If you mean to pray effectually, you must pray a
3007 great deal. It was said of the apostle James, that
3008 after he was dead it was found his knees were
3009 callous like a camel's knees, by praying so much.
3010 Ah! here was the secret of the success of those
3011 primitive ministers. They had callous knees.

3012

3013 10. If you intend prayer to be effectual, it must be
3014 offered in the name of Christ. You cannot come to
3015 God in your own name. You cannot plead your
3016 own merits. But you can come in a name that is
3017 always acceptable. You all know what it is to use

3018 the name of a man. If you should go to the bank
3019 with a draft or note, endorsed by John Jacob Astor,
3020 that would be giving you his name, and you know
3021 you could get the money from the bank just as well
3022 as he could himself. Now, Jesus Christ gives you
3023 the use of his name. And when you pray in the
3024 name of Christ, the meaning of it is, that you can
3025 prevail just as well as he could himself, and receive
3026 just as much as God's well-beloved Son would if
3027 he were to pray himself for the same things. But
3028 you must pray in faith. His name has all the virtue
3029 in your lips that it has in his own, and God is just as
3030 free to bestow blessings upon you, when you ask in
3031 the name of Christ, and in faith, as he would be to
3032 bestow them upon Christ, if he should ask.

3033

3034 11. You cannot prevail in prayer, without
3035 renouncing all your sins. You must not only recall
3036 them to mind, but you must actually renounce
3037 them, and leave them off, and in the purpose of
3038 your heart renounce them all for ever.

3039

3040 12. You must pray in faith. You must expect to
3041 obtain the things you ask for. You need not look
3042 for an answer to prayer, if you pray without an
3043 expectation of obtaining it. You are not to form
3044 such expectations without any reason for them. In
3045 the cases I have supposed, there is a reason for the

3046 expectation. In case the thing is revealed in God's
3047 word, if you pray without an expectation of
3048 receiving the blessings, you just make God a liar. If
3049 the will of God is indicated by his providence, you
3050 ought to depend on it, according to the clearness of
3051 the indication, so far as to expect the blessing if
3052 you pray for it. And if you are led by his Spirit to
3053 pray for certain things, you have just as much
3054 reason to expect the thing to be done as if God had
3055 revealed it in his word.

3056
3057 But some say, "Will not this view of the leadings
3058 of the Spirit of God lead people into fanaticism?" I
3059 answer, that I know not but many may deceive
3060 themselves in respect to this matter. Multitudes
3061 have deceived themselves in regard to all the other
3062 points of religion. And if some people should think
3063 they are led by the Spirit of God, when it is nothing
3064 but their own imagination, is that any reason why
3065 those who know that they are led by the Spirit
3066 should not follow? Many people suppose
3067 themselves to be converted when they are not. Is
3068 that any reason why we should not cleave to the
3069 Lord Jesus Christ? Suppose some people are
3070 deceived in thinking they love God, is that any
3071 reason why the pious saint who knows he has the
3072 love of God shed abroad in his heart, should not
3073 give vent to his feelings in songs of praise? So I

3074 suppose some may deceive themselves in thinking
3075 they are led by the Spirit of God. But there is no
3076 need of being deceived. If people follow impulses,
3077 it is their own fault. I do not want you to follow
3078 impulses. I want you to be sober minded, and
3079 follow the sober, rational leadings of the Spirit of
3080 God. There are those who understand what I mean,
3081 and who know very well what it is to give
3082 themselves up to the Spirit of God in prayer.

3083

3084 III. I will state some of the reasons why these
3085 things are essential to effectual prayer. Why does
3086 God require such prayer, such strong desires, such
3087 agonizing supplications?

3088

3089 1. These strong desires strongly illustrate the
3090 strength of God's feelings. They are like the real
3091 feelings of God for impenitent sinners. When I
3092 have seen, as I sometimes have, the amazing
3093 strength of love for souls that has been felt by
3094 Christians, I have been wonderfully impressed with
3095 the amazing love of God, and his desires for their
3096 salvation. The case of a certain woman, of whom I
3097 read, in a revival, made the greatest impression on
3098 my mind. She had such an unutterable compassion
3099 and love for souls, that she actually panted for
3100 breath almost to suffocation. What must be the
3101 strength of the desire which God feels, when his

3102 Spirit produces in Christians such amazing agony,
3103 such throes of soul, such travail—God has chosen
3104 the best word to express it—it is travail—travail of
3105 the soul.

3106

3107 I have seen a man of as much strength of intellect
3108 and muscle as any man in the community, fall
3109 down prostrate, absolutely overpowered by his
3110 unutterable desires for sinners. I know this is a
3111 stumbling block to many; and it always will be as
3112 long as there remain in the church so many blind
3113 and stupid professors of religion. But I cannot
3114 doubt that these things are the work of the Spirit of
3115 God. Oh that the whole church could be so filled
3116 with the Spirit as to travail in prayer, till a nation
3117 should be born in a day!

3118

3119 It is said in the word of God, that as soon “as Zion
3120 travailed, she brought forth.” What does that mean?
3121 I asked a professor of religion this question once.
3122 He was making exceptions about our ideas of
3123 effectual prayer, and I asked him what he supposed
3124 was meant by Zion’s travailing. “Oh,” said he, “it
3125 means that as soon as the church walk together in
3126 the fellowship of the Gospel, then it will be said
3127 that Zion travels! This walking together is called
3128 travelling.” Not the same term, you see. So much
3129 he knew.

3130

3131 2. These strong desires that I have described, are
3132 the natural results of great benevolence and clear
3133 views of the danger of sinners. It is perfectly
3134 reasonable that it should be so. If the women who
3135 are in this house should look up there, and see a
3136 family burning to death in the fire, and hear their
3137 shrieks, and behold their agony, they would feel
3138 distressed, and it is very likely that many of them
3139 would faint away with agony. And nobody would
3140 wonder at it, or say they were fools or crazy to feel
3141 so much distressed at such an awful sight. They
3142 would think it strange if there were not some
3143 expressions of powerful feeling. Why is it any
3144 wonder, then, if Christians should feel as I have
3145 described, when they have clear views of the state
3146 of sinners, and the awful danger they are in? The
3147 fact is, that those individuals who never have felt
3148 so, have never felt much real benevolence, and
3149 their piety must be of a very superficial character. I
3150 do not mean to judge harshly, or to speak unkindly.
3151 But I state it as a simple matter of fact; and people
3152 may talk about it as they please, but I know that
3153 such piety is superficial. This is not censoriousness,
3154 but plain truth.

3155

3156 People sometimes wonder at Christians having
3157 such feelings. Wonder at what? Why, at the natural,

3158 and philosophical, and necessary results of deep
3159 piety towards God, and deep benevolence towards
3160 man, in view of the great danger they see sinners to
3161 be in.

3162

3163 3. The soul of a Christian, when it is thus burdened,
3164 must have relief. God rolls this weight upon the
3165 soul of a Christian, for the purpose of bringing him
3166 near to himself. Christians are often so unbelieving,
3167 that they will not exercise proper faith in God, till
3168 he rolls this burden upon them, so heavy that they
3169 cannot live under it, and then they must go to God
3170 for relief. It is like the case of many a convicted
3171 sinner. God is willing to receive him at once, if he
3172 will come right to him, with faith in Jesus Christ.
3173 But the sinner will not come. He hangs back, and
3174 struggles, and groans under the burden of his sins,
3175 and will not throw himself upon God, till his
3176 burden of conviction becomes so great that he can
3177 live no longer; and when he is driven to
3178 desperation, as it were, and feels as if he was ready
3179 to sink into hell, he makes a mighty plunge, and
3180 throws himself upon God's mercy as his only hope.
3181 It was his duty to come before. God had no delight
3182 in his distress, for its own sake. It was only the
3183 sinner's obstinacy that created the necessity for all
3184 this distress. He would not come without it. So
3185 when professors of religion get loaded down with

3186 the weight of souls, they often pray again and
3187 again, and yet the burden is not gone, nor their
3188 distress abated, because they have never thrown it
3189 all upon God in faith. But they cannot get rid of the
3190 burden. So long as their benevolence continues it
3191 will remain and increase, and unless they resist and
3192 quench the Holy Ghost they can get no relief, until
3193 at length, when they are driven to extremity, they
3194 make a desperate effort, roll the burden off upon
3195 the Lord Jesus Christ, and exercise a child-like
3196 confidence in him. Then they feel relieved; then
3197 they feel as if the soul they were praying for would
3198 be saved. The burden is gone, and God seems in
3199 kindness to sooth down the mind to feel a sweet
3200 assurance that the blessing will be granted. Often,
3201 after a Christian has had this struggle, this agony in
3202 prayer, and has obtained relief in this way, you will
3203 find the sweetest and most heavenly affections flow
3204 out—the soul rests sweetly and gloriously in God,
3205 and rejoices, “with joy unspeakable and full of
3206 glory.”

3207
3208 Do any of you think now, that there are no such
3209 things in the experience of believers? I tell you, if I
3210 had time, I could show you from President
3211 Edwards, and other approved writers, cases and
3212 descriptions just like this. Do you ask why we
3213 never have such things here in New York? I tell

3214 you, it is not at all because you are so much wiser
3215 than Christians are in the country, or because you
3216 have so much more intelligence or more enlarged
3217 views of the nature of religion, or a more stable and
3218 well regulated piety. I tell you, no; instead of
3219 priding yourselves in being free from such
3220 extravagances, you ought to hide your heads,
3221 because Christians in New York are so worldly,
3222 and have so much starch, and pride, and fashion,
3223 that they cannot come down to such spirituality as
3224 this. I wish it could be so. Oh that there might be
3225 such a spirit in this city, and in this church! I know
3226 it would make a noise, if we had such things done
3227 here. But I would not care for that. Let them say, if
3228 they please, that the folks in Chatham Chapel are
3229 getting deranged. We need not be afraid of that, if
3230 we could live near enough to God to enjoy his
3231 Spirit in the manner I have described.

3232

3233 4. These effects of the Spirit of prayer upon the
3234 body are themselves no part of religion. It is only
3235 that the body is often so weak that the feelings of
3236 the soul overpower it. These bodily effects are not
3237 at all essential to prevailing prayer, but only a
3238 natural or physical result of highly excited
3239 emotions of the mind. It is not at all unusual for the
3240 body to be weakened and even overcome by any
3241 powerful emotion of the mind, on other subjects

3242 besides religion. The door-keeper of Congress in
3243 the time of the revolution, fell down dead on the
3244 reception of some highly cheering intelligence. I
3245 knew a woman in Rochester, who was in a great
3246 agony of prayer for the conversion of her son-in-
3247 law. One morning he was at an anxious meeting,
3248 and she remained at home praying for him. At the
3249 close of the meeting, he came home a convert, and
3250 she was so rejoiced that she fell down and died on
3251 the spot. It is no more strange that these effects
3252 should be produced by religion than by strong
3253 feeling on any other subject. It is not essential to
3254 prayer, but the natural result of great effort of the
3255 mind.

3256
3257 5. Doubtless one great reason why God requires the
3258 exercise of this agonizing prayer is, that it forms
3259 such a bond of union between Christ and the
3260 Church. It creates such a sympathy between them.
3261 It is as if Christ came and poured the overflowings
3262 of his own benevolent heart into his church, and led
3263 them to sympathize and to co-operate with him, as
3264 they never do in any other way. They feel just as
3265 Christ feels—so full of compassion for sinners that
3266 they cannot contain themselves. Thus it is often
3267 with those ministers who are distinguished for their
3268 success in preaching to sinners; they often have
3269 such compassion, such overflowing desires for

3270 their salvation, that it shows itself in their speaking,
3271 and their preaching, just as though Jesus Christ
3272 spoke through them. The words come from their
3273 lips fresh and warm, as if from the very heart of
3274 Christ. I do not mean that he dictates their words;
3275 but he excites the feelings that give utterance to
3276 them. Then you see a movement in the hearers, as
3277 if Christ himself spoke through lips of clay.

3278

3279 6. This travailing in birth for souls creates also a
3280 remarkable bond of union between warm-hearted
3281 Christians and the young converts. Those who are
3282 converted appear very dear to the hearts that have
3283 had this spirit of prayer for them. The feeling is
3284 like that of a mother for her first-born. Paul
3285 expresses it beautifully, when he says, "My little
3286 children!" His heart was warm and tender to them.
3287 "My little children, of whom I travail in birth
3288 again." They had backslidden, and he has all the
3289 agonies of a parent over a wandering child. "I
3290 travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you,
3291 the hope of glory." In a revival, I have often
3292 noticed how those who have had the spirit of
3293 prayer, love the young converts. I know this is all
3294 algebra to those who have never felt it. But to those
3295 who have experienced the agony of wrestling,
3296 prevailing prayer, for the conversion of a soul, you
3297 may depend upon it, that soul, after it is converted,

3298 appears as dear as a child is to the mother who has
3299 brought it forth with pain. He has agonized for it,
3300 and received it in answer to prayer, and can present
3301 it before the Lord Jesus Christ, saying, "Here,
3302 Lord, am I, and the children thou hast given me."

3303

3304 7. Another reason why God requires this sort of
3305 prayer is, that it is the only way in which the
3306 church can be properly prepared to receive great
3307 blessings without being injured by them. When the
3308 church is thus prostrated in the dust before God,
3309 and is in the depth of agony in prayer, the blessing
3310 does them good. While at the same time, if they
3311 had received the blessing without this deep
3312 prostration of soul, it would have puffed them up
3313 with pride. But as it is, it increases their holiness,
3314 their love, their humility.

3315

3316 IV. I am to show that such prayer as I have
3317 described will avail much. But time fails me to go
3318 into a particular detail of the evidence which I
3319 intended to bring forward under this head.

3320

3321 Elijah the prophet mourned over the declensions of
3322 the house of Israel, and when he saw that no other
3323 means were likely to be effectual, to prevent a
3324 perpetual going away into idolatry, he prayed that
3325 the judgments of God might come upon the guilty

3326 nation. He prayed that it might not rain, and God
3327 shut up the heavens for three years and six months,
3328 till the people were driven to the last extremity.
3329 And when he saw that it was time to relent, what
3330 does he do? See him go up to the mountain and
3331 bow down in prayer. He wished to be alone; and he
3332 told his servant to go seven times, while he was
3333 agonizing in prayer. The last time, the servant told
3334 him there was a little cloud appeared, like a man's
3335 hand, and he instantly arose from his knees—the
3336 blessing was obtained. The time had come for the
3337 calamity to be turned back. “Ah, but,” you say,
3338 “Elijah was a prophet.” Now do not make this
3339 objection. They made it in the apostle's days, and
3340 what does the apostle say? Why he brought
3341 forward this very instance, and the fact that Elijah
3342 was a man of like passions with ourselves, as a
3343 case of prevailing prayer, and insisted that they
3344 should pray so too.

3345
3346 John Knox was a man famous for his power in
3347 prayer, so that bloody Queen Mary used to say she
3348 feared his prayers more than all the armies of
3349 Europe. And events showed that she had reason to
3350 do it. He used to be in such an agony for the
3351 deliverance of his country that he could not sleep.
3352 He had a place in his garden where he used to go to
3353 pray. One night he and several friends were praying

3354 together, and as they prayed, Knox spoke and said
3355 that deliverance had come. He could not tell what
3356 had happened, but he felt that something had taken
3357 place, for God had heard their prayers. What was
3358 it? Why the next news they had was, that Mary was
3359 dead!

3360

3361 Take a fact which was related, in my hearing, by a
3362 minister. He said, that in a certain town there had
3363 been no revival for many years; the church was
3364 nearly run out, the youth were all unconverted, and
3365 desolation reigned unbroken. There lived in a
3366 retired part of the town, an aged man, a blacksmith
3367 by trade, and of so stammering a tongue, that it was
3368 painful to hear him speak. On one Friday, as he
3369 was at work in his shop, alone, his mind became
3370 greatly exercised about the state of the church, and
3371 of the impenitent. His agony became so great, that
3372 he was induced to lay by his work, lock the shop
3373 door, and spend the afternoon in prayer.

3374

3375 He prevailed, and on the Sabbath called on the
3376 minister, and desired him to appoint a conference
3377 meeting. After some hesitation, the minister
3378 consented, observing, however, that he feared but
3379 few would attend. He appointed it the same
3380 evening, at a large private house. When evening
3381 came, more assembled than could be

3382 accommodated in the house. All was silent for a
3383 time, until one sinner broke out in tears, and said, if
3384 any one could pray, he begged him to pray for him.
3385 Another followed, and another, and still another,
3386 until it was found that persons from every quarter
3387 of the town were under deep conviction. And what
3388 was remarkable was, that they all dated their
3389 conviction at the hour when the old man was
3390 praying in his shop. A powerful revival followed.
3391 Thus this old stammering man prevailed, and, as a
3392 prince, had power with God. I could name
3393 multitudes of similar cases, but, for want of time,
3394 must conclude with a few.

3395

3396 REMARKS.

3397

3398 1. A great deal of prayer is lost, and many people
3399 never prevail in prayer, because, when they have
3400 desires for particular blessings, they do not follow
3401 them up. They may have had desires, benevolent
3402 and pure, which were excited by the Spirit of God;
3403 and when they have them, they should persevere in
3404 prayer, for if they turn off their attention to other
3405 objects, they will quench the Spirit. We tell sinners
3406 not to turn off their minds from the one object, but
3407 to keep their attention fixed there, till they are
3408 saved. When you find these holy desires in your
3409 minds, take care of two things:

3410

3411 (1.) Do not quench the Spirit.

3412

3413 (2.) Do not be diverted to other objects.

3414

3415 Follow the leadings of the Spirit, till you have
3416 offered that effectual fervent prayer that availeth
3417 much.

3418

3419 2. Without the spirit of prayer, ministers will do but
3420 little good. A minister need not expect much
3421 success, unless he prays for it. Sometimes others
3422 may have the spirit of prayer, and obtain a blessing
3423 on his labors. Generally, however, those preachers
3424 are the most successful who have the most of a
3425 spirit of prayer themselves.

3426

3427 3. Not only must ministers have the spirit of prayer,
3428 but it is necessary that the church should unite in
3429 offering that effectual fervent prayer which can
3430 prevail with God. You need not expect a blessing,
3431 unless you ask for it. "For all these things will I be
3432 inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it."

3433

3434 Now, my brethren, I have only to ask you, in
3435 regard to what I have preached to-night, "Will you
3436 do it?" Have you done what I preached to you last
3437 Friday evening? Have you gone over with your

3438 sins, and confessed them, and got them all out of
3439 the way? Can you pray now? And will you join and
3440 offer prevailing prayer, that the Spirit of God may
3441 come down here?

3442

3443 [2] Edwards' Works. vol. iv. p. 85. New York
3444 edition.

3445

3446

3447

3448 LECTURE V.

3449

3450 THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

3451

3452 Text.—"Therefore I say unto you, What things
3453 soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye
3454 receive them, and ye shall have them."—Mark xi.
3455 24.

3456

3457 THESE words have been by some supposed to
3458 refer exclusively to the faith of miracles. But there
3459 is not the least evidence of this. That the text was
3460 not designed by our Saviour to refer exclusively to
3461 the faith of miracles, is proved by the connection in
3462 which it stands. If you read the chapter, you will
3463 see that Christ and his apostles were at this time
3464 very much engaged in their work, and very
3465 prayerful; and as they returned from their places of

3466 retirement in the morning, faint and hungry, they
3467 saw a fig-tree at a little distance. It looked very
3468 beautiful, and doubtless gave signs of having fruit
3469 on it; but when they came nigh, they found nothing
3470 on it but leaves. And Jesus said, “No man eat fruit
3471 of thee hereafter for ever.

3472

3473 “And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw
3474 the fig-tree dried up from the roots.

3475

3476 “And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto
3477 him, Master, behold the fig-tree which thou
3478 cursedst is withered away.

3479

3480 “And Jesus answering, saith unto them, have faith
3481 in God.

3482

3483 “For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say
3484 unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou
3485 cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart,
3486 but shall believe that those things which he saith
3487 shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he
3488 saith.”

3489

3490 Then follow the words of the text:

3491

3492 “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye
3493 desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them,
3494 and ye shall have them.”

3495
3496 Our Saviour was desirous of giving his disciples
3497 instructions respecting the nature and power of
3498 prayer, and the necessity of strong faith in God. He
3499 therefore stated a very strong case, a miracle—one
3500 so great as the removal of a mountain into the sea.
3501 And he tells them, that if they exercise a proper
3502 faith in God, they might do such things. But his
3503 remarks are not to be limited to faith merely in
3504 regard to working miracles, for he goes on to say,

3505
3506 “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have
3507 aught against any, that your Father also which is in
3508 heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

3509
3510 “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father
3511 which is in heaven may forgive you your
3512 trespasses.”

3513
3514 Does that relate to miracles? When you pray, you
3515 must forgive. Is that required only when a man
3516 wishes to work a miracle? There are many other
3517 promises in the Bible nearly related to this, and
3518 speaking nearly the same language, which have
3519 been all disposed of in this short-handed way, as

3520 referring to the faith employed in miracles. Just as
3521 if the faith of miracles was something different
3522 from faith in God!

3523

3524 In my last lecture, I dwelt upon the subject of
3525 “prevailing prayer;” and you will recollect that I
3526 passed over the subject of faith in prayer very
3527 briefly, because I wished to reserve it for a separate
3528 discussion. The subject to-night is,

3529

3530 THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

3531

3532 I propose,

3533

3534 I. To show that faith is an indispensable condition
3535 of prevailing prayer.

3536

3537 II. Show what it is that we are to believe when we
3538 pray.

3539

3540 III. Show when we are bound to exercise this faith,
3541 or to believe that we shall receive the thing that we
3542 ask for.

3543

3544 IV. That this kind of faith in prayer always does
3545 obtain the blessing sought.

3546

3547 V. Explain how we are to come into the state of
3548 mind, in which we can exercise such faith.

3549

3550 VI. Answer several objections, which are
3551 sometimes alleged against these views of prayer.

3552

3553 I. That faith is an indispensable condition of
3554 prevailing prayer, will not be seriously doubted.
3555 There is such a thing as offering benevolent
3556 desires, which are acceptable to God as such, that
3557 do not include the exercise of faith in regard to the
3558 actual reception of those blessings. But such
3559 desires are not prevailing prayer, the prayer of
3560 faith. God may see fit to grant the things desired, as
3561 an act of kindness and love, but it would not be
3562 properly in answer to prayer. I am speaking now of
3563 the kind of faith that insures the blessing. Do not
3564 understand me as saying that there is nothing in
3565 prayer that is acceptable to God, or that even
3566 obtains the blessing sometimes, without this kind
3567 of faith. But I am speaking of the faith which
3568 secures the very blessing it seeks. To prove that
3569 faith is indispensable to prevailing prayer, it is only
3570 necessary to repeat what the apostle James
3571 expressly tells us: "If any of you lack wisdom, let
3572 him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and
3573 upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let
3574 him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that

3575 wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the
3576 wind and tossed.”

3577

3578 II. We are to inquire what we are to believe when
3579 we pray.

3580

3581 1. We are to believe in the existence of God—”He
3582 that cometh to God must believe that he is”—and
3583 in his willingness to answer prayer—”that he is,
3584 and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently
3585 seek him.” There are many who believe in the
3586 existence of God, and do not believe in the efficacy
3587 of prayer. They profess to believe in God, but deny
3588 the necessity or influence of prayer.

3589

3590 2. We are to believe that we shall receive—
3591 something—what? Not something, or anything, as
3592 it happens, but some particular thing we ask for.
3593 We are not to think that God is such a being, that if
3594 we ask a fish, he will give us a serpent, or if we ask
3595 bread, he will give us a stone. But he says, “What
3596 things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that
3597 ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” With
3598 respect to the faith of miracles, it is plain that they
3599 were bound to believe they should receive just
3600 what they asked for—that the very thing itself
3601 should come to pass. That is what they were to
3602 believe. Now what ought men to believe in regard

3603 to other blessings? Is it a mere loose idea, that if a
3604 man prays for a specific blessing, God will by some
3605 mysterious sovereignty give something or other to
3606 him, or something to somebody else, somewhere?
3607 When a man prays for his children's conversion, is
3608 he to believe that either his children will be
3609 converted, or somebody's else children, and it is
3610 altogether uncertain which? All this is utter
3611 nonsense, and highly dishonorable to God. No, we
3612 are to believe that we shall receive the very things
3613 that we ask for.

3614
3615 III. When are we bound to make this prayer? When
3616 are we bound to believe that we shall have the very
3617 things we pray for? I answer, When we have
3618 evidence of it. Faith must always have evidence. A
3619 man cannot believe a thing, unless he sees
3620 something which he supposes to be evidence. He is
3621 under no obligation to believe, and has no right to
3622 believe, a thing will be done, unless he has
3623 evidence. It is the height of fanaticism to believe
3624 without evidence. The kinds of evidence a man
3625 may have are the following:

3626
3627 1. Suppose that God has especially promised the
3628 thing. As for instance, God says he is more ready to
3629 give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than
3630 parents are to give bread to their children. Here we

3631 are bound to believe that we shall receive it when
3632 we pray for it. You have no right to put in an if,
3633 and say, “Lord, if it be thy will, give us thy Holy
3634 Spirit.” This is to insult God. To put an if into
3635 God’s promise, where God has put none, is
3636 tantamount to charging God with being insincere. It
3637 is like saying, “O God, if thou art in earnest in
3638 making these promises, grant us the blessing we
3639 pray for.”

3640

3641 I heard of a case where a young convert was the
3642 means of teaching a minister a solemn truth on the
3643 subject of prayer. She was from a very wicked
3644 family, and went to live with a minister. While
3645 there, she was hopefully converted, and appeared
3646 well. One day she came to the minister’s study,
3647 while he was in it—a thing she was not in the habit
3648 of doing; and he thought there must be something
3649 the matter. So he asked her to sit down, and kindly
3650 inquired into the state of her religious feelings; she
3651 said, she was distressed at the manner in which the
3652 old church members prayed for the Spirit. They
3653 would pray for the Holy Spirit to come, and would
3654 seem to be very much in earnest, and plead the
3655 promises of God, and then say, “O Lord, if it be thy
3656 will, grant us these blessings for Christ’s sake.”
3657 She thought that saying, “if it be thy will,” when
3658 God has expressly promised it, was questioning

3659 whether God was sincere in his promises. The
3660 minister tried to reason her out of it, and of course
3661 he succeeded in confounding her. But she was
3662 distressed and filled with grief, and said, "I cannot
3663 argue the point with you, sir, but it is impressed on
3664 my mind that it is wrong, and dishonoring God."
3665 And she went away weeping with anguish. The
3666 minister saw she was not satisfied, and it led him to
3667 look at the matter again, and finally he saw that it
3668 was putting in an if where God had put none, and
3669 where he had revealed his will expressly, and that it
3670 was an insult to God. And he went and told his
3671 church they were bound to believe that God was in
3672 earnest when he made them a promise. And the
3673 spirit of prayer came down upon that church, and a
3674 most powerful revival followed.

3675
3676 2. Where there is a general promise in the
3677 Scriptures which you may reasonably apply to the
3678 particular case before you. If its real meaning
3679 includes the particular thing for which you pray, or
3680 if you can reasonably apply the principle of the
3681 promise to the case, there you have evidence. For
3682 instance, suppose it is a time when wickedness
3683 prevails greatly, and you are led to pray for God's
3684 interference? What promise have you? Why, this
3685 one: "
3686

3687 When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the
3688 Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against
3689 him.” Here you see is a general promise laying
3690 down a principle of God’s administration, which
3691 you may apply to the case before you, as a warrant
3692 for exercising faith in prayer. And if the case come
3693 up, to inquire as to the time in which God will
3694 grant blessings in answer to prayer, you have this
3695 promise: “While they are yet speaking, I will hear.”
3696

3697 There is a vast amount of general promises and
3698 principles laid down in the Bible, which Christians
3699 might make use of, if they would only think.
3700 Whenever you are in circumstances to which the
3701 promises or principles apply, there you are to use
3702 them. A parent finds this promise: “The mercy of
3703 the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon
3704 them that fear him, and his righteousness unto
3705 children’s children, to such as keep his covenant,
3706 and to those that remember his commandments to
3707 do them.” Now, here is a promise made to those
3708 that possess a certain character. If any parent is
3709 conscious that this is his character, he has a rightful
3710 ground to apply it to himself and his family. If you
3711 have this character, you are bound to make use of
3712 this promise in prayer, and believe it, even to your
3713 children’s children.
3714

3715 If I had time to-night, I could go from one end of
3716 the Bible to the other, and produce an astonishing
3717 variety of texts that are applicable as promises;
3718 enough to prove, that in whatever circumstances a
3719 child of God may be placed, God has provided in
3720 the Bible some promise, either general or
3721 particular, which he can apply, that is precisely
3722 suited to his case. Many of God's promises are
3723 very broad on purpose to cover much ground. What
3724 can be broader than the promise in the text:
3725 "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray?" What
3726 praying Christian is there who has not been
3727 surprised at the length, and breadth, and fullness, of
3728 the promises of God, when the Spirit has applied
3729 them to his heart? Who that lives a life of prayer,
3730 has not wondered at his own blindness, in not
3731 having before seen and felt the extent of meaning
3732 and richness of those promises, when viewed under
3733 the light of the Spirit of God? At such times he has
3734 been astonished at his own ignorance, and found
3735 the Spirit applying the promises and declarations of
3736 the Bible in a sense in which he had never dreamed
3737 of their being applicable before. The manner in
3738 which the apostles applied the promises, and
3739 prophecies, and declarations of the Old Testament,
3740 places in a strong light the breadth of meaning, and
3741 fullness, and richness of the word of God. He that
3742 walks in the light of God's countenance, and is

3743 filled with the Spirit of God as he ought to be, will
3744 often make an appropriation of promises to
3745 himself, and an application of them to his own
3746 circumstances, and the circumstances of those for
3747 whom he prays, that a blind professor of religion
3748 would never dream of.

3749

3750 3. Where there is any prophetic declaration, that the
3751 thing prayed for is agreeable to the will of God.

3752 When it is plain from prophecy that the event is
3753 certainly to come, you are bound to believe it, and
3754 to make it the ground for your special faith in
3755 prayer. If the time is not specified in the Bible, and
3756 there is no evidence from other sources, you are not
3757 bound to believe that it shall take place now, or
3758 immediately. But if the time is specified, or if the
3759 time may be learned from the study of the
3760 prophecies, and it appears to have arrived, then
3761 Christians are under obligations to understand and
3762 apply it, by offering the prayer of faith. For
3763 instance, take the case of Daniel, in regard to the
3764 return of the Jews from captivity. What does he
3765 say? "I Daniel understood by books the number of
3766 the years whereof the word of the Lord came to
3767 Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish
3768 seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem."
3769 Here he learned from books, that is, he studied his
3770 Bible, and in that way understood that the length of

3771 the captivity was to be seventy years. What does he
3772 do then? Does he sit down upon the promise, and
3773 say, “God has pledged himself to put an end to the
3774 captivity in seventy years, and the time has expired,
3775 and there is no need of doing any thing?” Oh no; he
3776 says, “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to
3777 seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and
3778 sackcloth, and ashes.” He set himself at once to
3779 pray that the thing might be accomplished. He
3780 prayed in faith. But what was he to believe? What
3781 he had learned from prophecy. There are many
3782 prophecies yet unfulfilled, in the Bible, which
3783 Christians are bound to understand, as far as they
3784 are capable of understanding them, and then make
3785 them the basis of believing prayer. Do not think, as
3786 some seem to, that because a thing is foretold in
3787 prophecy it is not necessary to pray for it, or that it
3788 will come whether Christians pray for it or not.
3789 There is no truth in this. God says, in regard to this
3790 very class of events, which are revealed in
3791 prophecy, “Nevertheless, for all these things will I
3792 be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for
3793 them.”

3794

3795 4. When the signs of the times, or the providence of
3796 God, indicate that a particular blessing is about to
3797 be bestowed, we are bound to believe it, The Lord
3798 Jesus Christ blamed the Jews, and called them

3799 hypocrites, because they did not understand the
3800 indications of Providence. They could understand
3801 the signs of the weather, and see when it was about
3802 to rain, and when it would be fair weather; but they
3803 could not see, from the signs of the times, that the
3804 time had come for the Messiah to appear, and build
3805 up the house of God. There are many professors of
3806 religion who are always stumbling and hanging
3807 back, whenever any thing is proposed to be done.
3808 They always say, The time has not come—the time
3809 has not come; when there are others who pay
3810 attention to the signs of the times, and who have
3811 spiritual discernment to understand them. These
3812 pray in faith for the blessing, and it comes.

3813
3814 5. When the Spirit of God is upon you, and excites
3815 strong desires for any blessing, you are bound to
3816 pray for it in faith. You are bound to infer, from the
3817 fact that you find yourself drawn to desire such a
3818 thing while in the exercise of such holy affections
3819 as the Spirit of God produces, that these desires are
3820 the work of the Spirit. People are not apt to desire
3821 with the right kind of desires, unless they are
3822 excited by the Spirit of God. The apostle refers to
3823 these desires, excited by the Spirit, in his epistle to
3824 the Romans, where he says—”Likewise the Spirit
3825 also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what
3826 we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself

3827 maketh intercession for us with groanings which
3828 cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart
3829 knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he
3830 maketh intercession for the saints, according to the
3831 will of God.” Here, then, if you find your self
3832 strongly drawn to desire a blessing, you are to
3833 understand it as an intimation that God is willing to
3834 bestow that particular blessing, and so you are
3835 bound to believe it. God does not trifle with his
3836 children. He does not go and excite in them a
3837 desire for one blessing, to turn them off with
3838 something else. But he excites the very desires he
3839 is willing to gratify. And when they feel such
3840 desires, they are bound to follow them out till they
3841 get the blessing.

3842
3843 IV. I will proceed to show that this kind of faith
3844 always obtains the object. The text is plain here, to
3845 show that you shall receive the very thing prayed
3846 for. It does not say, “Believe that ye shall receive,
3847 and ye shall either have that or something else
3848 equivalent to it.” To prove that this faith obtains the
3849 very blessing asked, I observe,

3850
3851 1. That otherwise we could never know whether
3852 our prayers were answered. And we might continue
3853 praying and praying, long after the prayer was

3854 answered by some other blessing equivalent to the
3855 one we ask for.

3856

3857 2. If we are not bound to expect the very thing we
3858 ask for, it must be that the Spirit of God deceives
3859 us. Why should he excite us to desire a certain
3860 blessing, when he means to grant something else?

3861

3862 3. What is the meaning of this passage, “If a man
3863 ask bread, will he give him a stone?” Does not our
3864 Saviour rebuke the idea that prayer may be
3865 answered by giving something else? What
3866 encouragement have we to pray for any thing in
3867 particular, if we are to ask for one thing and receive
3868 another? Suppose a Christian should pray for a
3869 revival here—he would be answered by a revival in
3870 China. Or he might pray for a revival, and God
3871 would send the cholera, or an earthquake. All the
3872 history of the church shows that when God answers
3873 prayer, he gives his people the very thing for which
3874 their prayers are offered. God confers other
3875 blessings, on both saints and sinners, which they do
3876 not pray for at all. He sends his rain both upon the
3877 just and the unjust, But when he answers prayer, it
3878 is by doing what they ask him to do. To be sure, he
3879 often more than answers prayer. He grants them
3880 not only what they ask, but often connects other
3881 blessings with it.

3882
3883 4. Perhaps you may feel a difficulty here about the
3884 prayers of Jesus Christ. People may often ask, “Did
3885 not he pray in the garden for the cup to be
3886 removed, and was his prayer answered?” I answer
3887 that this is no difficulty at all, for the prayer was
3888 answered. The cup he prayed to be delivered from
3889 was removed. This is what the apostle refers to,
3890 when he says—”Who in the days of his flesh, when
3891 he had offered up prayers and supplications with
3892 strong crying and tears unto him that was able to
3893 save him from death, was heard in that he feared.”
3894 Now I ask, On what occasion was he saved from
3895 death, if not on this? Was it the death of the cross
3896 he prayed to be delivered from? Not at all. But the
3897 case was this. A short time before he was betrayed,
3898 we hear him saying to his disciples, “My soul is
3899 exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” Anguish
3900 of mind came rolling in upon him, till he was just
3901 ready to die, and he went out into the garden to
3902 pray, and told his disciples to watch, and then he
3903 went by himself and prayed; “O my Father,” said
3904 he, “if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;
3905 nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” In his
3906 agony he rose from his knees, and walked the
3907 garden, till he came where his disciples were, and
3908 there he saw them fast asleep. He awaked them and
3909 said, “What, could ye not watch with me one

3910 hour?" And then he went again, for he was in such
3911 distress that he could not stand still, and again he
3912 poured out his soul. And the third time he goes
3913 away and prays, "Father, if thou be willing, remove
3914 this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but
3915 thine be done." And now the third time of praying,
3916 there appeared an angel unto him from heaven,
3917 strengthening him. And his mind became
3918 composed, and calm, and the cup was gone. Till
3919 then, he had been in such an agony that his sweat
3920 was as it were great drops of blood, but now it was
3921 all over.

3922
3923 Some have supposed that he was praying against
3924 the cross, and begging to be delivered from dying
3925 on the cross! Did Christ ever shrink from the cross?
3926 Never. He came into the world on purpose to die
3927 on the cross, and he never shrunk from it. But he
3928 was afraid he should die in the garden before he
3929 came to the cross. The burden on his soul was so
3930 great, and produced such an agony, that he felt as if
3931 he was on the point of dying, His soul was
3932 sorrowful even unto death. But after the angel
3933 appeared unto him, we hear no more of his agony
3934 of soul. He had prayed for relief from that cup, and
3935 his prayer was answered. He became calm, and had
3936 no more mental suffering till just as he expired.
3937 This case, therefore, is no exception. He received

3938 the very thing for which he asked, as he says, “I
3939 knew thou always hearest me.”

3940

3941 But there is another case often brought up, where
3942 the apostle Paul prayed against the thorn in the
3943 flesh. He says, “I besought the Lord thrice, that it
3944 might depart from me.” And God answered him,
3945 “My grace is sufficient for thee.” It is the opinion
3946 of Dr. Clarke and others, that Paul’s prayer was
3947 answered in the very thing for which he prayed.

3948 That “the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of
3949 Satan,” of which he speaks, was a false apostle
3950 who had distracted and perverted the church at
3951 Corinth. That Paul prayed against his influence,
3952 and the Lord answered him by assuring him, “My
3953 grace is sufficient for thee.” Who does not know
3954 that it was, and that Paul’s influence ultimately
3955 triumphed?

3956

3957 But admitting that Paul’s prayer was not answered
3958 by granting the particular thing for which he
3959 prayed, in order to make out this case as an
3960 exception to the prayer of faith, they are obliged to
3961 assume the very thing to be proved; and that is, that
3962 the apostle prayed in faith. There is no reason to
3963 suppose that Paul would always pray in faith, any
3964 more than that any other Christian does. The very
3965 manner in which God answered him shows that it

3966 was not in faith. He virtually tells him, “That thorn
3967 is necessary for your sanctification, and to keep
3968 you from being exalted above measure. I sent it
3969 upon you in love, and in faithfulness, and you have
3970 no business to pray that I should take it away.—
3971 LET IT ALONE.”

3972

3973 There is not only no evidence that he prayed in
3974 faith, but a strong presumption that he did not.
3975 From the history it is evident that he had nothing
3976 on which to repose faith. There was no express
3977 promise, no general promise, that could be
3978 applicable, no providence of God, no prophecy, no
3979 teaching of the Spirit that God would remove this
3980 thorn; but the presumption was that God would not
3981 remove it. He had given it to him for a particular
3982 purpose. His prayer appears to have been selfish, or
3983 at least praying against a mere personal influence.
3984 This was not any personal suffering that retarded
3985 his usefulness, but on the contrary it was given him
3986 to increase his usefulness by keeping him humble;
3987 and because on some account he found it
3988 inconvenient and mortifying, he set himself to pray
3989 out of his own heart, evidently without being led to
3990 it by the Spirit of God. But did Paul pray in faith
3991 without the Spirit of God, any more than any other
3992 man? And will any one undertake to say that the
3993 Spirit of God led him to pray that this might be

3994 removed, when God himself had given it for a
3995 particular purpose, which purpose could not be
3996 answered only as the thorn continued with him?
3997
3998 Why then is this made an exception to the general
3999 rule laid down in the text, that a man shall receive
4000 whatsoever he asks in faith? I was once amazed
4001 and grieved at a public examination at a
4002 Theological Seminary, to hear them darken counsel
4003 by words without knowledge on this subject. This
4004 case of Paul, and that of Christ just adverted to,
4005 were both of them cited as instances to prove to
4006 their students that the prayer of faith would not be
4007 answered in the particular thing for which they
4008 prayed. Now to teach such sentiments as these in or
4009 out of a Theological Seminary, is to trifle with the
4010 word of God, and to break the power of the
4011 Christian ministry. Has it come to this, that our
4012 grave doctors in our seminaries, are employed to
4013 instruct Zion's watchmen, to believe and teach that
4014 it is not to be expected that the prayer of faith is to
4015 be answered in granting the object for which we
4016 pray? Oh, tell it not in Gath, nor let the sound reach
4017 Askelon! What is to become of the church while
4018 such are the views of its gravest and most
4019 influential ministers? I would not be unkind nor
4020 censorious, but as one of the ministers of Jesus

4021 Christ, I feel bound to bear testimony against such
4022 a perversion of the word of God.

4023

4024 5. It is evident that the prayer of faith will obtain
4025 the blessing, from the fact that our faith rests on
4026 evidence that to grant that thing is the will of God.
4027 Not evidence that something else will be granted,
4028 but that this particular thing will be. But how, then,
4029 can we have evidence that this thing will be
4030 granted, if another thing is to be granted? People
4031 often receive more than they pray for. Solomon
4032 prayed for wisdom, and God granted him riches
4033 and honor in addition. So a wife sometimes prays
4034 for the conversion of her husband, and if she offers
4035 the prayer, of faith, God may not only grant that
4036 blessing, but convert her child, and her whole
4037 family. Blessings sometimes seem to hang
4038 together, so that if a Christian gains one he gets
4039 them all.

4040

4041 V. I am to show how we are to come into this state
4042 of mind, in which we can offer such prayer. People
4043 sometimes ask, "How shall I offer such prayer?
4044 Shall I say, Now I will pray in faith for such and
4045 such a blessing?" No, the human mind is not
4046 moved in this way. You might just as well say,
4047 "Now I will call up a spirit from the bottomless
4048 pit." I answer,

4049

4050 1. You must first obtain evidence that God will
4051 bestow the blessing. How did Daniel make out to
4052 offer the prayer of faith? He searched the
4053 Scriptures. Now, you need not let your Bible lie on
4054 a shelf, and expect God to reveal his promises to
4055 you. Search the Scriptures, and see where you can
4056 get either a general or special promise, or a
4057 prophecy, on which you can plant your feet when
4058 you pray. Go through the Bible, and you will find it
4059 full of such things—precious promises, which you
4060 may plead in faith. You never need to want for
4061 objects of prayer, if you will do as Daniel did.
4062 Persons are staggered on this subject, because they
4063 never make a proper use of the Bible.

4064

4065 A curious case occurred in one of the towns in the
4066 western part of this state. There was a revival there.
4067 A certain clergyman came to visit the place, and
4068 heard a great deal said about the Prayer of Faith.
4069 He was staggered at what they said, for he had
4070 never regarded the subject in the light they did. He
4071 inquired about it of the minister that was laboring
4072 there. The minister requested him, in a kind spirit,
4073 to go home, and take his Testament, look out the
4074 passages that refer to prayer, and go round to his
4075 most praying people, and ask them how they
4076 understood these passages. He said he would do it,

4077 for though these views were new to him, he was
4078 willing to learn. He did it, and went to his praying
4079 men and women, and read the passages without
4080 note or comment, and asked what they thought. He
4081 found their plain common sense had led them to
4082 understand these passages, and to believe that they
4083 mean just as they say. This affected him, and then
4084 the fact of his going round and presenting the
4085 promises before their minds awakened the spirit of
4086 prayer in them, and a revival followed.

4087
4088 I could name many individuals who have set
4089 themselves to examine the Bible on this subject,
4090 and before they got half through with it have been
4091 filled with the spirit of prayer. They found that God
4092 meant by his promises just what a plain, common
4093 sense man would understand them to mean. I
4094 advise you to try it. You have Bibles; look them
4095 over, and whenever you find a promise that you can
4096 use, fasten it in your mind before you go on; and I
4097 venture to predict you will not get through the book
4098 without finding out that God's promises mean just
4099 what they say.

4100

4101 2. Cherish the good desires you have. Christians
4102 very often lose their good desires by not attending
4103 to this; and then their prayers are mere words,
4104 without any desire or earnestness at all. The least

4105 longing of desire must be cherished. If your body
4106 was likely to freeze, and you had even the least
4107 spark of fire, how you would cherish it! So if you
4108 have the least desire for a blessing, let it be ever so
4109 small, do not trifle it away. Do not grieve the Spirit.
4110 Do not be diverted. Do not lose good desires by
4111 levity, by censoriousness, by worldly-mindedness.
4112 Watch and pray, and follow it up, or you will never
4113 pray the prayer of faith.

4114

4115 2. Entire consecration to God is indispensable to
4116 the prayer of faith. You must live a holy life, and
4117 consecrate all to God—your time, talents,
4118 influence—all you have, and all you are, to be his
4119 entirely. Read the lives of pious men, and you will
4120 be struck with this fact: that they used to set apart
4121 times to renew their covenant, and dedicate
4122 themselves anew to God; and whenever they have
4123 done so, a blessing has always followed
4124 immediately. If I had Edwards here to-night, I
4125 could read passages showing how it was in his
4126 days.

4127

4128 4. You must persevere. You are not to pray for a
4129 thing once, and then cease, and call that the prayer
4130 of faith. Look at Daniel. He prayed twenty-one
4131 days, and did not cease till he had obtained the
4132 blessing. He set his heart and his face unto the

4133 Lord, to seek by prayer and supplications, with
4134 fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and he held on
4135 three weeks, and then the answer came. And why
4136 did not it come before? God sent an Archangel to
4137 bear the message, but the devil hindered him all
4138 this time. See what Christ says in the parable of the
4139 unjust judge, and the parable of the loaves. What
4140 does he teach us by them? Why, that God will
4141 grant answers to prayer when it is importunate.
4142 “Shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day
4143 and night unto him?”

4144

4145 5. If you would pray in faith, be sure to walk every
4146 day with God. If you do, he will tell you what to
4147 pray for. Be filled with his Spirit, and he will give
4148 you objects enough to pray for. He will give you as
4149 much of the spirit of prayer as you have strength of
4150 body to bear.

4151

4152 Said a good man to me, “Oh, I am dying for the
4153 want of strength to pray. My body is crushed, the
4154 world is on me, and how can I forbear praying!” I
4155 have known that man go to bed absolutely sick, for
4156 weakness and faintness, under the pressure. And I
4157 have known him pray as if he would do violence to
4158 heaven, and then seen the blessing come as plainly
4159 in answer to his prayer as if it was revealed, so that
4160 no person would doubt it any more than if God had

4161 spoken from heaven. Shall I tell you how he died?
4162 He prayed more and more, and he used to take the
4163 map of the world before him and pray, and look
4164 over the different countries and pray for them, till
4165 he absolutely expired in his room praying. Blessed
4166 man! He was the reproach of the ungodly and of
4167 carnal, unbelieving professors, but he was the
4168 favorite of heaven, and a prevailing prince in
4169 prayer.

4170

4171 VI. I will refer to some objections which are
4172 brought forward against this doctrine.

4173

4174 1. "It leads to fanaticism and amounts to a new
4175 revelation." Why should this be a stumbling block?
4176 They must have evidence to believe before they
4177 can offer the prayer of faith. And if God gives
4178 other evidence besides the senses, where is the
4179 objection? True, there is a sense in which this is a
4180 new revelation; it is making known a thing by his
4181 Spirit. But it is the very revelation which God has
4182 promised to give. It is just the one we are to expect,
4183 if the Bible is true; that when we know not what we
4184 ought to pray for, according to the will of God, his
4185 Spirit helps our infirmities, and teaches us the very
4186 thing to pray for. Shall we deny the teaching of the
4187 Spirit?

4188

4189 2. It is often asked, "Is it our duty to pray the
4190 prayer of faith for the salvation of all men?" I
4191 answer, No; for that is not a thing according to the
4192 will of God. It is directly contrary to his revealed
4193 will. We have no evidence that all will be saved.
4194 We should feel benevolently to all, and, in itself
4195 considered, desire their salvation. But God has
4196 revealed it to us that many of the human race shall
4197 be damned. And it cannot be a duty to believe that
4198 they shall all be saved, in the face of a revelation to
4199 the contrary. In Christ's prayer, in the seventeenth
4200 chapter of John, he expressly said, "I pray not for
4201 the world but for those thou hast given me."
4202

4203 3. But say some, "If we were to offer this prayer
4204 for all men, would not all men be saved?" I answer,
4205 Yes, and so they would be saved, if they would all
4206 repent. But they will not. Neither will Christians
4207 offer the prayer of faith for all, because there is no
4208 evidence on which to ground a belief that God
4209 intends to save all men.

4210
4211 4. But you ask, "For whom are we to offer this
4212 prayer? We want to know in what cases, for what
4213 persons, and places, and at what times, etc., we are
4214 to make the prayer of faith." I answer, as I have
4215 already answered, When you have evidence, from
4216 promises, or prophecies, or providences, or the

4217 leadings of the Spirit, that God will do the things
4218 you pray for.

4219

4220 5. “How is it that so many prayers of pious parents
4221 for their children are not answered? Did you not
4222 say there was a promise which pious parents may
4223 apply to their children? Why is it, then, that so
4224 many pious praying parents have had impenitent
4225 children, that died in their sins?” Granted that it is
4226 so, what does it prove? Let God be true, but every
4227 man a liar. Which shall we believe, that God’s
4228 promise has failed, or that these parents did not do
4229 their duty? Perhaps they did not believe the
4230 promise, or did not believe there was any such
4231 thing as the prayer of faith. Wherever you find a
4232 professor that does not believe in any such prayer,
4233 you find, as a general thing, that he has children
4234 and domestics yet in their sins. And no wonder,
4235 unless they are converted in answer to the prayers
4236 of somebody else.

4237

4238 6. “Will not these views lead to fanaticism? Will
4239 not many people think they are offering the prayer
4240 of faith when they are not?” That is the same
4241 objection that the Unitarians make against the
4242 doctrine of regeneration—that many people think
4243 they have been born again when they have not. It is
4244 an argument against all spiritual religion whatever.

4245 Some think they have it when they have not, and
4246 are fanatics. But there are those who know what the
4247 prayer of faith is, just as there are those who know
4248 what spiritual experience is, though it may stumble
4249 cold-hearted professors who know it not. Even
4250 ministers often lay themselves open to the rebuke
4251 which Christ gave to Nicodemus: “Art thou a
4252 master in Israel, and knowest not these things?”
4253

4254 REMARKS.

4255

4256 1. Persons who have not known by experience
4257 what this is, have great reason to doubt their piety.
4258 This is by no means uncharitable. Let them
4259 examine themselves. It is to be feared that they
4260 understand prayer as Nicodemus did the new birth.
4261 They have not walked with God, and you cannot
4262 describe it to them, any more than you can describe
4263 a beautiful painting to a blind man who cannot see
4264 colors. Many professors can understand about the
4265 prayer of faith just as much as a blind man does of
4266 colors.

4267

4268 2. There is reason to believe millions are in hell
4269 because professors have not offered the prayer of
4270 faith. When they had promises under their eye, they
4271 have not had faith enough to use them. Thus
4272 parents let their children, and even baptized

4273 children, go down to hell because they would not
4274 believe the promises of God. Doubtless many
4275 women's husbands have gone to hell, when they
4276 might have prevailed with God in prayer and saved
4277 them. The signs of the times and the indications of
4278 Providence were favorable, perhaps, and the Spirit
4279 of God prompted desires for their salvation, and
4280 they had evidence enough to believe that God was
4281 ready to grant a blessing, and if they had only
4282 prayed in faith, God would have granted it; but
4283 God turned it away because they would not discern
4284 the signs of the times.

4285
4286 3. You say, "This leaves the church under a great
4287 load of guilt." True, it does so; and no doubt
4288 multitudes will stand up before God covered all
4289 over with the blood of souls that have been lost
4290 through their want of faith. The promises of God,
4291 accumulated in their Bibles, will stare them in the
4292 face and weigh them down to hell.

4293
4294 4. Many professors of religion live so far from God
4295 that to talk to them about the prayer of faith is all
4296 unintelligible. Very often the greatest offence
4297 possible to them is to preach about this kind of
4298 prayer.
4299

4300 5. I want to ask the professors who are here a few
4301 questions. Do you know what it is to pray in faith?
4302 Did you ever pray in this way? Have you ever
4303 prayed till your mind was assured the blessing
4304 would come—till you felt that rest in God, that
4305 confidence, as perfect as if you saw God come
4306 down from heaven to give it to you? If not, you
4307 ought to examine your foundation. How can you
4308 live without praying in faith at all? How do you
4309 live in view of your children, while you have no
4310 assurance whatever that they will be converted?
4311 One would think you would go deranged. I knew a
4312 father at the West; he was a good man, but he had
4313 erroneous views respecting the prayer of faith; and
4314 his whole family of children were grown up and
4315 not one of them converted. At length his son
4316 sickened and seemed about to die. The father
4317 prayed, but the son grew worse and seemed sinking
4318 into the grave without hope. The father prayed till
4319 his anguish was unutterable. He went at last and
4320 prayed—(there seemed no prospect of his son’s
4321 life)—but he poured out his soul as if he would not
4322 be denied, till at length he got an assurance that his
4323 son would not only live, but be converted; and not
4324 only this one, but his whole family, would be
4325 converted to God. He came into the house and told
4326 his family his son would not die. They were
4327 astonished at him. “I tell you,” says he, “he won’t

4328 die. And no child of mine will ever die in his sins.”
4329 That man’s children were all converted years ago.

4330

4331 What do you think of that? Was that fanaticism? If
4332 you believe so, it is because you know nothing
4333 about the matter. Do you pray so? Do you live in
4334 such a manner that you can offer such prayer for
4335 your children? I know that the children of
4336 professors may sometimes be converted in answer
4337 to the prayers of somebody else. But ought you to
4338 live so? Dare you trust to the prayers of others
4339 when God calls you to sustain this most important
4340 relation to your children?

4341

4342 Finally—See what combined effort is made to
4343 dispose of the Bible. The wicked are for throwing
4344 away the threatenings of the Bible, and the church
4345 the promises. And what is there left? Between
4346 them, they leave the Bible a blank. I say it in love:
4347 What are our Bibles good for if we do not lay hold
4348 on their precious promises, and use them as the
4349 ground of our faith when we pray for the blessing
4350 of God? You had better send your Bibles to the
4351 heathen, where they will do some good, if you are
4352 not going to believe and use them. I have no
4353 evidence that there is much of this prayer now in
4354 this church or in this city. And what will become of

4355 it? What will become of your children? your
4356 neighbors? the wicked?

4357

4358

4359

4360

4361 LECTURE VI.

4362

4363 THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

4364

4365 Text.—Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our
4366 infirmities: for we know not what we should pray
4367 for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh
4368 intercession for us with groanings which cannot be
4369 uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth
4370 what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh
4371 intercession for the saints, according to the will of
4372 God.—Romans viii. 26, 27.

4373

4374 My last lecture but one was on the subject of
4375 Effectual Prayer; in which I observed that one of
4376 the most important attributes of effectual or
4377 prevailing prayer is Faith. This was so extensive a
4378 subject that I reserved it for a separate discussion.
4379 And accordingly, I lectured last Friday evening on
4380 the subject of Faith in Prayer, or, as it is termed, the
4381 Prayer of Faith. It was my intention to discuss the
4382 subject in a single lecture. But as I was under the

4383 necessity of condensing so much on some points, it
4384 occurred to me, and was mentioned by others, that
4385 there might be some questions which people would
4386 ask, that ought to be answered more fully,
4387 especially as the subject is one on which there is so
4388 much darkness. One grand design in preaching is to
4389 exhibit the truth in such a way as to answer the
4390 questions which would naturally arise in the minds
4391 of those who read the Bible with attention, and who
4392 want to know what it means, so that they can put it
4393 in practice. In explaining the text, I propose to
4394 show,

4395

4396 I. What Spirit is here spoken of, “The Spirit also
4397 helpeth our infirmities.”

4398

4399 II. What that Spirit does for us.

4400

4401 III. Why he does what the text declares him to do.

4402

4403 IV. How he accomplishes it.

4404

4405 V. The degree in which he influences the minds of
4406 those who are under his influence.

4407

4408 VI. How his influences are to be distinguished from
4409 the influences of evil spirits, or from the
4410 suggestions of our own minds.

4411

4412 VII. How we are to obtain this agency of the Holy
4413 Spirit.

4414

4415 VIII. Who have a right to expect to enjoy his
4416 influences in this matter—or for whom the Spirit
4417 does the things spoken of in the text.

4418

4419 I. What Spirit is it that is spoken of in the text?

4420

4421 Some have supposed that the Spirit spoken of in
4422 the text means our own spirit—our own mind. But
4423 a little attention to the text will show plainly that
4424 this is not the meaning. “The Spirit helpeth our
4425 infirmities” would then read, “Our own spirit
4426 helpeth the infirmities of our own spirit,”—and
4427 “Our own spirit likewise maketh intercession for
4428 our own spirit.” You see you can make no sense of
4429 it on that supposition. It is evident from the manner
4430 in which the text is introduced, that the Spirit
4431 referred to is the Holy Ghost. “For if ye live after
4432 the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit
4433 do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For
4434 as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are
4435 the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit
4436 of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the
4437 spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father,
4438 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that

4439 we are the children of God.” And the text is plainly
4440 speaking of the same Spirit.

4441

4442 II. What the Spirit does.

4443

4444 Answer—He intercedes for the saints. “He maketh
4445 intercession for us,” and “helpeth our infirmities,”
4446 when “we know not what to pray for as we ought.”
4447 He helps Christians to pray according to the will of
4448 God, or for the things that God desires them to pray
4449 for.

4450

4451 III. Why is the Holy Spirit thus employed?

4452

4453 Because of our ignorance. Because we know not
4454 what we should pray for as we ought. We are so
4455 ignorant both of the will of God, revealed in the
4456 Bible, and of his unrevealed will, as we ought to
4457 learn it from his providence. Mankind are vastly
4458 ignorant both of the promises and prophecies of the
4459 Bible, and blind to the providence of God. And
4460 they are still more in the dark about those points of
4461 which God has said nothing but by the leadings of
4462 his Spirit. You recollect that I named these four
4463 sources of evidence on which to ground faith in
4464 prayer—promises, prophecies, providences, and
4465 the Holy Spirit. When all other means fail of

4466 leading us to the knowledge of what we ought to
4467 pray for, the Spirit does it.

4468

4469 IV. How does he make intercession for the saints?
4470 In what mode does he operate, so as to help our
4471 infirmities?

4472

4473 Not by superseding the use of our faculties. It is not
4474 by praying for us, while we do nothing. He prays
4475 for us, by exciting our own faculties. Not that he
4476 immediately suggests to us words, or guides our
4477 language. But he enlightens our minds, and makes
4478 the truth take hold of our souls. He leads us to
4479 consider the state of the church, and the condition
4480 of sinners around us. The manner in which he
4481 brings the truth before the mind, and keeps it there
4482 till it produces its effect, we cannot tell. But we can
4483 know as much as this—that he leads us to a deep
4484 consideration of the state of things; and the result
4485 of this, the natural and philosophical result, is, deep
4486 feeling. When the Spirit brings the truth up before a
4487 man's mind, there is only one way in which he can
4488 keep from deep feeling. That is, by turning away
4489 his thoughts, and leading his mind to think of other
4490 things. Sinners, when the Spirit of God brings the
4491 truth before them, must feel. They feel wrong, as
4492 long as they remain impenitent. So, if a man is a
4493 Christian, and the Holy Spirit brings a subject into

4494 warm contact with his heart, it is just as impossible
4495 he should not feel, as it is that your hand should not
4496 feel if you put it into the fire. If the Spirit of God
4497 leads him to dwell on things calculated to excite
4498 warm and overpowering feelings, and he is not
4499 excited by them, it proves that he has no love for
4500 souls, nothing of the Spirit of Christ, and knows
4501 nothing about Christian experience.

4502
4503 2. The Spirit makes the Christian feel the value of
4504 souls, and the guilt and danger of sinners in their
4505 present condition. It is amazing how dark and
4506 stupid Christians often are about this. Even
4507 Christian parents let their children go right down to
4508 hell before their eyes, and scarcely seem to exercise
4509 a single feeling, or put forth an effort to save them.
4510 And why? Because they are so blind to what hell
4511 is, so unbelieving about the Bible, so ignorant of
4512 the precious promises which God has made to
4513 faithful parents. They grieve the Spirit of God
4514 away, and it is in vain to try to make them pray for
4515 their children, while the Spirit of God is away from
4516 them.

4517
4518 3. He leads Christians to understand and apply the
4519 promises of Scripture. It is wonderful that in no age
4520 have Christians been able fully to apply the
4521 promises of Scripture to the events of life, as they

4522 go along. This is not because the promises
4523 themselves are obscure. The promises themselves
4524 are plain enough. But there has always been a
4525 wonderful disposition to overlook the Scriptures, as
4526 a source of light respecting the passing events of
4527 life. How astonished the apostles were at Christ's
4528 application of so many prophecies to himself! They
4529 seemed to be continually ready to exclaim,
4530 "Astonishing! Can it be so? We never understood it
4531 before." Who, that has witnessed the manner in
4532 which the apostles, influenced and inspired by the
4533 Holy Ghost, applied passages of the Old Testament
4534 to Gospel times, has not been amazed at the
4535 richness of meaning which they found in the
4536 Scriptures? So it has been with many a Christian;
4537 while deeply engaged in prayer, he has seen that
4538 passages of Scripture are appropriate which he
4539 never thought of before, as having any such
4540 application.

4541
4542 I once knew an individual who was in great
4543 spiritual darkness. He had retired for prayer,
4544 resolved that he would not desist till he had found
4545 the Lord. He kneeled down and tried to pray. All
4546 was dark, and he could not pray. He rose from his
4547 knees, and stood for a while, but he could not give
4548 it up, for he had promised that he would not let the
4549 sun go down before he had given himself to God.

4550 He knelt again, but it was all dark, and his heart
4551 was hard as before. He was nearly in despair, and
4552 said in agony, "I have grieved the Spirit of God
4553 away, and there is no promise for me. I am shut out
4554 from the presence of God." But his resolution was
4555 formed not to give over, and again he knelt down.
4556 He had said but a few words, when this passage
4557 came into his mind as fresh as if he had just read it;
4558 it seemed as if he had just been reading the words,
4559 "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall
4560 search for me with all your heart." Jer. xxix. 13.
4561 Though this promise was in the Old Testament, and
4562 was addressed to the Jews, it was still as applicable
4563 to him as to them. And it broke his heart, like the
4564 hammer of the Lord, in a moment. He prayed, and
4565 rose up, happy in God. Thus it often happens when
4566 professors of religion are praying for their children.
4567 Sometimes they pray, and are in darkness and
4568 doubt, feeling as if there was no foundation for
4569 faith, and no special promises for the children of
4570 believers. But while they are pleading, God has
4571 shown them the full meaning of some promise, and
4572 their soul has rested on it as on the mighty arm of
4573 God. I once heard of a widow who was greatly
4574 exercised about her children, till this passage was
4575 brought powerfully to her mind: "Leave thy
4576 fatherless children with me, I will preserve them
4577 alive." She saw it had an extended meaning, and

4578 she was enabled to lay hold on it, as it were, with
4579 her hands; and then she prevailed in prayer, and her
4580 children were converted. The Holy Spirit was sent
4581 into the world by the Saviour, to guide his people
4582 and instruct them, and bring things to their
4583 remembrance, as well as to convince the world of
4584 sin.

4585
4586 4. The Spirit leads Christians to desire and pray for
4587 things of which nothing is specifically said in the
4588 word of God. Take the case of an individual, That
4589 God is willing to save is a general truth. So it is a
4590 general truth that he is willing to answer prayer.
4591 But how shall I know the will of God respecting
4592 that individual, whether I can pray in faith
4593 according to the will of God for the conversion and
4594 salvation of that individual, or not? Here the
4595 agency of the Spirit comes in, to lead the minds of
4596 God's people to pray for those individuals, and at
4597 those times, when God is prepared to bless them.
4598 When we know not what to pray for, the Holy
4599 Spirit leads the mind to dwell on some object, to
4600 consider its situation, to realize its value, and to
4601 feel for it, and pray, and travail in birth, till the
4602 object is attained. This sort of experience I know is
4603 less common in cities than it is in some parts of the
4604 country, because of the infinite number of things to
4605 divert the attention and grieve the Spirit in cities. I

4606 have had much opportunity to know how it has
4607 been in some sections. I was acquainted with an
4608 individual who used to keep a list of persons that
4609 he was specially concerned for; and I have had the
4610 opportunity to know a multitude of persons for
4611 whom he became thus interested, who were
4612 immediately converted. I have seen him pray for
4613 persons on his list, when he was literally in an
4614 agony for them; and have sometimes known him
4615 call on some other person to help him pray for such
4616 a one. I have known his mind to fasten on an
4617 individual of hardened, abandoned character, and
4618 who could not be reached in any ordinary way. In a
4619 town in the north part of this State, where there was
4620 a revival, there was a certain individual who was a
4621 most violent and outrageous opposer. He kept a
4622 tavern, and used to delight in swearing at a
4623 desperate rate, whenever there were Christians
4624 within hearing, on purpose to hurt their feelings.
4625 He was so bad, that one man said he believed he
4626 should have to sell his place, or give it away, and
4627 move out of town, for he could not live near a man
4628 that swore so. This good man, that I was speaking
4629 of, was passing through the town, and heard of the
4630 case, and was very much grieved and distressed for
4631 the individual. He took him on his praying list. The
4632 case weighed on his mind, when he was asleep and
4633 when he was awake. He kept thinking about him,

4634 and praying for him for days. And the first we
4635 knew of it, this ungodly man came into a meeting,
4636 and got up and confessed his sins, and poured out
4637 his soul. His bar-room immediately became the
4638 place where they held prayer meetings. In this
4639 manner the Spirit of God leads individual
4640 Christians to pray for things which they would not
4641 pray for, unless they were led by the Spirit. And
4642 thus they pray for things according to the will of
4643 God.

4644
4645 By some, this may be said to be a revelation from
4646 God. I do not doubt that great evil has been done
4647 by saying that this kind of influence amounts to a
4648 new revelation. And many people will be afraid of
4649 it if they hear it called a new revelation, so that
4650 they will not stop to inquire what it means, or
4651 whether the Scriptures teach it or not. They
4652 suppose it to be a complete answer to the idea. But
4653 the plain truth of the matter is, that the Spirit leads
4654 a man to pray. And if God leads a man to pray for
4655 an individual, the inference from the Bible is, that
4656 God designs to save that individual. If we find by
4657 comparing our state of mind with the Bible, that we
4658 are led by the Spirit to pray for an individual, we
4659 have good evidence to believe that God is prepared
4660 to bless him.
4661

4662 6. By giving to Christians a spiritual discernment
4663 respecting the movements and developments of
4664 Providence. Devoted, praying Christians often see
4665 these things so clearly, and look so far ahead, as
4666 greatly to stumble others. They sometimes almost
4667 seem to prophesy. No doubt persons may be
4668 deluded, and sometimes are so, by leaning to their
4669 own understanding when they think they are led by
4670 the Spirit. But there is no doubt that a Christian
4671 may be made to see and to discern clearly the signs
4672 of the times, so as to understand, by providence,
4673 what to expect, and thus to pray for it in faith. Thus
4674 they are often led to expect a revival, and to pray
4675 for it in faith, when nobody else can see the least
4676 signs of it.

4677
4678 There was a woman in New Jersey, in a place
4679 where there had been a revival. She was very
4680 positive there was going to be another. She insisted
4681 upon it that they had had the former rain, and were
4682 now going to have the latter rain. She wanted to
4683 have conference meetings appointed. But the
4684 minister and elders saw nothing to encourage it,
4685 and would do nothing. She saw they were blind,
4686 and so she went forward and got a carpenter to
4687 make seats for her, for she said she would have
4688 meetings in her own house. There was certainly
4689 going to be a revival. She had scarcely opened her

4690 doors for meetings, before the Spirit of God came
4691 down in great power. And these sleepy church
4692 members found themselves surrounded all at once
4693 with convicted sinners. And they could only say,
4694 “Surely the Lord was in this place, and we knew it
4695 not.” The reason why such persons understand the
4696 indication of God’s will is not because of the
4697 superior wisdom that is in them, but because the
4698 Spirit of God leads them to see the signs of the
4699 times. And this, not by revelation; but they are led
4700 to see that converging of providences to a single
4701 point, which produces in them a confident
4702 expectation of a certain result.

4703
4704 V. In what degree are we to expect the Spirit of
4705 God to affect the minds of believers? The text says,
4706 “The Spirit maketh intercession with groanings that
4707 cannot be uttered.” The meaning of this I
4708 understand to be, that the Spirit excites desires too
4709 great to be uttered except by groans. Something
4710 that language cannot utter—making the soul too
4711 full to utter its feelings by words, where the person
4712 can only groan them out to God, who understands
4713 the language of the heart.

4714
4715 VI. How are we to know whether it is the Spirit of
4716 God that influences our minds or not?
4717

4718 1. Not by feeling that some external influence or
4719 agency is applied to us. We are not to expect to feel
4720 our minds in direct physical contact with God. If
4721 such a thing can be, we know of no way in which it
4722 can be made sensible. We know that we exercise
4723 our minds freely, and that our thoughts are
4724 exercised on something that excites our feelings.
4725 But we are not to expect a miracle to be wrought,
4726 as if we were led by the hand, sensibly, or like
4727 something whispered in the ear, or any miraculous
4728 manifestation of the will of God. People often
4729 grieve the Spirit away, because they do not harbor
4730 him and cherish his influences. Sinners often do
4731 this ignorantly. They suppose that if they were
4732 under conviction by the Spirit, they should have
4733 such and such mysterious feelings, a shock would
4734 come upon them, which they could not mistake.
4735 Many Christians are so ignorant of the Spirit's
4736 influences, and have thought so little about having
4737 his assistance in prayer, that when they have them
4738 they do not know it, and so do not cherish, and
4739 yield to them, and preserve them. We are conscious
4740 of nothing in the case, only the movement of our
4741 own minds. There is nothing else that can be felt.
4742 We are merely aware that our thoughts are
4743 intensely employed on a certain subject. Christians
4744 are often unnecessarily misled and distressed on
4745 this point, for fear they have not the Spirit of God.

4746 They feel intensely, but they know not what makes
4747 them feel. They are distressed about sinners; but
4748 why should they not be distressed, when they think
4749 of their condition? They keep thinking about them
4750 all the time, and why shouldn't they be distressed?
4751 Now, the truth is, that the very fact that you are
4752 thinking upon them is evidence that the Spirit of
4753 God is leading you. Do you not know that the
4754 greater part of the time these things do not affect
4755 you so? The greater part of the time you do not
4756 think much about the case of sinners. You know
4757 their salvation is always equally important. But at
4758 other times, even when you are quite at leisure,
4759 your mind is entirely dark, and vacant of any
4760 feeling for them. But now, although you may be
4761 busy about other things, you think, you pray, and
4762 feel intensely for them, even while you are about
4763 business that at other times would occupy all your
4764 thoughts. Now, almost every thought you have is,
4765 "God have mercy on them." Why is this? Why,
4766 their case is placed in a strong light before your
4767 mind. Do you ask what it is that leads your mind to
4768 exercise benevolence for sinners, and to agonize in
4769 prayer for them? What can it be but the Spirit of
4770 God? There are no devils that would lead you so. If
4771 your feelings are truly benevolent, you are to
4772 consider it as the Holy Spirit leading you to pray
4773 for things according to the will of God.

4774

4775 2. Try the spirits by the Bible. People are
4776 sometimes led away by strange fantasies and crazy
4777 impulses. If you compare them faithfully with the
4778 Bible, you never need be led astray. You can
4779 always know whether your feelings are produced
4780 by the Spirit's influences, by comparing your
4781 desires with the spirit and temper of religion as
4782 described in the Bible. The Bible commands you to
4783 try the spirits. "Beloved, believe not every spirit,
4784 but try the spirits, whether they be of God."

4785 Observe not only your own feelings in regard to
4786 your fellow-men, but also, and more especially, the
4787 teachings of the Spirit within you respecting our
4788 Lord Jesus Christ. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of
4789 God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ
4790 is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that
4791 confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh
4792 is not of God; and this is that spirit of Antichrist
4793 whereof ye have heard that it shall come; and even
4794 now already it is in the world."

4795

4796 VII. How shall we get this influence of the Spirit of
4797 God?

4798

4799 1. It must be sought by fervent, believing prayer.
4800 Christ says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to
4801 give good gifts to your children, how much more

4802 shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to
4803 them that ask him!” Does any one say, I have
4804 prayed for him, and he does not come? It is because
4805 you do not pray aright. “Ye ask and receive not,
4806 because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon
4807 your lusts.” You do not pray from right motives. A
4808 professor of religion, and a principal member in a
4809 church, once asked a minister what he thought of
4810 his case; he had been praying week after week for
4811 the Spirit, and had not received him. The minister
4812 asked him what his motive was in praying. He said
4813 he wanted to be happy. He knew those who had the
4814 Spirit were happy, and he wanted to enjoy his mind
4815 as they did. Why, the devil himself might pray so.
4816 That is mere selfishness. The man turned away in
4817 anger. He saw that he had never known what it was
4818 to pray. He was convinced he was a hypocrite, and
4819 that his prayers were all selfish, dictated only by a
4820 desire for his own happiness. David prayed that
4821 God would uphold him by his free Spirit, that he
4822 might teach transgressors and turn sinners to God.
4823 A Christian should pray for the Spirit that he may
4824 be the more useful and glorify God more; not that
4825 he himself may be more happy. This man saw
4826 clearly where he had been in error, and he was
4827 converted. Perhaps many here have been just so.
4828 You ought to examine and see if all your prayers
4829 are not selfish.

4830

4831 2. Use the means adapted to stir up your minds on
4832 the subject, and to keep your attention fixed there.
4833 If a man prays for the Spirit, and then diverts his
4834 mind to other objects; uses no other means, but
4835 goes right away to worldly objects; he tempts God,
4836 he swings loose from his object, and it would be a
4837 miracle if he should get what he prays for. How is a
4838 sinner to get conviction? Why, by thinking of his
4839 sins. That is the way for a Christian to obtain deep
4840 feeling, by thinking on the object. God is not going
4841 to pour these things on you without any effort of
4842 your own. You must cherish the slightest
4843 impressions. Take the Bible, and go over the
4844 passages that show the condition and prospects of
4845 the world. Look at the world, look at your children,
4846 and your neighbors, and see their condition while
4847 they remain in sin, and persevere in prayer and
4848 effort till you obtain the blessing of the Spirit of
4849 God to dwell in you. This was the way, doubtless,
4850 that Dr. Watts came to have the feelings which he
4851 has described in the second Hymn of the second
4852 Book, which you would do well to read after you
4853 go home.

4854

4855

4856 My thoughts on awful subjects roll,

4857

4858 Damnation and the dead:
4859
4860 What horrors seize the guilty soul
4861
4862 Upon a dying bed!
4863
4864
4865 Linger about these mortal shores,
4866
4867 She makes a long delay,
4868
4869 Till, like a flood, with rapid force
4870
4871 Death sweeps the wretch away.
4872
4873
4874 Then, swift and dreadful, she descends
4875
4876 Down to the fiery coast,
4877
4878 Amongst abominable fiends,
4879
4880 Herself a frightened ghost.
4881
4882
4883 There endless crowds of sinners lie,
4884
4885 And darkness makes their chains;

4886
4887 Tortured with keen despair thy cry,
4888
4889 Yet wait for fiercer pains.
4890
4891
4892 Not all their anguish and their blood
4893
4894 For their past guilt atones,
4895
4896 Nor the compassion of a God
4897
4898 Shall hearken to their groans.
4899
4900
4901 Amazing grace, that kept my breath,
4902
4903 Nor bid my soul remove,
4904
4905 Till I had learned my Saviour's death,
4906
4907 And well insured his love!
4908
4909 Look, as it were, through a telescope that will bring
4910 it up near to you; look into hell, and hear them
4911 groan; then turn the glass upwards and look at
4912 heaven, and see the saints there, in their white
4913 robes, with their harps in their hands, and hear

4914 them sing the song of redeeming love; and ask
4915 yourself—Is it possible, that I should prevail with
4916 God to elevate the sinner there? Do this, and if you
4917 are not a wicked man, and a stranger to God, you
4918 will soon have as much of the spirit of prayer as
4919 your body can sustain.

4920

4921 3. You must watch unto prayer. You must keep a
4922 look out, and see if God grants the blessing when
4923 you ask him. People sometimes pray, and never
4924 look to see if the prayer is granted. Be careful also,
4925 not to grieve the Spirit of God. Confess and forsake
4926 your sins. God will never lead you as one of his
4927 hidden ones, and let you into his secrets, unless you
4928 confess and forsake your sins. Not be always
4929 confessing and never forsake, but confess and
4930 forsake too. Make redress wherever you have
4931 committed an injury. You cannot expect to get the
4932 spirit of prayer first, and then repent. You cannot
4933 fight it through so. Professors of religion, who are
4934 proud and unyielding, and justify themselves, never
4935 will force God to dwell with them.

4936

4937 4. Aim to obey perfectly the written law. In other
4938 words, have no fellowship with sin. Aim at being
4939 entirely above the world; “Be ye perfect even as
4940 your Father in heaven is perfect.” If you sin at all,
4941 let it be your daily grief. The man who does not

4942 aim at this, means to live in sin. Such a man need
4943 not expect God's blessing, for he is not sincere in
4944 desiring to keep all his commandments.

4945

4946 VIII. For whom does the Spirit intercede?

4947

4948 Answer—He maketh intercession for the saints, for
4949 all saints, for any who are saints. “Likewise the
4950 Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not
4951 what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit
4952 itself maketh intercession for us with groanings
4953 which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the
4954 hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,
4955 because he maketh intercession for the saints
4956 according to the will of God.”—Rom. viii. 26, 27.

4957

4958 REMARKS.

4959

4960 1. Why do you suppose it is, that so little stress is
4961 laid on the influences of the Spirit in prayer, when
4962 so much is said about his influences in conversion?
4963 Many people are amazingly afraid the Spirit's
4964 influences will be left out. They lay great stress on
4965 the Spirit's influences in converting sinners. But
4966 how little is said, how little is printed, about his
4967 influence in prayer! How little complaining that
4968 people do not make enough of the Spirit's
4969 influences in leading Christians to pray according

4970 to the will of God! Let it never be forgotten, that no
4971 Christian ever prays aright, unless led by the Spirit.
4972 He has natural power to pray, and so far as the will
4973 of God is revealed, is able to do it; but he never
4974 does, unless the Spirit of God influences him. Just
4975 as sinners are able to repent, but never do, unless
4976 influenced by the Spirit.

4977
4978 2. This subject lays open the foundation of the
4979 difficulty felt by many persons on the subject of the
4980 Prayer of Faith. They object to the idea that faith in
4981 prayer is a belief that we shall receive the very
4982 things for which we ask; and insist that there can be
4983 no foundation or evidence upon which to rest such
4984 a belief. In a sermon published a few years since,
4985 upon this subject, the writer brings forward this
4986 difficulty, and presents it in its full strength. I have,
4987 says he, no evidence that the thing prayed for will
4988 be granted, until I have prayed in faith; because,
4989 praying in faith is the condition upon which it is
4990 promised. And of course I cannot claim the
4991 promise, until I have fulfilled the condition. Now,
4992 if the condition is, that I am to believe I shall
4993 receive the very blessing for which I ask, it is
4994 evident that the promise is given upon the
4995 performance of an impossible condition, and is of
4996 course a mere nullity. The promise would amount
4997 to just this: You shall have whatsoever you ask,

4998 upon the condition that you first believe that you
4999 shall receive it. Now, I must fulfill the condition
5000 before I can claim the promise. But I can have no
5001 evidence that I shall receive it until I have believed
5002 that I shall receive it. This reduces me to the
5003 necessity of believing that I shall receive it before I
5004 have any evidence that I shall receive it—which is
5005 impossible.

5006
5007 The whole force of this objection arises out of the
5008 fact, that the Spirit's influences are entirely
5009 overlooked, which he exerts in leading an
5010 individual to the exercise of faith. It has been
5011 supposed that the passage in Mark xi. 22 and 24,
5012 with other kindred promises on the subject of the
5013 Prayer of Faith, relate exclusively to miracles. But
5014 suppose this were true. I would ask, What were the
5015 apostles to believe, when they prayed for a
5016 miracle? Were they to believe that the precise
5017 miracle would be performed for which they
5018 prayed? It is evident that they were. In the verses
5019 just alluded to, Christ says, "For verily I say unto
5020 you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain,
5021 Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and
5022 shall not doubt in his heart, but SHALL BELIEVE
5023 THAT THESE THINGS WHICH HE SAITH
5024 SHALL COME TO PASS, he shall have
5025 whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, what

5026 things soever ye desire, when ye pray, BELIEVE
5027 THAT YE RECEIVE THEM, and ye shall have
5028 them.” Here it is evident, that the thing to be
5029 believed, and which they were not to doubt in their
5030 heart, was, that they should have the very blessing
5031 for which they prayed. Now the objection above
5032 stated, lies in all its force against this kind of faith,
5033 when praying for the performance of a miracle. If it
5034 be impossible to believe this in praying for any
5035 other blessing. it was equally so in praying for a
5036 miracle. I might ask, Could an apostle believe that
5037 the miracle would be wrought, before he had
5038 fulfilled the condition? inasmuch as the condition
5039 was, that he should believe that he should receive
5040 that for which he prayed. Either the promise is a
5041 nullity and a deception, or there is a possibility of
5042 performing the condition.

5043

5044 Now, as I have said, the whole difficulty lies in the
5045 fact that the Spirit’s influences are entirely
5046 overlooked, and that faith which is of the operation
5047 of God, is left out of the question. If the objection
5048 is good against praying for any object, it is as good
5049 against praying in faith for the performance of a
5050 miracle. The fact is, that the Spirit of God could
5051 give evidence, on which to believe that any
5052 particular miracle would be granted; could lead the
5053 mind to a firm reliance upon God, and trust that the

5054 blessing sought would be obtained. And so at the
5055 present day he can give the same assurance, in
5056 praying for any blessing that we need. Neither in
5057 the one case nor the other, are the influences of the
5058 Spirit miraculous. Praying is the same thing,
5059 whether you pray for the conversion of a soul, or
5060 for a miracle. Faith is the same thing in the one
5061 case as in the other; it only terminates on a
5062 different object; in the one case on the conversion
5063 of a soul, and in the other on the performance of a
5064 miracle. Nor is faith exercised in the one more than
5065 in the other, without reference to a promise; and a
5066 general promise may with the same propriety be
5067 applied to the conversion of a soul as to the
5068 performance of a miracle. And it is equally true in
5069 the one case as the other, that no man ever prays in
5070 faith without being influenced by the Spirit of God.
5071 And if the Spirit could lead the mind of an apostle
5072 to exercise faith in regard to a miracle, he can lead
5073 the mind of another Christian to exercise faith in
5074 regard to receiving any other blessing, by a
5075 reference to the same general promise.

5076
5077 Should any one ask, “When are we under an
5078 obligation to believe that we shall receive the
5079 blessing for which we ask?” I answer:
5080

5081 (1.) When there is a particular promise, specifying
5082 the particular blessing: as where we pray for the
5083 Holy Spirit. This blessing is particularly named in
5084 the promise, and here we have evidence, and are
5085 bound to believe, whether we have any Divine
5086 influence or not; just as sinners are bound to repent
5087 whether the Spirit strives with them or not. Their
5088 obligation rests, not upon the Spirit's influences,
5089 but upon the powers of moral agency which they
5090 possess; upon their ability to do their duty. And
5091 while it is true that not one of them ever will repent
5092 without the influences of the Spirit, still they have
5093 power to do so, and are under obligation to do so,
5094 whether the Spirit strives with them or not. So with
5095 the Christian. He is bound to believe where he has
5096 evidence. And although he never does believe,
5097 even where he has an express promise, without the
5098 Spirit of God, yet his obligation to do so rests upon
5099 his ability, and not upon the Divine influence.

5100
5101 (2.) Where God makes a revelation by his
5102 providence, we are bound to believe in proportion
5103 to the clearness of the providential indication.

5104
5105 (3.) So where there is a prophecy, we are bound
5106 also to believe. But in neither of these cases do we,
5107 in fact, believe, without the Spirit of God.
5108

5109 But where there is neither promise, providence, nor
5110 prophecy, on which to repose our faith, we are
5111 under no obligation to believe, unless, as I have
5112 shown in this discourse, the Spirit gives us
5113 evidence, by creating desires, and by leading us to
5114 pray for a particular object. In the case of those
5115 promises of a general nature, where we are
5116 honestly at a loss to know in what particular cases
5117 to apply them, it may be considered rather as our
5118 privilege than as our duty, in many instances, to
5119 apply them to particular cases; but whenever the
5120 Spirit of God leads us to apply them to a particular
5121 object, then it becomes our duty so to apply them.
5122 In this case, God explains his own promise, and
5123 shows how he designed it should be applied. And
5124 then our obligation to make this application, and to
5125 believe in reference to this particular object,
5126 remains in full force.

5127

5128 3. Some have supposed that Paul prayed in faith for
5129 the removal of the thorn in the flesh, and that it was
5130 not granted. But they cannot prove that Paul prayed
5131 in faith. The presumption is all on the other side, as
5132 I have shown in a former lecture. He had neither
5133 promise, nor prophecy, nor providence, nor the
5134 Spirit of God, to lead him to believe. The whole
5135 objection goes on the ground that the apostle might
5136 pray in faith without being led by the Spirit. This is

5137 truly a shorthand method of disposing of the
5138 Spirit's influences in prayer. Certainly, to assume
5139 that he prayed in faith, is to assume either that he
5140 prayed in faith without being led by the Spirit, or
5141 that the Spirit of God led him to pray for that which
5142 was not according to the will of God.

5143

5144 I have dwelt the more on this subject, because I
5145 want to have it made so plain, that you will all be
5146 careful not to grieve the Spirit. I want you to have
5147 high ideas of the Holy Ghost, and to feel that
5148 nothing good will be done without his influences.

5149 No praying or preaching will be of any avail
5150 without him. If Jesus Christ were to come down
5151 here and preach to sinners, not one would be
5152 converted without the Spirit. Be careful then not to
5153 grieve him away, by slighting or neglecting his
5154 heavenly influences when he invites you to pray.

5155

5156 4. In praying for an object, it is necessary to
5157 persevere till you obtain it. Oh, with what
5158 eagerness Christians sometimes pursue a sinner in
5159 their prayers, when the Spirit of God has fixed their
5160 desires on him! No miser pursues his gold with so
5161 fixed a determination.

5162

5163 5. The fear of being led by impulses has done great
5164 injury, by not being duly considered. A person's

5165 mind may be led by an ignis fatuus. But we do
5166 wrong if we let the fear of impulses lead us to resist
5167 the good impulses of the Holy Ghost. No wonder
5168 Christians do not have the spirit of prayer, if they
5169 are unwilling to take the trouble to distinguish; and
5170 so reject or resist all impulses and all leadings of
5171 invisible agents. A great deal has been said about
5172 fanaticism, that is very unguarded, and that causes
5173 many minds to reject the leadings of the Spirit of
5174 God. “As many as are the sons of God are led by
5175 the Spirit of God.” And it is our duty to try the
5176 Spirits whether they be of God. We should insist on
5177 a close scrutiny and an accurate discrimination.
5178 There must be such a thing as being led by the
5179 Spirit. And when we are convinced it is of God, we
5180 should be sure to follow—follow on, with full
5181 confidence that he will not lead us wrong.

5182
5183 6. We see from this subject the absurdity of using
5184 forms of prayer. The very idea of using a form
5185 rejects, of course, the leadings of the Spirit.
5186 Nothing is more calculated to destroy the spirit of
5187 prayer, and entirely to darken and confuse the
5188 mind, as to what constitutes prayer, than to use
5189 forms. Forms of prayer are not only absurd in
5190 themselves, but they are the very device of the
5191 devil to destroy the spirit and break the power of
5192 prayer. It is of no use to say the form is a good one.

5193 Prayer does not consist in words. And it matters not
5194 what the words are, if the heart is not led by the
5195 Spirit of God. If the desire is not enkindled, the
5196 thoughts directed, and the whole current of feeling
5197 produced and led by the Spirit of God, it is not
5198 prayer. And set forms are, of all things, best
5199 calculated to keep an individual from praying as he
5200 ought.

5201
5202 7. The subject furnishes a test of character. The
5203 Spirit maketh intercession—for whom? For the
5204 saints. Those who are saints are thus exercised. If
5205 you are saints, you know by experience what it is
5206 to be thus exercised, or it is because you have
5207 grieved the Spirit of God, so that he will not lead
5208 you. You live in such a manner that this Holy
5209 Comforter will not dwell with you, nor give you
5210 the spirit of prayer. If this is so, you must repent.
5211 Whether you are a Christian or not, do not stop to
5212 settle that, but repent, as if you never had repented.
5213 Do your first works. Do not take it for granted that
5214 you are a Christian, but go like a humble sinner,
5215 and pour out your heart unto the Lord. You never
5216 can have the spirit of prayer in any other way.

5217
5218 8. The importance of understanding this subject.
5219

5220 (1.) In order to be useful. Without this spirit there
5221 can be no such sympathy between you and God
5222 that you can either walk with God or work with
5223 God. You need to have a strong beating of your
5224 heart with his, or you need not expect to be greatly
5225 useful.

5226
5227 (2.) As important as your sanctification. Without
5228 such a spirit you will not be sanctified, you will not
5229 understand the Bible, you will not know how to
5230 apply it to your case. I want you to feel the
5231 importance of having God with you all the time. If
5232 you live as you ought, he says he will come unto
5233 you, and make his abode with you, and sup with
5234 you, and you with him.

5235
5236 9. If people know not the spirit of prayer, they are
5237 very apt to be unbelieving in regard to the results of
5238 prayer. They do not see what takes place, or do not
5239 see the connection, or do not see the evidence.
5240 They are not expecting spiritual blessings. When
5241 sinners are convicted, they think they are only
5242 frightened by such terrible preaching. And when
5243 people are converted, they feel no confidence, and
5244 only say, "We'll see how they turn out."

5245
5246 10. Those who have the spirit of prayer know when
5247 the blessing comes. It was just so when Jesus

5248 Christ appeared. These ungodly doctors did not
5249 know him. Why? Because they were not praying
5250 for the redemption of Israel. But Simeon and Anna
5251 knew him. How was that? Mark what they said,
5252 how they prayed and how they lived. They were
5253 praying in faith, and so they were not surprised
5254 when he came. So it is with such Christians. If
5255 sinners are convicted or converted, they are not
5256 surprised at it. They were expecting just such
5257 things. They know God when he comes, because
5258 they were looking out for his visits.

5259

5260 11. There are three classes of persons in the church
5261 who are liable to error, or have left the truth out of
5262 view, on this subject.

5263

5264 (1.) Those who place great reliance on prayer, and
5265 use no other means. They are alarmed at any
5266 special means, and talk about your “getting up a
5267 revival.”

5268

5269 (2.) Over against these are those who use means,
5270 and pray, but never think about the influences of
5271 the Spirit in prayer. They talk about prayer for the
5272 Spirit, and feel the importance of the Spirit in the
5273 conversion of sinners, but do not realize the
5274 importance of the Spirit in prayer. And their

5275 prayers are all cold talk, nothing that any body can
5276 feel, or that can take hold of God.

5277

5278 (3.) Those who have certain strange notions about
5279 the sovereignty of God, and are waiting for God to
5280 convert the world without prayer or means.

5281

5282 There must be in the church a deeper sense of the
5283 need of the spirit of prayer. The fact is that,
5284 generally, those who use means most assiduously,
5285 and make the most strenuous efforts for the
5286 salvation of men, and who have the most correct
5287 notions of the manner in which means should be
5288 used for converting sinners, also pray most for the
5289 Spirit of God, and wrestle most with God for his
5290 blessing. And what is the result? Let facts speak,
5291 and say whether these persons do or do not pray,
5292 and whether the Spirit of God does not testify to
5293 their prayers, and follow their labors with his
5294 power.

5295

5296 12. A spirit very different from the spirit of prayer
5297 appears to prevail in certain portions of the
5298 Presbyterian church at the present time. Nothing
5299 will produce an excitement and opposition so quick
5300 as the spirit of prayer. If any person should feel
5301 burdened with the case of sinners, in prayer, so as
5302 to groan in his prayer, why, the women are

5303 nervous, and he is visited at once with rebuke and
5304 opposition. From my soul I abhor all affectation of
5305 feeling where there is none, and all attempts to
5306 work one's self up into feeling by groans. But I feel
5307 bound to defend the position that there is such a
5308 thing as being in a state of mind in which there is
5309 but one way to keep from groaning; and that is, by
5310 resisting the Holy Ghost. I was once present where
5311 this subject was discussed. It was said that
5312 groaning ought to be discountenanced. The
5313 question was asked, whether God could not
5314 produce such a state of feeling that to abstain from
5315 groaning was impossible? and the answer was,
5316 "Yes, but he never does." Then the apostle Paul
5317 was egregiously deceived when he wrote about
5318 groanings that cannot be uttered. Edwards was
5319 deceived when he wrote his book upon revivals.
5320 Revivals are all in the dark. Now, no man who
5321 reviews the history of the church will adopt such a
5322 sentiment. I do not like this attempt to shut out, or
5323 stifle, or keep down, or limit the spirit of prayer. I
5324 would sooner cut off my right hand than rebuke the
5325 spirit of prayer, as I have heard of its being done by
5326 saying, "Do not let me hear any more groaning."

5327
5328 But then, I hardly know where to conclude this
5329 subject. I should like to discuss it a month, and till
5330 the whole church could understand it, so as to pray

5331 the prayer of faith. Beloved, I want to ask you if
5332 you believe all this? Or do you wonder that I
5333 should talk so? Perhaps some of you have had
5334 some glimpses of these things. Now, will you give
5335 yourselves up to prayer, and live so as to have the
5336 spirit of prayer, and have the spirit with you all the
5337 time? Oh, for a praying church! I once knew a
5338 minister who had a revival fourteen winters in
5339 succession. I did not know how to account for it till
5340 I saw one of his members get up in a prayer
5341 meeting and make a confession. "Brethren," said
5342 he, "I have been long in the habit of praying every
5343 Saturday night till after midnight, for the descent of
5344 the Holy Ghost among us. And now, brethren," and
5345 he began to weep, "I confess that I have neglected
5346 it for two or three weeks." The secret was out. That
5347 minister had a praying church. Brethren, in my
5348 present state of health, I find it impossible to pray
5349 as much as I have been in the habit of doing, and
5350 continue to preach. It overcomes my strength.
5351 Now, shall I give myself up to prayer, and stop
5352 preaching? That will not do. Now, will not you,
5353 who are in health, throw yourselves into this work,
5354 and bear this burden, and lay yourselves out in
5355 prayer, till God will pour out his blessing upon us?
5356
5357
5358

5359 LECTURE VII.

5360

5361 ON BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

5362

5363 Text.—Be filled with the Spirit.—Eph. v. 18.

5364

5365 SEVERAL of my last lectures have been on the
5366 subject of prayer, and the importance of having the
5367 spirit of prayer, of the intercession of the Holy
5368 Ghost. Whenever the necessity and importance of
5369 the Spirit's influences are held forth, there can be
5370 no doubt that persons are in danger of abusing the
5371 doctrine, and perverting it to their own injury. For
5372 instance, when you tell sinners that without the
5373 Holy Spirit they never will repent, they are very
5374 liable to pervert the truth, and understand by it that
5375 they cannot repent, and therefore are under no
5376 obligation to do it until they feel the Spirit. It is
5377 often difficult to make them see that all the
5378 "cannot" consists in their unwillingness, and not in
5379 their inability. So again, when we tell Christians
5380 that they need the Spirit's aid in prayer, they are
5381 very apt to think they are under no obligation to
5382 pray the prayer of faith, until they feel the
5383 influences of the Spirit. They overlook their
5384 obligation to be filled with the Spirit and wait for
5385 the spirit of prayer to come upon them without
5386 asking, and thus tempt God.

5387

5388 Before we come to consider the other department
5389 of means for promoting a revival, that is, the means
5390 to be used with sinners, I wish to show you, that if
5391 you live without the Spirit, you are without excuse.
5392 Obligation to perform duty never rests on the
5393 condition, that we shall first have the influence of
5394 the Spirit, but on the powers of moral agency. We,
5395 as moral agents, have the power to obey God, and
5396 are perfectly bound to obey, and the reason we do
5397 not is, that we are unwilling. The influences of the
5398 Spirit are wholly a matter of grace. If they were
5399 indispensable to enable us to perform duty, the
5400 bestowment of them would not be a gracious act,
5401 but a mere matter of common justice. Sinners are
5402 not bound to repent because they have the Spirit's
5403 influence, or because they can obtain it, but
5404 because they are moral agents, and have the powers
5405 which God requires them to exercise. So in the case
5406 of Christians. They are not bound to pray in faith
5407 because they have the Spirit, (except in those cases
5408 where his influences in begetting desire constitute
5409 the evidence that it is God's will to grant the object
5410 of desire,) but because they have evidence. They
5411 are not bound to pray in faith at all, except when
5412 they have evidence as the foundation of their faith.
5413 They must have evidence from promises, or
5414 principle, or prophecy, or providence. And where

5415 they have evidence independent of his influences,
5416 they are bound to exercise faith, whether they have
5417 the Spirit's influence or not. They are bound to see
5418 the evidence, and to believe. The Spirit is given not
5419 to enable them to see or believe, but because
5420 without it they will not look, nor feel, nor act, as
5421 they ought. I purpose this evening to show from the
5422 text,

5423
5424 I. That Christians may be filled with the Spirit of
5425 God.

5426
5427 II. That it is their duty to be filled with the Spirit.

5428
5429 III. Why they are not filled with the Spirit.

5430
5431 IV. The guilt of those who have not the Spirit of
5432 God, to lead their minds in duty and prayer.

5433
5434 V. The consequences that will follow if they are
5435 filled with the Spirit.

5436
5437 VI. The consequences if they are not.

5438
5439 I. I am to show you that you may have the Spirit.
5440 Not because it is a matter of justice for God to give
5441 you his Spirit, but because he has promised to give
5442 it to those that ask. "If ye then, being evil, know

5443 how to give good gifts to your children, how much
5444 more shall your Father which is in heaven give the
5445 Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" If you ask [for]
5446 the Holy Spirit, God has promised to give it.

5447
5448 But again, God has commanded you to have it. He
5449 says in the text, "Be filled with the Spirit." When
5450 God commands us to do a thing, it is the highest
5451 possible evidence that we can do it. For God to
5452 command, is equivalent to an oath that we can do
5453 it. He has no right to command, unless we have
5454 power to obey. There is no stopping short of the
5455 conclusion that God is an infinite tyrant, if he
5456 commands that which is impracticable.

5457
5458 II. I am to show, secondly, that it is your duty.

- 5459
5460 1. Because you have a promise of it.
5461
5462 2. Because God has commanded it.
5463
5464 3. It is essential to your own growth in grace that
5465 you should be filled with the Spirit.
5466
5467 4. It is as important as it is that you should be
5468 sanctified.
5469

5470 5. It is as necessary as it is that you should be
5471 useful and do good in the world.

5472

5473 6. If you do not have the Spirit of God in you, you
5474 will dishonor God, disgrace the church, and die and
5475 go to hell.

5476

5477 III. Why many do not have the Spirit. There are
5478 some, even professors of religion, who will say, "I
5479 do not know any thing about this; I never had any
5480 such experience; either it is not true or I am all
5481 wrong." No doubt you are all wrong, if you know
5482 nothing about the influence of the Spirit. I want to
5483 present you with a few of the reasons that may
5484 prevent you from being filled with the Spirit.

5485

5486 1. It may be that you live a hypocritical life. Your
5487 prayers are not earnest and sincere. Not only is
5488 your religion a mere outside show, without any
5489 heart, but you are insincere in your intercourse with
5490 others. Thus you do many things to grieve the
5491 Spirit, so that he cannot dwell with you.

5492

5493 A minister was once boarding in a certain family,
5494 and the lady of the house was constantly
5495 complaining that she did not enjoy her mind, and
5496 nothing seemed to help her. One day some ladies
5497 called to see her, and she protested that she was

5498 very much offended because they had not called
5499 before, and pressed them to stay and spend the day,
5500 and declared she could not consent to let them go.
5501 They excused themselves, however, and left the
5502 house, and as soon as they were gone, she said to
5503 her servant, she wondered these people had so little
5504 sense as to be always troubling her, and taking up
5505 her time. The minister heard it, and immediately
5506 rebuked her, and told her she could now see why
5507 she did not enjoy religion. It was because she was
5508 in the daily habit of insincerity that amounted to
5509 downright lying. And the Spirit of truth could not
5510 dwell in such a heart.

5511
5512 2. Others have so much levity that the Spirit will
5513 not dwell with them. The Spirit of God is solemn,
5514 and serious, and will not dwell with those who give
5515 way to thoughtless levity.

5516
5517 3. Others are so proud that they cannot have the
5518 Spirit. They are so fond of dress, high life,
5519 equipage, fashion, etc., that it is no wonder they are
5520 not filled with the Spirit. And yet such persons will
5521 pretend to be at a loss to know why it is that they
5522 do not enjoy religion!

5523
5524 4. Some are so worldly-minded, love property so
5525 well, and are trying so hard to get rich, that they

5526 cannot have the Spirit. How can he dwell with
5527 them, when their thoughts are all on things of the
5528 world, and all their powers absorbed in procuring
5529 wealth? And they hold on to it when they get it,
5530 and they are pained if pressed by conscience to do
5531 something for the conversion of the world. They
5532 show how much they love the world, in all their
5533 intercourse with others. Little things show it. They
5534 will screw down a poor man, who is doing a little
5535 piece of work for them, to the lowest penny. If they
5536 are dealing on a large scale, very likely they will be
5537 liberal and fair, because it is for their advantage.
5538 But if it is a person they care not about, a laborer,
5539 or a mechanic, or a servant, they will grind him
5540 down to the last fraction, no matter what it is really
5541 worth; and they actually pretend to make
5542 conscience of it, that they cannot possibly give any
5543 more. Now they would be ashamed to deal so with
5544 people of their own rank, because it would be
5545 known and injure their reputation. But God knows
5546 it, and has it all written down, that they are
5547 covetous and unfair in their dealings, and will not
5548 do right, only when it is for their interest. Now how
5549 can such professors have the Spirit of God? It is
5550 impossible.

5551
5552 There are a multitude of such things, by which the
5553 Spirit of God is grieved. People call them little

5554 sins, but God will not call them little. I was struck
5555 with this thought, when I saw a little notice in the
5556 Evangelist. The publishers stated that they had
5557 many thousand dollars in the hands of subscribers,
5558 which was justly due, and that it would cost them
5559 as much as it was worth to send an agent to collect
5560 it. I suppose it is so with all the other religious
5561 papers, that subscribers either put the publisher to
5562 the trouble and expense of sending an agent to
5563 collect his due, or else they cheat him out of it.
5564 There are doubtless, I do not know how many,
5565 thousands of dollars held back in this way by
5566 professors of religion, just because it is in such
5567 small sums, or they are so far off that they cannot
5568 be sued. And yet these people will pray, and appear
5569 very pious, and wonder why they cannot enjoy
5570 religion, and have the Spirit of God! It is this
5571 looseness of moral principle, this want of
5572 conscience about little matters, prevailing in the
5573 church, that grieves away the Holy Ghost. Why, it
5574 would be disgraceful to God to dwell and have
5575 communion with such persons, who will take an
5576 advantage and cheat their neighbor out of his dues,
5577 because they can do it and not be disgraced.

5578
5579 5. Others do not fully confess and forsake their
5580 sins, and so cannot enjoy the Spirit's presence.
5581 They will confess their sins in general terms,

5582 perhaps, and are ready always to acknowledge that
5583 they are sinners. Or they will confess partially
5584 some particular sins. But they do it reservedly,
5585 proudly, guardedly, as if they were afraid they
5586 should say a little more than is necessary; that is,
5587 when they confess to men the injuries done to
5588 them. They do it in a way which shows that,
5589 instead of bursting forth from an ingenuous heart,
5590 the confession is wrung from them, by the hand of
5591 conscience gripping them. If they have injured any
5592 one, they will make a partial recantation, which is
5593 hard-hearted, cruel, and hypocritical, and then they
5594 will ask, “Now, brother, are you satisfied?” And
5595 you know it would be very difficult for a person to
5596 say that he was not satisfied, even if the confession
5597 is cold and heartless. But I tell you God is not
5598 satisfied. He knows whether you have gone the full
5599 length of honest confession, and taken all the
5600 blame that belongs to you. If your confessions have
5601 been constrained and wrung from you, do you
5602 suppose you can cheat God? “He that covereth his
5603 sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and
5604 forsaketh shall find mercy.” “He that humbleth
5605 himself shall be exalted.” Unless you come quite
5606 down, and confess your sins honestly, and
5607 remunerate where you have done injury, you have
5608 no right to expect the spirit of prayer.
5609

5610 6. Others are neglecting some known duty, and that
5611 is the reason why they have not the Spirit. One
5612 does not pray in his family, though he knows he
5613 ought to do it, and yet he is trying to get the spirit
5614 of prayer! There is many a young man who feels in
5615 his heart that he ought to prepare for the ministry,
5616 and he has not the spirit of prayer because he has
5617 some worldly object in view, which prevents his
5618 devoting himself to the work. He has known his
5619 duty, and refuses to do it, and now he is praying for
5620 direction from the Spirit of God. He cannot have it.
5621 One has neglected to make a profession of religion.
5622 He knows his duty, but he refuses to join the
5623 church. He once had the spirit of prayer, but
5624 neglecting his duty, he grieved the Spirit away.
5625 And now he thinks, if he could once more enjoy
5626 the light of God's countenance, and have his
5627 evidences renewed, he would do his duty, and join
5628 the church. And so he is praying for it again, and
5629 trying to bring God over to his terms, to grant him
5630 his presence. You need not expect it. You will live
5631 and die in darkness, unless you are willing first to
5632 do your duty, before God manifests himself as
5633 reconciled to you. It is in vain to say, you will
5634 come forward if God will first show you the light
5635 of his countenance. He never will do it as long as
5636 you live; he will let you die without it, if you refuse
5637 to do your duty.

5638

5639 I have known women who felt that they ought to
5640 talk to their unconverted husbands, and pray with
5641 them, but they have neglected it, and so they get
5642 into the dark. They knew their duty and refused to
5643 do it; they went round it, and there they lost the
5644 spirit of prayer.

5645

5646 If you have neglected any known duty, and thus
5647 lost the spirit of prayer, you must yield first. God
5648 has a controversy with you; you have refused
5649 obedience to God, and you must retract it. You
5650 may have forgotten it, but God has not, and you
5651 must set yourself to recall it to mind, and repent.
5652 God never will yield nor grant you his Spirit, till
5653 you repent. Had I an omniscient eye now, I could
5654 call the names of the individuals in this
5655 congregation, who had neglected some known
5656 duty, or committed some sin, that they have not
5657 repented of, and now they are praying for the spirit
5658 of prayer, but they cannot succeed in obtaining it.

5659

5660 To illustrate this I will relate a case. A good man in
5661 the western part of this State, had been a long time
5662 an engaged Christian, and he used to talk to the
5663 sleepy church with which he was connected. By-
5664 and-by the church was offended and got out of
5665 patience, and many told him they wished he would

5666 let them alone, they did not think he could do them
5667 any good. He took them at their word, and they all
5668 went to sleep together, and remained so two or
5669 three years. By-and-by a minister came among
5670 them and a revival commenced, but this elder
5671 seemed to have lost his spirituality. He used to be
5672 forward in a good work, but now he held back.
5673 Everybody thought it unaccountable. Finally, as he
5674 was going home one night, the truth of his situation
5675 flashed upon his mind, and he went into absolute
5676 despair for a few minutes. At length his thoughts
5677 were directed back to that sinful resolution to let
5678 the church alone in their sins. He felt that no
5679 language could describe the blackness of that sin.
5680 He realized that moment what it was to be lost, and
5681 to find that God had a controversy with him. He
5682 saw that it was a bad spirit which caused the
5683 resolution: the same that caused Moses to say,
5684 “You rebels.” He humbled himself on the spot, and
5685 God poured out his Spirit on him. Perhaps some of
5686 you that hear me are in just this situation. You have
5687 said something provoking or unkind to some
5688 person. Perhaps it was peevishness to a servant that
5689 was a Christian. Or perhaps it was speaking
5690 censoriously of a minister or some other person.
5691 Perhaps you have been angry because your
5692 opinions have not been taken, or your dignity has
5693 been encroached upon. Search thoroughly, and see

5694 if you cannot find out the sin. Perhaps you have
5695 forgotten it. But God has not forgotten it, and never
5696 will forgive your unchristian conduct until you
5697 repent. God cannot overlook it. It would do no
5698 good if he should. What good would it do to
5699 forgive, while the sin is rankling in your heart?

5700

5701 7. Perhaps you have resisted the Spirit of God.
5702 Perhaps you are in the habit of resisting the Spirit.
5703 You resist conviction. In preaching, when
5704 something has been said that reached your case,
5705 your heart has risen up against it and resisted.
5706 Many are willing to hear plain and searching
5707 preaching so long as they can apply it all to others;
5708 a misanthropic spirit makes them take a satisfaction
5709 in hearing others searched and rebuked; but if the
5710 truth touch them, they directly cry out that it is
5711 personal and abusive. Is this your case?

5712

5713 8. The fact is that you do not on the whole desire
5714 the Spirit. This is true in every case in which you
5715 do not have the Spirit. Let me not be mistaken here.
5716 I want you should carefully discriminate. Nothing
5717 is more common than for people to desire a thing
5718 on some accounts, which they do not choose on the
5719 whole. A person may see an article in a store which
5720 he desires to purchase, and he goes in and asks the
5721 price, and thinks of it a little, and on the whole

5722 concludes not to purchase it. He desires the article,
5723 but does not like the price, or does not like to be at
5724 the expense, so that, upon the whole, he prefers not
5725 to purchase it. That is the reason why he does not
5726 purchase it. So persons may desire the Spirit of
5727 God on some accounts; from a regard to the
5728 comfort and joy of heart which it brings. If you
5729 know what it is by former experience to commune
5730 with God, and how sweet it is to dissolve in
5731 penitence and to be filled with the Spirit, you
5732 cannot but desire a return of those joys. And you
5733 may set yourself to pray earnestly for it, and to
5734 pray for a revival of religion. But on the whole you
5735 are unwilling it should come. You have so much to
5736 do that you cannot attend to it. Or it will require so
5737 many sacrifices, that you cannot bear to have it.
5738 There are some things you are not willing to give
5739 up. You find that if you wish to have the Spirit of
5740 God dwell with you, you must lead a different life,
5741 you must give up the world, you must make
5742 sacrifices, you must break off from your worldly
5743 associates, and makes confession of your sins. And
5744 so on the whole you do not choose to have him
5745 come, unless he will consent to dwell with you and
5746 let you live as you please. But that he never will
5747 do.
5748

5749 9. Perhaps you do not pray for the Spirit; or you
5750 pray and use no other means, or pray and do not act
5751 consistently with your prayers. Or you use means
5752 calculated to resist them. Or you ask, and as soon
5753 as he comes and begins to affect your mind, you
5754 grieve him right away, and will not walk with him.

5755

5756 IV. I am to show the great guilt of not having the
5757 Spirit of God.

5758

5759 1. Your guilt is just as great as the authority of God
5760 is great, which commands you to be filled with the
5761 Spirit. God commands it, and it is just as much a
5762 disobedience of God's commands, as it is to swear
5763 profanely, or steal, or commit adultery, or break the
5764 Sabbath. Think of that. And yet there are many
5765 people who do not blame themselves at all for not
5766 having the Spirit. They even think themselves quite
5767 pious Christians, because they go to prayer
5768 meetings, and partake of the sacrament, and all
5769 that, though they live year after year without the
5770 Spirit of God. Now, you see the same God who
5771 says, "Do not get drunk," says also, "Be filled with
5772 the Spirit." You all say, if a man is an habitual
5773 murderer, or a thief, he is no Christian. Why?
5774 Because he lives in habitual disobedience to God.
5775 So if he swears, you have no charity for him. You
5776 will not allow him to plead that his heart is right,

5777 and words are nothing. God does not care anything
5778 about words. You would think it outrageous to
5779 have such a man in church, or to have a company
5780 of such people pretend to call themselves a church
5781 of Christ. And yet they are not a whit more
5782 absolutely living in disobedience to God than you
5783 are, who live without the spirit of prayer, and
5784 without the presence of God.

5785
5786 2. Your guilt is equal to all the good you might do
5787 if you had the Spirit of God in as great a measure
5788 as it is your duty to have it, and as you might have
5789 it. You, elders of this church! how much good you
5790 might do, if you had the Spirit. And you, Sunday-
5791 school teachers, how much good you might do; and
5792 you, church-members, too, if you were filled with
5793 the Spirit, you might do vast good, infinite good.
5794 Well, your guilt is just as great. Here is a blessing
5795 promised, and you can have it by doing your duty.
5796 You are entirely responsible to the church and to
5797 God for all this good that you might do. A man is
5798 responsible for all the good he can do.

5799
5800 3. Your guilt is further measured by all the evil
5801 which you do in consequence of not having the
5802 Spirit. You are a dishonor to religion. You are a
5803 stumbling block to the church, and to the world.
5804 And your guilt is enhanced by all the various

5805 influences you exert. And it will prove so in the
5806 day of judgment.

5807

5808 V. The consequences of having the Spirit.

5809

5810 1. You will be called eccentric; and probably you
5811 will deserve it. Probably you will really be
5812 eccentric. I never knew a person who was filled
5813 with the Spirit, that was not called eccentric. And
5814 the reason is, that they are unlike other people. This
5815 is always a term of comparison. There is therefore
5816 the best of reasons why such persons should appear
5817 eccentric. They act under different influences, take
5818 different views, are moved by different motives,
5819 led by a different spirit. You are to expect such
5820 remarks. How often I have heard the remark
5821 respecting such and such persons, “He is a very
5822 good man—but he is rather eccentric.” I have
5823 sometimes asked for the particulars; in what does
5824 his eccentricity consist? I hear the catalogue, and
5825 the amount is, that he is spiritual. Make up your
5826 mind for this, to be eccentric. There is such a thing
5827 as affected eccentricity. Horrible! But there is such
5828 a thing as being so deeply imbued with the Spirit of
5829 God, that you must and will act so as to appear
5830 strange and eccentric, to those who cannot
5831 understand the reasons of your conduct.

5832

5833 2 If you have much of the Spirit of God, it is not
5834 unlikely you will be thought deranged, by many.
5835 We judge men to be deranged when they act
5836 differently from what we think to be prudent and
5837 according to common sense, and when they come
5838 to conclusions for which we can see no good
5839 reasons. Paul was accused of being deranged by
5840 those who did not understand the views of things
5841 under which he acted. No doubt Festus thought the
5842 man was crazy, and that much learning had made
5843 him mad. But Paul said, "I am not mad, most noble
5844 Festus." His conduct was so strange, so novel, that
5845 Festus thought it must be insanity. But the truth
5846 was, he only saw the subject so clearly that he
5847 threw his whole soul into it. They were entirely in
5848 the dark in respect to the motive by which he was
5849 actuated. This is by no means uncommon.
5850 Multitudes have appeared to those who had no
5851 spirituality as if they were deranged. Yet they saw
5852 good reasons for doing as they did. God was
5853 leading their minds to act in such a way that those
5854 who were not spiritual could not see the reasons.
5855 You must make up your mind to this, and so much
5856 the more, as you live more above the world and
5857 walk with God.
5858
5859 3. If you have the Spirit of God, you must expect to
5860 feel great distress in view of the church and the

5861 world. Some spiritual epicures ask for the Spirit
5862 because they think it will make them so perfectly
5863 happy. Some people think that spiritual Christians
5864 are always very happy and free from sorrow.

5865
5866 There never was a greater mistake. Read your
5867 Bibles, and see how the prophets and apostles were
5868 always groaning and distressed in view of the state
5869 of the church and the world. The apostle Paul says
5870 he was always bearing about in his body the dying
5871 of the Lord Jesus. I protest, says he, that I die daily.
5872 You will know what it is to sympathize with the
5873 Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized with the baptism
5874 that he was baptized with. Oh how he agonized in
5875 view of the state of sinners! how he travailed in
5876 soul for their salvation! The more you have of his
5877 Spirit, the more clearly you will see the state of
5878 sinners, and the more deeply you will be distressed
5879 about them. Many times you will feel as if you
5880 could not live in view of their situation; your
5881 distress will be unutterable. Paul says, Rom ix: 1-3:
5882 “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience
5883 also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I
5884 have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my
5885 heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed
5886 from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen
5887 according to the flesh.”
5888

5889 4. You will be often grieved with the state of the
5890 ministry. Some years since I met a woman
5891 belonging to one of the churches in this city. I
5892 inquired of her the state of religion here. She
5893 seemed unwilling to say much about it, made some
5894 general remarks, and then choked, and her eyes
5895 filled, and she said, “Oh, our minister’s mind seems
5896 to be very dark.” Spiritual Christians often feel like
5897 this, and often weep over it. I have seen much of it,
5898 and often found Christians who wept and groaned
5899 in secret, to see the darkness on the minds of
5900 ministers in regard to religion, their earthliness and
5901 fear of man; but they dared not speak of it, lest they
5902 should be denounced and threatened, and perhaps
5903 turned out of the church. I do not say these things
5904 censoriously, to reproach my brethren, but because
5905 they are true. And ministers ought to know that
5906 nothing is more common than for spiritual
5907 Christians to feel burdened and distressed at the
5908 state of the ministry. I would not wake up any
5909 wrong feeling towards ministers, but it is time it
5910 should be known that Christians do often get
5911 spiritual views of things, and their souls are kindled
5912 up, and then they find that their minister does not
5913 enter into their feelings, that he is far below the
5914 standard of what he ought to be, and in spirituality
5915 far below some of the members of his church. This
5916 is one of the most prominent and deeply to be

5917 deplored evils of the present day. The piety of the
5918 ministry, though real, is so superficial, in many
5919 instances, that the spiritual part of the church feel
5920 that ministers cannot, do not, sympathize with
5921 them. Their preaching does not meet their wants, it
5922 does not feed them, it does not meet their
5923 experience. The minister has not depth enough of
5924 religious experience to know how to search and
5925 wake up the church; to help those under
5926 temptation, to support the weak, to direct the
5927 strong, and lead them through all the labyrinths and
5928 mazes with which their path may be beset. When a
5929 minister has gone with a church as far as his
5930 experience in spiritual exercise goes, there he
5931 stops; and until he has a renewed experience, until
5932 he is reconverted, his heart broken up afresh, and
5933 he set forward in the divine life and Christian
5934 experience, he will help them no more. He may
5935 preach sound doctrine, and so may an unconverted
5936 minister; but, after all, his preaching will want that
5937 searching pungency, that practical bearing, that
5938 unction which alone will reach the case of a
5939 spiritually-minded Christian. It is a fact over which
5940 the church is groaning, that the piety of young men
5941 suffers so much in the course of their education,
5942 that when they enter the ministry, however much
5943 intellectual furniture they may possess, they are in
5944 a state of spiritual babyhood. They want nursing,

5945 and need rather to be fed, than to undertake to feed
5946 the church of God.

5947

5948 5. If you have much of the Spirit of God, you must
5949 make up your mind to have much opposition, both
5950 in the church and the world. Very likely the leading
5951 men in the church will oppose you. There has
5952 always been opposition in the church. So it was
5953 when Christ was on earth. If you are far above their
5954 state of feeling, church members will oppose you.
5955 If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must
5956 expect persecution. Often the elders, and even the
5957 minister, will oppose you, if you are filled with the
5958 Spirit of God.

5959

5960 6. You must expect very frequent and agonizing
5961 conflicts with Satan. Satan has very little trouble
5962 with those Christians who are not spiritual, but
5963 lukewarm, and slothful, and worldly-minded. And
5964 such do not understand what is said about spiritual
5965 conflicts. Perhaps they will smile when such things
5966 are mentioned. And so the devil lets them alone.
5967 They do not disturb him, nor he them. But spiritual
5968 Christians, he understands very well, are doing him
5969 a vast injury, and, therefore, he sets himself against
5970 them. Such Christians often have terrible conflicts.
5971 They have temptations that they never thought of
5972 before, blasphemous thoughts, atheism,

5973 suggestions to do deeds of wickedness, to destroy
5974 their own lives, and the like. And if you are
5975 spiritual, you may expect these terrible conflicts.

5976

5977 7. You will have greater conflicts with yourself
5978 than you ever thought of. You will sometimes find
5979 your own corruptions making strange headway
5980 against the Spirit. “The flesh lusteth against the
5981 Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” Such a
5982 Christian is often thrown into consternation at the
5983 power of his own corruptions. One of the
5984 Commodores in the United States was, as I have
5985 been told, a spiritual man; and his pastor told me he
5986 had known that man lie on the floor and groan a
5987 great part of the night, in conflict with his own
5988 corruptions, and to cry to God in agony that he
5989 would break the power of the temptation. It seemed
5990 as if the devil was determined to ruin him; and his
5991 own feelings, for the time being, was almost in
5992 league with the devil.

5993

5994 8. But you will have peace with God. If the church,
5995 and sinners, and the devil oppose you, there will be
5996 one with whom you will have peace. Let those who
5997 are called to these trials, and conflicts, and
5998 temptations, and who groan, and pray, and weep,
5999 and break your hearts, remember this

6000 consideration: your peace, so far as your feelings
6001 towards God are concerned, will flow like a river.

6002

6003 9. You will likewise have peace of conscience, if
6004 you are led by the Spirit. You will not be
6005 constantly goaded and kept on the rack by a guilty
6006 conscience. Your conscience will be calm and
6007 quiet, unruffled as the summer's lake.

6008

6009 10. If filled with the Spirit, you will be useful. You
6010 cannot help being useful. Even if you were sick and
6011 unable to go out of your room, or to converse, and
6012 saw nobody, you would be ten times more useful
6013 than a hundred of those common sort of Christians
6014 who have no spirituality. To give you an idea of
6015 this, I will relate an anecdote. A pious man in the
6016 Western part of this State was sick with a
6017 consumption. He was a poor man, and sick for
6018 years. An unconverted merchant in the place had a
6019 kind heart, and used to send him now and then
6020 something for his comfort, or for his family. He felt
6021 grateful for the kindness, but could make no return,
6022 as he wanted to do. At length he determined that
6023 the best return he could make would be to pray for
6024 his salvation; he began to pray, and his soul
6025 kindled, and he got hold of God. There was no
6026 revival there, but by and by, to the astonishment of
6027 every body, this merchant came right out on the

6028 Lord's side. The fire kindled all over the place, and
6029 a powerful revival followed, and multitudes were
6030 converted.

6031

6032 This poor man lingered in this way for several
6033 years, and died. After his death, I visited the place,
6034 and his widow put into my hands his diary. Among
6035 other things, he says in his diary: "I am acquainted
6036 with about thirty ministers and churches." He then
6037 goes on to set apart certain hours in the day and
6038 week to pray for each of these ministers and
6039 churches, and also certain seasons for praying for
6040 the different missionary stations. Then followed,
6041 under different dates, such facts as these: "To-day,"
6042 naming the date, "I have been enabled to offer what
6043 I call the prayer of faith for the outpouring of the
6044 Spirit on —— church, and I trust in God there will
6045 soon be a revival there." Under another date, "I
6046 have to-day been able to offer what I call the prayer
6047 of faith for such a church, and trust there will soon
6048 be a revival there." Thus he had gone over a great
6049 number of churches, recording the fact that he had
6050 prayed for them in faith that a revival might soon
6051 prevail among them. Of the missionary stations, if I
6052 recollect right, he mentions in particular the
6053 mission at Ceylon. I believe the last place
6054 mentioned in his diary, for which he offered the
6055 prayer of faith, was the place in which he lived.

6056 Not long after noticing these facts in his diary, the
6057 revival commenced, and went over the region of
6058 country, nearly, I believe, if not quite, in the order
6059 in which they had been mentioned in his diary; and
6060 in due time news came from Ceylon that there was
6061 a revival of religion there. The revival in his own
6062 town did not commence till after his death. Its
6063 commencement was at the time when his widow
6064 put into my hands the document to which I have
6065 referred. She told me that he was so exercised in
6066 prayer during his sickness that she often feared he
6067 would pray himself to death. The revival was
6068 exceedingly great and powerful in all the region;
6069 and the fact that it was about to prevail had not
6070 been hidden from this servant of the Lord.
6071 According to his word, the secret of the Lord is
6072 with them that fear him. Thus this man, too feeble
6073 in his body to go out of his house, was yet more
6074 useful to the world and the church of God than all
6075 the heartless professors of the country. Standing
6076 between God and the desolations of Zion, and
6077 pouring out his heart in believing prayer, as a
6078 prince he had power with God, and prevailed.

6079

6080 11. If you are filled with the Spirit, you will not
6081 find yourselves distressed, and galled, and worried,
6082 when people speak against you. When I find people
6083 irritated and fretting at any little thing that touches

6084 them, I am sure they have not the Spirit of Christ.
6085 Jesus Christ could have everything said against him
6086 that malice could invent, and yet not be in the least
6087 disturbed by it. If you mean to be meek under
6088 persecution, and exemplify the temper of the
6089 Saviour, and honor religion in this way, you need
6090 to be filled with the Spirit.

6091
6092 12. You will be wise in using means for the
6093 conversion of sinners. If the Spirit of God is in you,
6094 he will lead you to use means wisely, in a way
6095 adapted to the end, and to avoid doing hurt. No
6096 man who is not filled with the Spirit of God, is fit
6097 to be employed in directing the measures adopted
6098 in a revival. Their hands will be all thumbs, unable
6099 to take hold, and they will act as if they had not
6100 common sense. But a man who is led by the Spirit
6101 of God, will know how to time his measures right,
6102 and how to apportion Divine truth, so as to make it
6103 tell to the best advantage.

6104
6105 13. You will be calm under affliction; not thrown
6106 into confusion or consternation when you see the
6107 storm coming over you. People around will be
6108 astonished at your calmness and cheerfulness under
6109 heavy trials, not knowing the inward supports of
6110 those who are filled with the Spirit.
6111

6112 14. You will be resigned in death; you will always
6113 feel prepared to die, and not afraid to die, and after
6114 death you will be proportionably more happy for
6115 ever in heaven.

6116

6117 VI. Consequences of not being filled with the
6118 Spirit.

6119

6120 1. You will often doubt, and reasonably doubt,
6121 whether you are Christians. You will have doubts,
6122 and you ought to have them. The sons of God are
6123 led by the Spirit of God. And if you are not led by
6124 the Spirit what reason have you to think you are
6125 sons? You will try to make a little evidence go a
6126 great way to bolster up your hopes, but you cannot
6127 do it, unless your conscience is seared as with a hot
6128 iron. You cannot help being plunged often into
6129 painful doubt and uncertainty about your state.

6130 Rom. viii. 9.—”But ye are not in the flesh, but in
6131 the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in
6132 you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,
6133 he is none of his.” 2 Cor. xiii. 5.—”Examine
6134 yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your
6135 own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that
6136 Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobate?”

6137

6138 2. You will always be unsettled in your views
6139 about the prayer of faith. The prayer of faith is

6140 something so spiritual, so much a matter of
6141 experience and not of speculation, that unless you
6142 are spiritual yourselves, you will not understand it
6143 fully. You may talk a great deal about the prayer of
6144 faith, and for the time get thoroughly convinced of
6145 it. But you will never feel so settled on it as to
6146 retain the same position of mind concerning it, and
6147 in a little while you will be all uncertainty. I knew a
6148 curious instance in a brother minister. He told me,
6149 “When I have the Spirit of God, and enjoy his
6150 presence, I believe firmly in the prayer of faith; but
6151 when I have it not, I find myself doubting whether
6152 there is any such thing, and my mind offering
6153 objections.” I know, from my own experience,
6154 what this is, and when I hear persons raising
6155 objections to that view of prayer which I have
6156 presented in these lectures, I understand very well
6157 what their difficulty is, and have often found it
6158 impossible to satisfy their minds, while so far from
6159 God; when at the same time they would understand
6160 it themselves, without argument, whenever they
6161 had experienced it.

6162
6163 3. If you have not the Spirit, you will be very apt to
6164 stumble at those who have. You will doubt the
6165 propriety of their conduct. If they seem to feel a
6166 good deal more than yourself, you will be likely to
6167 call it animal feeling. You will perhaps doubt their

6168 sincerity when they say they have such feelings.
6169 You will say, “I do not know what to make of
6170 brother such-a-one; he seems to be very pious, but I
6171 do not understand him, I think he has a great deal
6172 of animal feeling.” Thus you will be trying to
6173 censure them, for the purpose of justifying
6174 yourself.

6175
6176 4. You will be had in reputation with the
6177 impenitent, and with carnal professors. They will
6178 praise you, as a rational, orthodox, consistent
6179 Christian. You will be just in the frame of mind to
6180 walk with them, because you are agreed.

6181
6182 5. You will be much troubled with fears about
6183 fanaticism. Whenever there are revivals, you will
6184 see in them a strong tendency to fanaticism, and
6185 will be full of fears and anxiety, or rather of
6186 opposition to them.

6187
6188 6. You will be much disturbed by the measures that
6189 are used in revivals. If any measures are adopted,
6190 that are decided and direct, you will think they are
6191 all “new,” and will be stumbled at them just in
6192 proportion to your want of spirituality. You do not
6193 see their appropriateness. You will stand and cavil
6194 at the measures, because you are so blind that you

6195 cannot see their adaptedness, while all heaven is
6196 rejoicing in them as the means of saving souls.

6197

6198 7. You will be a reproach to religion. The
6199 impenitent will sometimes praise you because you
6200 are so much like themselves, and sometimes laugh
6201 about you because you are such a hypocrite.

6202

6203 8. You will know but little about the Bible.

6204

6205 9. If you die without the Spirit, you will fall into
6206 hell. There can be no doubt of this. Without the
6207 Spirit you will never be prepared for heaven.

6208

6209 REMARKS.

6210

6211 1. Christians are as guilty for not having the Spirit,
6212 as sinners are for not repenting.

6213

6214 2. They are even more so. As they have more light,
6215 they are so much the more guilty.

6216

6217 3. All beings have a right to complain of Christians
6218 who are not filled with the Spirit. You are not
6219 doing work for God, and he has a right to
6220 complain. He has placed his Spirit at your disposal,
6221 and if you have it not, he has a right to look to you
6222 and to hold you responsible for all the good you

6223 might do, did you possess it. You are sinning
6224 against all heaven, for you ought to be adding to
6225 their happy ranks. Sinners, the church, ministers,
6226 have a right to complain.

6227
6228 4. You are right in the way of the work of the Lord.
6229 It is in vain for a minister to try to work over your
6230 head. Ministers often groan and struggle, and wear
6231 themselves out in vain, trying to do good where
6232 there is a church who live so that they do not have
6233 the Spirit of God. If the Spirit is poured out at any
6234 time, the church will grieve him right away. Thus
6235 you may tie the hands and break the heart of your
6236 minister, and break him down, and perhaps kill
6237 him, because you will not be filled with the Spirit.

6238
6239 5. You see the reason why Christians need the
6240 Spirit, and the degree of their dependence. This
6241 cannot be too strongly exhibited.

6242
6243 6. Do not tempt God, by waiting for his Spirit,
6244 while using no means to procure his presence.

6245
6246 7. If you mean to have the Spirit, you must be
6247 childlike, and yield to his influences—just as
6248 yielding as air. If he is drawing you to prayer, you
6249 must quit everything to yield to his gentle strivings.
6250 No doubt you have sometimes felt a desire to pray

6251 for some object, and you have put it off and
6252 resisted, and God left you. If you wish him to
6253 remain, you must yield to his softest and gentlest
6254 motions, and watch to learn what he would have
6255 you do, and yield yourself up to his guidance.

6256
6257 8. Christians ought to be willing to make any
6258 sacrifice to enjoy the presence of the Spirit. Said a
6259 woman in high life, a professor of religion, “I must
6260 either give up hearing such a minister (naming
6261 him) preach, or I must give up my gay company.”
6262 She gave up the preaching and staid away. How
6263 different from another case!

6264
6265 A woman in the same rank of life heard the same
6266 minister preach, and went home resolved to
6267 abandon her gay and worldly manner of life—
6268 dismissed most of her attendants—changed her
6269 whole mode of dress, of equipage, of living, and of
6270 conversation; so that her gay and worldly friends
6271 were soon willing to leave her to the enjoyment of
6272 communion with God, and free to spend her time in
6273 doing good.

6274
6275 9. You see from this, that it must be very difficult
6276 for those in fashionable life to go to heaven. What
6277 a calamity to be in such circles! Who can enjoy the
6278 presence of God in them?

6279

6280 10. See how crazy those are who are scrambling to
6281 get up to these circles, enlarging their houses,
6282 changing their style of living, furniture, etc. It is
6283 like climbing up mast-head to be thrown off into
6284 the ocean. To enjoy God, you must come down, not
6285 go up there. God is not there, among all the starch
6286 and flattery of high life.

6287

6288 11. Many professors of religion are as ignorant of
6289 spirituality as Nicodemus was of the new birth.
6290 They are ignorant, and I fear unconverted. If any
6291 body talks to them about the spirit of prayer, it is
6292 all algebra to them. The case of such professors is
6293 awful. How different was the character of the
6294 apostles! Read the history of their lives, read their
6295 letters, and you will see that they were always
6296 spiritual, and walked daily with God. But now how
6297 little is there of such religion! “When the Son of
6298 Man cometh, will he find faith on the earth?” Set
6299 some of these professors to work in a revival, and
6300 they do not know what to do, have no energy, no
6301 skill, and make no impression. When will
6302 professors of religion set themselves to work, filled
6303 with the Spirit? If I could see this church filled with
6304 the Spirit, I would ask nothing more to move this
6305 whole mighty mass of minds. Not two weeks

6306 would pass before the revival would spread all over
6307 this city.

6308

6309

6310

6311 LECTURE VIII.

6312

6313 MEETINGS FOR PRAYER.

6314

6315 Text.—"Again I say unto you, That if two of you
6316 shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they
6317 shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father
6318 which is in heaven."—Matthew xviii. 19.

6319

6320 HITHERTO, in treating of the subject of Prayer, I
6321 have confined my remarks to secret prayer. I am
6322 now to speak of social prayer, or prayer offered in
6323 company, where two or more are united in praying.
6324 Such meetings have been common from the time of
6325 Christ, and even hundreds of years before. And it is
6326 probable that God's people have always been in the
6327 habit of making united supplication, whenever they
6328 had the privilege. The propriety of the practice will
6329 not be questioned here. I need not dwell now on the
6330 duty of social prayer. Nor is it my design to discuss
6331 the question, whether any two Christians agreeing
6332 to ask any blessing, will be sure to obtain it. My
6333 object is to make some remarks on

6334

6335 MEETINGS FOR PRAYER.

6336

6337 I. The design of Prayer Meetings.

6338

6339 II. The manner of conducting them.

6340

6341 III. Mention several things that will defeat the
6342 design of holding them.

6343

6344 I. THE DESIGN OF PRAYER MEETINGS.

6345

6346 1. One design of assembling several persons
6347 together for united prayer, is to promote union
6348 among Christians. Nothing tends more to cement
6349 the hearts of Christians than praying together.
6350 Never do they love one another so well as when
6351 they witness the outpouring of each other's hearts
6352 in prayer. Their spirituality begets a feeling of
6353 union and confidence, highly important to the
6354 prosperity of the church. It is doubtful whether
6355 Christians can ever be otherwise than united, if
6356 they are in the habit of really praying together. And
6357 where they have had hard feelings and differences
6358 among themselves, they are all done away, by
6359 uniting in prayer. The great object is gained, if you
6360 can bring them really to unite in prayer. If this can
6361 be done, the difficulties vanish.

6362

6363 2. To extend the spirit of prayer. God has so
6364 constituted us, and such is the economy of his
6365 grace, that we are sympathetic beings, and
6366 communicate our feelings to each other. A
6367 minister, for instance, will often as it were breathe
6368 his own feelings into his congregation. The Spirit
6369 of God that inspires his soul, makes use of his
6370 feelings to influence his hearers, just as much as he
6371 makes use of the words he preaches. So he makes
6372 use of the feelings of Christians. Nothing is more
6373 calculated to beget a spirit of prayer, than to unite
6374 in social prayer, with one who has the spirit
6375 himself; unless this one should be so far ahead that
6376 his prayer will repel the rest. His prayer will
6377 awaken them, if they are not so far behind as to
6378 revolt at it and resist it. If they are anywhere near
6379 the standard of his feelings, his spirit will kindle,
6380 and burn, and spread all around. One individual in
6381 a church, that obtains a spirit of prayer, will often
6382 arouse a whole church, and extend the same spirit
6383 through the whole, and a general revival follows.

6384

6385 3. Another grand design of social prayer, is to
6386 move God. Not that it changes the mind and
6387 feelings of God. When we speak of moving God,
6388 as I have said in a former lecture, we do not mean
6389 that it alters the will of God. But when the right

6390 kind of prayer is offered by Christians, they are in
6391 such a state of mind, that it becomes proper for
6392 God to bestow a blessing. They are then prepared
6393 to receive it, and he gives because he is always the
6394 same, and always ready and happy to show mercy.
6395 When Christians are united, and praying as they
6396 ought, God opens the windows of heaven, and
6397 pours out his blessings till there is not room to
6398 receive them.

6399

6400 4. Another important design of prayer meetings is
6401 the conviction and conversion of sinners. When
6402 properly conducted, they are eminently calculated
6403 to produce this effect. Sinners are apt to be solemn
6404 when they hear Christians pray. Where there is a
6405 spirit of prayer, sinners must feel. An ungodly man,
6406 a Universalist, once said respecting a certain
6407 minister, "I can bear his preaching very well, but
6408 when he prays, I feel awfully; I feel as if God was
6409 coming down upon me." Sinners are often
6410 convicted by hearing prayer. A young man of
6411 distinguished talents, known to many of you, said
6412 concerning a certain minister to whom before his
6413 conversion he had been very much opposed, "As
6414 soon as he began to pray, I began to be convicted,
6415 and if he had continued to pray much longer, I
6416 should not have been able to contain myself." Just
6417 as soon as Christians begin to pray as they ought,

6418 sinners then know that they pray, and they feel
6419 awfully. They do not understand what spirituality
6420 is, because they have no experience of it. But when
6421 such prayer is offered, they know there is
6422 something in it; they know God is in it, and it
6423 brings them near to God; it makes them feel
6424 awfully solemn, and they cannot bear it. And not
6425 only is it calculated to impress the minds of
6426 sinners, but when Christians pray in faith, the Spirit
6427 of God is poured out, and sinners are melted down
6428 and converted on the spot.

6429

6430 II. THE MANNER OF CONDUCTING PRAYER 6431 MEETINGS.

6432

6433 1. It is often well to open a prayer meeting by
6434 reading a short portion of the word of God;
6435 especially if the person who takes the lead of the
6436 meeting, can call to mind any portion that will be
6437 applicable to the object or occasion, and that is
6438 impressive, and to the point. If he has no passage
6439 that is applicable, he had better not read any at all.
6440 Do not drag in the word of God to make up part of
6441 the meeting as a mere matter of form. This is an
6442 insult to God. It is not well to read any more than is
6443 applicable to the subject before the meeting, or the
6444 occasion. Some people think it always necessary to
6445 read a whole chapter, though it may be ever so

6446 long, and have a variety of subjects. It is just as
6447 impressive and judicious to read a whole chapter,
6448 as it would be for a minister to take a whole
6449 chapter for his text, when his object was to make
6450 some particular truth bear on the minds of his
6451 audience. The design of a prayer meeting should be
6452 to bring Christians to the point to pray for a definite
6453 object. Wandering over a large field, hinders and
6454 destroys this design.

6455
6456 2. It is proper that the person who leads should
6457 make some short and appropriate remarks,
6458 calculated to explain the nature of prayer, and the
6459 encouragements we have to pray, and to bring the
6460 object to be prayed for directly before the minds of
6461 the people.

6462
6463 A man can no more pray without having his
6464 thoughts concentrated, than he can do anything
6465 else. The person leading, should therefore see to
6466 this, by bringing up before their minds the object
6467 they came to pray for. If they came to pray for any
6468 object he can do this. And if they did not, they had
6469 better go home. It is of no use to stay there and
6470 mock God, by pretending to pray, when they have
6471 nothing on earth to pray for.
6472

6473 After stating the object, he should bring up some
6474 promise or some principle, as the ground of
6475 encouragement to expect an answer to their
6476 prayers. If there is any indication of Providence, or
6477 any promise, or any principle in the Divine
6478 government that affords a ground of faith, let him
6479 call it to mind, and not let them be talking out of
6480 their own hearts at random, without knowing any
6481 solid reason to expect an answer. One reason why
6482 prayer meetings mostly accomplish so little, is
6483 because there is so little common sense exercised
6484 about them. Instead of looking round for some
6485 solid footing on which to repose their faith, they
6486 just come together and pour forth their words, and
6487 neither know nor care whether they have any
6488 reason to expect an answer. If they are going to
6489 pray about anything concerning which there can be
6490 any doubt or any mistake, in regard to the ground
6491 of faith, they should be shown the reason there is
6492 for believing that their prayers will be heard and
6493 answered. It is easy to see, that unless something
6494 like this is done, three-fourths of them will have no
6495 idea of what they are doing, or of the ground on
6496 which they should expect to receive what they pray
6497 for.

6498
6499 3. In calling on persons to pray, it is always
6500 desirable to let things take their own course

6501 wherever it is safe. If it can be left so with safety,
6502 let those pray who are most inclined to pray. It
6503 sometimes happens that even those who are
6504 ordinarily the most spiritual, and most proper to be
6505 called on, are not at the time in a suitable frame;
6506 they may be cold and worldly, and only freeze the
6507 meeting. But if you let those pray who desire to
6508 pray, you avoid this. But often this cannot be done
6509 with safety, especially in large cities, where a
6510 prayer meeting might be liable to be interrupted by
6511 those who have no business to pray; some fanatic
6512 or crazy person, some hypocrite or enemy, who
6513 would only make a noise. In most places, however,
6514 this course may be taken with perfect safety. Give
6515 up the meeting to the Spirit of God, Those who
6516 desire to pray, let them pray. If the leader sees any
6517 thing that needs to be set right, let him remark,
6518 freely and kindly, and put it right, and then go on
6519 again. Only, he should be careful to time his
6520 remarks, so as not to interrupt the flow of feeling,
6521 or to chill the meeting, or turn off the minds from
6522 the proper subject.

6523
6524 4. If it is necessary to name the individuals who are
6525 to pray, it is best to call on those who are most
6526 spiritual first. And if you do not know who they
6527 are, then those whom you would naturally suppose
6528 to be most alive. If they pray at the outset, they will

6529 be likely to spread the spirit of prayer through the
6530 meeting, and elevate the tone of the whole.
6531 Otherwise, if you call on those who are cold and
6532 lifeless at the beginning, they will be likely to
6533 diffuse a chill throughout the meeting. The only
6534 hope of having an efficient prayer meeting is when
6535 at least a part of the church is spiritual, and they
6536 infuse their spirit into the rest. This is the very
6537 reason why it is often best to let things take their
6538 course, for then those who have the most feeling
6539 are apt to pray first, and give character to the
6540 meeting.

6541
6542 5. The prayers should always be very short. When
6543 individuals suffer themselves to pray long, they
6544 forget where they are, that they are only the mouth
6545 of the congregation, and that the congregation
6546 cannot be expected to sympathise with them, so as
6547 to go along and feel united in prayer, if they are
6548 long and tedious, and go all around the world and
6549 pray for every thing that they can think of.

6550 Commonly, those who pray long in meeting, do it
6551 not because they have the spirit of prayer, but
6552 because they have not. And they go round and
6553 round, not because they are full of prayer. Some
6554 men will spin out a long prayer in telling God who
6555 and what he is, or they exhort God to do so and so.
6556 Some pray out a whole system of divinity. Some

6557 preach, some exhort the people, till every body
6558 wishes they would stop, and God wishes so too,
6559 undoubtedly. They should keep to the point, and
6560 pray for what they came to pray for, and not follow
6561 the imagination of their own foolish hearts all over
6562 the universe.

6563

6564 6. Each one should pray for some one object. It is
6565 well for every individual to have one object for
6566 prayer: two or more may pray for the same thing,
6567 or each a separate object. If the meeting is
6568 convened to pray for some specific thing, let them
6569 all pray for that. If its object is more general, let
6570 them select their subjects, according as they feel
6571 interested in them. If one feels particularly
6572 disposed to pray for the church, let him do it. If the
6573 next feels disposed to pray for the church, he may
6574 do so too. Perhaps the next will feel inclined to
6575 pray for sinners; for the youth; to confess sin; let
6576 him do it, and as soon as he has got through let him
6577 stop. Whenever a man has deep feeling, he always
6578 feels on some particular point, and if he prays for
6579 that, he will speak out of the abundance of his
6580 heart, and then he will naturally stop when he is
6581 done. Those who feel most, will be most ready to
6582 confine their prayers to that point, and stop when
6583 they have done and not pray all over the world.
6584

6585 7. If in the progress of the meeting it becomes
6586 necessary to change the object of prayer, let the
6587 man who leads state the fact, and explain it in a few
6588 words. If the object is to pray for the church, or for
6589 backsliders, or sinners, or the heathen, let him state
6590 it plainly, and then turn it over and hold it up
6591 before them till he brings them to think and feel
6592 deeply before they pray. Then state to them the
6593 grounds on which they may repose their faith in
6594 regard to obtaining the blessings they pray for, if
6595 any such statement is needed, and so lead them
6596 right up to the throne, and let them take hold of the
6597 hand of God. This is according to the philosophy of
6598 the mind. People always do it for themselves when
6599 they pray in secret, if they really mean to pray to
6600 any purpose. And so it should be in prayer
6601 meetings.

6602
6603 8. It is important that the time should be fully
6604 occupied, so as not to leave long seasons of silence.
6605 This always makes a bad impression and chills the
6606 meeting. I know that sometimes churches have
6607 seasons of silent prayer. But in those cases they
6608 should be specially requested to pray in silence, so
6609 that all may know why they are silent. This often
6610 has a most powerful effect, where a few moments
6611 are spent by a whole congregation in silence, while
6612 all lift up their thoughts to God. This is very

6613 different from having long intervals of silence
6614 because there is nobody to pray. Every one feels
6615 that such a silence is like the cold damp of death
6616 over the meeting.

6617
6618 9. It is exceedingly important that he who leads the
6619 meeting should press sinners who may be present
6620 to immediate repentance. He should crowd this
6621 hard, and urge the Christians present to pray in
6622 such a way as to make sinners feel that they are
6623 expected to repent immediately. This tends to
6624 inspire Christians with compassion and love for
6625 souls. The remarks made to sinners are often like
6626 pouring fire upon the hearts of Christians, to
6627 awaken them to prayer and effort for their
6628 conversion. Let them see and feel the guilt and
6629 danger of sinners right among them, and then they
6630 will pray.

6631
6632 III. I am to mention several things which may
6633 defeat the design of a prayer meeting.

6634
6635 1. When there is an unhappy want of confidence in
6636 the leader, there is no hope of any good. Whatever
6637 the cause may be, whether he is to blame or not,
6638 the very fact that he leads the meeting will cast a
6639 damp over it and prevent all good. I have witnessed
6640 it in churches, where there was some offensive

6641 elder or deacon, perhaps justly offensive, and
6642 perhaps not, set to lead the prayer meeting, and the
6643 meeting would all die under his influence. If there
6644 is a want of confidence in regard to his piety, or in
6645 his ability, or in his judgment, or in anything
6646 connected with the meeting, everything he says or
6647 does will fall to the ground. The same thing often
6648 takes place where the church have lost their
6649 confidence in the minister.

6650

6651 2. Where the leader lacks spirituality, there will be
6652 a dryness and coldness in his remarks and prayers,
6653 and every thing will indicate his want of unction,
6654 and his whole influence will be the very reverse of
6655 what it ought to be. I have known churches where a
6656 prayer meeting could not be sustained, and the
6657 reason was not obvious, but those who understood
6658 the state of things knew that the leader was so
6659 notorious for his want of spirituality, that he would
6660 inevitably freeze a prayer meeting to death. In
6661 many Presbyterian churches the elders are so far
6662 from being spiritual men that they always freeze a
6663 prayer meeting. And then they are often amazingly
6664 jealous for their dignity, and cannot bear to have
6665 any body else lead the meeting. And if any member
6666 that is spiritual takes the lead of a prayer meeting,
6667 they will take him to task for it: "Why, you are not
6668 an elder, and ought not to lead a prayer meeting in

6669 presence of an elder.” And thus they stand in the
6670 way, while the whole church is suffering under
6671 their blighting influence.

6672

6673 A man who knows he is not in a spiritual frame of
6674 mind has no business to conduct a prayer meeting;
6675 he will kill it. There are two reasons: First, he will
6676 have no spiritual discernment, and will not know
6677 what to do, or when to do it. A person who is
6678 spiritual can see the movements of Providence, and
6679 can feel the Spirit of God, and understand what he
6680 is leading them to pray for, so as to time his
6681 subjects, and take advantage of the state of feeling
6682 among Christians. He will not overthrow all the
6683 feeling in a meeting by introducing other things
6684 that are incongruous or ill-timed. He has spiritual
6685 discernment to understand the leadings of the
6686 Spirit, and his workings in those who pray, and to
6687 follow on as the Spirit leads. Suppose an individual
6688 leads who is not spiritual, and there are two or
6689 three prayers, and the spirit of prayer rises, but the
6690 leader has no spiritual discernment to see it, and he
6691 makes some remarks on another point, or reads a
6692 piece out of some book, that is as far from the
6693 feeling of the meeting as the north pole. It may be
6694 just as evident to others what they are called to
6695 pray for, as if the Son of God himself had come
6696 into the meeting and named the subject; but the

6697 leader will overthrow it all, because he is so stupid
6698 that he does not know the indications of the
6699 meeting.

6700
6701 And then, if the leader is not spiritual, he will very
6702 likely be dull and dry in his remarks and in all his
6703 exercises. He will read a long hymn in a dreamy
6704 manner, and then read a long passage of Scripture,
6705 in a tone so cold and wintry that he will spread a
6706 wintry pall over the meeting, and it will be dull as
6707 long as his cold heart is placed up in front of the
6708 whole thing.

6709
6710 3. A want of suitable talents in the leader. If he is
6711 wanting in that kind of talents which are fitted to
6712 make a meeting useful, he will injure the meeting.
6713 If he can say nothing, or if his remarks are so out of
6714 the way as to produce levity or contempt, or if they
6715 have nothing in them that will impress the mind, or
6716 are not guided by good sense, or not appropriate,
6717 he will injure the meeting. A man may be pious,
6718 but so weak that his prayers do not edify, but rather
6719 disgust, the people present. When this is so, he had
6720 better keep silence.

6721
6722 4. Sometimes the benefit of a prayer-meeting is
6723 defeated by a bad spirit in the leader. For instance
6724 when there is a revival, and great opposition, if a

6725 leader gets up in a prayer meeting and speaks of
6726 instances of opposition, and comments upon them,
6727 and thus diverts the meeting away from the object
6728 they come to pray for, he knows not what spirit he
6729 is of. Its effect is always ruinous to a prayer
6730 meeting. Let a minister in a revival come out and
6731 preach against the opposition, and he will infallibly
6732 destroy the revival, and turn the hearts of
6733 Christians away from their proper object. Let the
6734 man who is set to lead the church be careful to
6735 guard his own spirit, lest he should mislead the
6736 church, and diffuse a wrong temper. The same will
6737 be true, if any one who is called upon to speak or
6738 pray, introduces in his remarks or prayers anything
6739 controversial, impertinent, unreasonable,
6740 unscriptural, ridiculous or irrelevant. Any of these
6741 things will quench the tender breathings of the
6742 spirit of prayer, and destroy the meeting.

6743

6744 5. Persons coming late to the meeting. This is a
6745 very great hindrance to a prayer meeting. When
6746 people have begun to pray, and their attention is
6747 fixed, and they have shut their eyes and closed their
6748 ears, to keep out everything from their minds, in
6749 the midst of a prayer somebody will come bolting
6750 in and walk up through the room. Some will look
6751 up, and all have their minds interrupted for the
6752 moment. Then they all get fixed again, and another

6753 comes in, and so on. Why, I suppose the devil
6754 would not care how many Christians went to a
6755 prayer-meeting, if they will only go after the
6756 meeting is begun. He would be glad to have ever so
6757 many go scattering along so, and dodging in very
6758 piously after the meeting is begun.

6759
6760 6. When persons make cold prayers, and cold
6761 confessions of sin, they are sure to quench the spirit
6762 of prayer. When the influences of the Spirit are
6763 enjoyed, in the midst of the warm expressions that
6764 are flowing forth, let an individual come in who is
6765 cold, and pour his cold breath out, like the damp of
6766 death, and it will make every Christian that has any
6767 feeling want to get out of the meeting.

6768
6769 7. In some places it is common to begin a prayer
6770 meeting by reading a long portion of Scripture.
6771 Then the deacon or elder gives out a long hymn.
6772 Next, they sing it. Then he prays a long prayer,
6773 praying for the Jews and the fullness of the
6774 Gentiles, and many other objects that have nothing
6775 to do with the occasion of the meeting. After that
6776 perhaps he reads a long extract from some book or
6777 magazine. Then they have another long hymn and
6778 another long prayer, and then they go home. I once
6779 heard an elder say, they had kept up a prayer
6780 meeting so many years, and yet there had been no

6781 revival in the place. The truth was, that the officers
6782 of the church had been accustomed to carry on the
6783 meetings in just such a dignified way, and their
6784 dignity would not allow anything to be altered. No
6785 wonder there was no revival. Such prayer meetings
6786 are enough to hinder a revival. And if ever so many
6787 revivals should commence, the prayer meeting
6788 would destroy them. There was a prayer meeting
6789 once in this city, as I have been told, where there
6790 appeared to be some feeling, and some one
6791 proposed that they should have two or three prayers
6792 in succession, without rising from their knees. One
6793 dignified man present opposed it, and said that they
6794 never had done so, and he hoped there would be no
6795 innovations. He did not approve of innovations.
6796 And that was the last of the revival. Such persons
6797 have their prayer meetings stereotyped, and they
6798 are determined not to turn out of their track,
6799 whether they have the blessing or not. To allow any
6800 such thing would be a new measure, and they never
6801 like new measures.

6802
6803 8. A great deal of singing often injures a prayer
6804 meeting. The agonizing spirit of prayer does not
6805 lead people to sing. There is a time for everything;
6806 a time to sing, and a time to pray. But if I know
6807 what it is to travail in birth for souls, Christians
6808 never feel less like singing, than when they have

6809 the spirit of prayer for sinners. Singing is the
6810 natural expression of feelings that are joyful and
6811 cheerful. The spirit of prayer is not a spirit of joy. It
6812 is a spirit of travail, and agony of soul, supplicating
6813 and pleading with God with strong cryings, and
6814 groanings that cannot be uttered. This is more like
6815 any thing else than it is like singing. I have known
6816 states of feeling, where you could not distress the
6817 people of God more than to begin to sing. It would
6818 be so entirely different from their feelings. Why, if
6819 you knew your house was on fire, would you first
6820 stop and sing a hymn before you put it out? How
6821 would it look here in New York, when a building
6822 was on fire, and the firemen are all collected, for
6823 the foreman to stop and sing a hymn? It is just
6824 about as natural for the people to sing when
6825 exercised with a spirit of prayer. When people feel
6826 like pulling men out of the fire, they do not feel like
6827 singing. I never knew a singing revival amount to
6828 much. Its tendency is to do away all deep feeling. It
6829 is true that singing a hymn has sometimes produced
6830 a powerful effect upon sinners who are convicted,
6831 but in general it is the perfect contrast there is
6832 between their feelings and those of the happy souls
6833 who sing, that produces the effect. If the hymn be
6834 of a joyful character it is not directly calculated to
6835 benefit sinners, and is highly fitted to relieve the
6836 mental anguish of the Christian, so as to destroy

6837 that travail of soul which is indispensable to his
6838 prevailing in prayer.

6839

6840 When singing is introduced in a prayer-meeting,
6841 the hymns should be short, and so selected as to
6842 bring out something solemn; some striking words,
6843 such as the Judgment Hymn, and others calculated
6844 to produce an effect on sinners; or something that
6845 will produce a deep impression on the minds of
6846 Christians; but not that joyful kind of singing, that
6847 makes every body feel comfortable, and turns off
6848 the mind from the object of the prayer meeting.

6849

6850 I once heard a celebrated organist produce a
6851 remarkable effect in a protracted meeting. The
6852 organ was a powerful one, and the double bass
6853 pipes were like thunder. The hymn was given out
6854 that has these lines:

6855

6856

6857 See the storm of vengeance gathering

6858

6859 O'er the path you dare to tread;

6860

6861 "Hear the awful thunder rolling,

6862

6863 Loud and louder o'er your head."

6864

6865 When he came to these words, we first heard the
6866 distant roar of thunder, then it grew nearer and
6867 louder, till at the word “louder,” there was a crash
6868 that seemed almost to overpower the whole
6869 congregation.

6870

6871 Such things in their proper place do good. But
6872 common singing dissipates feeling. It should
6873 always be such as not to take away feeling, but to
6874 deepen it.

6875

6876 Often a prayer meeting is injured by calling on the
6877 young converts to sing joyful hymns. This is highly
6878 improper in a prayer meeting. It is no time for them
6879 to let feeling flow away in joyful singing, while so
6880 many sinners around them, and their own former
6881 companions, are going down to hell. A revival is
6882 often put down by the church and minister all
6883 giving themselves up to singing with young
6884 converts. Thus by stopping to rejoice, when they
6885 ought to feel more and more deeply for sinners,
6886 they grieve away the Spirit of God, and they soon
6887 find that their agony and travail of soul are all
6888 gone.

6889

6890 9. Introducing subjects of controversy into prayer
6891 will defeat a prayer meeting. Nothing of a
6892 controversial nature should be introduced into

6893 prayer, unless it is the object of the meeting to
6894 settle that thing. Otherwise, let Christians come
6895 together in their prayer-meetings, on the broad
6896 ground of offering united prayer for a common
6897 object. And let controversies be settled somewhere
6898 else.

6899
6900 10. Great pains should be taken, both by the leader
6901 and others, to watch narrowly the motions of the
6902 Spirit of God. Let them not pray without the Spirit,
6903 but follow his leadings. Be sure not to quench the
6904 Spirit for the sake of praying according to the
6905 regular custom. Avoid everything calculated to
6906 divert attention away from the object. All
6907 affectation of feeling that is not real, should be
6908 particularly guarded against. If there is an
6909 affectation of feeling, most commonly others see
6910 and feel that it is affectation, not reality. At any
6911 rate, the Spirit of God knows it, and will be
6912 grieved, and leave the place. On the other hand, all
6913 resistance to the Spirit will equally destroy the
6914 meeting. Not unfrequently it happens, that there are
6915 some so cold that if any one should break out in the
6916 spirit of prayer, they would call it fanaticism, and
6917 perhaps break out in opposition.

6918
6919 11. If individuals refuse to pray when they are
6920 called on it injures a prayer meeting. There are

6921 some people, who always pretend they have no
6922 gifts. Women sometimes refuse to take their turn in
6923 prayer, and pretend they have no ability to pray.
6924 But if any one else should say so, they would be
6925 offended. Suppose they should know that any other
6926 person had made such a remark as this, “Do not ask
6927 her to pray; she cannot pray; she has not talents
6928 enough;” would they like it? So with a man who
6929 pretends he has no gifts, let any one else report that
6930 he has not talents enough to make a decent prayer,
6931 and see if he will like it. The pretence is not
6932 sincere; it is all a sham.

6933
6934 Some say they cannot pray in their families, they
6935 have no gift. But a person could not offend them
6936 more than to say they cannot pray a decent prayer
6937 before their own families. They would say, “Why,
6938 the man talks as if he thought nobody else had any
6939 gifts but himself.” People are not apt to have such a
6940 low opinion of themselves. I have often seen the
6941 curse of God follow such professors. They have no
6942 excuse. God will take none. The man has got a
6943 tongue to talk to his neighbors, and he can talk to
6944 God if he has any heart for it. You will see their
6945 children unconverted, their son a curse, their
6946 daughter—tongue cannot tell. God says he will
6947 pour out his fury on the families that call not on his
6948 name. If I had time, I could mention a host of facts

6949 to show that God MARKS those individuals with
6950 his disapprobation and curse who refuse to pray
6951 when they ought. Until professors of religion will
6952 repent of this sin and take up the cross (if they
6953 choose to call praying a cross!) and do their duty,
6954 they need not expect a blessing.

6955
6956 12. Prayer meetings are often too long. They
6957 should always be dismissed while Christians have
6958 feeling, and not be spun out until all feeling is
6959 exhausted, and the Spirit is gone.

6960
6961 13. Heartless confessions. People confess their sins
6962 and do not forsake them. Every week they will
6963 make the same confession over again. A long, cold,
6964 dull, stupid confession this week, and then the next
6965 week another just like it, without forsaking any
6966 sins. Why, they have no intention to forsake their
6967 sins! It shows plainly that they do not mean to
6968 reform. All their religion consists in these
6969 confessions. Instead of getting a blessing from God
6970 by such confessions they will get only a curse.

6971
6972 14. When Christians spend all the time in praying
6973 for themselves. They should have done this in their
6974 closets. When they come to a prayer meeting, they
6975 should be prepared to offer effectual intercessions
6976 for others. If Christians pray in their closets as they

6977 ought, they will feel like praying for sinners. If
6978 they pray exclusively in their closets for
6979 themselves, they will not get the spirit of prayer. I
6980 have known men shut themselves up for days to
6981 pray for themselves, and never get any life, because
6982 their prayers are all selfish. But if they will just
6983 forget themselves, and throw their hearts abroad,
6984 and pray for others, it will wake up such a feeling,
6985 that they can pour forth their hearts. And then they
6986 can go to work for souls. I knew an individual in a
6987 revival, who shut himself up seventeen days, and
6988 prayed as if he would have God come to his terms,
6989 but it would not do, and then he went out to work,
6990 and immediately he had the Spirit of God in his
6991 soul. It is well for Christians to pray for
6992 themselves, and confess their sins, and then throw
6993 their hearts abroad, till they feel as they ought.

6994
6995 15. Prayer meetings are often defeated by the want
6996 of appropriate remarks. The things are not said
6997 which are calculated to lead them to pray. Perhaps
6998 the leader has not prepared himself; or perhaps he
6999 has not the requisite talents, to lead the church out
7000 in prayer, or he does not lead their minds to dwell
7001 on the appropriate topics of prayer.

7002
7003 16. When individuals who are justly obnoxious for
7004 any cause, are forward in speaking and praying.

7005 Such persons are sometimes very much set upon
7006 taking a part. They say it is their duty to get up and
7007 testify for God on all occasions. They will say, they
7008 know they are not able to edify the church, but
7009 nobody else can do their duty, and they wish to
7010 testify. Perhaps the only place they ever did testify
7011 for God was in a prayer meeting; all their lives, out
7012 of the meeting, testify against God. They had better
7013 keep still.

7014

7015 17. Where persons take a part who are so illiterate
7016 that it is impossible persons of taste should not be
7017 disgusted. Persons of intelligence cannot follow
7018 them, and their minds are unavoidably diverted. I
7019 do not mean that it is necessary a person should
7020 have a liberal education in order to lead in prayer.
7021 All persons of common education, especially if
7022 they are in the habit of praying, can lead in prayer,
7023 if they have the spirit of prayer. But there are some
7024 persons who use such absurd and illiterate
7025 expressions, as cannot but disgust every intelligent
7026 mind. They cannot help being disgusted. The
7027 feeling of disgust is an involuntary thing, and when
7028 a disgusting object is before the mind, the feeling is
7029 irresistible. Piety will not keep a person from
7030 feeling it. The only way is to take away the object.
7031 If such persons mean to do good, they had better
7032 remain silent, Some of them may feel grieved at

7033 not being called to take a part. But it is better that
7034 they should be kindly told the reason than to have
7035 the prayer meeting regularly injured, and rendered
7036 ridiculous by their performances.

7037

7038 18. A want of union in prayer. When one leads the
7039 others do not follow, but are thinking of something
7040 else. Their hearts do not unite, do not say, Amen. It
7041 is as bad as if one should make a petition and
7042 another remonstrate against it. One asks God to do
7043 a thing, and the others ask him not to do it, or to do
7044 something else.

7045

7046 Neglect of secret prayer. Christians who do not
7047 pray in secret, cannot unite with power in a prayer
7048 meeting, and cannot have the spirit of prayer.

7049

7050 REMARKS.

7051

7052 1. An illy conducted prayer meeting often does
7053 more hurt than good. In many churches, the general
7054 manner of conducting prayer meetings is such that
7055 Christians have not the least idea of the design or
7056 the power of such meetings. It is such as tends to
7057 keep down rather than to promote pious feeling and
7058 the spirit of prayer.

7059

7060 2. A prayer meeting is an index to the state of
7061 religion in a church. If the church neglect the
7062 prayer meetings, or come and have not the spirit of
7063 prayer, you know of course that religion is low. Let
7064 me go into the prayer meeting, and I can always see
7065 the state of religion there.

7066
7067 3. Every minister ought to know that if the prayer
7068 meetings are neglected, all his labors are in vain.
7069 Unless he can get Christians to attend the prayer
7070 meetings, all he can do will not bring up the true
7071 religion.

7072
7073 4. A great responsibility rests on him who leads a
7074 prayer meeting. If the prayer meeting be not what it
7075 ought to be, if it does not elevate the state of
7076 religion, he should go seriously to work and see
7077 what is the matter, and get the spirit of prayer, and
7078 prepare himself to make such remarks as are
7079 calculated to do good and set things right. A leader
7080 has no business to lead prayer meetings, if he is not
7081 prepared, both in head and heart, to do this. I wish
7082 you, who lead the district prayer meetings of this
7083 church, to notice this point.

7084
7085 5. Prayer meetings are the most difficult meetings
7086 to sustain as they ought to be. They are so spiritual,
7087 that unless the leader be peculiarly prepared, both

7088 in heart and mind, they will dwindle. It is in vain
7089 for the leader to complain that members of the
7090 church do not attend. In nine cases out of ten, it is
7091 the leader's fault, that they do not attend. If he felt
7092 as he ought, they would find the meetings so
7093 interesting, that they would attend of course. If he
7094 is so cold, and dull, and without spirituality, as to
7095 freeze every thing, no wonder people do not come
7096 to the meeting. Church officers often complain and
7097 scold because people do not come to the prayer
7098 meeting, when the truth is, they themselves are so
7099 cold that they freeze every body to death that
7100 comes.

7101
7102 6. Prayer meetings are most important meetings for
7103 the church. It is highly important for Christians to
7104 sustain the prayer meetings:—

7105

7106 (1.) To promote union.

7107

7108 (2.) To increase brotherly love.

7109

7110 (3.) To cultivate Christian confidence.

7111

7112 (4.) To promote their own growth in grace.

7113

7114 (5.) To cherish and advance spirituality.

7115

7116 7. Prayer meetings should be so numerous in the
7117 church, and be so arranged, as to exercise the gifts
7118 of every individual member of the church—male
7119 and female. Every one should have the opportunity
7120 to pray, and to express the feelings of his heart, if
7121 he has any. The sectional prayer meetings of this
7122 church are designed to do this. And if they are too
7123 large for this, let them be divided, so as to bring the
7124 entire mass into the work, to exercise all gifts, and
7125 diffuse union, confidence, and brotherly love
7126 through the whole.

7127
7128 8. It is important that impenitent sinners should
7129 always attend prayer meetings. If none come of
7130 their own accord, go out and invite them.
7131 Christians ought to take great pains to induce their
7132 impenitent friends and neighbors to come to prayer
7133 meetings. They can pray better for impenitent
7134 sinners when they have them right before their
7135 eyes. I have know female prayer meetings exclude
7136 sinners from the meeting. And the reason was, they
7137 were so proud they were ashamed to pray before
7138 sinners. What a spirit! Such prayers will do no
7139 good. They insult God. You have not done enough,
7140 by any means, when you have gone to the prayer
7141 meeting yourself. You cannot pray, if you have
7142 invited no sinner to go. If all the church have
7143 neglected their duty so, and have gone to the prayer

7144 meeting, and taken no sinners along with them, no
7145 subjects of prayer—what have they come for?

7146

7147 9. The great object of all the means of grace is to
7148 aim directly at the conversion of sinners. You
7149 should pray that they may be converted there. Not
7150 pray that they may be awakened and convicted, but
7151 pray that they may be converted on the spot. No
7152 one should either pray or make any remarks, as if
7153 he expected a single sinner would go away without
7154 giving his heart to God. You should all make the
7155 impression on his mind, that NOW he must submit.
7156 And if you do this, while you are yet speaking God
7157 will hear. If Christians make it manifest that they
7158 have really set their hearts on the conversions of
7159 sinners, and are bent upon it, and pray as they
7160 ought, there would rarely be a prayer meeting held
7161 without souls being converted, and sometimes
7162 every sinner in the room. That is the very time, if
7163 ever, that sinners should be converted in answer to
7164 those prayers. I do not doubt but that you may have
7165 sinners converted in every sectional prayer
7166 meeting, if you do your duty. Take them there, take
7167 your families, your friends, or your neighbors there
7168 with that design, give them the proper instruction,
7169 if they need instruction, and pray for them as you
7170 ought, and you will save their souls. Rely upon it,

7171 if you do your duty, in a right manner, God will not
7172 keep back his blessing, and the work will be done.

7173

7174

7175

7176 LECTURE IX.

7177

7178 MEANS TO BE USED WITH SINNERS.

7179

7180 Text.—Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and
7181 my servant whom I have chosen.—Isaiah xliii: 10.

7182

7183 IN the text it is affirmed of the children of God,
7184 that they are his witnesses. In several preceding
7185 lectures I have been dwelling on the subject of
7186 Prayer, or that department of means for the
7187 promotion of a revival, which is intended to move
7188 God to pour out his Spirit. I am now to commence
7189 the other department:

7190

7191 MEANS TO BE USED FOR THE CONVICTION
7192 AND CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

7193

7194 It is true, in general, that persons are affected by
7195 the subject of religion, in proportion to their
7196 conviction of its truth. Inattention to religion is the
7197 great reason why so little is felt concerning it. No
7198 being can look at the great truths of religion, as

7199 truths, and not feel deeply concerning them. The
7200 devil cannot. He believes and trembles. Angels in
7201 heaven feel in view of these things. God feels. An
7202 intellectual conviction of truth is always
7203 accompanied with feeling of some kind.

7204

7205 One grand design of God in leaving Christians in
7206 the world after their conversion, is that they may be
7207 witnesses for God. It is that they may call the
7208 attention of the thoughtless multitude to the
7209 subject, and make them see the difference in the
7210 character and destiny of those who believe and
7211 those who reject the Gospel. This inattention is the
7212 grand difficulty in the way of promoting religion.
7213 And what the Spirit of God does is to awaken the
7214 attention of men to the subject of their sin and the
7215 plan of salvation. Miracles have sometimes been
7216 employed to arrest the attention of sinners. And in
7217 this way, miracles may become instrumental in
7218 conversion, although conversion is not itself a
7219 miracle, nor do miracles themselves ever convert
7220 any body. They may be the means of awakening.
7221 Miracles are not always effectual even in that. And
7222 if continued or made common, they would soon
7223 lose their power. What is wanted in the world is
7224 something that can be a sort of omnipresent
7225 miracle, able not only to arrest attention but to fix

7226 it, and keep the mind in warm contact with the
7227 truth, till it yields.

7228

7229 Hence we see why God has scattered his children
7230 everywhere, in families and among the nations. He
7231 never would suffer them to be all together in one
7232 place, however agreeable it might be to their
7233 feelings. He wishes them scattered. When the
7234 church at Jerusalem herded together, neglecting to
7235 go forth as Christ had commanded, to spread the
7236 Gospel all over the world, God let loose a
7237 persecution upon them and scattered them abroad,
7238 and then “they went every where preaching the
7239 Gospel.” In examining the text, I propose to
7240 inquire.

7241

7242 I. To what particular points Christians are to testify
7243 for God.

7244

7245 II. The manner in which they are to testify.

7246

7247 I. To what points are the children of God required
7248 to testify?

7249

7250 Generally, they are to testify to the truth of the
7251 Bible. They are competent witnesses to this, for
7252 they have experience of its truth. The experimental
7253 Christian has no more need of external evidence to

7254 prove the truth of the Bible to his mind, than he has
7255 to prove his own existence. The whole plan of
7256 salvation is so fully spread out and settled in his
7257 conviction, that to undertake to reason him out of
7258 his belief in the Bible would be a thing as
7259 impracticable as to reason him out of the belief in
7260 his own existence. Men have tried to awaken a
7261 doubt of the existence of the material world. But
7262 they cannot succeed. No man can doubt the
7263 existence of a material world. To doubt it, is
7264 against his own consciousness. You may use
7265 arguments that he cannot answer, and may puzzle
7266 and perplex him, and shut up his mouth; he may be
7267 no logician or philosopher, and unable to detect
7268 your fallacies. But what he knows he knows.

7269
7270 So it is in religion. The Christian is conscious that
7271 the Bible is true. The veriest child in religion
7272 knows by his experience the truth of the Bible. He
7273 may hear objections from infidels, that he never
7274 thought of, and that he cannot answer, and he may
7275 be confounded, but he cannot be driven from his
7276 ground. He will say, "I cannot answer you, but I
7277 know the Bible is true."

7278
7279 As if a man should look in a mirror, and say,
7280 "That's my face." How do you know it is your
7281 face? "Why, by its looks." So when a Christian

7282 sees himself drawn and pictured forth in the Bible,
7283 he sees the likeness to be so exact, that he knows it
7284 is true. But more particularly, Christians are to
7285 testify—

7286

7287 1. To the immortality of the soul. This is clearly
7288 revealed in the Bible.

7289

7290 2. The vanity and unsatisfying nature of all earthly
7291 good.

7292

7293 3. The satisfying nature and glorious sufficiency of
7294 religion.

7295

7296 4. The guilt and danger of sinners. On this point
7297 they can speak from experience as well as the word
7298 of God. They have seen their own sins, and they
7299 understand more of the nature of sin, and the guilt
7300 and danger of sinners.

7301

7302 5. The reality of hell, as a place of eternal
7303 punishment for the wicked.

7304

7305 6. The love of Christ for sinners.

7306

7307 7. The necessity of a holy life, if we think of ever
7308 getting to heaven.

7309

7310 8. The necessity of self-denial, and living above the
7311 world.

7312

7313 9. The necessity of meekness, heavenly-
7314 mindedness, humility, and integrity.

7315

7316 10. The necessity of an entire renovation of
7317 character and life, for all who would enter heaven.

7318 These are the subjects on which they are to be
7319 witnesses for God. And they are bound to testify in
7320 such a way as to constrain men to believe the truth.

7321

7322 II. How are they to testify?

7323

7324 By precept and example, on every proper occasion,
7325 by their lips, but mainly by their lives. Christians
7326 have no right to be silent with their lips; they
7327 should rebuke, exhort, and entreat with all long-
7328 suffering and doctrine. But their main influence as
7329 witnesses is by their example.

7330

7331 They are required to be witnesses in this way,
7332 because example teaches with so much greater
7333 force than precept. This is universally known.
7334 Actions speak louder than words. But where both
7335 precept and example are brought to bear, it brings
7336 the greatest amount of influence to bear upon the
7337 mind. As to the manner in which they are to testify;

7338 the way in which they should bear witness to the
7339 truth of the points specified; in general—they
7340 should live in their daily walk and conversation, as
7341 if they believed the Bible.

7342

7343 1. As if they believed the soul to be immortal, and
7344 as if they believed that death was not the
7345 termination of their existence, but the entrance into
7346 an unchanging state. They ought to live so as to
7347 make this impression full upon all around them. It
7348 is easy to see that precept without example on this
7349 point will do no good. All the arguments in the
7350 world will not convince mankind that you really
7351 believe this, unless you live as if you believed it.
7352 Your reasoning may be unanswerable, but if you
7353 do not live accordingly, your practice will defeat
7354 your arguments. They will say you are an
7355 ingenious sophist, or an acute reasoner, and
7356 perhaps admit that they cannot answer you; but
7357 then they will say, it is evident that your reasoning
7358 is all false, and that you know it is false, because
7359 your life contradicts your theory. Or that, if it is
7360 true, you do not believe it, at any rate. And so all
7361 the influence of your testimony goes to the other
7362 side.

7363

7364 2. The vanity and unsatisfying nature of the things
7365 of this world. You are to testify this by your life.

7366 The failure in this is the great stumbling block in
7367 the way of mankind. Here the testimony of God's
7368 children is needed more than any where else. Men
7369 are so struck with the objects of sense, and so
7370 constantly occupied with them, that they are very
7371 apt to shut out eternity from their minds. A small
7372 object, that is held close to the eye, may shut out
7373 the distant ocean. So the things of the world, that
7374 are near, magnify so in their minds, that they
7375 overlook every thing else. One important design in
7376 keeping Christians in the world is to teach people
7377 on this point, practically, not to labor for the meat
7378 that perisheth. But suppose professors of religion
7379 teach the vanity of earthly things by precept, and
7380 contradict it in practice. Suppose the women are
7381 just as fond of dress, and just as particular in
7382 observing all the fashions, and the men as eager to
7383 have fine houses and equipage, as the people of the
7384 world. Who does not see that it would be quite
7385 ridiculous for them to testify with their lips, that
7386 this world is all vanity, and its joys unsatisfying
7387 and empty? People feel this absurdity, and it is this
7388 that shuts up the lips of Christians. They are
7389 ashamed to speak to their neighbors, while they
7390 cumber themselves with these gewgaws, because
7391 their daily conduct testifies to every body the very
7392 reverse. How it would look for some of the church
7393 members in this city, male or female, to go about

7394 among the common people, and talk to them about
7395 the vanity of the world! Who would believe what
7396 they say?

7397

7398 3. The satisfying nature of religion. Christians are
7399 bound to show by their conduct, that they are
7400 actually satisfied with the enjoyments of religion,
7401 without the pomps and vanities of the world; that
7402 the joys of religion and communion with God keep
7403 them above the world. They are to manifest that
7404 this world is not their home. Their profession is,
7405 that heaven is a reality, and that they expect to
7406 dwell there for ever. But suppose they contradict
7407 this by their conduct, and live in such a way as to
7408 prove that they cannot be happy unless they have a
7409 full share of the fashion and show of the world, and
7410 that as for going to heaven, they had much rather
7411 remain on earth, than to die and go there! What do
7412 the world think, when they see a profession of
7413 religion just as much afraid to die as an infidel?
7414 Such Christians perjure themselves—they swear to
7415 a lie, for they testify that there is nothing in religion
7416 for which a person can afford to live above the
7417 world.

7418

7419 4. The guilt and danger of sinners. Christians are
7420 bound to warn sinners of their awful condition, and
7421 exhort them to flee from the wrath to come, and lay

7422 hold on everlasting life. But who does not know
7423 that the manner of doing this is every thing?
7424 Sinners are often struck under conviction by the
7425 very manner of doing a thing. There was a man
7426 once very much opposed to a certain preacher. On
7427 being asked to specify some reason, he replied, "I
7428 cannot bear to hear him, for he says the word
7429 HELL in such a way that it rings in my ears a long
7430 time afterwards." He was displeased with the very
7431 thing that constituted the power of speaking that
7432 word. The manner may be such as to convey an
7433 idea directly opposite to the meaning of the words.
7434 A man may tell you that your house is on fire in
7435 such a way as to make directly the opposite
7436 impression, and you will take for granted that it is
7437 not your house that is on fire. The watchman might
7438 sing out FIRE, FIRE, in such a way that every body
7439 would think he was either asleep or drunk. A
7440 certain manner is so usually connected with the
7441 announcement of certain things that they cannot be
7442 expressed without that manner. The words
7443 themselves never alone convey the meaning,
7444 because the idea can only be fully expressed by a
7445 particular manner of speaking. Go to a sinner, and
7446 talk with him about his guilt and danger; and if in
7447 your manner you make an impression that does not
7448 correspond, you in effect bear testimony the other
7449 way, and tell him he is in no danger of hell. If the

7450 sinner believes at all that he is in danger of hell, it
7451 is wholly on other grounds than your saying so. If
7452 you live in such a way as to show that you do not
7453 feel compassion for sinners around you; if you
7454 show no tenderness, by your eyes, your features,
7455 your voice; if your manner is not solemn and
7456 earnest, how can they believe you are sincere?
7457

7458 Woman, suppose you tell your converted husband,
7459 in an easy, laughing way, “My dear, I believe you
7460 are going to hell;” will he believe you? If your life
7461 is gay and trifling, you show that either you do not
7462 believe there is a hell, or that you wish to have him
7463 go there, and are trying to keep off every serious
7464 impression from his mind. Have you children that
7465 are unconverted? Suppose you never say any thing
7466 to them about religion, or when you do talk to them
7467 it is in such a cold, hard, dry way as shows you
7468 have no feeling; do you suppose they believe you?
7469 They don’t see the same coldness in you in regard
7470 to other things. They are in the habit of seeing all
7471 the mother in your eye, and in the tones of your
7472 voice, your emphasis, and the like, and feeling the
7473 warmth of a mother’s heart as it flows out from
7474 your lips on all that concerns them. If, then, when
7475 you talk to them on the subject of religion, you are
7476 cold and trifling, can they suppose you believe it?
7477 If your deportment holds up before your child this

7478 careless, heartless, prayerless spirit, and then you
7479 talk to him about the importance of religion, the
7480 child will go away and laugh, to think you should
7481 try to persuade him there is a hell.

7482
7483 5. The love of Christ. You are to bear witness to
7484 the reality of the love of Christ, by the regard you
7485 show for his precepts, his honor, his kingdom. You
7486 should act as if you believed that he died for the
7487 sins of the whole world, and as if you blamed
7488 sinners for rejecting his great salvation. This is the
7489 only legitimate way in which you can impress
7490 sinners with the love of Christ. Christians, instead
7491 of this, often live so as to make the impression on
7492 sinners that Christ is so compassionate that they
7493 have very little to fear from him. I have been
7494 amazed to see how a certain class of professors
7495 want ministers to be always preaching about the
7496 love of Christ. If a minister preaches up duty, and
7497 urges Christians to be holy, and to labor for Christ,
7498 they call it all legal preaching. They say they want
7499 to hear the Gospel. Well, suppose you present the
7500 love of Christ. How will they bear testimony in
7501 their lives? How will they show that they believe
7502 it? Why, by conformity to the world, they will
7503 testify point blank, that they do not believe a word
7504 of it, and that they care nothing at all for the love of
7505 Christ, only to have it for a cloak, that they can talk

7506 about it, and so cover up their sins. They have no
7507 sympathy with his compassion, and no belief in it
7508 as a reality, and no concern for the feelings of
7509 Christ, which fill his mind when he sees the
7510 condition of sinners.

7511

7512 6. The necessity of holiness in order to enter
7513 heaven. It will not do to depend on talking about
7514 this. They must live holy, and thus testify that men
7515 need not expect to be saved, unless they are holy.
7516 The idea has so long prevailed that we cannot be
7517 perfect here, that many professors do not so much
7518 as seriously aim at a sinless life. They cannot
7519 honestly say that they ever so much as really meant
7520 to live without sin. They drift along before the tide,
7521 in a loose, sinful, unhappy and abominable manner,
7522 at which, doubtless, the devil laughs, because it is,
7523 of all others, the surest way to hell.

7524

7525 7. The necessity of self-denial, humility, and
7526 heavenly-mindedness. Christians ought to show by
7527 their own example what the religion is which is
7528 expected of men. That is the most powerful
7529 preaching, after all, and the most likely to have
7530 influence on the impenitent, by showing them the
7531 great difference between them and Christians.
7532 Many people are trying to make men Christians by
7533 a different course, by copying as near as possible

7534 their present manner of life, and conforming to
7535 them as much as will possibly do. They seem to
7536 think they can make men fall in with religion best
7537 by bringing religion down to their standard. As if
7538 the nearer you bring religion to the world, the more
7539 likely the world would be to embrace it. Now all
7540 this is as wide as the poles from the true philosophy
7541 of making Christians. But it is always the policy of
7542 carnal professors. And they think they are
7543 displaying wonderful sagacity and prudence by
7544 taking so much pains not to scare people at the
7545 mighty strictness and holiness of the Gospel. They
7546 argue that if you exhibit religion to mankind as
7547 requiring such a great change in their manner of
7548 life, such innovations upon their habits, such a
7549 separation from their old associates, why, you will
7550 drive them all away. This seems plausible at first
7551 sight. But it is not true. Let professors live in this
7552 lax and easy way, and sinners say, "Why, I do not
7553 see but I am about right, or at least so near right,
7554 that it is impossible God should send me to hell for
7555 the difference between me and these professors. It
7556 is true, they do a little more than I do, they go to
7557 the communion table, and pray in their families,
7558 and a few such like little things, but they cannot
7559 make any such great difference as heaven and
7560 hell." No, the true way is, to exhibit religion and
7561 the world in strong contrast, or you never can make

7562 sinners feel the necessity of a change. Until the
7563 necessity of this fundamental change is embodied
7564 and held forth in a strong light by example, how
7565 can you make men believe they are going to be sent
7566 to hell if they are not wholly transformed in heart
7567 and life?

7568

7569 This is not only true in philosophy, but it has been
7570 proved by the history of the world. Look at the
7571 missions of the Jesuits in Japan, by Francis Xavier
7572 and his associates. How they lived, what a contrast
7573 they showed between their religion and the
7574 heathen, and what results followed! Now I was
7575 reading a letter from one of our missionaries in the
7576 East, who writes, I believe, to this effect, that a
7577 missionary must be able to rank with the English
7578 nobility, and so recommend his religion to the
7579 respect of the natives. He must get away up above
7580 them, so as to show a superiority, and thus impress
7581 them with respect! Is this philosophy? Is this the
7582 way to convert the world. You can no more convert
7583 the world in this way than by blowing a ram's
7584 horn. It has no tendency that way. What did the
7585 Jesuits do? They went about among the people in
7586 the daily practice of self-denial before their eyes,
7587 teaching, and preaching, and praying, and laboring,
7588 unwearied and unawed, mingling with every caste
7589 and grade, bringing down their instructions to the

7590 capacity of every individual. And in that way the
7591 mission carried idolatry before it like a wave of the
7592 sea, and all at once their religion spread over the
7593 vast empire of Japan. And if they had not meddled
7594 with politics and brought themselves in needless
7595 collision with the government, no doubt they would
7596 have held their ground till this day. I am not saying
7597 anything in regard to the religion they taught, for I
7598 am not sure how much truth they preached with it.
7599 I speak only of their following the true policy of
7600 missions, by showing, by their lives, the religion
7601 they taught in wide contrast with a worldly spirit
7602 and the fooleries of idolatry. This one feature of
7603 their policy so commended itself to the consciences
7604 of the people that it was irresistible. If Christians
7605 contradict this one point, and attempt to
7606 accommodate their religion to the worldliness of
7607 men, they render the salvation of the world
7608 impossible. How can you make people believe that
7609 self-denial and separation from the world are
7610 necessary, unless you practise them?

7611
7612 8. Meekness, humility, and heavenly-mindedness.
7613 The people of God should always show a temper
7614 like the Son of God, who when he was reviled,
7615 reviled not again. If a professor of religion is
7616 irritable, and ready to resent an injury, and fly in a
7617 passion, and take the same measures as the world

7618 do to get redress, by going to law and the like, how
7619 is he to make people believe there is any reality in a
7620 change of heart? They cannot recommend religion
7621 while they have such a spirit. If you are in the habit
7622 of resenting injurious conduct; if you do not bear it
7623 meekly, and put the best construction that can be
7624 on it, you contradict the Gospel. Some people
7625 always show a bad spirit, ever ready to put the
7626 worst construction on what is done, and take fire at
7627 any little thing. This shows a great want of that
7628 charity which “hopeth all things, believeth all
7629 things, endureth all things,” But if a man always
7630 shows meekness under injuries, it will confound
7631 gainsaying. Nothing makes so solemn an
7632 impression upon sinners, and bears down with such
7633 a tremendous weight on their consciences, as to see
7634 a Christian, Christ-like bearing affronts and injuries
7635 with the meekness of a lamb. It cuts like a two-
7636 edged sword.

7637
7638 I will mention a case to show this. A young man
7639 abused a minister to his face, and reviled him in an
7640 unprecedented manner. The minister possessed his
7641 soul in patience, and spoke mildly in reply, telling
7642 him the truth pointedly, but yet in a very kind
7643 manner. This only made him the more angry, and
7644 at length he went away in a rage, declaring that he
7645 was not going to stay and bear this vituperation. As

7646 if it was the minister, instead of himself, that had
7647 been scolding. The sinner went away, but with the
7648 arrows of the Almighty in his heart, and in less
7649 than half an hour he followed the minister to his
7650 lodgings in intolerable agony, wept, and begged
7651 forgiveness, and broke down before God, and
7652 yielded up his heart to Christ. This calm and mild
7653 manner was more overwhelming to him than a
7654 thousand arguments. Now if that minister had been
7655 thrown off his guard, and answered harshly, no
7656 doubt he would have ruined the soul of that young
7657 man. How many of you have defeated every future
7658 effort you may make with your impenitent friends
7659 or neighbors, in some such way as this. On some
7660 occasion you have showed yourself so irascible,
7661 that you have sealed up your own lips, and laid a
7662 stumbling block over which that sinner will
7663 stumble into hell. If you have done it in any
7664 instance, do not sleep till you have done all you can
7665 to retrieve the mischief; till you have confessed the
7666 sin and done every thing to counteract it as far as
7667 possible.

7668
7669 9. The necessity of entire honesty in a Christian.
7670 Oh what a field opens here for remark! But I cannot
7671 go over it fully now. It extends to all the
7672 departments of life. Christians need to show the
7673 strictest regard to integrity in every department of

7674 business, and in all their intercourse with their
7675 fellow-men. If every Christian would pay a
7676 scrupulous regard to honesty, and always be
7677 conscientious to do exactly right, it would make a
7678 powerful impression on the minds of people of the
7679 reality of religious principle.

7680

7681 A lady was once buying some eggs in a store, and
7682 the clerk made a miscount and gave her one more
7683 than the number. She saw it at the time, but said
7684 nothing, and after she got home it troubled her. She
7685 felt that she had acted wrong, soon hurried back to
7686 the young man and confessed it and paid the
7687 difference. The impression of her conscientious
7688 integrity went to his heart like a sword. It was a
7689 great sin in her to conceal the miscount, because
7690 the temptation was so small; for if she would cheat
7691 him out of an egg, it showed that she would cheat
7692 him out of his whole store, if she could do it and
7693 not be found out. But her prompt and humble
7694 confession showed an honest conscience.

7695

7696 I am happy to say, there are some men who deal on
7697 this principle of integrity. And the wicked hate
7698 them for it. They rail against them, and vociferate
7699 in bar-rooms, that they never will buy goods of
7700 such and such individuals, that such a hypocrite
7701 shall never touch a dollar of their money, and all

7702 that, and then they will go right away and buy of
7703 them, because they know they shall be honestly
7704 dealt with. This is a testimony to the truth of
7705 religion, that is heard from Georgia to Maine.
7706 Suppose all Christians did so, what would be the
7707 consequence? Christians would run away with the
7708 business of the city. The Christians would soon do
7709 the business of the world. The great argument
7710 which some Christians urge, that if they do not do
7711 business upon the common principle, of stating one
7712 price and taking another, they cannot compete with
7713 men of the world, is all false—false in philosophy
7714 and false in history. Only make it your invariable
7715 rule to do right, and do business upon principle,
7716 and you control the market. The ungodly will be
7717 obliged to conform to your standard. It is perfectly
7718 in the power of the church to regulate the
7719 commerce of the world, if they will only
7720 themselves maintain perfect integrity.

7721
7722 And if Christians will do the same in politics, they
7723 will sway the destinies of nations, without
7724 involving themselves at all in the base and
7725 corrupting strife of parties. Only let Christians
7726 generally determine to vote for no man for any
7727 office, that is not an honest man and a man of pure
7728 morals, and let it be known that Christians are
7729 united in this, whatever may be their difference in

7730 political sentiments, and no man would be put up
7731 who is not such a character. In three years it would
7732 be talked about in taverns and published in
7733 newspapers, when any man is set up as a candidate
7734 for office, “What a good man he is, how moral,
7735 how pious!” and the like. And any political party
7736 would no more set up a known Sabbath-breaker, or
7737 a gambler, or a profane swearer, or a whoremonger,
7738 or a rum-seller, as their candidate for office, than
7739 they would set up the devil himself for president.
7740 The carnal policy of many professors, who
7741 undertake to correct politics by such means as
7742 wicked men employ, and who are determined to
7743 vote with a party, let the candidate be ever so
7744 profligate, is all wrong—wrong in principle,
7745 contrary to philosophy and common sense, and
7746 ruinous to the best interests of mankind. The
7747 dishonesty of the church is cursing the world. I am
7748 not going to preach a political sermon, I assure
7749 you. But I want to show you, that if you mean in
7750 impress men favorably to your religion by your
7751 lives, you must be honest, strictly honest, in
7752 business, politics, and every thing you do. What do
7753 you suppose those ungodly politicians, who know
7754 themselves to be playing a dishonest game in
7755 carrying an election, think of your religion when
7756 they see you uniting with them? They know you
7757 are a hypocrite!

7758

7759 REMARKS.

7760

7761 1. It is unreasonable for professors of religion to
7762 wonder at the thoughtlessness of sinners.—Every
7763 thing considered, the carelessness of sinners is not
7764 wonderful. We are affected by testimony, and only
7765 by that testimony which is received by our minds.
7766 Sinners are so taken up with business, pleasure, and
7767 the things of the world, that they will not examine
7768 the Bible to find out what religion is. Their feelings
7769 are excited only on worldly subjects, because these
7770 only are brought into warm contact with their
7771 minds. The things of the world make therefore a
7772 strong impression. But there is so little to make an
7773 impression on their minds in respect to eternity,
7774 and to bring religion home to them, that they do not
7775 feel on the subject. If they examined the subject
7776 they would feel. But they do not examine it, nor
7777 think upon it, nor care for it. And they never will,
7778 unless God's witnesses rise up and testify. But
7779 inasmuch as the great body of Christians in fact
7780 live so as to testify on the other side by their
7781 conduct, how can we expect that sinners will feel
7782 right on the subject? Nearly all the testimony and
7783 all the influence that comes to their minds tends to
7784 make them feel the other way. God has left his
7785 cause here before the human race, and left his

7786 witnesses to testify in his behalf, and behold, they
7787 turn round and testify the other way! Is it any
7788 wonder that sinners are careless?

7789

7790 2. We see why it is that preaching does so little
7791 good; and how it is that so many sinners get
7792 Gospel-hardened. Sinners that live under the
7793 Gospel are often supposed to be Gospel-hardened;
7794 but only let the church wake up, and act
7795 consistently, and they will feel. If the church were
7796 to live only one week as if they believed the Bible,
7797 sinners would melt down before them. Suppose I
7798 were a lawyer, and should go into court and spread
7799 out my client's case, the issue is joined, and I make
7800 my statements, and tell what I expect to prove, and
7801 then call in my witnesses. The first witness takes
7802 his oath, and then rises up and contradicts me to
7803 my face. What good will all my pleading do? I
7804 might address the jury a month, and be as eloquent
7805 as Cicero, but so long as my witnesses contradicted
7806 me, all my pleading would do no good. Just so it is
7807 with a minister who is preaching in the midst of a
7808 cold, stupid, and God-dishonoring church. In vain
7809 does he hold up to view the great truths of religion,
7810 when every member of the church is ready to swear
7811 he lies. Why, in such a church, their very manner
7812 of going out of the aisles contradicts the sermon.
7813 They press out as cheerful and as easy, bowing to

7814 one another, and whispering together, as if nothing
7815 was the matter. Let the minister warn every man
7816 daily with tears, it will produce no effect. If the
7817 devil should come in and see the state of things, he
7818 would think he could not better the business for his
7819 interest.

7820

7821 Yet there are ministers who will go on in this way
7822 for years, preaching over the heads of such a
7823 people, that by their lives contradict every word
7824 they say, and they think it their duty to do so. Duty!
7825 To preach to a church that are undoing all his work,
7826 and contradicting all his testimony, and that will
7827 not alter! No. Let him shake off the dust from his
7828 feet for a testimony, and go to the heathen, or to the
7829 new settlements. The man is wasting his energies,
7830 and wearing out his life, and just rocking the cradle
7831 for a sleepy church, all testifying to sinners, there is
7832 no danger. Their whole lives are a practical
7833 testimony that the Bible is not true. Shall ministers
7834 continue to wear themselves out so? Probably not
7835 less than ninety-nine-hundredths of the preaching
7836 in this country is lost, because it is contradicted by
7837 the church. Not one truth in a hundred that is
7838 preached takes effect, because the lives of
7839 professors testify that it is not so.

7840

7841 3. It is evident that the standard of Christian living
7842 must be raised, or the world will never be
7843 converted. If we had as many church members now
7844 as there are families, and scattered all over the
7845 world, and a minister to every five hundred souls,
7846 and every child in a Sabbath-school, and every
7847 young person in a Bible-class, you would have all
7848 the machinery you want, but if the church
7849 contradict the truth by their lives, it never would
7850 produce a revival.

7851
7852 They never will have a revival in any place while
7853 the whole church in effect testify against the
7854 minister. Often it is the case that where there is the
7855 most preaching, there is the least religion, because
7856 the church contradict the preaching. I never knew
7857 means fail of a revival where Christians live
7858 consistently. One of the first things is to raise the
7859 standard of religion, so as to embody and hang out
7860 in the sight of all men, the truth of the Gospel.
7861 Unless ministers can get the church to wake up and
7862 act as if religion was true, and back their testimony
7863 by their lives, in vain will they attempt to promote
7864 a revival.

7865
7866 Many churches are depending on their minister to
7867 do everything. When he preaches, they will say,
7868 “What a great sermon that was. He’s an excellent

7869 minister. Such preaching must do good. We shall
7870 have a revival soon, I do not doubt.” And all the
7871 while they are contradicting the preaching by their
7872 lives. I tell you, if they are depending on preaching
7873 alone to carry on the work, they must fail. If Jesus
7874 Christ were to come and preach, and the church
7875 contradict it, he would fail. It has been tried once.
7876 Let an apostle rise from the dead, or an angel come
7877 down from heaven and preach, without the church
7878 to witness for God, and it would have no effect.
7879 The novelty might produce a certain kind of effect
7880 for a time, but as soon as the novelty was gone, the
7881 preaching would have no saving effect, while
7882 contradicted by the witnesses.

7883
7884 4. Every Christian makes an impression by his
7885 conduct, and witnesses either for one side or the
7886 other. His looks, dress, whole demeanor, make a
7887 constant impression on one side or the other. He
7888 cannot help testifying for or against religion. He is
7889 either gathering with Christ, or scattering abroad.
7890 Every step you take, you tread on chords that will
7891 vibrate to all eternity. Every time you move, you
7892 touch keys whose sound will re-echo over all the
7893 hills and dales in heaven, and through all the dark
7894 caverns and vaults of hell. Every movement of
7895 your lives, you are exerting a tremendous
7896 influence, that will tell on the immortal interests of

7897 souls all around you. Are you asleep, while all your
7898 conduct is exerting such an influence?

7899

7900 Are you going to walk in the street? Take care how
7901 you dress. What is that on your head? What does
7902 that gaudy ribbon, and those ornaments upon your
7903 dress, say to every one that meets you? It makes
7904 the impression that you wish to be thought pretty.
7905 Take care! You might just as well write on your
7906 clothes, "NO TRUTH IN RELIGION." It says,
7907 "GIVE ME DRESS, GIVE ME FASHION, GIVE
7908 ME FLATTERY, AND I AM HAPPY." The world
7909 understand this testimony as you walk the streets.
7910 You are "living epistles, known and read of all
7911 men." If you show pride, levity, bad temper, and
7912 the like, it is like tearing open the wounds of the
7913 Saviour. How Christ might weep to see professors
7914 of religion going about hanging up his cause to
7915 contempt at the comers of streets. Only "let the
7916 women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with
7917 shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered
7918 hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which
7919 becometh women professing godliness) with good
7920 works;" only let them act consistently, and their
7921 conduct will tell on the world, heaven will rejoice
7922 and hell groan at their influence. But oh, let them
7923 display vanity, try to be pretty, bow down to the
7924 goddess of fashion, fill their ears with ornaments,

7925 and their fingers with rings. Let them put feathers
7926 in their hats, and clasps upon their arms, lace
7927 themselves up till they can hardly breathe. Let
7928 them put on their “round tires and walk mincing as
7929 they go,” and their influence is reversed. Heaven
7930 puts on the robes of mourning, and hell may hold a
7931 jubilee.

7932
7933 5. It is easy to see why revivals do not prevail in a
7934 great city. How can they? Just look at God’s
7935 witnesses, and see what they are testifying to. They
7936 seem to be agreed together to tempt the Spirit of
7937 the Lord, and lie to the Holy Ghost. They make
7938 their vows to God, to consecrate themselves wholly
7939 to him, and then go bowing down at the shrine of
7940 fashion, and then wonder there are no revivals. It
7941 would be more than a miracle to have a revival
7942 under such circumstances. How can a revival
7943 prevail in this church? Do you suppose I have such
7944 a vain imagination of my own ability, as to think I
7945 can promote a revival by preaching over your
7946 heads, while you live on as some of you do? Do
7947 you not know that so far as your influence goes,
7948 many of you are right in the way of a revival? Your
7949 spirit and deportment produce an influence on the
7950 world against religion. How shall the world believe
7951 religion, when the witnesses are not agreed among
7952 themselves? You contradict yourselves, you

7953 contradict one another, and you contradict your
7954 minister, and the sum of the whole testimony is,
7955 there is no need of being pious.
7956
7957 Do you believe the things I have been preaching
7958 are true, or are they the ravings of a disturbed
7959 mind? If they are true, do you recognize the fact
7960 that they have reference to you? You say, perhaps,
7961 “I wish some of the rich churches could hear it!”
7962 Why, I am not preaching to them, I am preaching
7963 to you. My responsibility is to you, and my fruits
7964 must come from you. Now are you contradicting
7965 it? What is the testimony on the leaf of the record
7966 that is now sealed for the judgment concerning this
7967 day? Have you manifested a sympathy with the
7968 Son of God, when his heart is bleeding in view of
7969 the desolations of Zion? Have your children,
7970 clerks, servants, seen it to be so? Have they seen a
7971 solemnity on your countenance, and tears in your
7972 eyes, in view of perishing souls?
7973
7974 Finally.—I must close by remarking, that God and
7975 all moral beings have great reason to complain of
7976 this false testimony. There is ground to complain
7977 that God’s witnesses turn and testify point-blank
7978 against him. They declare by their conduct that
7979 there is no truth in the Gospel. Heaven might weep
7980 and hell rejoice to see this. Oh, how guilty! Here

7981 you are, going to the judgment, red all over with
7982 blood. Sinners are to meet you there, those who
7983 have seen how you live, many of them already
7984 dead, and many others you will never see again.
7985 What an influence you have exerted! Perhaps
7986 hundreds of souls will meet you in the judgment,
7987 and curse you (if they are allowed to speak) for
7988 leading them to hell, by practically denying the
7989 truth of the Gospel. What will become of this city,
7990 and of the world, when the church is united in
7991 practically testifying that God is a liar? They testify
7992 by their lives, that if they make a profession and
7993 live a moral life, that is religion enough. Oh, what a
7994 doctrine of devils is that! Enough to ruin the whole
7995 human race.

7996

7997

7998

7999 LECTURE X.

8000

8001 TO WIN SOULS REQUIRES WISDOM.

8002

8003 Text.—He that winneth souls is wise.—Proverbs
8004 xi. 30.

8005

8006 THE most common definition of wisdom is, that it
8007 is the choice of the best end and the selection of the
8008 most appropriate means for the accomplishment of

8009 that end—the best adaptation of means to secure a
8010 desired end. “He that winneth souls,” God says, “is
8011 wise.” The object of this evening’s lecture is to
8012 direct Christians in the use of means for
8013 accomplishing their infinitely desirable end, the
8014 salvation of souls. To-night I shall confine my
8015 attention to the private efforts of individuals for the
8016 conversion and salvation of men. On another
8017 occasion, perhaps I shall use the same text in
8018 speaking of what is wise in the public preaching of
8019 the Gospel, and the labors of ministers. In giving
8020 some directions to aid private Christians in this
8021 work, I propose,

8022
8023 I. To show Christians how they should deal with
8024 careless sinners.

8025
8026 II. How they should deal with awakened sinners.

8027
8028 III. How they should deal with convicted sinners.

8029
8030 I. The manner of dealing with careless sinners.

8031
8032 1. In regard to the time. It is important that you
8033 should select a proper time to try to make a serious
8034 impression on the mind of a careless sinner. Much
8035 depends on timing your efforts right. For if you fail
8036 of selecting the most proper time, very probably

8037 you will be defeated. True, you may say, it is your
8038 duty at all times to warn sinners, and try to awaken
8039 them to think of their souls. And so it is; yet if you
8040 do not pay due regard to the time and opportunity,
8041 your hope of success may be very doubtful.

8042
8043 (1.) It is desirable, if possible, to address a person
8044 that is careless, when he is disengaged from other
8045 employments. In proportion as his attention is
8046 taken up with something else, it will be difficult to
8047 awaken him to religion. People who are careless
8048 and indifferent to religion are often offended, rather
8049 than benefited, by being called off from important
8050 and lawful business. For instance, a minister
8051 perhaps goes to visit the family of a merchant, or
8052 mechanic, or farmer, and finds the man absorbed in
8053 his business; perhaps he calls him off from his
8054 work when it is urgent, and the man is uneasy and
8055 irritable, and feels as if it was an intrusion. In such
8056 a case, there is little room to expect any good.
8057 Notwithstanding it is true that religion is infinitely
8058 more important than all his worldly business, and
8059 he ought to postpone everything to the salvation of
8060 his soul, yet he does not feel it, for if he did he
8061 would no longer be a careless sinner, and therefore
8062 he regards it as unjustifiable, and gets offended.
8063 You must take him as you find him, a careless,
8064 impenitent sinner, and deal with him accordingly.

8065 He is absorbed in other things, and very apt to be
8066 offended if you take such a time to interfere and
8067 call his attention to religion.

8068

8069 (2.) It is important to take a person, if possible, at a
8070 time when he is not strongly excited with any other
8071 subject. If that is the case, he is in an unfit frame to
8072 be addressed on the subject of religion. In
8073 proportion to the strength of that excitement, would
8074 be the probability that you would do no good. You
8075 may possibly reach him; persons have had their
8076 minds arrested and turned to religion in the midst
8077 of a powerful excitement on other subjects. But it is
8078 not likely.

8079

8080 (3.) Be sure that the person is perfectly sober. It
8081 used to be more common that it is now for people
8082 to drink spirits every day, and become more or less
8083 intoxicated. Precisely in proportion as they are so,
8084 they are rendered unfit to be approached on the
8085 subject of religion. If they have been drinking beer,
8086 or cider, or wine, so that you can smell their breath,
8087 you may know there is but little chance of
8088 producing any lasting effect on them. I have had
8089 professors of religion bring persons to me,
8090 pretending they were under conviction; for you
8091 know that people in liquor are often very fond of
8092 talking upon religion; but as soon as I came near

8093 them, so as to smell their breath, I have asked, Why
8094 do you bring this drunken man to me? Why, they
8095 say, he is not drunk, he has only drank a little.

8096 Well, that little has made him a little drunk. He is
8097 drunk if you can smell his breath, The cases are
8098 exceedingly rare where a person has been truly
8099 convicted, who had any intoxicating liquor in him.

8100

8101 (4.) If possible, where you wish to converse with a
8102 man on the subject of salvation, take him when he
8103 is in a good temper. If you find him out of humor,
8104 very probably he will get angry and abuse you.

8105 Better let him alone for that time, or you will be
8106 likely to quench the Spirit. It is possible you may
8107 be able to talk in such a way as to cool his temper,
8108 but it is not likely. The truth is, men hate God, and
8109 though their hatred may be dormant, it is easily
8110 excited, and if you bring God fully before their
8111 minds when they are already excited with anger, it
8112 will be so much the easier to arouse their enmity to
8113 open violence.

8114

8115 (5.) If possible, always take an opportunity to
8116 converse with careless sinners when they are alone.
8117 Most men are too proud to be conversed with
8118 freely respecting themselves in the presence of
8119 others, even their own family. A man in such
8120 circumstances will brace up all his powers to

8121 defend himself, while if he was alone he would
8122 melt down under the truth. He will resist the truth,
8123 or try to laugh it off, for fear that if he should
8124 manifest any feeling somebody will go and report
8125 that he is serious.

8126
8127 In visiting families, instead of calling the family
8128 together at the same time to be talked to, the better
8129 way is to see them all, one at a time. There was a
8130 case of this kind. Several young ladies, of a proud,
8131 gay, and fashionable character, lived together in a
8132 fashionable family. Two men were strongly
8133 desirous to get the subject of religion before them,
8134 but were at a loss how to accomplish it, for fear
8135 they would all combine, and counteract or resist
8136 every serious impression. At length they took this
8137 course. They called and sent up their card to one of
8138 the young ladies by name. She came down and they
8139 conversed with her on the subject of her salvation,
8140 and as she was alone, she not only treated them
8141 politely, but seemed to receive the truth with
8142 seriousness. A day or two after, they called in like
8143 manner on another, and then another, and so on, till
8144 they had conversed with every one separately. In a
8145 little time they were all, I believe, every one,
8146 hopefully converted. This was as it should be, for
8147 then they could not keep each other in countenance.
8148 And then the impression made on one was

8149 followed up with the others, so that one was not
8150 left to exert a bad influence over the rest.
8151
8152 There was a pious woman who kept a boarding
8153 house for young gentlemen; she had twenty-one or
8154 two of them in her family, and at length she
8155 became very anxious for their salvation; she made
8156 it a subject of prayer, but saw no seriousness
8157 among them. At length she saw that there must be
8158 something done besides praying, and yet she did
8159 not know what to do. One morning after breakfast,
8160 as they were retiring, she asked one of them to stop
8161 a few minutes. She took him to her room, and
8162 conversed with him tenderly on the subject of
8163 religion, and prayed with him. She followed up the
8164 impression made, and pretty soon he was hopefully
8165 converted. Then there were two, and they
8166 addressed another, and prayed with him, and soon
8167 he was prepared to join them. Then another, and so
8168 on, taking one at a time, and letting none of the rest
8169 know what was going on, so as not to alarm them,
8170 till every one of these young men was converted to
8171 God. Now if she had brought the subject before the
8172 whole of them together, very likely they would
8173 have turned it all into ridicule; or perhaps they
8174 would have been offended and left the house, and
8175 then she could have had no further influence over
8176 them. But taking one alone, and treating him

8177 respectfully and kindly, he had no such motive for
8178 resistance as arises out of the presence of others.

8179

8180 (6.) Try to seize an opportunity to converse with a
8181 careless sinner, when the events of Providence
8182 seem to favor your design. If any particular event
8183 should occur, calculated to make a serious
8184 impression, be sure to improve the occasion
8185 faithfully.

8186

8187 (7.) Seize the earliest opportunity to converse with
8188 those around you who are careless. Do not put it
8189 off from day to day, thinking a better opportunity
8190 will come. You must seek an opportunity, and if
8191 none offers make one. Appoint a time and place,
8192 and get an interview with your friend or neighbor,
8193 where you can speak to him freely. Send him a
8194 note, go to him on purpose, make it look like a
8195 matter of business, as if you were in earnest in
8196 endeavoring to promote his soul's salvation. Then
8197 he will feel that it is a matter of importance, at least
8198 in your eyes. Follow it up till you succeed, or
8199 become convinced nothing can now be done.

8200

8201 (8.) If you have any feeling for a particular
8202 individual, take an opportunity to converse with
8203 that individual while this feeling continues. If it is a
8204 truly benevolent feeling, you have reason to believe

8205 the Spirit of God is moving you to desire the
8206 salvation of his soul, and that God is ready to bless
8207 your efforts for his conversion. In such a case,
8208 make it the subject of special and importunate
8209 prayer, and seek an early opportunity to pour out
8210 all your heart to him and bring him to Christ.

8211

8212 2. In regard to the manner of doing all this.

8213

8214 (1.) When you approach a careless individual to
8215 endeavor to awaken him to his soul's concerns, be
8216 sure to treat him kindly. Let him see that you
8217 address him, not because you seek a quarrel with
8218 him, but because you love his soul, and desire his
8219 best good in time and eternity. If you are harsh and
8220 overbearing in your manner, you will probably
8221 offend him and drive him farther off from the way
8222 of life.

8223

8224 (2.) Be solemn. Avoid all lightness of manner or
8225 language. Levity will produce any thing but a right
8226 impression. You ought to feel that you are engaged
8227 in a very solemn work, which is going to affect the
8228 character of your friend or neighbor, and probably
8229 determine his destiny for eternity. Who could trifle
8230 and use levity in such circumstances if his heart
8231 was sincere?

8232

8233 (3.) Be respectful. Some seem to suppose it
8234 necessary to be abrupt, and rude, and coarse in their
8235 intercourse with the careless and impenitent.
8236 Nothing can be a greater mistake. The Apostle Paul
8237 has given us a better rule on the subject, where he
8238 says, “Be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil
8239 for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise
8240 blessing.” A rude and coarse address is only
8241 calculated to give an unfavorable opinion both of
8242 you and your religion.

8243
8244 (4.) Be sure to be very plain. Do not suffer yourself
8245 to cover up any circumstance of the person’s
8246 character, and his relations to God. Lay it all open,
8247 not for the purpose of offending or wounding him,
8248 but because it is necessary. Before you can cure a
8249 wound, you must probe it to the bottom. Keep back
8250 none of the truth, but let it come out plainly before
8251 him.

8252
8253 (5.) Be sure to address his conscience. In public
8254 addresses, ministers often get hold of the feelings
8255 only, and thus awaken the mind. But in private
8256 conversation you cannot do so. You cannot pour
8257 out the truth in an impassioned and rousing
8258 manner. And unless you address the conscience
8259 pointedly, you get no hold of the mind at all.
8260

8261 (6.) Bring the great and fundamental truths to bear
8262 upon the person's mind. Sinners are very apt to run
8263 off upon some pretext or some subordinate point,
8264 especially some point of sectarianism. For instance,
8265 if the man is a Presbyterian, he will try to turn the
8266 conversation on the points of difference between
8267 Presbyterians and Methodists. Or he will fall foul
8268 of old school divinity. Do not yield to him, or talk
8269 with him on any such point; it will do more hurt
8270 than good. Tell him the present business is to save
8271 his soul, and not to settle controverted questions in
8272 theology. Hold him to the great fundamental
8273 points, by which he must be saved or lost.

8274
8275 (7.) Be very patient. If he has a real difficulty in his
8276 mind, be very patient till you find out what it is,
8277 and then clear it up. If what he alleges is a mere
8278 cavil, make him see that it is a cavil. Do not try to
8279 answer it by argument, but show him that he is not
8280 sincere in advancing it. It is not worth while to
8281 spend your time in arguing against a cavil, but
8282 make him feel that he is committing sin to plead it,
8283 and thus enlist his conscience on your side.

8284
8285 (8.) Be careful to guard your own spirit. There are
8286 many people who have not good temper enough to
8287 converse with those who are much opposed to
8288 religion. And such a person wants no better

8289 triumph than to see you angry. He will go away
8290 exulting because he has made one of these saints
8291 mad.

8292

8293 (9.) If the sinner is inclined to intrench himself
8294 against God, be careful not to take his part in
8295 anything. If he says he cannot do his duty, do not
8296 take sides with him, or say any thing to
8297 countenance his falsehood. Do not tell him he
8298 cannot, or help him maintain himself in the
8299 controversy against his Maker. Sometimes a
8300 careless sinner will go to finding fault with
8301 Christians. Do not take his part or side with him
8302 against Christians. Just tell him he has not got their
8303 sins to answer for, and he had better see to his own
8304 concerns. If you fall in with him, he feels that he
8305 has you on his side. Show him that it is a
8306 censorious and wicked spirit that prompts him to
8307 make these remarks, and not a regard for the honor
8308 of religion or the laws of Jesus Christ.

8309

8310 (10.) Bring up the individual's particular sins.
8311 Talking in general terms against sin will produce
8312 no results. You must make a man feel that you
8313 mean him. A minister who cannot make his hearers
8314 feel that he means them, cannot expect to
8315 accomplish much. Some people are very careful to
8316 avoid mentioning the particular sins of which they

8317 know the individual to be guilty, for fear of hurting
8318 his feelings. This is wrong. If you know his history,
8319 bring up his particular sins, kindly but plainly, not
8320 to give offence, but to awaken conscience, and give
8321 full force to the truth.

8322
8323 (11.) It is generally best to be short, and not spin
8324 out what we have to say. Get the attention as soon
8325 as you can to the very point, say a few things and
8326 press them home, and bring the matter to an issue.
8327 If possible, get them to repent and give themselves
8328 to Christ at the time. This is the proper issue.
8329 Carefully avoid making an impression that you do
8330 not expect them to repent NOW.

8331
8332 (12.) If possible, when you converse with sinners,
8333 be sure to pray with them. If you converse with
8334 them, and leave them without praying, you leave
8335 your work undone.

8336
8337 II. The manner of dealing with awakened sinners.

8338
8339 1. You should be careful to distinguish between an
8340 awakened sinner, and one who is under conviction.
8341 When you find a person who feels a little on the
8342 subject of religion, do not take it for granted that he
8343 is convicted of sin, and thus omit to use means to
8344 show him his sin. Persons are often awakened by

8345 some providential circumstance, as sickness, a
8346 thunderstorm, pestilence, death in the family,
8347 disappointment, or the like, or by the Spirit of God,
8348 so that their ears are open, and they are ready to
8349 hear on the subject of religion with attention and
8350 seriousness, and some feeling. If you find a person
8351 awakened, no matter by what means, lose no time
8352 in pouring light upon his mind, Do not be afraid,
8353 but show him the breadth of the Divine law, and
8354 the exceeding strictness of its precepts. Make him
8355 see how it condemns his thoughts and life. Search
8356 out his heart, find what is there, and bring it up
8357 before his mind, as far as you can. If possible, melt
8358 him down on the spot. When once you have got a
8359 sinner's attention, very often his conviction and
8360 conversion is the work of a few moments. You can
8361 sometimes do more in five minutes, than in years or
8362 a whole life while he is careless or indifferent.

8363

8364 I have been amazed at the conduct of those cruel
8365 parents, and other heads of families, who will let an
8366 awakened sinner be in their families for days and
8367 weeks, and not say a word to him on the subject.
8368 Why, they say, if the Spirit of God has begun a
8369 work in him, he will certainly carry it on! Perhaps
8370 the person is anxious to converse, and puts himself
8371 in the way of Christians, as often as possible,
8372 expecting they will converse with him, and they do

8373 not say a word. Amazing! Such a person ought to
8374 be looked out immediately, as soon as he is
8375 awakened, and let a blaze of light be poured into
8376 his mind without delay. Whenever you have reason
8377 to believe that a person within your reach is
8378 awakened, do not sleep till you have poured in the
8379 light upon his mind, and tried to bring him to
8380 immediate repentance. Then is the time to press the
8381 subject with effect. If that favorable moment is lost,
8382 it can never be recovered.

8383
8384 I have often seen Christians in revivals, who were
8385 constantly on the look-out to see if any persons
8386 appeared to be awakened. And as soon as they saw
8387 any one begin to manifest feeling under preaching,
8388 they would mark him, and as soon as the meeting
8389 was out, invite him to a room and converse and
8390 pray with him, and if possible not leave him till he
8391 was converted. A remarkable case of this kind
8392 occurred in a town at the West. A merchant came
8393 to the place from a distance to buy goods. It was a
8394 time of powerful revival, but he was determined to
8395 keep out of its influence, and so he would not go to
8396 any meeting at all. At length he found everybody
8397 so much engaged in religion that it met him at
8398 every turn, and he got vexed, and swore he would
8399 go home. There was so much religion there, he
8400 said, he could not do any business, and he would

8401 not stay. Accordingly he took his seat for the stage,
8402 which was to leave at four o'clock the next
8403 morning. As he spoke of going away, a gentleman
8404 belonging to the house, who was one of the young
8405 converts, asked him if he would not go to a
8406 meeting once before he left town. He finally
8407 consented, and went to the meeting. The sermon
8408 took hold of his mind, but not with sufficient power
8409 to bring him into the kingdom. He returned to his
8410 lodgings, and called the landlord to pay his bill.
8411 The landlord, who had himself recently
8412 experienced religion, saw that he was agitated. He
8413 accordingly spoke to him on the subject of religion,
8414 and the man burst into tears. The landlord
8415 immediately called in three or four young converts,
8416 and they prayed and exhorted him, and at four
8417 o'clock in the morning, when the stage called, he
8418 went on his way rejoicing in God! When he got
8419 home, he called his family together, confessed to
8420 them his past sins, and avowed his determination to
8421 live differently, and prayed with them for the first
8422 time. It was so unexpected that it was soon noised
8423 abroad, people began to inquire, and a revival
8424 broke out in the place. Now, suppose these
8425 Christians had done as some do, been careless, and
8426 let the man go off, slightly impressed? It is not
8427 probable he ever could have been saved. Such

8428 opportunities are often lost for ever, when once the
8429 favorable moment is passed.

8430

8431 III. The manner of dealing with convicted sinners.

8432

8433 By a convicted sinner I mean one who feels
8434 himself condemned by the law of God, as a guilty
8435 sinner. He has so much instruction as to understand
8436 something of the extent of God's law, and he sees
8437 and feels his guilty state, and knows what his
8438 remedy is. To deal with these often requires great
8439 wisdom. There are some most trying cases occur,
8440 when it is extremely difficult to know what to do
8441 with them.

8442

8443 1. When a person is convicted and not converted,
8444 but remains in an anxious state, there is generally
8445 some specific reason for it. In such cases, it does no
8446 good to exhort him to repent, or to explain the law
8447 to him. He knows all that, he understands all these
8448 general points. But still he does not repent. Now
8449 there must be some particular difficulty to
8450 overcome. You may preach and pray, and exhort
8451 till doomsday, and not gain anything.

8452

8453 You must then set yourself to inquire what is that
8454 particular difficulty. A physician, when he is called
8455 to a patient, and finds him sick with a particular

8456 disease, first administers the general remedies that
8457 are applicable to that disease. If they produce no
8458 effect, and the disease still continues, he must
8459 examine the case, and learn the constitution of the
8460 individual, and his habits, diet, manner of living,
8461 etc., and see what the matter is that the medicine
8462 does not take effect. So it is with the case of a
8463 sinner convicted but not converted. If your ordinary
8464 instructions and exhortations fail, there must be a
8465 difficulty. The particular difficulty is often known
8466 to the individual himself, though he keeps it
8467 concealed. Sometimes it is something that has
8468 escaped even his own observations.

8469
8470 (1.) Sometimes the individual has some idol,
8471 something which he loves more than God, which
8472 prevents him from giving himself up. You must
8473 search out and see what it is that he will not give
8474 up. Perhaps it is wealth, perhaps some earthly
8475 friend, perhaps gay dress, or gay company, or some
8476 favorite amusement. At any rate there is something
8477 on which his heart is so set that he will not yield to
8478 God.

8479
8480 (2.) Perhaps he has done an injury to some
8481 individual, that calls for redress, and he is
8482 unwilling to confess it or to make a just
8483 recompense. Now, until he will confess and forsake

8484 this sin, he can find no mercy. If he has injured the
8485 person in properly, or character, or has abused him,
8486 he must make it up. If you can it find out, tell him
8487 plainly and frankly, that there is no hope for him
8488 till he is willing to confess it, and to do what is
8489 right.

8490

8491 (3.) Sometimes there is some particular sin, which
8492 he will not forsake. He pretends it is only a small
8493 one, or tries to persuade himself it is no sin. No
8494 matter how small it is, he can never get into the
8495 kingdom of God till he gives it up. Sometimes an
8496 individual has seen it to be a sin to use tobacco, and
8497 he never can find true peace till he gives it up.
8498 Perhaps he is looking upon it as a small sin.

8499

8500 But God knows nothing about small sins in such a
8501 case. What is the sin? Why it is injuring your
8502 health, setting a bad example, and taking God's
8503 money, which you are bound to employ in his
8504 service, and spending it for tobacco. What would a
8505 merchant say, if he found one of his clerks in the
8506 habit of going to the money drawer, and taking
8507 money enough to keep him in cigars? Would he
8508 call it a small offence? No, he would say he
8509 deserved to be sent to the State prison. I mention
8510 this particular sin, because I have found it to be one
8511 of the things to which men who are convicted will

8512 hold on when they know it is wrong, and then
8513 wonder why they do not find peace.

8514

8515 (4.) See if there is not some work of remuneration,
8516 which he is bound to do. Perhaps he has defrauded
8517 somebody in trade, or taken some unfair advantage,
8518 contrary to the golden rule of doing as you would
8519 be done by, and is unwilling to make satisfaction.
8520 This is a very common sin among merchants and
8521 men of business. I have known many melancholy
8522 instances, where men have grieved away the Spirit
8523 of God, or else have been driven well nigh to
8524 absolute despair because they were unwilling to
8525 give satisfaction where they have done such things.
8526 Now it is plain that such persons never can have
8527 forgiveness until they do it.

8528

8529 (5.) They may have intrenched themselves
8530 somewhere, and fortified their minds in regard to
8531 some particular point, which they are determined
8532 not to yield. For instance, they may have taken
8533 strong ground that they will not do a particular
8534 thing. I knew a man who was determined not to go
8535 into a certain grove to pray. Several other persons
8536 during the revival had gone into the grove, and
8537 there, by prayer and meditation, given themselves
8538 to God. His own clerk had been converted there.
8539 The lawyer himself was awakened, but he was

8540 determined that he would not go into the grove. He
8541 had powerful convictions, and went on for weeks
8542 in this way, with no relief. He tried to make God
8543 believe that it was not pride that kept him from
8544 Christ; and so, when he was going home from
8545 meeting, he would kneel down in the street and
8546 pray. And not only that, but he would look round
8547 for a mud-puddle in the street, in which he might
8548 kneel, to show that he was not proud. He once
8549 prayed all night in his parlor, but he would not go
8550 into the grove. His distress was so great, and he
8551 was so angry with God, that he was strongly
8552 tempted to make way with himself, and actually
8553 threw away his knife for fear he should cut his
8554 throat. At length he concluded he would go into the
8555 grove and pray, and as soon as he got there he was
8556 converted, and went and poured out his full heart to
8557 God.

8558
8559 So individuals are sometimes intrenched in a
8560 determination that they will not go to a particular
8561 meeting, perhaps the inquiry meeting, or some
8562 prayer meeting, or they will not have a certain
8563 person pray with them, or they will not take a
8564 particular seat, such as the anxious seat. They say
8565 that they can be converted just as well without
8566 yielding this point, for religion does not consist in
8567 this, going to a particular meeting, or taking a

8568 particular attitude in prayer, or a particular seat.
8569 This is true, but by taking this ground they make it
8570 the material point. And so long as they are
8571 intrenched there, and determined to bring God to
8572 their terms, they never can be converted. Sinners
8573 will often yield any thing else, and do any thing in
8574 the world, but yield the point upon which they have
8575 committed themselves, and taken a stand against
8576 God. They cannot be humbled until they yield this
8577 point, whatever it is. And if without yielding it they
8578 get a hope, it will be a false hope.

8579
8580 (6.) Perhaps he has a prejudice against some one, a
8581 member of the church perhaps, on account of some
8582 faithful dealing with his soul, or something in his
8583 business that he did not like, and he hangs on this
8584 and will never be converted till he gives it up.
8585 Whatever it be, you should search it out and tell
8586 him the truth plainly and faithfully.

8587
8588 (7.) He may feel ill will towards some one, or be
8589 angry, and cherish strong feelings of resentment,
8590 which prevent him from obtaining mercy from
8591 God. “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye
8592 have aught against any: that your Father also which
8593 is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But,
8594 if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which
8595 is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

8596

8597 (8.) Perhaps he entertains some errors in doctrine,
8598 or some wrong notions respecting the thing to be
8599 done, or the way of doing it, which may be keeping
8600 him out of the kingdom. Perhaps he is waiting for
8601 God. He is convinced that he deserves to go to hell,
8602 and that unless he is converted he must go there,
8603 but he is waiting for God to do something to him
8604 before he submits. He is in fact waiting for God to
8605 do for him what he has required the sinner to do.

8606

8607 He may be waiting for more conviction. People
8608 often do not know what conviction is, and think
8609 they are not under conviction, when in fact they are
8610 under powerful conviction. They often think
8611 nothing is conviction unless they have great fears
8612 of hell. But the fact is, individuals often have
8613 strong convictions, who have very little fear of hell.
8614 Show them what is the truth, and let them see they
8615 have no need to wait.

8616

8617 Perhaps he may be waiting for certain feelings,
8618 which somebody else has had before he obtained
8619 mercy. This is very common in revivals, where
8620 some one of the first converts has told of
8621 remarkable experiences. Others who are awakened
8622 are very apt to think they must wait for just such
8623 feelings. I knew a young man thus awakened; his

8624 companion had been converted in a remarkable
8625 way, and this one was waiting for just such
8626 feelings. He said he was using the means, and
8627 praying for them, but finally found that he was a
8628 Christian, although he had not been through the
8629 course of feeling he expected.

8630

8631 Sinners often lay out a plan of the way they expect
8632 to feel, and how they expect to be converted and in
8633 fact lay out the work for God, determined that they
8634 will go in that path or not at all. Tell them this is all
8635 wrong, they must not lay out any such path
8636 beforehand, but let God lead them as he sees to be
8637 best. God always leads the blind by a way they
8638 know not. There never was a sinner brought into
8639 the kingdom through such a course of feeling as he
8640 expected. Very often they are amazed to find that
8641 they are in, and have had no such exercises as they
8642 expected.

8643

8644 It is very common for persons to be waiting to be
8645 made subjects of prayer, or for some particular
8646 means to be used, or to see if they cannot make
8647 themselves better. They are so wicked, they say,
8648 that they cannot come to Christ. They want to try,
8649 by humiliation, and suffering, and prayer, to fit
8650 themselves to come. You will have to hunt them
8651 out of all these refuges. It is astonishing into how

8652 many corners they will often run before they will
8653 go to Christ. I have known persons almost
8654 deranged for the want of a little correct instruction.

8655
8656 Sometimes such people think their sins are too
8657 great to be forgiven, or that they have grieved the
8658 Spirit of God away, when that Spirit is all the while
8659 convicting them. They pretend their sins are greater
8660 than Christ's mercies, thus actually insulting the
8661 Lord Jesus Christ.

8662
8663 Sometimes sinners get the idea that they are given
8664 up of God, and that now they cannot be saved. It is
8665 often very difficult to beat persons off from this
8666 ground. Many of the most distressing cases I have
8667 ever met with have been of this character, where
8668 persons would insist upon it that they were given
8669 up and nothing would change them.

8670
8671 In a place where I was laboring in a revival I went
8672 one day into the meeting, and before the exercises
8673 commenced I heard a low moaning, distressing,
8674 unearthly noise. I looked and saw several women
8675 gathered round the person who made it. They said
8676 it was a woman in despair. She had been a long
8677 time in that state. Her husband was a drunkard. He
8678 had brought her to meeting and gone himself to the
8679 tavern. I conversed with her and saw her state, and

8680 that it was very difficult to reach her case. As I was
8681 going away to commence the exercises she said she
8682 must go out, for she could not hear praying or
8683 singing. I told her she must not go, and told the
8684 ladies to detain her, if necessary, by force. I felt
8685 that if the devil had hold of her, God was stronger
8686 than the devil, and could deliver her. The exercises
8687 began, and she made some noise at first. But by and
8688 by she looked up. The subject was chosen with
8689 special reference to her case, and as it proceeded,
8690 her attention was gained, her eyes were fixed—I
8691 never shall forget how she looked—her eyes and
8692 mouth open, her head up, and she almost rose from
8693 her seat as the truth poured in upon her mind.
8694 Finally, as the truth knocked away every
8695 foundation on which her despair had rested, she
8696 shrieked out, put her head down, and sat perfectly
8697 still till the meeting was out. I went to her, and
8698 found her perfectly calm and happy in God. I saw
8699 her long afterwards, and she remained so. Thus
8700 Providence threw her where she never expected to
8701 be, and compelled her to hear instruction adapted to
8702 her case. You may often do incalculable good by
8703 finding out precisely where the difficulty lies, and
8704 then bring the truth to bear right on that point.
8705
8706 Sometimes persons will strenuously maintain that
8707 they have committed the unpardonable sin. When

8708 they get that idea into their minds, they will turn
8709 every thing you say against themselves. In some
8710 such cases, it is a good way to take them on their
8711 own ground, and reason with them in this way;
8712 “Suppose you have committed the unpardonable
8713 sin, what then? It is reasonable that you should
8714 submit to God, and be sorry for your sins, and
8715 break off from them, and do all the good you can,
8716 even if God will not forgive you. Even if you go to
8717 hell you ought to do this.” Press this thought and
8718 turn it over until you find they understand and
8719 consent to it,

8720
8721 It is common for persons in such cases to keep their
8722 eyes on themselves; they will shut themselves up
8723 and keep looking at their own darkness, instead of
8724 looking away to Christ. Now if you can take their
8725 minds off from themselves, and get them to think
8726 of Christ, you may draw them away from brooding
8727 over their own present feelings, and get them to lay
8728 hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel.

8729
8730 2. Be careful, in conversing with convicted sinners,
8731 not to make any compromise with them on any
8732 point where they have a difficulty. If you do, they
8733 will be sure to take advantage of it, and thus get a
8734 false hope. Convicted sinners often get into a
8735 difficulty, in regard to giving up some darling sin,

8736 or yielding some point where conscience and the
8737 Holy Ghost are at war with them. And if they come
8738 across an individual who will yield the point, they
8739 feel better and are happy, and think they are
8740 converted. The young man who came to Christ was
8741 of this character. He had one difficulty, and Jesus
8742 Christ knew just what it was. He knew he loved his
8743 money, and instead of compromising the matter
8744 and thus trying to comfort him, he just put his
8745 finger on the very place and told him, "Go sell all
8746 that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come
8747 follow me." What was the effect? Why the young
8748 man went away sorrowful. Very likely, if Christ
8749 had told him to do any thing else, he would have
8750 felt relieved, and would have got a hope; would
8751 have professed himself a disciple, joined the
8752 church, and gone to hell.

8753

8754 People are often amazingly anxious to make a
8755 compromise. They will ask such questions as this,
8756 Whether you do not think a person may be a
8757 Christian and yet do such and such things; or if he
8758 may not be a Christian and not do such and such
8759 things? Now, do not yield an inch to any such
8760 questions. These questions themselves may often
8761 show you the very point that is laboring in their
8762 minds. They will show you that it is pride, or love

8763 of the world, or something of the kind, which
8764 prevents their becoming Christians.

8765

8766 Be careful to make thorough work on this point, the
8767 love of the world. I believe there have been more
8768 false hopes built on wrong instructions here, than
8769 in any other way. I once heard a Doctor of Divinity
8770 trying to persuade his hearers to give up the world;
8771 and he told them “if they would only give it up,
8772 God would give it right back to them again. He is
8773 willing you should enjoy the world.” Miserable!
8774 God never gives back the world to the Christian, in
8775 the same sense that he requires a convicted sinner
8776 to give it up. He requires us to give up the
8777 ownership of everything to him, so that we shall
8778 never again for a moment consider it as our own. A
8779 man must not think he has a right to judge for
8780 himself how much of his property he shall lay out
8781 for God. One man thinks he may spend twenty
8782 thousand dollars a year to support his family; he
8783 has a right to do it, because he has the means of his
8784 own. Another thinks he may lay up five hundred
8785 thousand dollars. One man said the other day, that
8786 he had promised he never would give any of his
8787 property to educate young men for the ministry.
8788 When he is applied to, he just answers, “I have said
8789 I never will give to any such object, and I never
8790 will.” Man! did Jesus Christ ever tell you to do so

8791 with his money? Has he laid down any such rule?
8792 Remember it is his money you are talking about,
8793 and if he wants it to educate ministers, you
8794 withhold it at your peril. That man has yet to learn
8795 the first principle of religion, that he is not his own,
8796 and that the money which he possesses is Jesus
8797 Christ's.

8798
8799 Here is the great reason why the church is so full of
8800 false hopes. Men have been left to suppose they
8801 could be Christians while holding on to their
8802 money. And this has served as a clog to every
8803 enterprise. It is an undoubted fact that the church
8804 has funds enough to supply the world with Bibles,
8805 and tracts, and missionaries, immediately. But the
8806 truth is, that professors of religion do not believe
8807 that the "earth is the Lord's, and the fullness
8808 thereof." Every man supposes he has a right to
8809 decide what appropriation he shall make of his own
8810 money. And they have no idea that Jesus Christ
8811 shall dictate to them on the subject.

8812
8813 Be sure to deal thoroughly on this point. The
8814 church is now filled up with hypocrites, because
8815 they were never made to give up the world. They
8816 never were made to see that unless they made an
8817 entire consecration of all to Christ, all their time,
8818 all their talents, all their influence, all their

8819 possessions, they would never get to heaven. Many
8820 think they can be Christians, and yet dream along
8821 through life, and use all their time and property for
8822 themselves, only giving a little now and then, to
8823 save appearances, when they can do it with perfect
8824 convenience. But it is a sad mistake, and they will
8825 find it so, if they do not employ their energies for
8826 God. And when they die, instead of finding heaven
8827 at the end of the path they are pursuing, they will
8828 find hell there.

8829
8830 In dealing with a convicted sinner, be sure to drive
8831 him away from every refuge, and not leave him an
8832 inch of ground to stand on, so long as he resists
8833 God. This need not take a long time to do. When
8834 the Spirit of God is at work striving with a sinner, it
8835 is easy to drive him from his refuges. You will find
8836 the truth will be like a hammer, crushing wherever
8837 it strikes. Make clean work with it, so that he shall
8838 give up all for God.

8839
8840 Make the sinner see clearly the nature and extent of
8841 the Divine law, and press the main question of
8842 entire submission to God. Bear down on that point
8843 as soon as you have made him clearly understand
8844 what you aim at, and do not turn off upon anything
8845 else.
8846

8847 Be careful in illustrating the subject, not to mislead
8848 the mind so as to leave the impression that a selfish
8849 submission will answer, or a selfish acceptance of
8850 the atonement, or a selfish giving up to Christ and
8851 receiving him, as if a man was making a good
8852 bargain, giving up his sins and receiving salvation
8853 in exchange. This is mere barter, and not
8854 submission to God. Leave no ground in your
8855 explanations or illustrations, for such a view of the
8856 matter. Man's selfish heart will eagerly seize such a
8857 view of religion, if it be presented, and very likely
8858 close in with it, and thus get a false hope.

8859

8860 Another time I shall call your attention to certain
8861 things that are to be avoided in dealing with
8862 sinners.

8863

8864 REMARKS.

8865

8866 1. Make it an object of constant study and of daily
8867 reflection and prayer, to learn how to deal with
8868 sinners, so as to promote their conversion. It is the
8869 great business on earth of every Christian, to save
8870 souls. People often complain that they do not know
8871 how to take hold of this matter. Why, the reason is
8872 plain enough; they have never studied it. They
8873 never took the proper pains to qualify themselves
8874 for the work of saving souls. If people made it no

8875 more a matter of attention and thought to qualify
8876 themselves for their worldly business, than they do
8877 to save souls, how do you think they would
8878 succeed? Now, if you are thus neglecting the main
8879 business of life, what are you living for? If you do
8880 not make it a matter of study, how you may most
8881 successfully act in building up the kingdom of
8882 Christ, you are acting a very wicked and absurd
8883 part as a Christian.

8884

8885 2. Many professors of religion do more hurt than
8886 good, when they attempt to talk to impenitent
8887 sinners. They have so little knowledge and skill,
8888 that their remarks rather divert attention than
8889 increase it.

8890

8891 3. Be careful to find the point where the Spirit of
8892 God is pressing a sinner, and press the same point
8893 in all your remarks. If you divert his attention from
8894 that point, you will be in great danger of destroying
8895 his convictions. Take pains to learn the state of his
8896 mind, what he is thinking of, how he feels, and
8897 what he feels most deeply upon, and then press that
8898 thoroughly, and do not divert his mind by talking
8899 about anything else. Do not fear to press that point,
8900 for fear of driving him to distraction. Some people
8901 fear to press a point to which the mind is
8902 tremblingly alive, lest they should injure the mind,

8903 notwithstanding the Spirit of God is evidently
8904 debating that point with the sinner. This is an
8905 attempt to be wiser than God. You should clear up
8906 the point, throw the light of truth all around it, and
8907 bring the soul to yield, and then the mind is at rest.

8908

8909 4. Great evils have arisen, and many false hopes
8910 have been created, by not discriminating between
8911 an awakened and a convicted sinner. For the want
8912 of this, persons who are only awakened are
8913 immediately pressed to submit; “you must repent,”
8914 “submit to God,” when they are not in fact
8915 convinced of their guilt, nor instructed so far as
8916 even to know what submission means. This is one
8917 way in which revivals have been greatly injured by
8918 indiscriminate exhortations to repent,
8919 unaccompanied with proper instruction.

8920

8921 5. Anxious sinners are to be regarded as being in a
8922 very solemn and critical state. They have in fact
8923 come to a turning point. It is a time when their
8924 destiny is likely to be settled for ever. The Spirit of
8925 God will not strive always. Christians ought to feel
8926 deeply for them. In many respects their
8927 circumstances are more solemn than the judgment
8928 day. Here their destiny is settled. The judgment day
8929 reveals it. And the particular time when it is done is
8930 when the Spirit is striving with them. Christians

8931 should remember their awful responsibility at such
8932 times. The physician, if he knows any thing of his
8933 duty, sometimes feels himself under a very solemn
8934 responsibility. His patient is in a critical state,
8935 where a little error will destroy life, and he hangs
8936 quivering between life and death. If such
8937 responsibility is felt in relation to the body, what
8938 awful responsibility should be felt in relation to the
8939 soul, when it is seen to hang trembling on a point,
8940 and its destiny is now to be decided. One false
8941 impression, one indiscreet remark, one sentence
8942 misunderstood, a slight diversion of mind may
8943 wear him the wrong way, and his soul is lost.
8944 Never was an angel employed in a more solemn
8945 work than that of dealing with sinners who are
8946 under conviction. How solemnly and carefully then
8947 should Christians walk, how wisely and skillfully
8948 work, if they do not mean to be the means of
8949 damning a soul!

8950
8951 Finally.—If there is a sinner in this house, let me
8952 say to him, Abandon all your excuses. You have
8953 been told to-night that they are all vain. To-night it
8954 will be told in hell, and told in heaven, and echoed
8955 from the ends of the universe, what you decide to
8956 do. This very hour may seal your eternal destiny.
8957 Will you submit to God to-night—NOW?
8958

8959

8960

8961 LECTURE XI.

8962

8963 A WISE MINISTER WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

8964

8965 Text.—He that winneth souls is wise.—Proverbs
8966 xi. 30.

8967

8968 I PREACHED last Friday evening from the same
8969 text, on the method of dealing with sinners by
8970 private Christians. My object at this time is to take
8971 up the more public means of grace, with particular
8972 reference to the

8973

8974 DUTIES OF MINISTERS.

8975

8976 As I observed in my last lecture, wisdom is the
8977 choice and pursuit of the best end by the most
8978 appropriate means. The great end for which the
8979 Christian Ministry was appointed, is to glorify God
8980 in the salvation of souls. In speaking on this subject
8981 I propose to show,

8982

8983 I. That a right discharge of the duties of a minister
8984 requires great wisdom.

8985

8986 II. That the amount of success in the discharge of
8987 his duties (other things being equal) decides the
8988 amount of wisdom employed by him in the
8989 exercise of his office.

8990

8991 I. I am to show that a right discharge of the duties
8992 of a minister requires great wisdom.

8993

8994 1. On account of the opposition it encounters. The
8995 very end for which the ministry is appointed is one
8996 against which is arrayed the most powerful
8997 opposition of sinners themselves. If men were
8998 willing to receive the Gospel, and there were
8999 nothing needed to be done but to tell the story of
9000 redemption, a child might convey the news. But
9001 men are opposed to the Gospel. They are opposed
9002 to their own salvation, in this way. Their opposition
9003 is often violent and determined. I once saw a
9004 maniac who had formed designs against his own
9005 life, and he would exercise the utmost sagacity and
9006 cunning to effect his purpose. He would be as artful
9007 and make his keepers believe he had no such
9008 design, that he had given it all up, and would
9009 appear as mild and sober, and at the instant the
9010 keeper was off his guard he would lay hands on
9011 himself. So sinners often exercise great cunning in
9012 evading all the efforts that are made to save them.
9013 And to meet this dreadful cunning, and overcome it

9014 so as to save men, ministers need a great amount of
9015 wisdom.

9016

9017 2. The particular means appointed to be employed
9018 in the work show the necessity of great wisdom in
9019 ministers. If men were converted by an act of
9020 physical omnipotence, creating some new taste, or
9021 something like that, and if sanctification were
9022 nothing but the same physical omnipotence rooting
9023 out the remaining roots of sin from the soul, it
9024 would not require so much sagacity and skill to win
9025 souls. Nor would there then be any meaning in the
9026 text. But the truth is that regeneration and
9027 sanctification are to be effected by moral means—
9028 by argument and not by force. There never was and
9029 never will be any one saved by any thing but truth
9030 as the means. Truth is the outward means, the
9031 outward motive, presented first by man and then by
9032 the Holy Spirit. Take into view the opposition of
9033 the sinner himself, and you see that nothing, after
9034 all, short of the wisdom of God and the moral
9035 power of the Holy Spirit, can break down this
9036 opposition, and bring him to submit to God. Still
9037 the means are to be used by men, and means
9038 adapted to the end, skillfully used. God has
9039 provided that the work of conversion and
9040 sanctification shall in all cases be done by means of

9041 that kind of truth, applied in that connection and
9042 relation, which is fitted to produce such a result.

9043

9044 3. He has the powers of earth and hell to overcome,
9045 and that calls for wisdom. The devil is constantly at
9046 work, trying to prevent the success of ministers,
9047 laboring to divert the attention from the subject of
9048 religion, and to get the sinner away from God and
9049 lead him down to hell. The whole framework of
9050 society, almost, is hostile to religion. Nearly all the
9051 influences which surround a man from his cradle to
9052 his grave, in the present state of society, are
9053 calculated to defeat the design of the ministry.
9054 Does not a minister then need great wisdom to
9055 conflict with the powers of darkness, and the whole
9056 influence of the world, in addition to the sinner's
9057 own opposition?

9058

9059 4. The same is seen from the infinite importance of
9060 the end itself. The end of the ministry is the
9061 salvation of the soul. When we consider the
9062 importance of the end, and the difficulties of the
9063 work, who will not say with the apostle, "Who is
9064 sufficient for these things?"

9065

9066 5. He must understand how to wake up the church,
9067 and get them out of the way of the conversion of
9068 sinners. This is often the most difficult part of a

9069 minister's work, and requires more wisdom and
9070 patience than any thing else. Indeed, to do this
9071 successfully, is a most rare qualification in the
9072 Christian ministry. It is a point where almost all
9073 ministers fail. They know not how to wake up the
9074 church, and raise the tone of piety to a high
9075 standard, and thus clear the way for the work of
9076 conversion. Many ministers can preach to sinners
9077 very well, but gain little success, while the
9078 counteracting influence of the church resists it all,
9079 and they have not skill enough to remove the
9080 difficulty. There is only here and there a minister in
9081 the country who knows how to probe the church
9082 when they are in a cold, backslidden state, so as
9083 effectually to wake them up and keep them awake.
9084 The members of the church sin against such light,
9085 that when they become cold it is very difficult to
9086 rouse them up. They have a form of piety which
9087 wards off the truth, while at the same time it is just
9088 that kind of piety which has no power nor
9089 efficiency. Such professors are the most difficult
9090 individuals to arouse from their slumbers. I do not
9091 mean that they are always more wicked than the
9092 impenitent. They are often employed about the
9093 machinery of religion, and pass for very good
9094 Christians, but are of no use in a revival.
9095

9096 I know ministers are sometimes amazed to hear it
9097 said that churches are not awake. No wonder such
9098 ministers do not know how to wake a sleeping
9099 church. There was a young licentiate heard brother
9100 Foote the other day, in this city, pouring out truth,
9101 and trying to wake up the churches, and he knew so
9102 little about it that he thought it was abusing the
9103 churches. So perfectly blind was he that he really
9104 thought the churches in New York were all awake
9105 on the subject of religion. So some years ago there
9106 was a great controversy and opposition raised,
9107 because so much was said about the churches being
9108 asleep. It was all truth, yet many ministers knew
9109 nothing about it, and were astonished to hear such
9110 things said about the churches. When it has come
9111 to this, that ministers do not know when the church
9112 is asleep, no wonder that we have no revivals. I
9113 was invited once to preach at a certain place. I
9114 asked the minister what was the state of the church.
9115 “Oh,” says he, “to a man they are awake.” I was
9116 delighted at the idea of laboring in such a church,
9117 for it was a sight I had never yet seen, to see every
9118 single member awake in a revival. But when I got
9119 there I found the church sleepy and cold, and I
9120 doubt whether one of them was awake.

9121

9122 Here is the great difficulty in keeping up revivals,
9123 to keep the church thoroughly awake and engaged.

9124 It is one thing for a church to get up in their sleep
9125 and bluster about and run over each other, and a
9126 widely different thing for them to have their eyes
9127 open, and their senses about them, and be wide
9128 awake, so as to know how to find God and how to
9129 work for Christ.

9130

9131 5. He must know how to set the church to work
9132 when they are awake. If a minister attempts to go
9133 to work alone, calculating to do it all himself, it is
9134 like attempting to roll a great stone up a hill alone.
9135 The church can do much to help forward a revival.
9136 Churches have sometimes had powerful revivals
9137 without any minister. But when a minister has a
9138 church who are awake, and knows how to set them
9139 to work, and how to sit at the helm and guide them,
9140 he may feel strong, and oftentimes may find that
9141 they do more than he does himself, in the
9142 conversion of sinners.

9143

9144 6. In order to be successful, a minister needs great
9145 wisdom to know how to keep the church to the
9146 work. Often the church seem just like children.
9147 You set children to work, and they appear to be all
9148 engaged, but as soon as your back is turned they
9149 will stop and go to play. The great difficulty in
9150 continuing a revival lies here. And to meet it
9151 requires great wisdom. To know how to break them

9152 down again, when their heart gets lifted up because
9153 they have had such a great revival; to wake them
9154 up afresh when their zeal begins to flag; to keep
9155 their hearts full of zeal for the work; these are some
9156 of the most difficult things in the world. Yet if a
9157 minister would be successful in winning souls, he
9158 must know when they first begin to grow proud, or
9159 to lose the spirit of prayer, and when to probe them
9160 and how to search them over again, how to keep
9161 the church in the field gathering the harvest of the
9162 Lord.

9163
9164 7. He must understand the Gospel. But you will
9165 ask, Do not all ministers understand the Gospel? I
9166 answer, that they certainly do not all understand it
9167 alike, for they do not all preach alike.

9168
9169 8. He must know how to divide it, so as to bring
9170 forward the particular truths, in that order, and to
9171 make them bear upon those points and at such
9172 times as are calculated to produce a given result. A
9173 minister should understand the philosophy of the
9174 human mind, so as to know how to plan and
9175 arrange his labors wisely. Truth, when brought to
9176 bear upon the mind, is in itself calculated to
9177 produce corresponding feelings. The minister must
9178 know what feelings he wishes to produce, and how
9179 to bring such truth to bear as is calculated to

9180 produce these feelings. He must know how to
9181 present truth calculated to humble Christians, or to
9182 make them feel for sinners, or to awaken sinners,
9183 or to convert them.

9184
9185 Often, when sinners are awakened, the ground is
9186 lost for the want of wisdom in following up the
9187 blow. Perhaps a rousing sermon is preached,
9188 Christians are moved, and sinners begin to feel, and
9189 the next Sabbath something will be brought
9190 forward that has no connection with the state of
9191 feeling in the congregation, and that is not
9192 calculated to lead the mind on to the exercise of
9193 repentance, faith or love. It shows how important it
9194 is that a minister should understand how to produce
9195 a given impression, at what time it may and should
9196 be done, and by what truth, and how to follow it
9197 up, till the sinner is broken down and brought in.

9198
9199 A great many good sermons preached are all lost
9200 for the want of a little wisdom here. They are good
9201 sermons, and calculated, if well timed, to do great
9202 good; but they have so little connection with the
9203 actual state of feeling in the congregation, that it
9204 would be more than a miracle if they should
9205 produce a revival. A minister may preach in this
9206 random way till he has preached himself to death,
9207 and never produce any great results. He may

9208 convert here and there a scattering soul; but he will
9209 not move the mass of the congregation unless he
9210 knows how to follow up his impressions, to carry
9211 out a plan of operations and execute it, so as to
9212 carry on the work when it is begun. He must not
9213 only be able to blow the trumpet so loud as to start
9214 the sinner from his lethargy, but when he is waked,
9215 he must lead him by the shortest way to Jesus
9216 Christ. And not as soon as sinners are roused by a
9217 sermon, immediately begin to preach about some
9218 remote subject that has no tendency to carry on the
9219 work.

9220

9221 10. To reach different classes of sinners
9222 successfully requires great wisdom on the part of a
9223 minister. For instance, a sermon on a particular
9224 subject may start a particular class of persons
9225 among his hearers. Perhaps they will begin to look
9226 serious, or perhaps talk about it, or perhaps they
9227 will begin to cavil about it. Now, if the minister is
9228 wise, he will know how to observe those
9229 indications, and to follow right on with sermons
9230 adapted to this class, until he leads them into the
9231 kingdom of God. Then let him go back and take
9232 another class, find out where they are hid, break
9233 down their refuges, and follow them up, till he
9234 leads them into the kingdom of God. He should
9235 thus beat about every bush where sinners hide

9236 themselves, as the voice of God followed Adam in
9237 the garden—"ADAM, WHERE ART THOU?" till
9238 one class of hearers after another are brought in,
9239 and so the whole community converted. Now a
9240 minister must be very wise to do this. It never will
9241 be done so, till a minister sets himself to hunt out
9242 and bring in every class of sinners in his
9243 congregation, the old and young, male and female,
9244 rich and poor.

9245

9246 11. A minister needs great wisdom to get sinners
9247 away from their present refuges of lies, without
9248 forming new hiding places for them. I once sat
9249 under the ministry of a man who had contracted a
9250 great alarm about heresies, and was constantly
9251 employed in confuting them. And he used to bring
9252 up many such heresies as his people never heard of.
9253 He got his ideas chiefly from books, and mingled
9254 very little among the people to know what they
9255 thought. And the result of his labors often was, that
9256 the people would be taken with the heresy, more
9257 than with the argument against it. The novelty of
9258 the error attracted their attention so much that they
9259 forgot the answer. And in that way he gave many
9260 of his people new objections against religion, such
9261 as they never thought of before. If a man does not
9262 mingle enough with mankind to know how people

9263 think now-a-days he cannot expect to be wise to
9264 meet their objections and difficulties.
9265
9266 I have heard a great deal of preaching against
9267 Universalists, that did more hurt than good,
9268 because the preachers did not understand how
9269 Universalists of the present day reason. They have
9270 never mingled with Universalists, and know not
9271 what they believe and how they argue, now, but
9272 have got all they know of Universalism from books
9273 that were written long ago, and are now out of date
9274 among Universalists themselves. And the
9275 consequence is that when they attempt to preach
9276 against Universalism they oppose a man of straw,
9277 and not Universalist sentiments as they are now
9278 found in the community. And people either laugh
9279 at them, or say it is all lies, for they know
9280 Universalists do not hold such sentiments as are
9281 ascribed to them by the preacher.
9282
9283 When ministers undertake to oppose a present
9284 heresy, they ought to know what it is at present.
9285 For instance, almost all those who write and preach
9286 against Universalism think they are called upon to
9287 oppose the idea that God is all mercy. They
9288 suppose Universalists hold the doctrine that God is
9289 all mercy, and that when they have refuted this
9290 doctrine, they have got Universalists down. But

9291 this is not true. They do not hold such doctrine.
9292 They deny it altogether. They reject the idea of
9293 mercy in the salvation of men, for they hold that
9294 every man is punished in full according to his just
9295 deserts. Of what use is it, then, to argue against
9296 Universalists, that God is a God of justice and not a
9297 God all mercy, when they hold to the justice of
9298 God alone as the ground of salvation, and do not
9299 admit the idea of mercy at all? In like manner, I
9300 have heard men preach against the idea that men
9301 are saved in their sins, and they supposed they were
9302 preaching down Universalist doctrine.
9303 Universalists believe no such thing. They believe
9304 that all men will be made holy and saved in that
9305 way. This shows the importance of knowing what
9306 people actually hold, before you try to reason them
9307 out of their errors. It is of no use to misrepresent a
9308 man's doctrines to his face, and then try to reason
9309 him out of them. You must state his doctrine just as
9310 he holds it, and state his arguments fairly.
9311 Otherwise, if you state them wrong, you either
9312 make him angry, or he laughs in his sleeve at the
9313 advantage you give him. He will say, That man
9314 cannot argue with me on fair grounds; he has to
9315 misrepresent our doctrines in order to confute me.
9316 Great hurt is done in this way. Ministers do not
9317 intend to misrepresent their opponents; but the
9318 effect of it is, that the poor miserable creatures who

9319 hold these errors go to hell because ministers do
9320 not take care to inform themselves what are their
9321 real errors. Errors are never torn away by such a
9322 process. I mention these cases to show how much
9323 wisdom a minister must have to meet the cases that
9324 occur. He must be acquainted with the real views
9325 of men in order to meet them, and do away their
9326 errors and mistakes.

9327
9328 12. Ministers ought to know what measures are
9329 best calculated to aid in accomplishing the great
9330 end of their office, the salvation of souls. Some
9331 measures are plainly necessary. By measures, I
9332 mean what things should be done to get the
9333 attention of the people and bring them to listen to
9334 the truth. Building houses for worship, and visiting
9335 from house to house, etc., are all “measures,” the
9336 object of which is to get the attention of people to
9337 the Gospel. Much wisdom is requisite to devise and
9338 carry forward all the various measures that are
9339 adapted to favor the success of the Gospel.

9340
9341 What do the politicians do? They get up meetings;
9342 circulate handbills and pamphlets; blaze away in
9343 the newspapers; send their ships about the streets
9344 on wheels with flags and sailors; send coaches all
9345 over town, with handbills, to bring people up to the
9346 polls—all to gain attention to their cause and elect

9347 their candidate. All these are their “measures,” and
9348 for their end they are wisely calculated. The object
9349 is to get up an excitement, and bring the people out.
9350 They know that unless there can be an excitement it
9351 is in vain to push their end, I do not mean to say
9352 that their measures are pious, or right, but only that
9353 they are wise, in the sense that they are the
9354 appropriate application of means to the end.
9355

9356 The object of the ministry is to get all the people to
9357 feel that the devil has no right to rule this world,
9358 but that they ought all to give themselves to God,
9359 and vote in the Lord Jesus Christ as the governor of
9360 the universe. Now what shall be done? What
9361 measures shall we take? Says one, “Be sure and
9362 have nothing that is new.” Strange! The object of
9363 our measures is to gain attention, and you must
9364 have something new. As sure as the effect of a
9365 measure becomes stereotyped, it ceases to gain
9366 attention, and then you must try something new.
9367 You need not make innovations in everything. But
9368 whenever the state of things is such that anything
9369 more is needed, it must be something new,
9370 otherwise it will fail. A minister should never
9371 introduce innovations that are not called for. If he
9372 does they will embarrass him. He cannot alter the
9373 Gospel; that remains the same. But new measures
9374 are necessary, from time to time, to awaken

9375 attention and bring the Gospel to bear upon the
9376 public mind. And then a minister ought to know
9377 how to introduce new things, so as to create the
9378 least possible resistance or reaction. Mankind are
9379 fond of form in religion. They love to have their
9380 religious duties stereotyped, so as to leave them at
9381 ease; and they are therefore inclined to resist any
9382 new movement designed to rouse them up to action
9383 and feeling. Hence it is all-important to introduce
9384 new things wisely, so as not to give needless
9385 occasion or apology for resistance.

9386
9387 13. Not a little wisdom is sometimes needed by a
9388 minister to know when to put a stop to new
9389 measures. When a measure has novelty enough to
9390 secure attention to the truth, ordinarily no other
9391 new measure should be introduced. You have
9392 secured the great object of novelty. Anything more
9393 will be in danger of diverting the public mind away
9394 from the great object, and fixing it on the measures
9395 themselves. And then, if you introduce novelties
9396 when they are not called for, you will go over so
9397 large a field, that by and by when you really want
9398 something new, you will have nothing else to
9399 introduce, without doing something that will give
9400 too great a shock to the public mind. The Bible has
9401 laid down no specific course of measures to
9402 promote revivals of religion, but has left it to

9403 ministers to adopt such as are wisely calculated to
9404 secure the end. And the more sparing we are of our
9405 new things, the longer we can use them, to keep
9406 public attention awake to the great subject of
9407 religion. By a wise course this may undoubtedly be
9408 done for a long series of years, until our present
9409 measures will by and by have sufficient novelty in
9410 them again to attract and fix public attention. And
9411 so we shall never want for something new.

9412

9413 14. A minister, to win souls, must know how to
9414 deal with careless, with awakened, and with
9415 anxious sinners, so as to lead them right to Christ
9416 in the shortest and most direct way. It is amazing to
9417 see how many ministers there are who do not know
9418 how to deal with sinners, or what to say to them in
9419 their various states of mind. A good woman in
9420 Albany told me, that when she was under concern
9421 she went to her minister and asked him to tell her
9422 what she must do to get relief. And he said God
9423 had not given him much experience on the subject,
9424 and advised her to go to such a deacon, who
9425 perhaps could tell her what to do. The truth was, he
9426 did not know what to say to a sinner under
9427 conviction, although there was nothing peculiar in
9428 her case. Now if you think this minister a rare case,
9429 you are quite deceived. There are many ministers
9430 who do not know what to say to sinners.

9431

9432 A minister once appointed an anxious meeting, and
9433 went to attend it, and instead of going round to the
9434 individuals, he began to ask them the catechism,
9435 “Wherein doth Christ execute the office of a
9436 priest?” About as much in point to a great many of
9437 their minds as anything else.

9438

9439 I know a minister who held an anxious meeting,
9440 and went to attend it with a written discourse which
9441 he had prepared for the occasion. Just as wise as it
9442 would be if a physician, going out to visit his
9443 patients, should sit down at leisure and write all the
9444 prescriptions before he had seen them. A minister
9445 needs to know the state of mind of the individuals,
9446 before he can know what truth will be proper and
9447 useful to administer. I say these things, not because
9448 I love to do it, but because truth, and the object
9449 before me, requires them to be said. And such
9450 instances as I have mentioned are by no means
9451 rare.

9452

9453 A minister should know how to apply truth to all
9454 the situations in which he may find dying sinners
9455 going down to hell. He should know how to
9456 preach, how to pray, how to conduct prayer-
9457 meetings, and how to use all the means for bringing
9458 the truth of God to bear upon the kingdom of

9459 darkness. Does not this require wisdom? And who
9460 is sufficient for these things?

9461

9462 II. The amount of a minister's success in winning
9463 souls (other things being equal) invariably decides
9464 the amount of wisdom he has exercised in the
9465 discharge of his office.

9466

9467 1. This is plainly asserted in the text. "He that
9468 winneth souls is wise." That is, if a man wins souls,
9469 he does skillfully adapt means to the end, which is,
9470 to exercise wisdom. He is the more wise, by how
9471 much the greater is the number of sinners that he
9472 saves. A blockhead may, indeed, now and then
9473 stumble on such truth or such a manner of
9474 exhibiting it, as to save a soul. It would be a
9475 wonder indeed if any minister did not sometimes
9476 have something in his sermons that would meet the
9477 case of some individual. But the amount of wisdom
9478 is to be decided, "other things being equal," by the
9479 number of cases in which he is successful in
9480 converting sinners.

9481

9482 Take the case of a physician. The greatest quack in
9483 New York may now and then stumble upon a
9484 remarkable cure, and so get his name up with the
9485 ignorant. But sober and judicious people judge of
9486 the skill of a physician by the uniformity of his

9487 success in overcoming disease, the variety of
9488 diseases he can manage, and the number of cases in
9489 which he is successful in saving his patients. The
9490 most skillful saves the most. This is common sense.
9491 It is truth. And it is just as true in regard to success
9492 in saving souls, and true in just the same sense.

9493

9494 2. This principle is not only asserted in the text, but
9495 it is a matter of fact, a historical truth, that “He that
9496 winneth souls is wise.” He has actually employed
9497 means adapted to the end, in such a way as to
9498 secure the end.

9499

9500 3. Success in saving souls is evidence that a man
9501 understands the Gospel, and understands human
9502 nature, that he knows how to adapt means to his
9503 end, that he has common sense, and that he has that
9504 kind of tact, that practical discernment, to know
9505 how to get at people. And if his success is
9506 extensive, it shows that he knows how to deal with
9507 a great variety of characters, in a great variety of
9508 circumstances, who are yet all the enemies of God,
9509 and to bring them to Christ. To do this requires
9510 great wisdom. And the minister who does it shows
9511 that he is wise.

9512

9513 4. Success in winning souls shows that a minister
9514 not only knows how to labor wisely for that end,

9515 but also that he knows where his dependence is.
9516 You know that fears are often expressed respecting
9517 those ministers who are aiming most directly and
9518 earnestly at the conversion of sinners. People say,
9519 “Why, this man is going to work in his own
9520 strength; one would imagine he thinks he can
9521 convert himself.” How often has the event showed
9522 that the man knows what he is about, very well,
9523 and knows where his strength is too. He went to
9524 work to convert sinners so earnestly, just as if he
9525 could do it all himself; but that was the very way
9526 he should do. He ought to reason with sinners, and
9527 plead with them, as faithfully and fully as if he did
9528 not expect any interposition of the Spirit of God, or
9529 as if he knew there was no Holy Ghost. But
9530 whenever a man does this successfully, it shows
9531 that, after all, he knows he must depend on the
9532 Spirit of God alone for success.

9533

9534 Objection.—There are many who feel an objection
9535 against this subject, arising out of the view they
9536 have taken of the ministry of Jesus Christ. They ask
9537 us, “What will you say about the ministry of Jesus
9538 Christ, was not he wise?” I answer, Yes, infinitely
9539 wise. But in regard to his alleged want of success
9540 in the conversion of sinners, you will observe the
9541 following things:

9542

9543 (1.) That his ministry was vastly more successful
9544 than is generally supposed. We read in one of the
9545 sacred writers, that after his resurrection and before
9546 his ascension “he was seen by above five hundred
9547 brethren at once.” If so many as five hundred
9548 brethren were found assembled together at one
9549 place, we see there must have been a vast number
9550 of them scattered over the country.

9551
9552 (2.) Another circumstance to be observed is, that
9553 his public ministry was very short, less than three
9554 years.

9555
9556 (3.) Consider the peculiar design of his ministry.
9557 His main object was to make atonement for the sins
9558 of the world. It was not aimed so much at
9559 promoting revivals. The “dispensation of the
9560 Spirit” was not yet given. He did not preach the
9561 Gospel so fully as his apostles did afterwards. The
9562 prejudices of the people were so fixed and violent
9563 that they would not bear it. That he did not, is plain
9564 from the fact that even his apostles, who were
9565 constantly with him, did not understand the
9566 atonement. They did not get the idea that he was
9567 going to die, and consequently, when they heard he
9568 was actually dead, they were driven to despair, and
9569 thought the thing was all gone by, and their hopes
9570 blown to the winds. The fact was, that he had

9571 another object in view, to which every thing else
9572 was made to yield, and the perverted state of the
9573 public mind, and the obstinate prejudices
9574 prevailing, showed why results were not seen any
9575 more in the conversion of sinners. The state of
9576 public opinion was such, that they finally murdered
9577 him for what he did preach.

9578

9579 Many ministers who have little or no success, are
9580 hiding themselves behind the ministry of Jesus
9581 Christ, as if he was an unsuccessful preacher.
9582 Whereas, in fact, he was eminently successful,
9583 considering the circumstances in which he labored.
9584 This is the last place in all the world where a
9585 minister who has no success should think of hiding
9586 himself.

9587

9588 REMARKS.

9589

9590 1. A minister may be very learned and not wise.
9591 There are many ministers possessed of great
9592 learning; they understand all the sciences, physical,
9593 moral, and theological; they may know the dead
9594 languages, and possess all learning, and yet not be
9595 wise, in relation to the great end about which they
9596 are chiefly employed. Facts clearly demonstrate
9597 this. "He that winneth souls is wise."

9598

9599 2. An unsuccessful minister may be pious as well
9600 as learned, and yet not wise. It is unfair to infer
9601 because a minister is unsuccessful, that therefore he
9602 is a hypocrite. There may be something defective
9603 in his education, or in his mode of viewing a
9604 subject, or of exhibiting it, or such a want of
9605 common sense, as will defeat his labors, and
9606 prevent his success in winning souls, while he
9607 himself may be saved—"yet so as by fire."

9608

9609 3. A minister may be very wise, though he is not
9610 learned. He may not understand the dead
9611 languages, or theology in its common acceptation;
9612 and yet he may know just what a minister of the
9613 Gospel wants most to know, without knowing
9614 many other things. A learned minister and a wise
9615 minister are different things. Facts in the history of
9616 the church in all ages prove this. It is very common
9617 for churches, when looking out for a minister, to
9618 aim at getting a very learned man. Do not
9619 understand me to disparage learning. The more
9620 learning the better, if he is also wise in the great
9621 matter he is employed about. If a minister knows
9622 how to win souls, the more learning he has the
9623 better. But if he has any other kind of learning, and
9624 not this, he will infallibly fail of the end of his
9625 ministry.

9626

9627 4. Want of success in a minister (other things being
9628 equal) proves, (1.) either that he was never called to
9629 preach, and has taken it up out of his own head; or
9630 (2.) that he was badly educated, and was never
9631 taught the very things he wants most to know; or
9632 (3.) if he was called to preach, and knows how to
9633 do his duty, he is too indolent and too wicked to do
9634 it.

9635
9636 5. Those are the best educated ministers, who win
9637 the most souls. Ministers are sometimes looked
9638 down upon, and called very ignorant, because they
9639 do not know sciences and languages; although they
9640 are very far from being ignorant of the great thing
9641 for which the ministry is appointed. This is wrong.
9642 Learning is important, and always useful. But after
9643 all, a minister may know how to win souls to
9644 Christ, without great learning, and he has the best
9645 education for a minister, who can win the most
9646 souls to Christ.

9647
9648 6. There is evidently a great defect in the present
9649 mode of educating ministers. This is a SOLEMN
9650 FACT, to which the attention of the whole church
9651 should be distinctly called; that the great mass of
9652 young ministers who are educated accomplish very
9653 little.
9654

9655 When young men come out from the seminaries,
9656 are they fit to go into a revival? Look at a place
9657 where there has been a revival in progress, and a
9658 minister is wanted. Let them send to a theological
9659 seminary for a minister. Will he enter into the
9660 work, and sustain it, and carry it on? Seldom. Like
9661 David with Saul's armor, he comes in with such a
9662 load of theological trumpery, that he knows
9663 nothing what to do. Leave him there for two weeks,
9664 and the revival is at an end. The churches know and
9665 feel, that the greater part of these young men do not
9666 know how to do anything that needs to be done for
9667 a revival, and they are complaining that the young
9668 ministers are so far behind the church. You may
9669 send all over the United States, to theological
9670 seminaries, and find but few young ministers fitted
9671 to carry forward the work. What a state of things!

9672
9673 There is a grand defect in educating ministers.
9674 Education ought to be such, as to prepare young
9675 men for the peculiar work to which they are
9676 destined. But instead of this, they are educated for
9677 any thing else. The grand mistake is this. They
9678 direct the mind too much to irrelevant matters,
9679 which are not necessary to be attended to. In their
9680 courses of study, they carry the mind over too wide
9681 a field, which diverts their attention from the main
9682 thing, and so they get cold in religion, and when

9683 they get through, instead of being fitted for their
9684 work, they are unfitted for it. Under pretence of
9685 disciplining the mind, they in fact scatter the
9686 attention, so that when they come to their work,
9687 they are awkward, and know nothing how to take
9688 hold, or how to act, to win souls. This is not
9689 universally the case, but too often it is so.

9690
9691 It is common for people to talk loudly and largely
9692 about an educated ministry. God forbid that I
9693 should say a word against an educated ministry.
9694 But what do we mean by an education for the
9695 ministry? Do we mean that they should be so
9696 educated, as to be fitted for the work? If they are so
9697 educated, the more education the better. Let
9698 education be of the right kind, teaching a young
9699 man the things he needs to know, and not the very
9700 things he does not need to know. Let them be
9701 educated for the work. Do not let education be
9702 such, that when young men come out, after
9703 spending six, eight, or ten years in study, they are
9704 not worth half as much as they were before they
9705 went. I have known young men come out after
9706 what they call “a thorough course,” who were not
9707 fit to take charge of a prayer meeting, and who
9708 could not manage a prayer meeting, so as to make
9709 it profitable or interesting. An elder of a church in a
9710 neighboring city, informed me recently of a case in

9711 point. A young man, before he went to the
9712 seminary, had labored as a layman with them,
9713 conducted their prayer meetings, and had been
9714 exceedingly useful among them. After he had been
9715 to the seminary, they sent for him and desired his
9716 help; but oh, how changed! he was so completely
9717 transformed, that he made no impression; the
9718 church soon began to complain that they should die
9719 under his influences, and he left, because he was
9720 not prepared for the work.

9721
9722 It is common for those ministers who have been to
9723 the seminaries, and are now useful, to affirm that
9724 their course of studies there did them little or no
9725 good, and that they had to unlearn what they had
9726 there learned, before they could effect much. I do
9727 not say this censoriously, but it is a solemn fact,
9728 and I must say it in love.

9729
9730 Suppose you were going to make a man a surgeon
9731 in the navy. Instead of sending him to the medical
9732 school to learn surgery, would you send him to the
9733 nautical school to learn navigation? In this way,
9734 you might qualify him to navigate a ship, but he is
9735 no surgeon. Ministers should be educated to know
9736 what the Bible is, and what the human mind is, and
9737 know how to bring one to bear on the other. They
9738 should be brought into contact with mind, and

9739 made familiar with all the aspects of society. They
9740 should have the Bible in one hand, and the map of
9741 the human mind in the other, and know how to use
9742 the truth for the salvation of men.

9743
9744 7. A want of common sense often defeats the ends
9745 of the Christian ministry. There are many good
9746 men in the ministry, who have learning, and talents
9747 of a certain sort, but they have no common sense to
9748 win souls.

9749
9750 8. We see one great defect in our theological
9751 schools.—Young men are shut up in their schools,
9752 confined to books and shut out from intercourse
9753 with the common people, or contact with the
9754 common mind, Hence they are not familiar with
9755 the mode in which common people think. This
9756 accounts for the fact that some plain men, that have
9757 been brought up to business, and acquainted with
9758 human nature, are ten times better qualified to win
9759 souls than those who are educated on the present
9760 principle, and are in fact ten times as well
9761 acquainted with the proper business of the ministry.
9762 These are called “uneducated men.” This is a grand
9763 mistake. They are not learned in science, but they
9764 are learned in the very things which they need to
9765 know as ministers. They are not ignorant ministers,
9766 for they know exactly how to reach the mind with

9767 truth. They understand the minds of men, and how
9768 to adapt the Gospel to their case. They are better
9769 furnished for their work, than if they had all the
9770 machinery of the schools.

9771

9772 I wish to be understood. I do not say that I would
9773 not have a young man go to school. Nor would I
9774 discourage him from going over the field of
9775 science. The more the better, if together with it he
9776 learns also the things that the minister needs to
9777 know, in order to win souls—if he understands his
9778 Bible, and understands human nature, and knows
9779 how to bring the truth to bear, and how to guide
9780 and manage minds, and to lead them away from sin
9781 and lead them to God.

9782

9783 9. The success of any measure designed to promote
9784 a revival of religion, demonstrates its wisdom with
9785 the following exceptions:

9786

9787 (1.) A measure may be introduced for effect to
9788 produce excitement, and be such that when it is
9789 looked back upon afterwards, it will look
9790 nonsensical, and appear to have been a mere trick.
9791 In that case, it will react, and its introduction will
9792 do more hurt than good.

9793

9794 (2.) Measures may be introduced, and the revival
9795 be very powerful, and the success be attributed to
9796 the measures, when in fact other things made the
9797 revival powerful, and these very measures may
9798 have been a hinderance. The prayers of Christians,
9799 and the preaching, and other things may have been
9800 so well calculated to carry on the work, that it has
9801 succeeded in spite of these measures.

9802
9803 But when the blessing evidently follows the
9804 introduction of the measure itself, the proof is
9805 unanswerable, that the measure is wise. It is
9806 profane to say that such a measure will do more
9807 hurt than good. God knows about that. His object
9808 is, to do the greatest amount of good possible. And
9809 of course he will not add his blessing to a measure
9810 that will do more hurt than good. He may
9811 sometimes withhold his blessing from a measure
9812 that is calculated to do some good because it will
9813 be at the expense of a greater good. But he never
9814 will bless a pernicious proceeding. There is no such
9815 thing as deceiving God in the matter. He knows
9816 whether a given measure is, on the whole, wise, or
9817 not. He may bless a course of labours
9818 notwithstanding some unwise or injurious
9819 measures. But if he blesses the measure itself, it is
9820 rebuking God to pronounce it unwise. He who
9821 undertakes to do this, let him look to the matter.

9822

9823 10. It is evident that much fault has been found
9824 with measures, which have been pre-eminently and
9825 continually blessed of God for the promotion of
9826 revivals. We know it is said that the horrid oaths of
9827 a profane swearer have been the means of
9828 awakening another less hardened sinner. But this is
9829 a rare case. God does not usually make such a use
9830 of profanity. But if a measure is continually or
9831 usually blessed, let the man who thinks he is wiser
9832 than God, call it in question. TAKE CARE how
9833 you find fault with God!

9834

9835 11. Christians should pray for ministers. Brethren,
9836 if you felt how much ministers need wisdom to
9837 perform the duties of their great office with
9838 success, and how ignorant they all are, and how
9839 insufficient they are of themselves, to think
9840 anything as of themselves, you would pray for
9841 them a great deal more than you do; that is, if you
9842 cared anything for the success of their labors.
9843 People often find fault with ministers, when they
9844 do not pray for them. Brethren, this is tempting
9845 God, for you ought not to expect any better
9846 ministers, unless you pray for them. And you ought
9847 not to expect a blessing on the labors of your
9848 minister, or to have your families converted by his
9849 preaching, where you do not pray for him. And so

9850 for others, the waste places, and the heathen,
9851 instead of praying all the time, only that God would
9852 sent out more laborers, you have need to pray that
9853 God would make ministers wise to win souls, and
9854 that those he sends out may be properly educated,
9855 so that they shall be scribes well instructed in the
9856 kingdom of God.

9857
9858 12. Those laymen in the church who know how to
9859 win souls are to be counted wise. They should not
9860 be called “Ignorant laymen.” And those church
9861 members who do not know how to convert sinners,
9862 and who cannot win souls, should not be called
9863 wise—as Christians. They are not wise Christians;
9864 only “he that winneth souls is wise.” They may be
9865 learned in politics, in all sciences, or they may be
9866 skilled in the management of business, or other
9867 things, and they may look down on those who win
9868 souls, as nothing but plain, simple-hearted and
9869 ignorant men. If any of you are inclined to do this,
9870 and to undervalue those brethren who win souls, as
9871 being not so wise and cunning as you are, you
9872 deceive yourselves. They may not know some
9873 things which you know. But they know those
9874 things which a Christian is most concerned to
9875 know, and you do not.
9876

9877 It may be illustrated by the case of a minister that
9878 goes to sea. He may be learned in science, but he
9879 knows nothing how to sail a ship. And he begins to
9880 ask the sailors about this thing and that, and what is
9881 this rope for, and the like. “Why,” say the sailors,
9882 “these are not ropes, we have only one rope in a
9883 ship, these are the rigging, the man talks like a
9884 fool.” And so this learned man becomes a
9885 laughing-stock, perhaps, to the sailors, because he
9886 does not know how to sail a ship. But if he were to
9887 tell them one half of what he knows about science,
9888 perhaps they would think him a conjurer, to know
9889 so much. So learned students may understand their
9890 hic, haec, hoc, very well, and may laugh at the
9891 humble Christian, and call him ignorant, although
9892 he may know how to win more souls than five
9893 hundred of them.

9894
9895 I was once distressed and grieved at hearing a
9896 minister bearing down upon a young preacher, who
9897 had been converted under remarkable
9898 circumstances, and who was licensed to preach
9899 without pursuing a regular course of study. This
9900 minister, who was never, or at least rarely, known
9901 to convert a soul, bore down upon the young man
9902 in a very lordly, censorious manner, depreciating
9903 him because he had not had the advantage of a
9904 liberal education, when in fact he was instrumental

9905 in converting more souls than any five hundred
9906 ministers like himself.

9907

9908 I would say nothing to undervalue, or lead you to
9909 undervalue a thorough education for ministers. But
9910 I do not call that a thorough education, which they
9911 get in our colleges and seminaries. It does not fit
9912 them for their work. I appeal to all experience,
9913 whether our young men in seminaries are
9914 thoroughly educated for the purpose of winning
9915 souls. Do THEY DO IT? Everybody knows they
9916 do not. Look at the reports of the Home Missionary
9917 Society. If I recollect right, in 1830, the number of
9918 conversions in connection with the labors of the
9919 missionaries of that society did not exceed five to
9920 each missionary. I believe the number has
9921 increased since, but is still exceedingly small to
9922 what it would have been had they been fitted by a
9923 right course of training for their work. I do not say
9924 this to reproach them, for from my heart I pity
9925 them, and I pity the church for being under the
9926 necessity of supporting ministers so trained, or
9927 none at all. They are the best men the Missionary
9928 Society can obtain. I suppose, of course, that I shall
9929 be reproached for saying this. But it is too true and
9930 too painful to be concealed. Those fathers who
9931 have the training of our young ministers are good
9932 men, but they are ancient men, men of another age

9933 and stamp, from what is needed in these days of
9934 excitement, when the church and world are rising
9935 to new thought and action. Those dear fathers will
9936 not, I suppose, see this; and will perhaps think hard
9937 of me for saying it; but it is the cause of Christ.
9938 Some of them are getting back toward second
9939 childhood, and ought to resign, and give place to
9940 younger men, who are not rendered physically
9941 incapable, by age, of keeping pace with the onward
9942 movements of the church. And here I would say,
9943 that to my own mind, it appears evident, that unless
9944 our theological professors preach a good deal,
9945 mingle much with the church, and sympathize with
9946 her in all her movements, it is morally, if not
9947 naturally, impossible, that they should succeed in
9948 training young men to the spirit of the age. It is a
9949 shame and a sin, that theological professors, who
9950 preach but seldom, who are withdrawn from the
9951 active duties of the ministry, should sit in their
9952 studies and write their letters, advisory, or
9953 dictatorial, to ministers and churches who are in the
9954 field, and who are in circumstances to judge what
9955 needs to be done. The men who spend all or at least
9956 a portion of their time in the active duties of the
9957 ministry, are the only men who are able to judge of
9958 what is expedient or inexpedient, prudent or
9959 imprudent, as to measures from time to time. It is
9960 as dangerous and ridiculous for our theological

9961 professors, who are withdrawn from the field of
9962 conflict, to be allowed to dictate, in regard to the
9963 measures and movements of the church, as it would
9964 be for a general to sit in his bed-chamber and
9965 attempt to order a battle. [3]

9966

9967 Two ministers were one day conversing about
9968 another minister whose labors were greatly blessed
9969 in the conversion of some thousands of souls. One
9970 of them said, "That man ought not to preach any
9971 more; he should stop and go to" a particular
9972 theological seminary which he named, "and go
9973 through a regular course of study." He said the man
9974 had "a good mind, and if he was thoroughly
9975 educated, he might be very useful," The other
9976 replied, "Do you think he would be more useful for
9977 going to that seminary? I challenge you to show by
9978 facts that any are more useful who have been there.
9979 No, sir, the fact is, that since this man has been in
9980 the ministry, he has been instrumental in
9981 converting more souls than all the young men who
9982 have come from that seminary in the time." This is
9983 logic! Stop, and go to a seminary, to prepare
9984 himself for converting souls, when he is now
9985 converting more than all who come from the
9986 seminary!

9987

9988 Finally.—I wish to ask you, before I sit down, who
9989 among you can lay any claim to the possession of
9990 this Divine wisdom? Who among you, laymen?
9991 Who among you, ministers? Can any of you? Can
9992 I? Are we at work, wisely, to win souls? Or are we
9993 trying to make ourselves believe that success is no
9994 criterion of wisdom? It is a criterion. It is a safe
9995 criterion for every minister to try himself by. The
9996 amount of his success, other things being equal,
9997 measures the amount of wisdom he has exercised
9998 in the discharge of his office.

10000 How few of you have ever had wisdom enough to
10001 convert so much as a single sinner!

10002
10003 Do not say now, “I cannot convert sinners; how can
10004 I convert sinners? God alone can convert sinners.”
10005 Look at the text, “He that winneth souls is wise,”
10006 and do not think you can escape the sentence. It is
10007 true that God converts sinners. But there is a sense,
10008 too, in which ministers convert them. And you
10009 have something to do; something that requires
10010 wisdom; something which, if you do it wisely, will
10011 insure the conversion of sinners in proportion to the
10012 wisdom employed. If you never have done this, it
10013 is high time to think about yourselves, and see
10014 whether you have wisdom enough to save even
10015 your own souls.

10016

10017 Men—women—you are bound to be wise in
10018 winning souls. Perhaps already souls have
10019 perished; perhaps a friend, or a child is in hell,
10020 because you have not put forth the wisdom which
10021 you might, in saving them. The city is going to
10022 hell. Yes, the world is going to hell, and must go
10023 on, till the church finds out what to do, to win
10024 souls. Politicians are wise. The children of this
10025 world are wise, they know what to do to
10026 accomplish their ends, while we are prosing about,
10027 not knowing what to do, or where to take hold of
10028 the work, and sinners are going to hell.

10029

10030 [3] This was said in 1833.

10031

10032

10033

10034 LECTURE XII.

10035

10036 HOW TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

10037

10038 Text.—He that winneth souls is wise.—Proverbs
10039 xi. 30.

10040

10041 ONE of the last remarks in my last lecture, was
10042 this, that the text ascribes conversion to men.

10043 Winning souls is converting men. This evening I
10044 design to show,
10045
10046 I. That several passages of Scripture ascribe
10047 conversion to men.
10048
10049 II. That this is consistent with other passages which
10050 ascribe conversion to God.
10051
10052 III. I purpose to discuss several further particulars
10053 which are deemed important, in regard to the
10054 preaching of the Gospel, and which show that great
10055 practical wisdom is necessary to win souls to
10056 Christ.
10057
10058 I. I am to show that the Bible ascribes conversion
10059 to men.
10060
10061 There are many passages which represent the
10062 conversion of sinners as the work of men. In Daniel
10063 xii. 3, it is said, “And they that be wise, shall shine
10064 as the brightness of the firmament; and they that
10065 turn many to righteousness as stars for ever and
10066 ever.” Here the work is ascribed to men. So also in
10067 1 Cor. iv. 15. “For though ye have ten thousand
10068 instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers:
10069 for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the
10070 Gospel.” Here the apostle explicitly tells the

10071 Corinthians that he made them Christians, with the
10072 Gospel or truth which he preached. Again, in
10073 James, v. 19, 20, we are taught the same thing.
10074 “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and
10075 one convert him; let him know that he which
10076 converteth the sinner from the error of his way
10077 shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a
10078 multitude of sins.” I might quote many other
10079 passages, equally explicit. But these are sufficient
10080 abundantly to establish the fact, that the Bible does
10081 actually ascribe conversion to men.

10082

10083 II. I proceed to show that this is not inconsistent
10084 with those passages in which conversion is
10085 ascribed to God.

10086

10087 And here let me remark, that to my mind it often
10088 appears very strange that men should ever suppose
10089 there was an inconsistency here, or that they should
10090 ever have overlooked the plain common sense of
10091 the matter. How easy it is to see, that there is a
10092 sense in which God converts them, and another
10093 sense in which men convert them.

10094

10095 The Scriptures ascribe the conversion of a sinner to
10096 four different agencies—to men, to God, to the
10097 truth, and to the sinner himself. The passages
10098 which ascribe it to the truth are the largest class.

10099 That men should ever have overlooked this
10100 distinction, and should have regarded conversion as
10101 a work performed exclusively by God, is
10102 surprising. So it is that any difficulty should ever
10103 have been felt on the subject, or that people should
10104 ever have professed themselves unable to reconcile
10105 these several classes of passages.

10106
10107 Why, the Bible speaks on this subject, precisely as
10108 we speak on common subjects. There is a man who
10109 has been very sick. How natural it is for him to say
10110 of his physician, "That man saved my life." Does
10111 he mean to say that the physician saved his life
10112 without reference to God? Certainly not, unless he
10113 is an infidel. God made the physician, and he made
10114 the medicine too. And it never can be shown but
10115 that the agency of God is just as truly concerned in
10116 making the medicine take effect to save life, as it is
10117 in making the truth take effect to save a soul. To
10118 affirm the contrary is downright atheism. It is true
10119 then, that the physician saved him, and it is also
10120 true that God saved him. It is equally true that the
10121 medicine saved his life, and that he saved his own
10122 life by taking the medicine; for the medicine would
10123 have done no good if he had not voluntarily taken
10124 it, or yielded his body to its power.
10125

10126 In the conversion of a sinner, it is true that God
10127 gives the truth efficiency to turn the sinner to God.
10128 He is an active, voluntary, powerful agent in
10129 changing the mind. But he is not the only agent.
10130 The one that brings the truth to his notice is also an
10131 agent. We are apt to speak of ministers and other
10132 men as only instruments in converting sinners. This
10133 is not exactly correct. Man is something more than
10134 an instrument. Truth is the mere unconscious
10135 instrument. But man is more, he is a voluntary,
10136 responsible agent in the business. In my printed
10137 sermon, No. 1., which some of you may have seen,
10138 I have illustrated this idea by the case of an
10139 individual standing on the banks of Niagara.

10140
10141 “Suppose yourself to be standing on the banks of
10142 the Falls of Niagara. As you stand upon the verge
10143 of the precipice, you behold a man lost in deep
10144 reverie, approaching its verge unconscious of his
10145 danger. He approaches nearer and nearer, until he
10146 actually lifts his foot to take the final step that shall
10147 plunge him in destruction. At this moment you lift
10148 your warning voice above the roar of the foaming
10149 waters, and cry out, Stop. The voice pierces his ear,
10150 and breaks the charm that binds him; he turns
10151 instantly upon his heel, all pale and aghast he
10152 retires, quivering, from the verge of death. He reels
10153 and almost swoons with horror; turns and walks

10154 slowly to the public house; you follow him; the
10155 manifest agitation in his countenance calls numbers
10156 around him; and on your approach, he points to
10157 you, and says, That man saved my life. Here he
10158 ascribes the work to you; and certainly there is a
10159 sense in which you had saved him. But, on being
10160 further questioned, he says, Stop! how that word
10161 rings in my ears. Oh, that was to me the word of
10162 life! Here he ascribes it to the word that aroused
10163 him, and caused him to turn. But, on conversing
10164 still further, he says, Had I not turned at that
10165 instant, I should have been a dead man. Here he
10166 speaks of it, and truly, as his own act; but directly
10167 you hear him say, Oh the mercy of God! if God had
10168 not interposed, I should have been lost. Now the
10169 only defect in this illustration is this: In the case
10170 supposed, the only interference on the part of God,
10171 was a providential one; and the only sense in which
10172 the saving of the man's life is ascribed to him, is in
10173 a providential sense. But in the conversion of a
10174 sinner, there is something more than the providence
10175 of God employed; for here not only does the
10176 providence of God so order it, that the preacher
10177 cries, Stop, but the Spirit of God urges the truth
10178 home upon him with such tremendous power as to
10179 induce him to turn.”
10180

10181 Not only does the preacher cry, Stop, but through
10182 the living voice of the preacher, the Spirit cries,
10183 Stop. The preacher cries, “Turn ye, why will ye
10184 die.” The Spirit pours the expostulation home with
10185 such power, that the sinner turns. Now in speaking
10186 of this change, it is perfectly proper to say, that the
10187 Spirit turned him, just as you would say of a man,
10188 who had persuaded another to change his mind on
10189 the subject of politics, that he had converted him,
10190 and brought him over. It is also proper to say that
10191 the truth converted him; as in a case when the
10192 political sentiments of a man were changed by a
10193 certain argument, we should say that argument
10194 brought him over. So also with perfect propriety
10195 may we ascribe the change to the living preacher,
10196 or to him who had presented the motives; just as
10197 we should say of a lawyer who had prevailed in his
10198 argument with a jury; he has got his case, he has
10199 converted the jury. It is also with the same
10200 propriety ascribed to the individual himself whose
10201 heart is changed; we should say that he had
10202 changed his mind, he has come over, he has
10203 repented. Now it is strictly true, and true in the
10204 most absolute and highest sense; the act is his own
10205 act, the turning is his own turning, while God by
10206 the truth has induced him to turn; still it is strictly
10207 true that he has turned and has done it himself.
10208 Thus you see the sense in which it is the work of

10209 God, and also the sense in which it is the sinner's
10210 own work. The Spirit of God, by the truth,
10211 influences the sinner to change, and in this sense is
10212 the efficient cause of the change. But the sinner
10213 actually changes, and is therefore himself, in the
10214 most proper sense, the author of the change. There
10215 are some who, on reading their Bibles, fasten their
10216 eyes upon those passages that ascribe the work to
10217 the Spirit of God, and seem to overlook those that
10218 ascribe it to man, and speak of it as the sinner's
10219 own act. When they have quoted Scripture to prove
10220 it is the work of God, they seem to think they have
10221 proved that it is that in which man is passive, and
10222 that it can in no sense be the work of man. Some
10223 months since a tract was written, the title of which
10224 was, "Regeneration, the effect of Divine Power."
10225 The writer goes on to prove that the work is
10226 wrought by the Spirit of God, and there stops. Now
10227 it had been just as true, just as philosophical, and
10228 just as scriptural, if he had said, that conversion
10229 was the work of man. It was easy to prove that it
10230 was the work of God, in the sense in which I have
10231 explained it. The writer, therefore, tells the truth, so
10232 far as he goes; but he has told only half the truth.
10233 For while there is a sense in which it is the work of
10234 God, as he has shown, there is also a sense in
10235 which it is the work of man, as we have just seen.
10236 The very title to this tract is a stumbling block. It

10237 tells the truth, but it does not tell the whole truth.
10238 And a tract might be written upon this proposition,
10239 that “Conversion or regeneration is the work of
10240 man;” which would be just as true, just as
10241 scriptural, and just as philosophical, as the one to
10242 which I have alluded. Thus the writer, in his zeal to
10243 recognise and honor God as concerned in this
10244 work, by leaving out the fact that a change of heart
10245 is the sinner’s own act, has left the sinner strongly
10246 intrenched, with his weapons in his rebellious
10247 hands, stoutly resisting the claims of his Maker,
10248 and waiting passively for God to make him a new
10249 heart. Thus you see the consistency between the
10250 requirement of the text, and the declared fact that
10251 God is the author of the new heart. God commands
10252 you to make you a new heart, expects you to do it,
10253 and if it ever is done, you must do it.

10254
10255 And let me tell you, sinner, if you do not do it you
10256 will go to hell, and to all eternity you will feel that
10257 you deserved to be sent there for not having done
10258 it.

10259
10260 III. As proposed, I shall now advert to several
10261 important particulars growing out of this subject, as
10262 connected with preaching the Gospel, and which
10263 show that great practical wisdom is indispensable
10264 to win souls to Christ.

10265

10266 And FIRST, in regard to the MATTER OF
10267 PREACHING.

10268

10269 1. All preaching should be practical.

10270

10271 The proper end of all doctrine is practice. Anything
10272 brought forward as doctrine, which cannot be made
10273 use of as practical, is not preaching the Gospel.

10274 There is none of that sort of preaching in the Bible.

10275 That is all practical. "All Scripture is given by
10276 inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,

10277 for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

10278 righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect,

10279 thoroughly furnished unto all good works." A vast

10280 deal of preaching in the present day, as well as in

10281 past ages, is called doctrinal, as opposed to

10282 practical preaching. The very idea of making this

10283 distinction is a device of the devil. And a more

10284 abominable device Satan himself never devised.

10285 You sometimes hear certain men tell a wonderful

10286 deal about the necessity of "indoctrinating the

10287 people." By which they mean something different

10288 from practical preaching; teaching them certain

10289 doctrines, as abstract truths, without any particular

10290 reference to practice. And I have known a minister

10291 in the midst of a revival, while surrounded with

10292 anxious sinners, leave off laboring to convert souls,

10293 for the purpose of “Indoctrinating” the young
10294 converts, for fear somebody else should
10295 indoctrinate them before him. And there the revival
10296 stops! Either his doctrine was not true, or it was not
10297 preached in the right way. To preach doctrines in
10298 an abstract way, and not in reference to practice, is
10299 absurd. God always brings in doctrine to regulate
10300 practice. To bring forward doctrinal views for any
10301 other object is not only nonsense, but it is wicked.

10302

10303 Some people are opposed to doctrinal preaching. If
10304 they have been used to hear doctrines preached in a
10305 cold, abstract way, no wonder they are opposed to
10306 it. They ought to be opposed to such preaching. But
10307 what can a man preach, who preaches no doctrine?
10308 If he preaches no doctrine, he preaches no Gospel.
10309 And if he does not preach it in a practical way, he
10310 does not preach the Gospel. All preaching should
10311 be doctrinal, and all preaching should be practical.
10312 The very design of doctrine is to regulate practice.
10313 Any preaching that has not this tendency is not the
10314 Gospel. A loose, exhortatory style of preaching
10315 may affect the passions, and may produce
10316 excitement, but will never sufficiently instruct the
10317 people to secure sound conversions. On the other
10318 hand, preaching doctrine in an abstract manner,
10319 may fill the head with notions, but will never
10320 sanctify the heart or life.

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2. Preaching should be direct. The Gospel should be preached to men, and not about them. The minister must address his hearers. He must preach to them about themselves, and not leave the impression that he is preaching to them about others. He will never do them any good, farther than he succeeds in convincing each individual that he means him. Many preachers seem very much afraid of making the impression that they mean any body in particular. They are preaching against certain sins, not that have anything to do with the sinner. It is the sin, and not the sinner, that they are rebuking; and they would by no means speak as if they supposed any of their hearers were guilty of these abominable practices. Now this is anything but preaching the Gospel. Thus did not the prophets, nor Christ, nor the apostles. Nor do those ministers do this, who are successful in winning souls to Christ.

3. Another very important thing to be regarded in preaching is, that the minister should hunt after sinners and Christians, wherever they may have intrenched themselves in inaction. It is not the design of preaching, to make men easy and quiet, but to make them ACT. It is not the design of calling in a physician to have him give opiates, and

10349 so cover up the disease and let it run on till it works
10350 death; but to search out the disease wherever it may
10351 be hidden, and to remove it. So if a professor of
10352 religion has backslidden, and is full of doubts and
10353 fears, it is not the minister's duty to quiet him in his
10354 sins, and comfort him, but to hunt him out of his
10355 errors and backslidings, and show him just where
10356 he stands, and what it is that makes him full of
10357 doubts and fears.

10358

10359 A minister ought to know the religious opinions of
10360 every sinner in his congregation. Indeed, a minister
10361 in the country is generally inexcusable if he does
10362 not. He has no excuse for not knowing the religious
10363 views of all his congregation, and of all that may
10364 come under his influence if he has had opportunity
10365 to know them. How otherwise can he preach to
10366 them? How can he know how to bring forth things
10367 new and old, and adapt truth to their case? How can
10368 he hunt them out unless he knows where they hide
10369 themselves? He may ring changes on a few
10370 fundamental doctrines, Repentance and Faith, and
10371 Faith and Repentance, till the day of judgment, and
10372 never make any impression on many minds. Every
10373 sinner has some hiding-place, some intrenchment
10374 where he lingers. He is in possession of some
10375 darling LIE, with which he is quieting himself. Let
10376 the minister find it out and get it away, either in the

10377 pulpit or in private, or the man will go to hell in his
10378 sins, and his blood will be found in the minister's
10379 skirts.

10380

10381 4. Another important thing to observe is, that a
10382 minister should dwell most on those particular
10383 points which are most needed. I will explain what I
10384 mean.

10385

10386 Sometimes he may find a people who have been
10387 led to place great reliance on their own resolutions.
10388 They think they can consult their own convenience,
10389 and by and by they will repent, when they get
10390 ready, without any concern about the Spirit of God.
10391 Let him take up these notions, and show that they
10392 are entirely contrary to the Scriptures. Let him
10393 show that if the Spirit of God is grieved away,
10394 however able he may be, it is certain he never will
10395 repent, and that by and by, when it shall be
10396 convenient for him to do it, he will have no
10397 inclination. The minister who finds these errors
10398 prevailing, should expose them. He should hunt
10399 them out, and understand just how they are held,
10400 and then preach the class of truths which will show
10401 the fallacy, the folly, and the danger of these
10402 notions.

10403

10404 So on the other hand. He may find a people who
10405 have got such views of Election and Sovereignty,
10406 as to think they have nothing to do but to wait for
10407 the moving of the waters. Let him go right over
10408 against them, and crowd upon them their ability to
10409 obey God, and to show their obligation and duty,
10410 and press them with that until he brings them to
10411 submit and be saved. They have got behind a
10412 perverted view of these doctrines, and there is no
10413 way to drive them out of the hiding-place but to set
10414 them right on these points. Wherever a sinner is
10415 intrenched, unless you pour light upon him there,
10416 you will never move him. It is of no use to press
10417 him with those truths which he admits, however
10418 plainly they may in fact contradict his wrong
10419 notions. He supposes them to be perfectly
10420 consistent, and does not see the inconsistency, and
10421 therefore it will not move him, or bring him to
10422 repentance.

10423

10424 I have been informed of a minister in New
10425 England, who was settled in a congregation which
10426 had long enjoyed little else than Arminian
10427 preaching, and the congregation themselves were
10428 chiefly Arminians. Well, this minister, in his
10429 preaching, strongly insisted on the opposite points,
10430 the doctrine of election, Divine sovereignty,
10431 predestination, etc. The consequence was, as might

10432 have been expected where this was done with
10433 ability, there was a powerful revival. Some time
10434 afterwards this same minister was called to labor in
10435 another field, in this State, where the people were
10436 all on the other side, and strongly tinctured with
10437 Antinomianism. They had got such perverted views
10438 of election, and Divine sovereignty, that they were
10439 continually saying they had no power to do
10440 anything, but must wait God's time. Now, what
10441 does this minister do but immediately go to
10442 preaching the doctrine of election. And when he
10443 was asked, how he could think of preaching the
10444 doctrine of election so much to that people, when it
10445 was the very thing that lulled them to a deeper
10446 slumber, he replied. "Why, that's the very class of
10447 truths by which I had such a great revival in ——;"
10448 not considering the difference in the views of the
10449 people. And if I am correctly informed, there he is
10450 to this day, preaching away at the doctrine of
10451 election, and wondering that it does not produce as
10452 powerful a revival as it did in the other place.
10453 Probably those sinners never will be converted.
10454 You must take things as they are, find out where
10455 sinners lie, and pour in truth upon them there, and
10456 START THEM OUT from their refuges of lies. It
10457 is of vast importance that a minister should find out
10458 where the congregation are, and preach
10459 accordingly.

10460

10461 I have been in many places in times of revival, and
10462 I have never been able to employ precisely the
10463 same course of preaching in one as in another.
10464 Some are intrenched behind one refuge, and some
10465 behind another. In one place, the church will need
10466 to be instructed, in another, sinners. In one place,
10467 one set of truths, in another, another set. A minister
10468 must find out where they are, and preach
10469 accordingly. I believe this is the experience of all
10470 preachers who are called to labor from field to
10471 field.

10472

10473 5. If a minister means to promote a revival, he
10474 should be very careful not to introduce controversy.
10475 He will grieve away the Spirit of God. In this way
10476 probably more revivals are put down, than in any
10477 other. Look back upon the history of the church
10478 from the beginning, and you will see that ministers
10479 are generally responsible for grieving away the
10480 Spirit and causing declensions by controversy. It is
10481 the ministers who bring forward controversial
10482 subjects for discussion, and by and by they get very
10483 zealous on the subject, and then get the church into
10484 a controversial spirit, and so the Spirit of God is
10485 grieved away.

10486

10487 If I had time to go over the history of the church
10488 from the days of the Apostles, I could show that all
10489 the controversies that have taken place, and all the
10490 great declensions in religion, too, were chargeable
10491 upon ministers. I believe the ministers of the
10492 present day are responsible for the present state of
10493 the church, and it will be seen to be true at the
10494 judgment. Who does not know that ministers have
10495 been crying out “Heresy,” and “New Measures,”
10496 and talking about the “Evils of Revivals,” until
10497 they have got the church all in confusion? Look at
10498 the poor Presbyterian church, and see ministers
10499 getting up their Act and Testimony, and keeping up
10500 a continual war! O God, have mercy on ministers.
10501 They talk about their days of fasting and prayer,
10502 but are these the men to call on others to fast and
10503 pray? They ought to fast and pray themselves. It is
10504 time that ministers should assemble together, and
10505 fast and pray over the evil of controversy, for they
10506 have caused it. The church itself never would get
10507 into a controversial spirit unless led into it by
10508 ministers. The body of the church are always
10509 averse to controversy, and will keep out of it, only
10510 as they are dragged into it by ministers. When
10511 Christians are revived they are not inclined to
10512 meddle with controversy, either to read or hear it.
10513 But they may be told of such and such “damnable
10514 heresies,” that are afloat, till they get their feelings

10515 enlisted in controversy, and then farewell to the
10516 revival. If a minister, in preaching, finds it
10517 necessary to discuss particular points, about which
10518 Christians differ in opinion, let him BY ALL
10519 MEANS avoid a controversial spirit and manner of
10520 doing it. [4]

10521

10522 6. The Gospel should be preached in those
10523 proportions, that the whole Gospel may be brought
10524 before the minds of the people, and produce its
10525 proper influence. If too much stress is laid on one
10526 class of truths, the Christian character will not have
10527 its due proportions. Its symmetry will not be
10528 perfect. If that class of truths be almost exclusively
10529 dwelt upon, that requires great exertion of intellect,
10530 without being brought home to the heart and
10531 conscience, it will be found that the church will be
10532 indoctrinated in those views, will have their heads
10533 filled with notions, but will not be awake, and
10534 active, and efficient in the promotion of religion. If,
10535 on the other hand, the preaching be loose,
10536 indefinite, exhortatory, and highly impassioned, the
10537 church will be like a ship, with too much sail for
10538 her ballast. It will be in danger of being swept
10539 away by a tempest of feeling, where there is not
10540 sufficient knowledge to prevent their being carried
10541 away with every wind of doctrine. If election and
10542 sovereignty are too much preached, there will be

10543 Antinomianism in the church, and sinners will hide
10544 themselves behind the delusion that they can do
10545 nothing. If the other doctrines of ability and
10546 obligation are too prominent, they will produce
10547 Arminianism in the church, and sinners will be
10548 blustering and self-confident.

10549
10550 When I entered the ministry, there had been so
10551 much said about the doctrine of election and
10552 sovereignty, that I found it was the universal hiding
10553 place, both of sinners and of the church, that they
10554 could not do anything, or could not obey the
10555 Gospel. And wherever I went, I found it
10556 indispensable to demolish these refuges of lies.
10557 And a revival would in no way be produced or
10558 carried on, but by dwelling on that class of truths,
10559 which holds up man's ability, and obligation, and
10560 responsibility. This was the only class of truths that
10561 would bring sinners to submission.

10562
10563 It was not so in the days when President Edwards
10564 and Whitefield labored. Then the churches in New
10565 England had enjoyed little else than Arminian
10566 preaching, and were all resting in themselves and
10567 their own strength. These bold and devoted
10568 servants of God came out and declared those
10569 particular doctrines of grace, Divine sovereignty,
10570 and election, and they were greatly blessed. They

10571 did not dwell on these doctrines exclusively, but
10572 they preached them very fully. The consequence
10573 was, that because in those circumstances revivals
10574 followed from such preaching, the ministers who
10575 followed, continued to preach these doctrines
10576 almost exclusively. And they dwelt on them so
10577 long, that the church and the world got intrenched
10578 behind them, waiting for God to come and do what
10579 he required them to do, and so revivals ceased for
10580 many years.

10581
10582 Now, and for years past, ministers have been
10583 engaged in hunting them out from these refuges.
10584 And here it is all important for the ministers of this
10585 day to bear in mind, that if they dwell exclusively
10586 on ability and obligation, they will get their hearers
10587 back on the old Arminian ground, and then they
10588 will cease to promote revivals. Here are a body of
10589 ministers who have preached a great deal of truth,
10590 and have had great revivals, under God. Now let it
10591 be known and remarked, that the reason is, they
10592 have hunted sinners out from their hiding places.
10593 But if they continue to dwell on the same class of
10594 truths till sinners hide themselves behind their
10595 preaching, another class of truths must be
10596 preached. And then if they do not change their
10597 mode, another pall will hang over the church, until

10598 another class of ministers shall arise and hunt
10599 sinners out of those new retreats.

10600

10601 A right view of both classes of truths, election and
10602 free-agency, will do no hurt. They are eminently
10603 calculated to convert sinners and strengthen saints.
10604 It is a perverted view which chills the heart of the
10605 church, and closes the eyes of sinners in sleep, till
10606 they sink down to hell. If I had time I would
10607 remark on the manner in which I have sometimes
10608 heard the doctrines of Divine sovereignty, election,
10609 and ability preached. They have been exhibited in
10610 irreconcilable contradiction, the one against the
10611 other. Such exhibitions are anything but the
10612 Gospel, and are calculated to make a sinner feel
10613 anything else rather than his responsibility to God.

10614

10615 By preaching truth in proper proportions, I do not
10616 mean mingling all things together in the same
10617 sermon, in such a way that sinners will not see their
10618 connection or consistency. A minister once asked
10619 another, Why do you not preach the doctrine of
10620 election? Because, said the other, I find sinners
10621 here are intrenched behind inability. The first then
10622 said he once knew a minister who used to preach
10623 election in the forenoon, and repentance in the
10624 afternoon. Marvellous grace it must be, that would
10625 produce a revival under such preaching! What

10626 connection is there in this? Instead of exhibiting to
10627 the sinner his sins in the morning, and then and in
10628 the afternoon calling on him to repent, he is first
10629 turned to the doctrine of election, and then
10630 commanded to repent. What is he to repent of? The
10631 doctrine of election? This is not what I mean by
10632 preaching truth in its proportion. Bringing things
10633 together, that only confound the sinner's mind, and
10634 overwhelm him with a fog of metaphysics, is not
10635 wise preaching. When talking of election, the
10636 preacher is not talking of the sinner's duty. It has
10637 no relation to the sinner's duty. Election belongs to
10638 the government of God. It is a part of the exceeding
10639 richness of the grace of God. It shows the love of
10640 God, not the duty of the sinner. And to bring
10641 election and repentance together in this way is
10642 diverting the sinner's mind away from his duty. It
10643 has been customary, in many places, for a long
10644 time, to bring the doctrine of election into every
10645 sermon. Sinners have been commanded to repent,
10646 and told that they could not repent, in the same
10647 sermon. A great deal of ingenuity has been
10648 exercised in endeavoring to reconcile a sinner's
10649 "inability" with his obligation to obey God.
10650 Election, predestination, free-agency, inability, and
10651 duty, have all been thrown together in one
10652 promiscuous jumble. And with regard to many
10653 sermons, it has been too true, as has been objected,

10654 that ministers have preached, “You can and you
10655 can’t, You shall and you sha’n’t, You will and you
10656 won’t, And you’ll be damned if you don’t.” Such a
10657 mixture of truth and error, of light and darkness,
10658 has confounded the congregation, and been the
10659 fruitful source of Universalism and every species
10660 of infidelity and error.

10661

10662 7. It is of great importance that the sinner should be
10663 made to feel his guilt, and not left to the impression
10664 that he is unfortunate. I think this is a very
10665 prevailing fault, particularly with printed books on
10666 the subject. They are calculated to make the sinner
10667 think more of his sorrows than of his sins, and feel
10668 that his state is rather unfortunate than criminal.
10669 Perhaps most of you have seen a very lovely little
10670 book recently published, entitled “Todd’s Lectures
10671 to Children.” It is very fine, exquisitely fine, and
10672 happy in some of its illustrations of truth. But it has
10673 one very serious fault. Many of its illustrations, I
10674 may say most of them, are not calculated to make a
10675 correct impression respecting the guilt of sinners,
10676 or to make them feel how much they have been to
10677 blame. This is very unfortunate. If the writer had
10678 guarded his illustrations on this point, so as to
10679 make them impress sinners with a sense of their
10680 guilt, I do not see how a child could read through
10681 that book and not be converted.

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Multitudes of the books written for children, and for adults too, within the last twenty years, have run into this mistake to an alarming degree. Mrs. Sherwood's writings have this fault standing out upon almost every page. They are not calculated to make the sinner blame and condemn himself. Until you can do this, the Gospel will never take effect.

8. A prime object with the preacher must be to make present obligation felt. I have talked, I suppose, with many thousands of anxious sinners. And I have found that they had never before felt the pressure of present obligation. The impression is not commonly made by ministers in their preaching that sinners are expected to repent NOW. And if ministers suppose they make this impression, they deceive themselves. Most commonly any other impression is made upon the minds of sinners by the preacher, than that they are expected now to submit. But what sort of a Gospel is this? Does God authorize such an impression? Is this according to the preaching of Jesus Christ? Does the Holy Spirit, when striving with the sinner, make the impression upon his mind that he is not expected to obey now?—Was any such impression produced by the preaching of the apostles? How does it happen that so many ministers now preach,

10710 so as in fact to make an impression on their
10711 hearers, that they are not expected to repent now?
10712 Until the sinner's conscience is reached on this
10713 subject, you preach to him in vain. And until
10714 ministers learn how to preach so as to make the
10715 right impression, the world never can be converted.
10716 Oh, to what an alarming extent does the impression
10717 now prevail among the impenitent, that they are not
10718 expected to repent now, but must wait God's time!

10719

10720 9. Sinners ought to be made to feel that they have
10721 something to do, and that is to repent; that it is
10722 something which no other being can do for them,
10723 neither God nor man, and something which they
10724 can do, and do now. Religion is something to do,
10725 not something to wait for. And they must do it
10726 now, or they are in danger of eternal death.

10727

10728 10. Ministers should never rest satisfied, until they
10729 have ANNIHILATED every excuse of sinners. The
10730 plea of "inability" is the worst of all excuses. It
10731 slanders God so, charging him with infinite
10732 tyranny, in commanding men to do that which they
10733 have no power to do. Make the sinner see and feel
10734 that this is the very nature of his excuse. Make the
10735 sinner see that all pleas in excuse for not
10736 submitting to God, are an act of rebellion against
10737 him. Tear away the last LIE which he grasps in his

10738 hand, and make him feel that he is absolutely
10739 condemned before God.

10740

10741 11. Sinners should be made to feel that if they now
10742 grieve away the Spirit of God, it is very probable
10743 that they will be lost for ever. There is infinite
10744 danger of this. They should be made to understand
10745 why they are dependent on the Spirit, and that it is
10746 not because they cannot do what God commands,
10747 but because they are unwilling; but that they are so
10748 unwilling that it is just as certain they will not
10749 repent without the Holy Ghost, as if they were now
10750 in hell, or as if they were actually unable. They are
10751 so opposed and so unwilling, that they never will
10752 repent in the world, unless God sends his Holy
10753 Spirit upon them.

10754

10755 Show them, too, that a sinner under the Gospel,
10756 who hears the truth preached, if converted at all, is
10757 generally converted young. And if not converted
10758 while young, he is commonly given up of God.
10759 Where the truth is preached, sinners are either
10760 Gospel-hardened or converted. I know some old
10761 sinners are converted, but they are rather
10762 exceptions, and by no means common.

10763

10764 I wish now, **SECONDLY**, to make a few remarks
10765 on the **MANNER OF PREACHING**.

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10793

1. It should be conversational. Preaching, to be understood, should be colloquial in its style. A minister must preach just as he would talk, if he wishes to be fully understood. Nothing is more calculated to make a sinner feel that religion is some mysterious thing that he cannot understand, than this mouthing, formal, lofty style of speaking, so generally employed in the pulpit. The minister ought to do as the lawyer does when he wants to make a jury understand him perfectly. He uses a style perfectly colloquial. This lofty, swelling style will do no good. The Gospel will never produce any great effects, until ministers talk to their hearers, in the pulpit, as they talk in private conversation.

2. It must be in the language of common life. Not only should it be colloquial in its style, but the words should be such as are in common use. Otherwise they will not be understood. In the New Testament you will observe that Jesus Christ invariably uses words of the most common kind. You scarcely find a word of his instructions, that any child cannot understand. The language of the Gospels is the plainest, simplest, and most easily understood of any language in the world.

10794 For a minister to neglect this principle, is wicked.
10795 Some ministers use language that is purely
10796 technical in preaching. They think to avoid the
10797 mischief by explaining the meaning fully at the
10798 outset; but this will not answer. It will not effect
10799 the object in making the people understand what he
10800 means. If he uses a word that is not in common use,
10801 and that people do not understand, his explanation
10802 may be very full, but the difficulty is that people
10803 will forget his explanations and then his words are
10804 all Greek to them. Or if he uses a word in common
10805 use, but employs it in an uncommon sense, giving
10806 his special explanations, it is no better; for the
10807 people will soon forget his special explanations,
10808 and then the impression actually conveyed to their
10809 minds will be according to their common
10810 understanding of the word. And thus he will never
10811 convey the right idea to his congregation. It is
10812 amazing how many men of thinking minds there
10813 are in congregations, who do not understand the
10814 most common technical expressions employed by
10815 ministers, such as regeneration, sanctification, etc.
10816
10817 Use words that can be perfectly understood. Do
10818 not, for fear of appearing unlearned, use language
10819 half Latin and half Greek, which the people do not
10820 understand. The apostle says the man is a
10821 barbarian, who uses language that the people do

10822 not understand. And “if the trumpet give an
10823 uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the
10824 battle?” In the apostles’ days there were some
10825 preachers, who were marvellously proud of
10826 displaying their command of language, and
10827 showing off the variety of tongues they could
10828 speak, which the common people could not
10829 understand. The apostle rebukes this spirit sharply,
10830 and says, “I had rather speak five words with my
10831 understanding, that by my voice I might teach
10832 others also, than ten thousand words in an
10833 unknown tongue.”

10834

10835 I have sometimes heard ministers preach, even
10836 when there was a revival, when I have wondered
10837 what that part of the congregation would do, who
10838 had no dictionary. So many phrases were brought
10839 in, manifestly to adorn the discourse, rather than to
10840 instruct the people, that I have felt as if I wanted to
10841 tell the man, “Sit down, and not confound the
10842 people’s minds with your barbarian preaching, that
10843 they cannot understand.”

10844

10845 3. Preaching should be parabolical. That is,
10846 illustrations should be constantly used, drawn from
10847 incidents, real or supposed. Jesus Christ constantly
10848 illustrated his instructions in this way. He would
10849 either advance a principle and then illustrate it by a

10850 parable, that is, a short story of some event real or
10851 imaginary, or else he would bring out the principle
10852 in the parable. There are millions of facts that can
10853 be used to advantage, and yet very few ministers
10854 dare to use them, for fear somebody will reproach
10855 them. “Oh,” says somebody, “he tells stories.”
10856 Tells stories! Why, that is the way Jesus Christ
10857 preached. And it is the only way to preach. Facts,
10858 real or supposed, should be used to show the truth.
10859 Truths not illustrated, are generally just as well
10860 calculated to convert sinners as a mathematical
10861 demonstration. Is it always to be so? Shall it always
10862 be matter of reproach, that ministers follow the
10863 example of Jesus Christ, in illustrating truths by
10864 facts? Let them do it, and let fools reproach them
10865 as story-telling ministers. They have Jesus Christ
10866 and common sense on their side.

10867

10868 4. The illustrations should be drawn from common
10869 life, and the common business of society. I once
10870 heard a minister illustrate his ideas by the manner
10871 in which merchants transact business in their
10872 stores. Another minister who was present made
10873 some remarks to him afterwards. He objected to
10874 this illustration particularly, because, he said, it was
10875 too familiar, and was letting down the dignity of
10876 the pulpit. He said all illustrations in preaching
10877 should be drawn from ancient history, or from

10878 some elevated source, that would keep up the
10879 dignity of the pulpit. Dignity indeed! Just the
10880 language of the devil. He rejoices in it. Why, the
10881 object of an illustration is, to make people see the
10882 truth, not to bolster up pulpit dignity. A minister
10883 whose heart is in the work, does not use an
10884 illustration to make people stare, but to make them
10885 see the truth. If he brought forward his illustrations
10886 from ancient history, it could not make the people
10887 see, it would not illustrate anything. The novelty of
10888 the thing might awaken their attention, but then
10889 they would lose the truth itself. For if the
10890 illustration itself be a novelty, the attention will be
10891 directed to this fact as a matter of history, and the
10892 truth itself, which it was designed to illustrate, will
10893 be lost sight of. The illustration should, if possible,
10894 be a matter of common occurrence, and the more
10895 common the occurrence the more sure it will be,
10896 not to fix attention upon itself, but it serves as a
10897 medium through which the truth is conveyed. I
10898 have been pained at the very heart, at hearing
10899 illustrations drawn from ancient history, of which
10900 not one in a hundred of the congregation had ever
10901 heard. The very manner in which they were
10902 adverted to, was strongly tinctured, to say the least,
10903 with the appearance of vanity, and an attempt to
10904 surprise the people with an exhibition of learning.
10905

10906 The Saviour always illustrated his instructions by
10907 things that were taking place among the people to
10908 whom he preached, and with which their minds
10909 were familiar. He descended often very far below
10910 what is now supposed to be essential to support the
10911 dignity of the pulpit. He talked about the hens and
10912 chickens, and children in market-places, and sheep
10913 and lambs, shepherds and farmers, and
10914 husbandmen and merchants. And when he talked
10915 about kings, as in the marriage of the king's son,
10916 and the nobleman that went into a far country to
10917 receive a kingdom, he had reference to historical
10918 facts, that were well known among the people at
10919 the time. The illustration should always be drawn
10920 from things so common that the illustration itself
10921 will not attract attention away from the subject, but
10922 that people may see through it the truth illustrated.

10923
10924 5. Preaching should be repetitious. If a minister
10925 wishes to preach with effect, he must not be afraid
10926 of repeating whatever he sees is not perfectly
10927 understood by his hearers. Here is the evil of using
10928 notes. The preacher preaches right along just as he
10929 has it written down, and cannot observe whether he
10930 is understood or not. If he interrupts his reading,
10931 and attempts to catch the countenances of his
10932 audience, and to explain where he sees they do not
10933 understand, he gets lost and confused, and gives it

10934 up. If a minister has his eyes on the people he is
10935 preaching to, he can commonly tell by their looks
10936 whether they understand him. And if he sees they
10937 do not understand any particular point, let him stop
10938 and illustrate it. If they do not understand one
10939 illustration, let him give another, and make it all
10940 clear to their minds, before he goes on. But those
10941 who write their sermons go right on, in a regular
10942 consecutive train, just as in any essay or a book,
10943 and do not repeat their thoughts till the audience
10944 fully comprehend them.

10945
10946 I was conversing with one of the first advocates in
10947 this country. He said the difficulty which preachers
10948 find in making themselves understood, is, that they
10949 do not repeat enough, Says he, "In addressing a
10950 jury, I always expect that whatever I wish to
10951 impress upon their minds, I shall have to repeat at
10952 least twice, and often I repeat it three or four times,
10953 and even as many times as there are jurymen before
10954 me. Otherwise, I do not carry their minds along
10955 with me, so that they can feel the force of what
10956 comes afterwards." If a jury under oath, called to
10957 decide on the common affairs of this world, cannot
10958 apprehend an argument unless there is so much
10959 repetition, how is it to be expected that men will
10960 understand the preaching of the Gospel without it.
10961

10962 In like manner the minister ought to turn an
10963 important thought over and over before his
10964 audience, till even the children understand it
10965 perfectly. Do not say that so much repetition will
10966 create disgust in cultivated minds. It will not
10967 disgust. This is not what disgusts thinking men.
10968 They are not weary of the efforts a minister makes
10969 to be understood. The fact is, the more simple a
10970 preacher's illustrations are, and the more plain he
10971 makes everything, the more men of mind are
10972 interested. I know that men of the first minds often
10973 get ideas they never had before, from illustrations
10974 which were designed to bring the Gospel down to
10975 the comprehension of a child. Such men are
10976 commonly so occupied with the affairs of this
10977 world, that they do not think much on the subject
10978 of religion, and they therefore need the plainest
10979 preaching, and they will like it.

10980
10981 6. A minister should always feel deeply his subject,
10982 and then he will suit the action to the word and the
10983 word to the action, so as to make the full
10984 impression which the truth is calculated to make.
10985 He should be in solemn earnest in what he says. I
10986 heard lately a most judicious criticism on this
10987 subject. "How important it is that a minister should
10988 feel what he says. Then his actions will of course
10989 correspond to his words. If he undertakes to make

10990 gestures, his arms may go like a windmill, and yet
10991 make no impression.” It requires the utmost stretch
10992 of art on the stage for the actors to make their
10993 hearers feel. The design of elocution is to teach this
10994 skill. But if a man feels his subject fully, he will
10995 naturally do it. He will naturally do the very thing
10996 that elocution laboriously teaches. See any
10997 common man in the streets, who is earnest in
10998 talking. See with what force he gestures. See a
10999 woman or a child in earnest. How natural. To
11000 gesture with their hands is as natural as it is to
11001 move their tongue and lips. It is the perfection of
11002 eloquence.

11003
11004 Let a minister, then, only feel what he says, and not
11005 be tied to his notes, to read an essay, or to speak a
11006 piece, like a school-boy, first on one foot and then
11007 on the other, put out first one hand and then the
11008 other. Let him speak as he feels, and act as he feels,
11009 and he will be eloquent.

11010
11011 No wonder that a great deal of preaching produces
11012 so little effect. Gestures are of more importance
11013 than is generally supposed. Mere words will never
11014 express the full meaning of the Gospel. The
11015 manner of saying it is almost everything. Suppose
11016 one of you, that is a mother, goes home to-night,
11017 and as soon as you get into the door, the nurse

11018 comes rushing up to you, with her whole soul in
11019 her countenance, and tells you that your child is
11020 burnt to death. You would believe it, and you
11021 would feel it too, at once. But suppose she comes
11022 and tells it in a cold and careless manner. Would
11023 that arouse you? No. It is the earnestness of her
11024 manner, and the distress of her looks, that tells the
11025 story. You know something is the matter, before
11026 she speaks a word.

11027

11028 I once heard a remark made, respecting a young
11029 minister's preaching, which was instructive. He
11030 was uneducated, in the common sense of the term,
11031 but well educated to win souls. It was said of him,
11032 "The manner in which he comes in, and sits in the
11033 pulpit, and rises to speak, is a sermon of itself. It
11034 shows that he has something to say that is
11035 important and solemn." That man's manner of
11036 saying some things I have known to move the
11037 feelings of a whole congregation, when the same
11038 things said in a prosing way would have produced
11039 no effect at all.

11040

11041 A fact which was stated by one of the most
11042 distinguished professors of elocution in the United
11043 States, ought to impress ministers on this subject,
11044 That man was an infidel. He said, "I have been
11045 fourteen years employed in teaching elocution to

11046 ministers, and I know they do not believe the
11047 Christian religion. The Bible may be true. I do not
11048 pretend to know as to that, but I know these
11049 ministers do not believe it. I can demonstrate that
11050 they do not. The perfection of my art is to teach
11051 them to speak naturally on this subject. I go to their
11052 studies, and converse with them, and they speak
11053 eloquently. I say to them, Gentlemen, if you will
11054 preach just as you yourselves naturally speak on
11055 any other subject in which you are interested, you
11056 do not need to be taught. That is just what I am
11057 trying to teach you. I hear you talk on other
11058 subjects with admirable force and eloquence. I see
11059 you go into the pulpit, and you speak and act as if
11060 you did not believe what you are saying. I have
11061 told them, again and again, to talk in the pulpit as
11062 they naturally talk to me. And I cannot make them
11063 do it, and so I know they do not believe the
11064 Christian religion.”

11065
11066 I have mentioned this to show how universal it is,
11067 that men will gesture right if they feel right. The
11068 only thing in the way of ministers being natural
11069 speakers is, that they do not DEEPLY FEEL. How
11070 can they be natural in elocution, when they do not
11071 feel?
11072

11073 7. A minister should aim to convert his
11074 congregation. But you will ask, Does not all
11075 preaching aim at this? No. A minister always has
11076 some aim in preaching, but most sermons were
11077 never aimed at converting sinners. And if sinners
11078 were converted under them, the preacher himself
11079 would be amazed. I once heard a fact on this point.
11080 There were two young ministers who had entered
11081 the ministry at the same time. One of them had
11082 great success in converting sinners, the other none.
11083 The latter inquired of the other, one day, what was
11084 the reason of this difference. "Why," replied the
11085 other, "the reason is, that I aim at a different end
11086 from you, in preaching. My object is to convert
11087 sinners, but you aim at no such thing. And then you
11088 go and lay it to sovereignty in God, that you do not
11089 produce the same effect, when you never aim at it.
11090 Here, take one of my sermons, and preach it to
11091 your people, and see what the effect will be." The
11092 man did so, and preached the sermon, and it did
11093 produce effect. He was frightened when sinners
11094 began to weep; and when one came to him after
11095 meeting to ask what he should do, the minister
11096 apologized to him, and said, "I did not aim to
11097 wound you, I am sorry if I have hurt your feelings."
11098 Oh, horrible!
11099

11100 8. A minister must anticipate the objections of
11101 sinners, and answer them. What does the lawyer do
11102 when pleading before a jury? Oh, how differently
11103 is the cause of Jesus Christ pleaded from human
11104 causes! It was remarked by a lawyer, that the cause
11105 of Jesus Christ had the fewest able advocates of
11106 any cause in the world. And I partly believe it.
11107 Does a lawyer go along in his argument in a regular
11108 train, and not explain any thing obscure, or
11109 anticipate the arguments of his antagonist? If he did
11110 so, he would lose his case to a certainty. But, no.
11111 The lawyer, who is pleading for money, anticipates
11112 every objection, which may be made by his
11113 antagonist, and carefully removes or explains them,
11114 so as to leave the ground all clear as he goes along,
11115 that the jury may be settled on every point. But
11116 ministers often leave one difficulty and another
11117 untouched. Sinners who hear them feel the
11118 difficulty, and it is never got over in their minds,
11119 and they never know how to remove it, and perhaps
11120 the minister never takes the trouble to know that
11121 such difficulties exist, and yet he wonders why his
11122 congregation is not converted, and why there is no
11123 revival. How can he wonder at it, when he has
11124 never hunted up the difficulties and objections that
11125 sinners feel, and removed them?
11126

11127 9. If a minister means to preach the Gospel with
11128 effect he must be sure not to be monotonous. If he
11129 preaches in a monotonous way, he will preach the
11130 people to sleep. Any monotonous sound, great or
11131 small, if continued, disposes people to sleep. The
11132 falls of Niagara, the roaring of the ocean, or any
11133 sound ever so great or small, has this effect
11134 naturally on the nervous system. You never hear
11135 this monotonous manner from people in
11136 conversation. And a minister cannot be
11137 monotonous in preaching, if he feels what he says.

11138
11139 10. A minister should address the feelings enough
11140 to secure attention, and then deal with the
11141 conscience, and probe to the quick. Appeals to the
11142 feelings alone will never convert sinners. If the
11143 preacher deals too much in these, he may get up an
11144 excitement, and have wave after wave of feeling
11145 flow over the congregation, and people may be
11146 carried away as with a flood, and rest in false
11147 hopes. The only way to secure sound conversions
11148 is to deal faithfully with the conscience. If attention
11149 flags at any time, appeal to the feelings again, and
11150 rouse it up; but do your work with conscience.

11151
11152 11. If he can, it is desirable that a minister should
11153 learn the effect of one sermon, before he preaches
11154 another. Let him learn if it is understood, if it has

11155 produced any impression, if any difficulties are felt
11156 in regard to the subject which need clearing up, if
11157 any objections are raised, and the like. When he
11158 knows it all, then he knows what to preach next,
11159 What would be thought of the physician who
11160 should give medicine to his patient, and then give it
11161 again and again, without trying to learn the effect
11162 of the first, or whether it had produced any effect or
11163 not? A minister never will be able to deal with
11164 sinners as he ought, till he can find out whether his
11165 instruction has been received and understood, and
11166 whether the difficulties in sinners' minds are
11167 cleared away, and their path open to the Saviour, so
11168 that they need not stumble and stumble till their
11169 souls are lost.

11170
11171 I had designed to notice several other points, but
11172 time does not admit. I wish to close with a few

11173

11174 REMARKS.

11175

11176 1. We see why so few of the leading minds in many
11177 communities are converted.

11178

11179 Until the late revivals, professional men were
11180 rarely reached by preaching, and they were almost
11181 all infidels at heart. People almost understood the
11182 Bible to warrant the idea, that they could not be

11183 converted. The reason is obvious. The Gospel had
11184 not been commended to the consciences of such
11185 men. Ministers had not grappled with mind, and
11186 reasoned so as to make that class of mind see the
11187 truth of the Gospel, and feel its power, and
11188 consequently such persons had come to regard
11189 religion as something unworthy their notice.

11190
11191 But of late years the case is altered, and in some
11192 places there have been more of this class of persons
11193 converted, in proportion to their numbers, than of
11194 any others. That is because they were made to
11195 understand the claims of the Gospel. The preacher
11196 grappled with their minds, and showed them the
11197 reasonableness of religion. And when this is done,
11198 it is found that that class of minds are more easily
11199 converted than any other. They have so much better
11200 capacity to receive an argument, and are so much
11201 more in the habit of yielding to the force of reason,
11202 that as soon as the Gospel gets a fair hold of their
11203 minds, it breaks them right down, and melts them
11204 at the feet of Christ.

11205
11206 2. Before the Gospel can take general effect, we
11207 must have a class of extempore preachers, for the
11208 following reasons:
11209

- 11210 (1.) No set of men can stand the labor of writing
11211 sermons and doing all the preaching which will be
11212 requisite.
11213
- 11214 (2.) Written preaching is not calculated to produce
11215 the requisite effect. Such preaching does not
11216 present truth in the right shape.
11217
- 11218 (3.) It is impossible for a man who writes his
11219 sermons to arrange his matter, and turn and choose
11220 his thoughts, so as to produce the same effect as
11221 when he addresses the people directly, and makes
11222 them feel that he means them. Writing sermons had
11223 its origin in times of political difficulty. The
11224 practice was unknown in the apostles' days. No
11225 doubt written sermons have done a great deal of
11226 good, but they can never give to the Gospel its
11227 great power. Perhaps many ministers have been so
11228 long trained in the use of notes, that they had better
11229 not throw them away. Perhaps they would make
11230 bad work without them. The difficulty would not
11231 be for the want of mind, but from wrong training.
11232 The bad habit is begun with the school boy, who is
11233 called to "speak his piece." Instead of being set to
11234 express his own thoughts and feelings in his own
11235 language, and with his own natural manner, such as
11236 nature herself prompts, he is made to commit
11237 another person's writing to memory, and then

11238 mouths it out in a stiff and formal way. And so
11239 when he goes to college, and to the seminary,
11240 instead of being trained to extempore speaking, he
11241 is set to writing his piece, and commit it to
11242 memory. I would pursue the opposite course from
11243 the beginning. I would give him a subject, and let
11244 him first think, and then speak his thoughts.
11245 Perhaps he will make mistakes. Very well, that is
11246 to be expected—in a beginner. But he will learn.
11247 Suppose he is not eloquent, at first. Very well, he
11248 can improve. And he is in the very way to improve.
11249 This kind of training alone will ever raise up a class
11250 of ministers who can convert the world.

11251
11252 But it is objected to extemporaneous preaching,
11253 that if ministers do not write, they will not think.
11254 This objection will have weight with those men
11255 whose habit has always been to write down their
11256 thoughts. But to a man of a different habit, it will
11257 have no weight at all. Writing is not thinking. And
11258 if I should judge from many of the written sermons
11259 I have heard preached, the makers of them had
11260 been doing anything rather than thinking. The
11261 mechanical labor of writing is really a hinderance
11262 to close and rapid thought. It is true that some
11263 extempore preachers have not been men of thought.
11264 And so it is true that many men who write sermons,
11265 are not men of thought. A man whose habits have

11266 always been such, that he has thought only when he
11267 has put his mind on the end of his pen, will of
11268 course, if he lays aside his pen, at first find it
11269 difficult to think; and if he attempts to preach
11270 without writing, will, until his habits are
11271 thoroughly changed, find it difficult to throw into
11272 his sermons the same amount of thought, as if he
11273 conformed to his old habits of writing. But it
11274 should be remembered that this is only on account
11275 of his having been trained to write, and having
11276 always habituated himself to it. It is the training
11277 and habit that renders it so difficult for him to think
11278 without writing. Will any body pretend to say that
11279 lawyers are not men of thought? That their
11280 arguments before a court and jury, are not profound
11281 and well digested? And yet every one knows that
11282 they do not write their speeches. It should be
11283 understood, too, that in college, they have the same
11284 training with ministers, and have the same
11285 disadvantage of having been trained to write their
11286 thoughts; and it is only after they enter upon their
11287 profession, that they change their habit. Were they
11288 educated, as they should be, to extempore habits in
11289 the schools, they would be vastly more eloquent
11290 and powerful in argument than they are.

11291
11292 I have heard much of this objection to extempore
11293 preaching ever since I entered the ministry. It was

11294 often said to me then, in answer to my views of
11295 extempore preaching, that ministers who preached
11296 extemporaneously, would not instruct the churches,
11297 that there would be a great deal of sameness in
11298 their preaching, and they would soon become
11299 insipid and repetitious for want of thought. But
11300 every year's experience has ripened the conviction
11301 on my mind, that the reverse of this objection is
11302 true. The man who writes least may, if he pleases,
11303 think most, and will say what he does think in a
11304 manner that will be better understood than if it
11305 were written; and that, just in the proportion that he
11306 lays aside the labor of writing, his body will be left
11307 free to exercise, and his mind to vigorous and
11308 consecutive thought.

11309
11310 The great reason why it is supposed that extempore
11311 preachers more frequently repeat the same thoughts
11312 in their preaching, is because what they say is, in a
11313 general way, more perfectly remembered by the
11314 congregation, than if it had been read. I have often
11315 known preachers, who could repeat their written
11316 sermons once in a few months, without its being
11317 recognised by the congregation. But the manner in
11318 which extempore sermons are generally delivered
11319 is so much more impressive, that the thoughts
11320 cannot in general be soon repeated, without being
11321 remembered. We shall never have a set of men in

11322 our halls of legislation, in our courts of justice, and
11323 in our pulpits, that are powerful and overwhelming
11324 speakers, and can carry the world before them, till
11325 our system of education teaches them to think,
11326 closely, rapidly, consecutively, and till all their
11327 habits of speaking in the schools are
11328 extemporaneous. The very style of communicating
11329 thought, in what is commonly called a good style
11330 of writing, is not calculated to leave a deep
11331 impression on the mind, or to communicate thought
11332 in a clear and impressive manner. It is not laconic,
11333 direct, pertinent. It is not the language of nature. It
11334 is impossible that gestures should be suited to the
11335 common style of writing. And consequently, when
11336 they attempt to gesture in reading an essay, or
11337 delivering a written sermon, their gestures are a
11338 burlesque upon all public speaking.

11339
11340 In delivering a sermon in this essay style of
11341 writing, it is impossible that nearly all the fire of
11342 meaning and power of gesture, and looks, and
11343 attitude, and emphasis should not be lost. We can
11344 never have the full meaning of the Gospel, till we
11345 throw away our notes.

11346
11347 3. A minister's course of study and training for his
11348 work should be exclusively theological.
11349

11350 I mean just as I say. I am not now going to discuss
11351 the question whether all education ought not to be
11352 theological. But I say education for the ministry
11353 should be exclusively so. But you will ask, Should
11354 not a minister understand science? I would answer,
11355 Yes, the more the better. I would that ministers
11356 might understand all science. But it should all be in
11357 connection with theology. Studying science is
11358 studying the works of God. And studying theology
11359 is studying God.

11360
11361 Let a scholar be asked, for instance, this question:
11362 “Is there a God?” To answer it, let him ransack the
11363 universe, let him go out into every department of
11364 science, to find the proofs of design, and in this
11365 way to learn the existence of God. Let him next
11366 inquire how many gods there are, and let him again
11367 ransack creation to see whether there is such a
11368 unity of design as evinces that there is one God. In
11369 like manner, let him inquire concerning the
11370 attributes of God, and his character. He will learn
11371 science here, but will learn it as a part of theology.
11372 Let him search every field of knowledge, to bring
11373 forward his proofs. What was the design of this
11374 plan? What was the end of that arrangement? See
11375 whether everything you find in the universe is not
11376 calculated to produce happiness, unless perverted.
11377

11378 Would the student's heart get hard and cold in
11379 study, as cold and hard as the college walls, if
11380 science was pursued in this way? Every lesson
11381 brings him right up before God, and is in fact
11382 communion with God, and warms his heart, and
11383 makes him more pious, more solemn, more holy.
11384 The very distinction between classical and
11385 theological study is a curse to the church, and a
11386 curse to the world. The student spends four years in
11387 college at classical studies, and no God in them,
11388 and then three years in the seminary, at theological
11389 studies; and what then? Poor young man. Set him
11390 to work, and you will find that he is not educated
11391 for the ministry at all. The church groans under his
11392 preaching, because he does not preach with
11393 unction, nor with power. He has been spoiled in
11394 training.

11395
11396 4. We learn what is revival preaching. All ministers
11397 should be revival ministers, and all preaching
11398 should be revival preaching; that is, it should be
11399 calculated to promote holiness. People say, "It is
11400 very well to have some men in the church, who are
11401 revival preachers, and who can go about and
11402 promote revivals; but then you must have others to
11403 indoctrinate the church." Strange! Do they not
11404 know that a revival indoctrinates the church faster
11405 than anything else! And a minister will never

11406 produce a revival, if he does not indoctrinate his
11407 hearers. The preaching I have described, is full of
11408 doctrine, but it is doctrine to be practised. And that
11409 is revival preaching.

11410

11411 5. There are two objections sometimes brought
11412 against the kind of preaching which I have
11413 recommended.

11414

11415 (1.) That it is letting down the dignity of the pulpit
11416 to preach in this colloquial, lawyer-like style. They
11417 are shocked at it. But it is only on account of its
11418 novelty, and not for any impropriety there is in the
11419 thing itself. I heard a remark made by a leading
11420 layman in the centre of this State, in regard to the
11421 preaching of a certain minister. He said it was the
11422 first preaching he ever heard, that he understood,
11423 and the first minister he ever heard that spoke as if
11424 he believed his own doctrine, or meant what he
11425 said. And when he first heard him preach as if he
11426 was saying something that he meant, he thought he
11427 was crazy. But eventually, he was made to see that
11428 it was all true, and he submitted to the truth, as the
11429 power of God for the salvation of his soul.

11430

11431 What is the dignity of the pulpit? To see a minister
11432 go into the pulpit to sustain its dignity! Alas, alas!
11433 During my foreign tour, I heard an English

11434 missionary preach exactly in that way. I believe he
11435 was a good man, and out of the pulpit he would
11436 talk like a man that meant what he said. But no
11437 sooner was he in the pulpit, than he appeared like a
11438 perfect automaton—swelling, mouthing, and
11439 singing, enough to put all the people to sleep. And
11440 the difficulty seemed to be, that he wanted to
11441 maintain the dignity of the pulpit.

11442
11443 (2.) It is objected that this preaching is theatrical.
11444 The bishop of London once asked Garrick, the
11445 celebrated play-actor, why it was that actors, in
11446 representing a mere fiction, should move an
11447 assembly, even to tears, while ministers, in
11448 representing the most solemn realities, could
11449 scarcely obtain a hearing. The philosophical
11450 Garrick well replied, “It is because we represent
11451 fiction as reality, and you represent reality as a
11452 fiction.” This is telling the whole story. Now what
11453 is the design of the actor in a theatrical
11454 representation? It is so to throw himself into the
11455 spirit and meaning of the writer, as to adopt his
11456 sentiments, make them his own, feel them, embody
11457 them, throw them out upon the audience as living
11458 reality. And now, what is the objection to all this in
11459 preaching? The actor suits the action to the word,
11460 and the word to the action. His looks, his hands, his
11461 attitudes, and everything are designed to express

11462 the full meaning of the writer. Now this should be
11463 the aim of the preacher. And if by “theatrical” be
11464 meant the strongest possible representation of the
11465 sentiments expressed, then the more theatrical a
11466 sermon is, the better. And if ministers are too stiff,
11467 and the people too fastidious, to learn even from an
11468 actor, or from the stage, the best method of
11469 swaying mind, of enforcing sentiment, and
11470 diffusing the warmth of burning thought over a
11471 congregation, then they must go on with their
11472 prosing, and reading, and sanctimonious starch.
11473 But let them remember, that while they are thus
11474 turning away and decrying the art of the actor, and
11475 attempting to support “the dignity of the pulpit,”
11476 the theatres can be thronged every night. The
11477 common-sense people will be entertained with that
11478 manner of speaking, and sinners will go down to
11479 hell.

11480

11481 6. A congregation may learn how to choose a
11482 minister.

11483

11484 When a vacant church are looking out for a
11485 minister, there are two leading points on which
11486 they commonly fix their attention. (1.) That he
11487 should be popular. (2.) That he should be learned.
11488 That is very well. But this point should be the first
11489 in their inquiries—”Is he wise to win souls?” No

11490 matter how eloquent a minister is, or how learned.
11491 No matter how pleasing and popular in his
11492 manners. If it is a matter of fact that sinners are not
11493 converted under his preaching, it shows that he has
11494 not this wisdom, and your children and neighbors
11495 will go down to hell under his preaching.

11496
11497 I am happy to know that many churches will ask
11498 this question about ministers. And if they find that
11499 a minister is destitute of this vital quality, they will
11500 not have him. And if ministers can be found who
11501 are wise to win souls, the churches will have such
11502 ministers. It is in vain to contend against it, or to
11503 pretend that they are not well educated, or not
11504 learned, or the like. It is in vain for the schools to
11505 try to force down the throats of the churches a race
11506 of ministers who are learned in everything but what
11507 they most need to know. The churches have
11508 pronounced them not made right, and they will not
11509 sustain that which is notoriously so inadequate as
11510 the present system of theological education.

11511
11512 It is very difficult to say what needs to be said on
11513 this subject, without being in danger of begetting a
11514 wrong spirit in the church, towards ministers.
11515 Many professors of religion are ready to find fault
11516 with ministers when they have no reason;
11517 insomuch, that it becomes very difficult to say of

11518 ministers what is true, and what needs to be said,
11519 without its being perverted and abused by this class
11520 of professors. I would not for the world say
11521 anything to injure the influence of a minister of
11522 Christ, who is really endeavoring to do good. I
11523 would that they deserved a hundred times more
11524 influence than they now deserve or have. But, to
11525 tell the truth will not injure the influence of those
11526 ministers, who by their lives and preaching give
11527 evidence to the church, that their object is to do
11528 good, and win souls to Christ. This class of
11529 ministers will recognise the truth of all that I have
11530 said, or wish to say. They see it all, and deplore it.
11531 But if there be ministers who are doing no good,
11532 who are feeding themselves and not the flock, such
11533 ministers deserve no influence. If they are doing no
11534 good, it is time for them to betake themselves to
11535 some other profession. They are but leeches on the
11536 very vitals of the church, sucking out its heart's
11537 blood. They are useless, and worse than useless.
11538 And the sooner they are laid aside, and their places
11539 filled with those who will exert themselves for
11540 Christ the better.

11541
11542 Finally—It is the duty of the church to pray for us,
11543 ministers. Not one of us is such as we ought to be.
11544 Like Paul, we can say, “Who is sufficient for these
11545 things?” But who of us is like Paul? Where will

11546 you find such a minister as Paul? They are not here.
11547 We have been wrongly educated, all of us. Pray for
11548 the schools, and colleges, and seminaries. And pray
11549 for young men who are preparing for the ministry.
11550 Pray for ministers, that God would give them this
11551 wisdom to win souls. And pray that God would
11552 bestow upon the church the wisdom and the means
11553 to educate a generation of ministers who will go
11554 forward and convert the world. The church must
11555 travail in prayer, and groan and agonize for this.
11556 This is now the pearl of price to the church, to have
11557 a supply of the right sort of ministers. The coming
11558 of the millennium depends on having a different
11559 sort of ministers, who are more thoroughly
11560 educated for their work. And this we shall have so
11561 sure as the promise of the Lord holds good. Such a
11562 ministry as is now in the church will never convert
11563 the world. But the world is to be converted, and
11564 therefore God intends to have ministers who will
11565 do it. "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest
11566 that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

11567
11568 [4] This was said with pain in 1833-34.

11569
11570
11571
11572
11573

LECTURE XIII.

11574

11575 HOW CHURCHES CAN HELP MINISTERS.

11576

11577 Text.—And it came to pass, when Moses held up
11578 his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let
11579 down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses's
11580 hands were heavy, and they took a stone, and put it
11581 under him, and he sat thereon: and Aaron and Hur
11582 stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the
11583 other on the other side: and his hands were steady
11584 until the going down of the sun. And Joshua
11585 discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge
11586 of the sword.—Exodus xvii. 11-13.

11587

11588 You who read your Bibles will recollect the
11589 connection in which these verses stand. The people
11590 of God in subduing their enemies came to battle
11591 against the Amalekites, and these incidents took
11592 place. It is difficult to conceive why importance
11593 should be attached to the circumstance of Moses
11594 holding up his hands, unless the expression is
11595 understood to denote the attitude of prayer. And
11596 then his holding up his hands, and the success
11597 attending it, will teach us the importance of prayer
11598 to God, for his aid in all our conflicts with the
11599 enemies of God. The co-operation and support of
11600 Aaron and Hur have been generally understood to
11601 represent the duty of churches to sustain and assist

11602 ministers in their work, and the importance of this
11603 co-operation to the success of the preached Gospel.
11604 I shall make this use of it on the present occasion.
11605 As I have spoken of the duty of ministers to labor
11606 for revivals, I shall now consider,

11607
11608 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CO-OPERATION
11609 OF THE CHURCH IN PRODUCING AND
11610 CARRYING ON A REVIVAL.

11611
11612 There are a number of things whose importance in
11613 promoting a revival has not been duly considered
11614 by churches and ministers, which if not attended to
11615 will make it impossible that revivals should extend,
11616 or even continue for any considerable time. In my
11617 last two lectures, I have been dwelling on the duties
11618 of ministers, as it was impossible for me to preach
11619 a course of lectures on revivals without entering
11620 more or less extensively into that department of
11621 means. I have not done with that part of the subject,
11622 but have thought it important here to step aside and
11623 discuss some points in which the church must stand
11624 by and aid their minister, if they expect to enjoy a
11625 revival. In discussing the subject, I propose,

11626
11627 I. To mention several things which Christians must
11628 avoid, if they would support ministers.
11629

11630 II. Some things to which they must attend.

11631

11632 I. I am to mention several things that must be
11633 avoided.

11634

11635 1. By all means keep clear of the idea, both in
11636 theory and practice, that a minister is to promote
11637 revivals alone. Many people are inclined to take a
11638 passive attitude on this subject, and feel as if they
11639 had nothing to do. They have employed a minister
11640 and paid him, to feed them with instruction and
11641 comfort, and now they have nothing to do but to sit
11642 and swallow the food he gives. They are to pay his
11643 salary, and attend on his preaching, and they think
11644 that is doing a great deal. And he on his part is
11645 expected to preach good, sound, comfortable
11646 doctrine, to bolster them up, and make them feel
11647 comfortable, and so they expect to go to heaven. I
11648 tell you, **THEY WILL GO TO HELL**, if this is
11649 their religion. That is not the way to heaven.

11650

11651 Rest assured that where this spirit prevails in the
11652 church, however good the minister may be, the
11653 church have taken the course to prevent a revival.
11654 If he is ever so faithful, ever so much engaged, ever
11655 so talented and eloquent, he may wear himself out,
11656 and perhaps destroy his life, but he will have little
11657 or no revival.

11658

11659 Where there is no church, or very few members in
11660 the church, a revival may be promoted without any
11661 organized effort of the church, because it is not
11662 there, and in such a case, God accommodates his
11663 grace to the circumstances, as he did when the
11664 apostles went out, single-handed, to plant the
11665 Gospel in the world. I have seen instances of
11666 powerful revivals where such was the case. But
11667 where there are means, God will have them used. I
11668 had rather have no church in a place, than attempt
11669 to promote a revival in a place where there is a
11670 church which will not work. God will be inquired
11671 of by his people to bestow blessings. The
11672 counteracting influence of a church that will not
11673 work is worse than infidelity. There is no
11674 possibility of occupying neutral ground, in regard
11675 to a revival, though some professors imagine they
11676 are neutral. If a professor will not lay himself out in
11677 the work, he opposes it. Let such a one attempt to
11678 take middle ground, and say he is going to wait and
11679 see how they come out—why, that is the very
11680 ground the devil wants him to take. Professors can
11681 in this way do his work a great deal more
11682 effectually than by open opposition. If they take
11683 open ground in opposition, everybody will say they
11684 have no religion. But by this middle course they

11685 retain their influence, and thus do the devil's work
11686 more effectually.

11687

11688 In employing a minister, a church must remember
11689 that they have only employed a leader to lead them
11690 on to action in the cause of Christ. People would
11691 think it strange if any body should propose to
11692 support a general and then let him go and fight
11693 alone! This is no more absurd, or destructive, than
11694 for a minister to attempt to go forward alone. The
11695 church misconceive the design of the ministry, if
11696 they leave their minister to work alone. It is not
11697 enough that they should hear the sermons. That is
11698 only the word of command, which the church are
11699 bound to follow.

11700

11701 2. Do not complain of your minister because there
11702 is no revival, if you are not doing your duty. It is of
11703 no use to complain of there being no revival, if you
11704 are not doing your duty. That alone is a sufficient
11705 reason why there should be no revival. It is a most
11706 cruel and abominable thing for a church to
11707 complain of their minister, when they themselves
11708 are fast asleep. It is very common for professors of
11709 religion to take great credit to themselves, and
11710 quiet their own consciences by complaining of
11711 their ministers. And when the importance of
11712 ministers being awake is spoken of, this sort of

11713 people are ready to say, We never shall have a
11714 revival with such a minister, when the fact is that
11715 their minister is much more awake than they are
11716 themselves.

11717

11718 Another thing is true in regard to this point, and
11719 worthy of notice. When the church is sunk down in
11720 a low state, professors of religion are very apt to
11721 complain of the church, and of the low state of
11722 religion among them. That intangible and
11723 irresponsible being, the “church,” is greatly
11724 complained of by them, for being asleep. Their
11725 complaints of the low state of religion, and of the
11726 coldness of the church or of the minister, are
11727 poured out dolefully, without their seeming to
11728 realize that the church is composed of individuals,
11729 and that until each one will take his own case in
11730 hand, complain of himself, and humble himself
11731 before God, and repent, and wake up, the church
11732 can never have any efficiency, and there never can
11733 be a revival. If instead of complaining of your
11734 minister, or of the church, you would wake up as
11735 individuals, and not complain of him or them until
11736 you can say you are pure from the blood of all men,
11737 and are doing your duty to save sinners, he would
11738 be apt to feel the justice of your complaints, and if
11739 he would not God would, and would either wake
11740 him up or remove him.

11741

11742 3. Do not let your minister kill himself by
11743 attempting to carry on the work alone, while you
11744 refuse to help him. It sometimes happens that a
11745 minister finds the ark of the Lord will not move
11746 unless he lays out his utmost strength, and he has
11747 been so desirous of a revival that he has done this,
11748 and has died. And he was willing to die for it. I
11749 could mention some cases in this State, where
11750 ministers have died, and no doubt in consequence
11751 of their labors to promote a revival where the
11752 church hung back from the work.

11753

11754 I will mention one case. A minister, some years
11755 since, was laboring where there was a revival; and
11756 was visited by an elder of a church at some
11757 distance who wanted him to go and preach there.
11758 There was no revival there, and never had been,
11759 and the elder complained about their state, said
11760 they had had two excellent ministers, one had worn
11761 himself completely out and died, and the other had
11762 exhausted himself, and got discouraged, and left
11763 them, and they were a poor and feeble church, and
11764 their prospects very dark unless they could have a
11765 revival, and so he begged this minister to go and
11766 help them. He seemed to be very sorrowful, and the
11767 minister heard his whining, and at last replied by
11768 asking, Why did you never have a revival? I do not

11769 know, said the elder. Our minister labored hard, but
11770 the church did not seem to wake up, and somehow
11771 there seemed to be no revival. “Well, now,” said
11772 the minister, “I see what you want; you have killed
11773 one of God’s ministers, and broke down another so
11774 that he had to leave you, and now you want to get
11775 another there and kill him, and the devil has sent
11776 you here to get me to go and rock your cradle for
11777 you. You had one good minister to preach to you,
11778 but you slept on, and he exerted himself till he
11779 absolutely died in the work. Then the Lord let you
11780 have another, and still you lay and slept, and would
11781 not wake up to your duty. And now you have come
11782 here in despair, and want another minister, do you?
11783 God forbid that you should ever have another while
11784 you do as you have done. God forbid that you
11785 should ever have a minister, till the church will
11786 wake up to duty.” The elder was affected, for he
11787 was a good man. The tears came in his eyes, and he
11788 said it was no more than they deserved. “And
11789 now,” said the minister, “will you be faithful, and
11790 go home and tell the church what I say? If you will,
11791 and they will be faithful and wake up to duty, they
11792 shall have a minister, I will warrant them that.” The
11793 elder said he would, and he was true to his word;
11794 he went home and told the church how cruel it was
11795 for them to ask another minister to come among
11796 them, unless they would wake up. They felt it, and

11797 confessed their sins, and waked up to duty, and a
11798 minister was sent to them, and a precious and
11799 powerful revival followed.

11800

11801 Churches do not realize how often their coldness
11802 and backwardness may be absolutely the cause of
11803 the death of ministers. The state of the people, and
11804 of sinners, rests upon their mind, they travail in
11805 soul night and day, and they labor in season and
11806 out of season, beyond the power of the human
11807 constitution to bear, till they wear out and die. The
11808 church know not the agony of a minister's heart,
11809 when he travails for souls, and labors to wake up
11810 the church to help, and still sees them in the
11811 slumbers of death. Perhaps sometimes they will
11812 rouse up to spasmodic effort for a few days, and
11813 then all is cold again. And so many a faithful
11814 minister wears himself out and dies, and then these
11815 heartless professors are the first to blame him for
11816 doing so much.

11817

11818 I recollect a case of a good minister, who went to a
11819 place where there was a revival, and while there
11820 heard a pointed sermon to ministers. He received it
11821 like a man of God; he did not rebel against God's
11822 truth, but he vowed to God that he never would rest
11823 until he saw a revival among his people. He
11824 returned home and went to work; the church would

11825 not wake up, except a few members, and the Lord
11826 blessed them, and poured out his Spirit, but the
11827 minister laid himself down on his bed and died, in
11828 the midst of the revival.

11829

11830 4. Be careful not to complain of plain, pointed
11831 preaching, even when its reproofs fasten on
11832 yourselves. Churches are apt to forget that a
11833 minister is responsible only to God. They want to
11834 make rules for a minister to preach by, so as not to
11835 have it fit them. If he bears down on the church,
11836 and exposes the sins that prevail among them, they
11837 call it personal, and rebel against the truth. Or they
11838 say, he should not preach so plainly to the church
11839 before the world; it exposes religion, they say, and
11840 he ought to take them by themselves and preach to
11841 the church alone, and not tell sinners how bad
11842 Christians are. But there are cases where a minister
11843 can do no less than to show the house of Jacob
11844 their sins. If you ask, Why not do it when we are by
11845 ourselves? I answer, Just as if sinners did not know
11846 you did wrong. I will preach to you by yourselves,
11847 about your own sins, when you will get together by
11848 yourselves to sin. But as the Lord liveth, if you sin
11849 before the world, you shall be rebuked before the
11850 world. Is it not a fact that sinners do know how you
11851 live, and that they stumble over you into hell? Then
11852 do not blame ministers, when they see it their duty

11853 to rebuke the church openly, before the world. If
11854 you are so proud you cannot bear this, you need not
11855 expect a revival. Do not call preaching too plain
11856 because it exposes the faults of the church. There is
11857 no such thing as preaching too plain.

11858

11859 5. Sometimes professors take alarm, lest the
11860 minister should offend the ungodly by plain
11861 preaching. And they will begin to caution him
11862 against it, and ask him if he had not better alter a
11863 little to avoid giving offence, and the like. This fear
11864 is excited especially if some of the more wealthy
11865 and influential members of the congregation are
11866 offended, lest they should withdraw their support
11867 from the church, and no longer give their money to
11868 help to pay the minister's salary, and so the burden
11869 will come the heavier on the church. They never
11870 can have a revival in such a church. Why, the
11871 church ought to pray, above all things, that the
11872 truth may come on the ungodly like fire. What if
11873 they are offended? Christ can get along very well
11874 without their money. Do not blame your minister,
11875 nor ask him to change his mode of preaching to
11876 please and conciliate the ungodly. It is of no use for
11877 a minister to preach to the impenitent, unless he
11878 can preach the truth to them. And it will do no
11879 good for them to pay for the support of the Gospel,

11880 unless it is preached in such a way that they may be
11881 searched and saved.

11882

11883 Sometimes church members will talk among
11884 themselves about the minister's imprudence, and
11885 create a party, and get into a very wrong spirit,
11886 because the wicked are displeased. There was a
11887 place where there was a powerful revival, and great
11888 opposition. The church were alarmed, for fear that
11889 if the minister was not less plain and pointed, some
11890 of the impenitent would go and join some other
11891 congregation. And one of the leading men in the
11892 church was appointed to go to the minister and ask
11893 him not to preach quite so hard, for if he continued
11894 to do so, such and such persons would leave the
11895 congregation. The minister asked, Is not the
11896 preaching true? "Yes." Does not God bless it?
11897 "Yes." Did you ever see the like of this work
11898 before in this place? "No, I never did." "Get thee
11899 behind me, Satan, the devil has sent you here on
11900 this errand; you see God is blessing the preaching,
11901 the work is going on, and sinners are converted
11902 every day, and now you come to get me to let down
11903 the tone of preaching, so as to ease the minds of the
11904 ungodly." The man felt the rebuke, and took it like
11905 a Christian; he saw his error and submitted, and
11906 never again was heard to find fault with the
11907 plainness of preaching.

11908

11909 In another town, where there was a revival, a
11910 woman who had some influence, (not pious),
11911 complained very much about plain, pointed,
11912 personal preaching, as she called it. But by and by
11913 she herself became a subject of the work. After this
11914 some of her impenitent friends reminded her of
11915 what she used to say against the preacher for
11916 “preaching it out so hot.” She now said her views
11917 were altered, and she did not care how hot the truth
11918 was preached, if it was red hot.

11919

11920 6. Do not take part with the wicked in any way. If
11921 you do it at all, you will strengthen their hands. If
11922 the wicked accuse the minister of being imprudent,
11923 or of being personal, and if the church members,
11924 without admitting that the minister does so, only
11925 admit that personal preaching is wrong, and talk
11926 about the impropriety of personal preaching, the
11927 wicked will feel themselves strengthened by such
11928 remarks. Do not unite with them at all, for they will
11929 feel that they have you on their side against their
11930 minister. You adopt their principles, and use their
11931 language, and are understood as sympathizing with
11932 them. What is personal preaching? No individual is
11933 ever benefited by preaching unless he is made to
11934 feel that it means him. Now such preaching is
11935 always personal. It often appears so personal, to

11936 wicked men, that they feel as if they were just
11937 going to be called out by name before the
11938 congregation. A minister was once preaching to a
11939 congregation, and when describing certain
11940 characters, he said, "If I was omniscient, I could
11941 call out by name the very persons that answer to
11942 this picture." A man cried out, "Name me!" and he
11943 looked as if he was going to sink into the earth. He
11944 afterwards said that he had no idea of speaking out,
11945 but the minister described him so perfectly, that he
11946 really thought he was going to call him by name.
11947 The minister did not know there was such a man in
11948 the world. It is common for men to think their own
11949 conduct is described, and they complain, "Who has
11950 been telling him about me? Somebody has been
11951 talking to him about me, and getting him to preach
11952 at me." I suppose I have heard of five hundred or a
11953 thousand just such cases. Now if the church
11954 members will just admit that it is wrong for a
11955 minister to mean anybody in his preaching, how
11956 can he do any good If you are not willing your
11957 minister should mean anybody, or preach to
11958 anybody, you had better dismiss him. Whom must
11959 he preach to, if not to the persons, the individuals
11960 before him? And how can he preach to them, when
11961 he does not mean them?
11962

11963 7. If you wish to stand by your minister in
11964 promoting a revival, do not by your lives contradict
11965 his preaching. If he preaches that sinners are going
11966 to hell, do not give the lie to it, and smile it all
11967 away, by your levity and unconcern. I have heard
11968 sinners speak of the effect produced on their minds,
11969 by levity in Christians, after a solemn and
11970 searching discourse. They feel solemn and tender,
11971 and begin to be alarmed at their condition, and they
11972 see these professors, instead of weeping over them,
11973 all light and easy, as much as to say, “Do not be
11974 afraid, sinners, it is not so bad, after all; keep cool
11975 and you will do well; do you think we would laugh
11976 and joke if you were going to hell so fast? We
11977 should not laugh if only your house was on fire,
11978 still less if we saw you burning in it.” Of what use
11979 is it for a minister to preach to sinners, in such a
11980 state of things?

11981

11982 8. Do not needlessly take up the time of your
11983 minister. Ministers often lose a great deal of time
11984 by individuals calling on them to talk, when they
11985 have nothing of importance to talk about, and no
11986 particular errand. The minister of course is glad to
11987 see his friends, and often too willing to spend time
11988 in conversation with his people, as he loves and
11989 esteems them. Professors of religion should
11990 remember that a minister’s time is worth more than

11991 gold, for it can be employed in that which gold can
11992 never buy. If the minister is kept from his knees, or
11993 from his Bible, or his study, that they may indulge
11994 themselves in his conversation, they do a great
11995 injury. When you have a good reason for it, you
11996 should never be backward to call on him, and even
11997 take up all the time that is necessary. But if you
11998 have nothing in particular to say that is important,
11999 keep away. I knew a man in one of our cities, who
12000 was out of business, and he used to take up months
12001 of the minister's time. He would come to his study,
12002 and sit for three hours at a time, and talk, because
12003 he had nothing else to do, till finally, the minister
12004 had to rebuke him plainly, and tell him how much
12005 sin he was committing.

12006
12007 9. Be sure not to sanction any thing that is
12008 calculated to divert public attention from the
12009 subject of religion. Often when it comes the time of
12010 year to work, when the evenings are long, and
12011 business is light, and the very time to make an
12012 extra effort, at this moment, somebody in the
12013 church will give a party, and invite some Christian
12014 friends, so as to have it a religious party. And then
12015 some other family must do the same, to return the
12016 compliment. Then another and another, till it grows
12017 into an organized system of parties, that consume
12018 the whole winter. Abominable! This is the grand

12019 device of the devil, because it appears so innocent,
12020 and so proper, to promote good feeling, and
12021 increase the acquaintance of Christians with each
12022 other. And so, instead of prayer meetings they will
12023 have these parties.

12024

12025 The evils of these parties are very great. They are
12026 often got up at great expense, and the most
12027 abominable gluttony is practised in them. It is said
12028 that the expense is from one hundred to two
12029 thousand dollars. I have been told that in some
12030 instances, professed Christians have given great
12031 parties, and made great entertainments, and
12032 excused their ungodly prodigality in the use of
12033 Jesus Christ's money, by giving what was left, after
12034 the feast was ended, to the poor! Thus making it a
12035 virtue to feast and riot, even to surfeiting, on the
12036 bounties of God's providence, under pretence of
12037 benefiting the poor. This is the same in principle,
12038 with a splendid ball which was given some years
12039 since, in a neighboring city. The ball was got up for
12040 the benefit of the poor, and each gentleman was to
12041 pay a certain sum, and after the ball was ended,
12042 whatever remained of the funds thus raised, was to
12043 be given to the poor. Truly this is strange charity,
12044 to eat and drink and dance, and when they have
12045 rioted and feasted until they can enjoy it no longer,
12046 they deal out to the poor the crumbs that have

12047 fallen from the table. I do not see why such a ball is
12048 not quite as pious as such Christian parties. The
12049 evil of balls does not consist simply in the exercise
12050 of dancing, but in the dissipation, and surfeiting,
12051 and temptations connected with them.

12052
12053 But it is said they are Christian parties, and that
12054 they are all, or nearly all, professors of religion
12055 who attend them. And furthermore, that they are
12056 concluded, often, with prayer. Now I regard this as
12057 one of the worst features about them; that after the
12058 waste of time and money, the excess in eating and
12059 drinking, the vain conversation, and nameless
12060 fooleries, with which such a season is filled up, an
12061 attempt should be made to sanctify it, and palm it
12062 off upon God, by concluding it with prayer. Say
12063 what you will, it would not be more absurd or
12064 incongruous, or impious, to close a ball, or a
12065 theatre, or a card party with prayer.

12066
12067 Has it come to this, that professors of religion,
12068 professing to desire the salvation of the world,
12069 when such calls are made upon them, from the four
12070 winds of heaven, to send the Gospel, to furnish
12071 Bibles, and tracts, and missionaries, to save the
12072 world from death, that they should spend hundreds
12073 of dollars in an evening, and then go to the monthly
12074 concert and pray for the heathen!

12075

12076 In some instances, I have been told, they find a
12077 salve for their consciences, in the fact that their
12078 minister attends their parties. This, of course,
12079 would give weight to such an example, and if one
12080 professor of religion made a party and invited their
12081 minister, others must do the same. The next step
12082 they take may be for each to give a ball, and
12083 appoint their minister a manager! Why not? And
12084 perhaps, by and by, he will do them the favor to
12085 play the fiddle. In my estimation he might quite as
12086 well do it, as to go and conclude such a party with
12087 prayer.

12088

12089 I have heard with pain, that a circle of parties, I
12090 know not to what extent, has been held in
12091 Rochester—that place so highly favored of the
12092 Lord. I know not through whose influence they
12093 have been got up, or by what particular persons
12094 they have been patronized and attended. But I
12095 should advise any congregation who are calculating
12096 to have a circle of parties, in the mean time to
12097 dismiss their minister, and let him go and preach
12098 where the people would be ready to receive the
12099 word and profit by it, and not have him stay and be
12100 distressed, and grieved, and killed, by attempting to
12101 promote religion among them, while they are
12102 engaged heart and hand in the service of the devil.

12103

12104 Professors of religion should never get up anything
12105 that may divert public attention from religion,
12106 without first having consulted their minister, and
12107 made it a subject of special prayer. And if they find
12108 it will have this effect, they ought never to do it.

12109 Subjects will often come up before the public
12110 which have this tendency; some course of lectures,
12111 or show, or the like. Professors ought to be wise,
12112 and understand what they are about, and not give
12113 countenance to any such thing, until they see what
12114 influence it will have, and whether it will hinder a
12115 revival. If it will do that, let them have nothing to
12116 do with it. Every such thing should be estimated by
12117 its bearing upon Christ's kingdom.

12118

12119 In relation to parties, say what you please about
12120 their being an innocent recreation, I appeal to any
12121 of you who have ever attended them, to say
12122 whether they fit you for prayer, or increase your
12123 spirituality, or whether sinners are ever converted
12124 in them, or Christians made to agonize in prayer for
12125 souls?

12126

12127 II. I am to mention several things which churches
12128 must DO, if they would promote a revival and aid
12129 their minister.

12130

12131 1. They must attend to his temporal wants. A
12132 minister, who gives himself wholly to the work,
12133 cannot be engaged in worldly employments, and of
12134 course is entirely dependent on his people for the
12135 supply of his temporal wants, including the support
12136 of his family. I need not argue this point here, for
12137 you all understand this perfectly. It is the command
12138 of God, that “they which preach the Gospel should
12139 live of the Gospel.” But now look around and see
12140 how many churches do in this matter. For instance,
12141 when they want a minister, they will cast about and
12142 see how cheap they can get one. They will
12143 calculate to a farthing how much his salt will cost,
12144 and how much his meal, and then set his salary so
12145 low as to subject him to extreme inconvenience to
12146 get along and keep his family. A minister must
12147 have his mind at ease, to study and labor with
12148 effect, and he cannot screw down prices, and
12149 banter, and look out for the best chances to buy to
12150 advantage what he needs. If he is obliged to do this,
12151 his mind is embarrassed. Unless his temporal wants
12152 are so supplied, that his thoughts may be abstracted
12153 from them, how can he do his duty?

12154

12155 2. Be honest with your minister.

12156

12157 Do not measure out and calculate with how much
12158 salt and how many bushels of grain he can possibly

12159 get along. Remember, you are dealing with Christ.
12160 And he calls you to place his ministers in such a
12161 situation that with ordinary prudence temporal
12162 embarrassment is out of the question.

12163

12164 3. Be punctual with him.

12165

12166 Sometimes churches, when they are about settling a
12167 minister, have a great deal of pride about giving a
12168 salary, and they will get up a subscription, and
12169 make out an amount which they never pay, and
12170 very likely never expected to pay. And so, after
12171 one, two, three, or four years, the society gets three
12172 or four hundred dollars in arrears to their minister,
12173 and then they expect he will give it to them. And
12174 all the while they wonder why there is no revival!
12175 This may be the very reason, because the church
12176 have LIED; they have faithfully promised to pay so
12177 much, and have not done it. God cannot
12178 consistently pour out his Spirit on such a church.

12179

12180 4. Pay him his salary without asking.

12181

12182 Nothing is so embarrassing, often, to a minister as
12183 to be obliged to dun his people for his salary. Often
12184 he gets enemies, and gives offence, by being
12185 obliged to call, and call, and call for his money,
12186 and then not get it as they promised. They would

12187 have paid it if their credit had been at stake, but
12188 when it is nothing but conscience and the blessing
12189 of God, they let it lie along. if any one of them had
12190 a note at the bank, you would see him careful and
12191 prompt to be on the ground before three o'clock.
12192 That is because the note will be protested, and they
12193 shall lose their character. But they know the
12194 minister will not sue them for his salary, and they
12195 are careless and let it run along, and he must suffer
12196 the inconvenience. This is not so common in the
12197 city as it is in the country. But in the country, I
12198 have known some heart-rending cases of distress
12199 and misery, by the negligence and cruelty of
12200 congregations in WITHHOLDING that which is
12201 due. Churches live in habitual lying and cheating,
12202 and then wonder why they have no revival. How
12203 can they wonder?

12204

12205 5. Pray for your minister.

12206

12207 I mean something by this. And what do you
12208 suppose I mean? Even the apostles used to urge the
12209 churches to pray for them. This is more important
12210 than you imagine. Ministers do not ask people to
12211 pray for them simply as men, nor that they may be
12212 filled with an abundance of the Spirit's influences,
12213 merely to promote their personal enjoyment. But
12214 they know that unless the church greatly desires a

12215 blessing upon the labors of a minister, it is
12216 tempting God for him to expect it. How often does
12217 a minister go into his pulpit, feeling that his heart is
12218 ready to break for the blessing of God, while he
12219 also feels that there is no room to expect it, for
12220 there is no reason to believe the church desire it!
12221 Perhaps he has been two hours on his knees in
12222 supplication, and yet because that the church do not
12223 desire a blessing, he feels as if his words would
12224 bound back in his face.

12225
12226 I have seen Christians who would be in an agony,
12227 when the minister was going into the pulpit, for
12228 fear his mind should be in a cloud, or his heart
12229 cold, or he should have no unction, and so a
12230 blessing should not come. I have labored with a
12231 man of this sort. He would pray until he got
12232 assurance in his mind that God would be with me
12233 in preaching, and sometimes he would pray himself
12234 sick. I have known the time, when he has been in
12235 darkness for a season, while the people were
12236 gathering, and his mind was full of anxiety, and he
12237 would go again and again to pray, till finally he
12238 would come into the room with a placid face, and
12239 say, "The Lord has come, and he will be with us."
12240 And I do not know that I ever found him mistaken.
12241

12242 I have known a church bear their minister on their
12243 arms in prayer from day to day, and watch with
12244 anxiety unutterable, to see that he has the Holy
12245 Ghost with him in his labors! When they feel and
12246 pray thus, Oh, what feelings and what looks are
12247 manifest in the congregation! They have felt
12248 anxiety unutterable to have the word come with
12249 power, and take effect, and when they see their
12250 prayer answered, and they hear a word or a
12251 sentence come WARM from the heart, and taking
12252 effect among the people, you can see their whole
12253 souls look out of their eyes. How different is the
12254 case, where the church feel that the minister is
12255 praying, and so there is no need of their praying!
12256 They are mistaken. The church must desire and
12257 pray for the blessing. God says he will be inquired
12258 of by the house of Israel. I wish you to feel that
12259 there can be no substitute for this.

12260

12261 I have seen cases in revivals, where the church was
12262 kept in the back ground in regard to prayer, and
12263 persons from abroad were called on to pray in all
12264 the meetings. This is always unhappy, even if there
12265 should be a revival, for the revival must be less
12266 powerful and less salutary in its influences upon the
12267 church. I do not know but I have sometimes
12268 offended Christians and ministers from abroad, by
12269 continuing to call on members of the church in the

12270 place to pray, and not on those from abroad. It was
12271 not from any disrespect to them, but because the
12272 object was to get that church which was chiefly
12273 concerned, to desire, and pray, and agonize for a
12274 blessing.

12275
12276 In a certain place, a protracted meeting was held,
12277 with no good results, and great evils produced. I
12278 was led to make inquiry for the reason. And it
12279 came out, that in all their meetings, not one
12280 member of their own church was called on to pray,
12281 but all the prayers were made by persons from
12282 abroad. No wonder there was no good done. The
12283 church was not interested. The leader of the
12284 meeting meant well, but he undertook to promote a
12285 revival without getting the church there into the
12286 work. He let a lazy church lie still and do nothing,
12287 and so there could be no good.

12288
12289 Churches should pray for ministers as the agents of
12290 breaking down sinners with the word of truth.
12291 Prayer for a minister is often done in a set and
12292 formal way, and confined to the prayer meetings.
12293 They will say their prayers in the old way, as they
12294 have always done: "Lord, bless thy ministering
12295 servant, whom thou hast stationed on this part of
12296 Zion's walls," and so on, and it amounts to nothing,
12297 because there is no heart in it. And the proof often

12298 is, that they never thought of praying for him in
12299 secret, they never have agonized in their closets for
12300 a blessing on his labors. They may not omit it
12301 wholly in their meetings. If they do that, it is
12302 evident that they care very little indeed about the
12303 labors of their minister. But that is not the most
12304 important place. The way to present effectual
12305 prayer for your minister is to take it to your closet,
12306 and when you are in secret, wrestle with God for
12307 success to attend his labors.

12308
12309 I knew a case of a minister in ill health, who
12310 became depressed and sunk down in his mind, and
12311 was very much in darkness, so that he did not feel
12312 as if he could preach any longer. An individual of
12313 the church was waked up to feel for the minister's
12314 situation, and to pray that he might have the Holy
12315 Ghost to attend his preaching. One Sabbath
12316 morning, this person's mind was very much
12317 exercised, and he began to pray as soon as it was
12318 light, and prayed again and again for a blessing that
12319 day. And the Lord in some way directed the
12320 minister within hearing of his prayer. The person
12321 was telling the Lord just what he thought of the
12322 minister's situation and state of mind, and
12323 pleading, as if he would not be denied, for a
12324 blessing. The minister went into the pulpit and
12325 preached, and the light broke in upon him, and the

12326 word was with power, and a revival commenced
12327 that very day.

12328

12329 6. A minister should be provided for by the church,
12330 and his support guaranteed, irrespective of the
12331 ungodly. Otherwise he may be obliged either to
12332 starve his family, or to keep back a part of the truth
12333 so as not to offend sinners. I once expostulated
12334 with a minister who I found was afraid to come out
12335 fully with the truth. I told him I was surprised he
12336 did not bear down on certain points. He told me he
12337 was so situated that he must please certain men,
12338 who would be touched there. It was the ungodly
12339 that chiefly supported him, and that made him
12340 dependent and temporizing. And yet perhaps that
12341 very church which left their minister dependent on
12342 the ungodly for his bread, will turn round and
12343 abuse him for his want of faith, and his fear of
12344 men. The church ought always to say to their
12345 minister, "We will support you; go to work; let the
12346 truth pour down on the people, and we will stand
12347 by you."

12348

12349 7. See that everything is so arranged, that people
12350 can sit comfortably in meeting. If people do not sit
12351 easy, it is difficult to get or to keep their attention.
12352 And if they are not attentive, they can not be
12353 converted. They have come to hear for their lives,

12354 and they ought to be so situated that they can hear
12355 with all their souls, and have nothing in their bodily
12356 position to call for attention. Churches do not
12357 realize how important it is that the place of meeting
12358 should be made comfortable. I do not mean showy.
12359 All your glare and glory of rich chandeliers, and
12360 rich carpets, and splendid pulpits, is the opposite
12361 extreme, and takes off the attention just as badly,
12362 and defeats every object for which a sinner should
12363 come to meeting. You need not expect a revival
12364 there.

12365
12366 8. See that the house of God is kept cleanly. The
12367 house of God should be kept as clean as you would
12368 want your own house to be kept. Churches are
12369 often kept excessively slovenly. I have seen them,
12370 where people used so much tobacco, and took so
12371 little care about neatness, that it was impossible to
12372 preach with comfort. Once in a protracted meeting,
12373 the thing was charged upon the church, and they
12374 had to acknowledge it, that they paid more money
12375 for tobacco than they did for the cause of missions.
12376 They could not kneel in their pews, and ladies
12377 could not sit without all the time watching their
12378 clothes, and they had to be careful where they
12379 stepped, because the house was so dirty, and there
12380 was so much tobacco juice running all about the
12381 floor. If people cannot go where they can hear

12382 without being annoyed with offensive sights and
12383 smells, and where they can kneel in prayer, what
12384 good will a protracted meeting do? There is an
12385 importance in these things, which is not realized.
12386 See that man! What is he doing? I am preaching to
12387 him about eternal life, and he is thinking about the
12388 dirty pew. And that woman is asking for a footstool
12389 to keep her feet out of the tobacco juice. Shame!

12390

12391 9. It is important that the house should be just
12392 warm enough, and not too warm. Suppose a
12393 minister comes into a house, and finds it cold; he
12394 sees as soon as he gets in, that he might as well
12395 have staid home; the people are shivering, their feet
12396 cold, they feel as if they should take cold, they are
12397 uneasy, and he wishes he was at home, for he
12398 knows he cannot do anything, but he must preach,
12399 or they will be disappointed.

12400

12401 Or he may find the house too warm, and the people,
12402 instead of listening to the truth, are fanning, and
12403 panting for breath, and by and by a woman faints,
12404 and makes a stir, and the train of thought and
12405 feeling is all lost, and so a whole sermon is wasted
12406 to no good end. These little things take off the
12407 attention of people from the words of eternal life.
12408 And very often it is so, that if you drop a single
12409 link in the chain of argument, you lose the whole,

12410 and the people are damned, just because the
12411 careless church do not see to the proper regulation
12412 of these little matters.

12413

12414 10. The house should be well ventilated. Of all
12415 houses, a church should be the most perfectly
12416 ventilated. If there is no change of the air, it passes
12417 through so many lungs it becomes bad, and its
12418 vitality is exhausted, and the people pant, they
12419 know not why, and feel an almost irresistible desire
12420 to sleep, and the minister preaches in vain. The
12421 sermon is lost, and worse than lost. I have often
12422 wondered that this matter should be so little the
12423 subject of thought. The elders and trustees will sit
12424 and hear a whole sermon, while the people are all
12425 but ready to die for the want of air, and the minister
12426 is wasting his strength in preaching where the room
12427 is just like an exhausted receiver, and there they sit
12428 and never think to do any thing to help the matter.
12429 They should take it upon themselves to see that this
12430 is regulated right, that the house is just warm
12431 enough, and the air kept pure. How important it is
12432 that the church should be awake to this subject, that
12433 the minister may labor to the best advantage, and
12434 the people give their undivided attention to the
12435 truth, which is to save their souls.

12436

12437 It is very common, when things are wrong, to have
12438 it all laid to the sexton. This is not so. Often the
12439 sexton is not to blame. If the house is cold and
12440 uncomfortable, very often it is because the fuel is
12441 not good, or the stoves not suitable, or the house is
12442 so open it cannot be warmed. If it is too warm,
12443 perhaps somebody has intermeddled when he was
12444 out, and heaped on fuel without discretion. Or, if
12445 the sexton is in fault, perhaps it is because the
12446 church do not pay him enough for his services, and
12447 he cannot afford to give the attention necessary to
12448 keep the church in order. Churches sometimes
12449 screw down the sexton's salary, to the lowest point,
12450 so that he is obliged to slight his work. Or they will
12451 select one who is incompetent, for the sake of
12452 getting him cheap, and then the thing is not done.
12453 The fault is in the church. Let them give an
12454 adequate compensation for the work, and it can be
12455 done, and done faithfully. If one sexton will not do
12456 right, another will, and the church are bound to see
12457 it done right, or else let them dismiss their minister,
12458 and not keep him, and at the same time have other
12459 things in a state so out of order that he loses all his
12460 work. What economy! To pay the minister's salary,
12461 and then for the want of fifty dollars added to the
12462 sexton's wages, every thing is so out of order that
12463 the minister's labors are all lost, souls are lost, and
12464 your children and neighbors go down to hell!

12465

12466 Sometimes this uncleanness, and negligence, and
12467 confusion are chargeable to the minister. Perhaps
12468 he uses tobacco, and sets the example of defiling
12469 the house of God. Perhaps the pulpit will be the
12470 filthiest place in the house. I have sometimes been
12471 in pulpits that were to loathesome to be occupied
12472 by human beings. If a minister has no more piety
12473 and decency than this, no wonder things are at
12474 loose ends in the congregation. And generally it is
12475 even so.

12476

12477 11. People should leave their dogs, and very young
12478 children at home. I have often known contentions
12479 arise among dogs, and children to cry, just at that
12480 stage of the services, that would most effectually
12481 destroy the effect of the meeting. If children are
12482 present and weep, they should instantly be
12483 removed. I have sometimes known a mother or a
12484 nurse sit and toss her child, while its cries were
12485 diverting the attention of the whole congregation.
12486 This is cruel. And as for dogs, they had infinitely
12487 better be dead, than to divert attention from the
12488 word of God. See that deacon; perhaps his dog has
12489 in this way destroyed more souls than the deacon
12490 will ever be instrumental in saving.

12491

12492 12. The members of the church should aid the
12493 minister by visiting from house to house, and
12494 trying to save souls. Do not leave all this to the
12495 minister. It is impossible he should do it, even if he
12496 gives all his time, and neglects his study and his
12497 closet. Church members should take pains and
12498 qualify themselves for this duty, so that they can be
12499 useful in it.

12500

12501 13. They should hold Bible classes. Suitable
12502 individuals should be selected to hold Bible
12503 classes, for the instruction of the young people, and
12504 where those who are awakened or affected by the
12505 preaching, can be received and be converted. As
12506 soon as any one is seen to be touched, let them be
12507 invited to join the Bible class, where they will be
12508 properly treated, and probably they will be
12509 converted. The church should select the best men
12510 for this service, and should all be on the look out to
12511 fill up the Bible classes. It has been done in this
12512 congregation, and it is a very common thing, when
12513 persons are impressed, that they are observed by
12514 somebody, and invited to join the Bible class, and
12515 they will do it, and there they are converted. I do
12516 not mean that we are doing all we ought to do in
12517 this way, or all we might do. We want more
12518 teachers, able and willing to take charge of such
12519 classes.

12520

12521 14. Churches should sustain Sabbath schools, and
12522 in this way aid their ministers in saving souls, How
12523 can a minister attend to this and preach? Unless the
12524 church will take off these responsibilities, and
12525 cares, and labors, he must either neglect them, or
12526 be crushed. Let the church be WIDE AWAKE,
12527 watch and bring in children to the school, and teach
12528 them faithfully, and lay themselves out to promote
12529 a revival in the school.

12530

12531 15. They should watch over the members of the
12532 church. They should visit each other, in order to
12533 stir each other up, know each other's spiritual state,
12534 and provoke one another to love and good works.
12535 The minister cannot do it, he has not time; it is
12536 impossible he should study and prepare sermons,
12537 and at the same time visit every member of the
12538 church as often as it needs to be done to keep them
12539 advancing. The church are bound to do it. They are
12540 under oath to watch over each other's spiritual
12541 welfare. But how is this done? Many do not know
12542 each other. They meet and pass each other as
12543 strangers, and never ask about their spiritual
12544 condition. But if they hear anything bad of one,
12545 they go and tell it to others. Instead of watching
12546 over each other for their good, they watch for their

12547 halting. How can they watch for good when they
12548 are not even acquainted with each other?

12549

12550 16. The church should watch for the effect of
12551 preaching. If they are praying for the success of the
12552 preached word, they will watch for it of course.

12553 They should keep a look out, and when any in the
12554 congregation give evidence that the word of God
12555 has taken hold of them, they should follow it up.

12556 Wherever there are any exhibitions of feeling,
12557 those persons should be attended to instantly, and
12558 not left till their impressions wear off. They should
12559 talk to them, or get them visited, or get them into
12560 the anxious meeting, or into the Bible class, or
12561 bring them to the minister. If the members of the
12562 church do not attend to this, they neglect their duty.
12563 If they attend to it, they may do incalculable good.

12564

12565 There was a pious young woman, who lived in a
12566 very cold and wicked place. She alone had the
12567 spirit of prayer, and she had been praying for a
12568 blessing upon the word. At length she saw one
12569 individual in the congregation who seemed to be
12570 affected by the preaching, and as soon as the
12571 minister came from the pulpit, she came forward,
12572 agitated and trembling, and begged him to go and
12573 converse with the person immediately. He did so,
12574 and the individual was soon converted, and a

12575 revival followed. Now one of your stupid
12576 professors would not have seen that individual
12577 awakened, and would have stumbled over half a
12578 dozen of them without notice, and let them go to
12579 hell. Professors should watch every sermon, and
12580 see how it affects the congregation. I do not mean
12581 that they should be stretching their necks and
12582 staring about the house, but they should observe, as
12583 they may, and if they find any person affected by
12584 preaching, throw themselves in his way, and guide
12585 him to the Saviour.

12586
12587 17. Beware and not give away all the preaching to
12588 others. If you do not take your portion, you will
12589 starve, and become like spiritual skeletons.
12590 Christians should take their portion to themselves.
12591 If the word should be quite searching to them, they
12592 should make the honest application, and lay it
12593 along side their heart and practise it, and live by it.
12594 Otherwise preaching will do them no good.

12595
12596 18. Be ready to aid your minister in effecting his
12597 plans for doing good. When the minister is wise to
12598 devise plans for usefulness, and the church ready to
12599 execute them, they may carry all before them. But
12600 when the church hang back from every enterprise
12601 until they are actually dragged into it, when they
12602 are opposing every proposal, because it will cost

12603 something, they are a dead weight upon a minister.
12604 If stoves are needed, Oh, no, they will cost
12605 something. If lamps are called for, to prevent
12606 preaching in the dark, Oh, no, they will cost
12607 something. And so they will stick up candles on the
12608 posts, or do without evening meetings altogether. If
12609 they stick up candles, it soon comes to pass that
12610 they either give no light, or some one must run
12611 round and snuff them. And so the whole
12612 congregation are disturbed by the candle-snuffer,
12613 their attention taken off, and the sermon lost.

12614
12615 I was once attending a protracted meeting, where
12616 we were embarrassed because there were no lamps
12617 to the house. I urged the people to get them, but
12618 they thought it would cost too much. I then
12619 proposed to get them myself, and was about to do
12620 it, but found it would give offence, and we went on
12621 without. But the blessing did not come, to any great
12622 extent. How could it? The church began by
12623 calculating to a cent how much it would cost, and
12624 they would not go beyond, to save souls from hell.

12625
12626 So where a minister appoints a meeting, such
12627 people cannot have it, because it will cost
12628 something. If they can offer unto the Lord that
12629 which costs nothing, they will do it. Miserable
12630 helpers they are! Such a church can have no

12631 revival. A minister might as well have a millstone
12632 about his neck as such a church. He had better
12633 leave them, if he cannot learn them better, and go
12634 where he will not be so hampered.

12635
12636 19. Church members should make it a point to
12637 attend prayer meetings, and attend in time. Some
12638 church members will always attend on preaching,
12639 because there they have nothing to do, but to sit
12640 and hear, and be entertained, but they will not
12641 attend prayer meetings, for fear they shall be called
12642 on to do something. Such members tie up the hands
12643 of the minister, and discourage his heart. Why do
12644 they employ a minister? Is it to amuse them by
12645 preaching? or is it that he may teach them the will
12646 of God that they may do it?

12647
12648 20. Church members ought to study and inquire
12649 what they can do, and then do it. Christians should
12650 be trained like a band of soldiers. It is the duty and
12651 office of a minister to train them for usefulness, to
12652 teach them and direct them, and lead them on in
12653 such a way as to produce the greatest amount of
12654 moral influence. And then they should stand their
12655 ground and do their duty, otherwise they will be
12656 right in the way.

12657

12658 There are many other points which I noted, and
12659 intended to touch upon, but there is not time. I
12660 could write a book as big as this Bible, in detailing
12661 the various particulars that ought to be attended to.
12662 I must close with a few

12663

12664 REMARKS.

12665

12666 1. You see that a minister's want of success may
12667 not be wholly on account of a want of wisdom in
12668 the exercise of his office. I am not going to plead
12669 for negligent ministers. I never will spare ministers
12670 from the naked truth, nor apply flattering tides to
12671 men. If they are blameworthy, let them be blamed.
12672 And no doubt they are always more or less to
12673 blame when the word produces no effect. But it is
12674 far from being true that they are always the
12675 principal persons to blame. Sometimes the church
12676 is much more to blame than the minister, and if an
12677 apostle or an angel from heaven were to preach, he
12678 could not produce a revival of religion in that
12679 church. Perhaps they are dishonest to their
12680 minister, or covetous, or careless about the
12681 conveniences of public worship. Alas! what a state
12682 many country churches are in, where, for the want
12683 of a hundred dollars, everything is inconvenient
12684 and uncomfortable, and the labors of the preacher
12685 are lost. They live in ceiled houses themselves, and

12686 let the house of God lie waste. Or the church
12687 counteract all the influence of preaching by their
12688 ungodly lives. Or perhaps their parties, their
12689 worldly show, as in most of the churches in this
12690 city, annihilate the influence of the Gospel.

12691
12692 2. Churches should remember that they are
12693 exceedingly guilty to employ a minister, and then
12694 not aid him in his work. The Lord Jesus Christ has
12695 sent an ambassador to sinners, to turn them from
12696 their evil ways, and he fails of his errand, because
12697 the church refuse to do their duty. Instead of
12698 recommending his message, and seconding his
12699 entreaties, and holding up his hands in all the ways
12700 that are proper, they stand right in the way, and
12701 contradict his message, and counteract his
12702 influence, and souls perish. No doubt in most of the
12703 congregations in the United States, the minister is
12704 often hindered so much that he might as well be on
12705 a foreign mission a great part of the time, as to be
12706 there, for any effect of his preaching in the
12707 conversion of sinners, while he has to preach over
12708 the heads of an inactive, stupid church.

12709
12710 And yet these very churches are not willing to have
12711 their minister absent a few days to attend a
12712 protracted meeting. "We cannot spare him; why he
12713 is our minister, and we like to have our minister

12714 here;” while at the same time they hinder all he can
12715 do. If he could, he would tear himself right away,
12716 and go where there is no minister, and where the
12717 people would be willing to receive the Gospel. But
12718 there he must stay, though he cannot get the church
12719 into a state to have a revival once in three years, to
12720 last three months at a time. It might be well for him
12721 to say to the church, “Whenever you are
12722 determined to take one of these long naps, I wish
12723 you to let me know it, so that I can go and labor
12724 somewhere else in the mean time, till you are ready
12725 to wake again.”

12726
12727 3. Many churches cannot be blessed with a revival,
12728 because they are spunging out of other churches,
12729 and out of the treasury of the Lord for the support
12730 of their minister, when they are abundantly able to
12731 support him themselves. Perhaps they are
12732 depending on the Home Missionary Society, or on
12733 other churches, while they are not exercising any
12734 self-denial for the sake of the Gospel. I have been
12735 amazed to see how some churches live. One church
12736 that I was acquainted with actually confessed that
12737 they spent more money for tobacco than they gave
12738 for missions. And yet they had no minister, because
12739 they were not able to support one. And they have
12740 none now. And yet there is one man in that church

12741 who is able to support a minister. And still they
12742 have no minister, and no preaching.

12743

12744 The churches have not been instructed in their duty
12745 on this subject. I stopped in one place last summer,
12746 where there was no preaching. I inquired of an
12747 elder in the church why it was so, and he said it
12748 was because they were so poor. I asked him how
12749 much he was worth. He did not give me a direct
12750 answer, but said that another elder's income was
12751 about \$5,000 a year, and I finally found out that
12752 this man's was about the same. Here, said I, are
12753 two elders, each of you able to support a minister,
12754 and because you cannot get help from abroad, you
12755 have no preaching. Why, if you had preaching, it
12756 would not be blessed, while you were thus
12757 spunging out of the Lord's treasury. Finally, he
12758 confessed that he was able to support a minister,
12759 and the two together agreed that they would do it.

12760

12761 It is common for churches to ask help, when in fact
12762 they do not need any help, and when it would be a
12763 great deal better for them to support their own
12764 minister. If they get funds from the Home
12765 Missionary Society, when they ought to raise them
12766 themselves, they may expect the curse of the Lord
12767 upon them, and this will be a sufficient reason for
12768 the Gospel's proving to them a curse rather than a

12769 blessing. Of how many churches might it be said,
12770 “Ye have robbed God, even this whole church.”
12771
12772 I know a church who employed a minister but half
12773 the time, and felt unable to pay his salary for that.
12774 A female working society in a neighboring town
12775 appropriated their funds to this object, and assisted
12776 this church in paying their minister’s salary. The
12777 result was as might be expected. He did them little
12778 or no good. They had no revival under his
12779 preaching, nor could they ever expect any, while
12780 acting on such a principle. There was one man in
12781 that congregation who could support a minister all
12782 the time. I was informed by a member that the
12783 church members were supposed to be worth TWO
12784 HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS. Now if this
12785 is true, here is a church with an income, at seven
12786 per cent., of \$14,000 a year, who felt themselves
12787 too poor to pay \$200 for support of a minister to
12788 preach half the time, and would suffer the females
12789 of a neighboring town to work with their own
12790 hands to aid them in paying this sum. Among the
12791 elders of this church, I found that several of them
12792 used tobacco, and two of them who lived together
12793 signed a covenant written on the blank leaf of their
12794 Bible, in which they pledged themselves to
12795 abandon that sin for ever.
12796

12797 It was in a great measure for want of right
12798 instruction that this church was pursuing such a
12799 course. For when the subject was taken up, and
12800 their duty laid before them, the wealthy man of
12801 whom I am speaking said that he would pay the
12802 whole salary himself, if he thought it would not be
12803 resented by the congregation, and do more hurt
12804 than good; and that if the church would procure a
12805 minister, and go ahead and raise a part of his
12806 salary, he would make up the remainder. They can
12807 now not only support a minister half the time, but
12808 all the time, and pay his salary themselves. And
12809 they will find it good and profitable to do so.

12810
12811 As I have gone from place to place laboring in
12812 revivals, I have always found that churches were
12813 blessed in proportion to their liberality. Where they
12814 have manifested a disposition to support the
12815 Gospel, and to pour their substance liberally into
12816 the treasury of the Lord, they have been blessed
12817 both in spiritual and temporal things. But where
12818 they have been parsimonious, and let the minister
12819 preach for them for little or nothing, these churches
12820 have been cursed instead of blessed. And as a
12821 general thing, in revivals of religion, I have found
12822 it to be true that young converts are most inclined
12823 to join those churches which are most liberal in
12824 making efforts to support the Gospel.

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The churches are very much in the dark on this subject. They have not been taught their duty. I have, in many instances, found an exceeding readiness to do it when the subject was laid before them. I knew an elder in a church who was talking about getting a minister for half the time, because the church were poor, although his own income was considerable. I asked him if his income was not sufficient to support a minister all the time himself. He said it was. And on being asked what other use he could make of the Lord's money which he possessed, that would prove so beneficial to the interest of Christ's kingdom, as to employ a minister not only half but all the time in his own town, he concluded to set himself about it. A minister has been accordingly obtained, and I believe they find no difficulty in paying him his full salary.

The fact is, that a minister can do but little by preaching only half the time. If on one Sabbath an impression is made, it is lost before a fortnight comes round. As a matter of economy, a church should lay themselves out to support the Gospel all the time. If they get the right sort of a minister, and keep him steadily at work, they may have a revival, and thus the ungodly will be converted and come in

12853 and help them. And thus in one year they may have
12854 a great accession to their strength. But if they
12855 employ a minister but half the time, year after year
12856 may roll away, while sinners are going to hell, and
12857 no accession is made to their strength from the
12858 ranks of the ungodly.

12859
12860 The fact is, that professors of religion have not
12861 been made to feel that all their possessions are the
12862 Lord's. Hence they have talked about giving their
12863 property for the support of the Gospel. As if the
12864 Lord Jesus Christ was a beggar, and they called
12865 upon to support his Gospel as an act of almsgiving!
12866 A merchant in one of the towns in this State, was
12867 paying a large part of his minister's salary. One of
12868 the members of the church was relating the fact to a
12869 minister from abroad, and speaking of the sacrifice
12870 which this merchant was making. At this moment
12871 the merchant came in. "Brother," said the minister,
12872 "you are a merchant. Suppose you employ a clerk
12873 to sell goods, and a schoolmaster to teach your
12874 children. You order your clerk to pay your
12875 schoolmaster out of the store such an amount, for
12876 his services in teaching. Now suppose your clerk
12877 should give out that he had to pay this
12878 schoolmaster his salary, and should speak of the
12879 sacrifices that he was making to do it, what would
12880 you say to this?" "Why," said the merchant, "I

12881 should say it was ridiculous.” “Well,” says the
12882 minister, “God employs you to sell goods as his
12883 clerk, and your minister he employs to teach his
12884 children, and requires you to pay his salary out of
12885 the income of the store. Now, do you call this your
12886 sacrifice, and say that you are making a great
12887 sacrifice, to pay this minister’s salary? No, you are
12888 just as much bound to sell goods for God as he is to
12889 preach for God. You have no more right to sell
12890 goods for the purpose of laying up money, than he
12891 has to preach the Gospel for the same purpose. You
12892 are bound to be just as pious, and to aim as singly
12893 at the glory of God, in selling goods, as he is in
12894 preaching the Gospel. And thus you are as
12895 absolutely to give up your whole time for the
12896 service of God as he does. You and your family
12897 may lawfully live out of the avails of this store, and
12898 so may the minister and his family, just as lawfully.
12899 If you sell goods from these motives, selling goods
12900 is just as much serving God as preaching. And a
12901 man who sells goods upon these principles, and
12902 acts in conformity to them, is just as pious, just as
12903 much in the service of God, as he is who preaches
12904 the Gospel. Every man is bound to serve God in his
12905 calling, the minister by teaching, the merchant by
12906 selling goods, the farmer by tilling his fields, the
12907 lawyer and physician by plying the duties of their
12908 profession.

12909

12910 “It is equally unlawful for any one of these to labor
12911 for the meat that perisheth. All they do is to be for
12912 God, and all they can earn, after comfortably
12913 supporting their families, is to be dedicated to the
12914 spread of the Gospel and the salvation of the
12915 world.”

12916

12917 It has long enough been supposed that ministers
12918 must be more pious than other men, that they must
12919 not love the world, that they must labor for God:
12920 they must live as frugally as possible, and lay out
12921 their whole time, and health, and strength, and life,
12922 to build up the kingdom of Jesus Christ. This is
12923 true. But although other men are not called to labor
12924 in the same field, and to give up their time to public
12925 instruction, yet they are just as absolutely bound to
12926 consider their whole time as God’s, and have no
12927 more right to love the world, or accumulate wealth,
12928 or lay it up for their children, or spend it upon their
12929 lusts, than ministers have.

12930

12931 It is high time the church was acquainted with
12932 these principles; and the Home Missionary Society
12933 may labor till the day of judgment to convert the
12934 people, and they will never succeed, till the
12935 churches are led to understand and feel their duty in
12936 this respect. Why, the very fact that they are asking

12937 and receiving aid in supporting their minister from
12938 the Home Missionary Society while they are able
12939 to support him themselves, is probably the very
12940 reason why his labors among them are not more
12941 blessed.

12942
12943 I would that the American Home Missionary
12944 Society possessed a hundred times the means that it
12945 now does, of aiding feeble churches, that are
12946 unable to help themselves. But it is neither good
12947 economy nor piety, to give their funds to those who
12948 are able but unwilling to support the Gospel. For it
12949 is in vain to attempt to help them, while they are
12950 able but unwilling to help themselves.

12951
12952 If the Missionary Society had a ton of gold, it
12953 would be no charity to give it to such a church. But
12954 let the church bring in all the tithes to God's
12955 storehouse, and God will open the windows of
12956 heaven and pour down a blessing. But let the
12957 churches know assuredly that if they are unwilling
12958 to help themselves to the extent of their ability,
12959 they will know the reason why such small success
12960 attends the labors of their ministers. Here they are
12961 spunging their support from the Lord's treasury.
12962 How many churches are laying out their money for
12963 tea and coffee and tobacco, and then come and ask
12964 aid from the Home Missionary Society! I will

12965 protest against aiding a church who use tea and
12966 tobacco, and live without the least self-denial, and
12967 who want to offer God only that which costs
12968 nothing.

12969
12970 Finally—If they mean to be blessed, let them do
12971 their duty, do all their duty, put shoulder to the
12972 wheel, gird on the Gospel armor, and come up to
12973 the work. Then, if the church is in the field, the car
12974 of salvation will move on, though all hell oppose,
12975 and sinners will be converted and saved. But if a
12976 church will give up all the labor to the minister,
12977 and sit still and look on, while he is laboring, and
12978 themselves do nothing but complain of him, they
12979 will not only fail of a revival of religion, but if they
12980 continue slothful and censorious, will by and by
12981 find themselves in hell for their disobedience and
12982 unprofitableness in the service of Christ.

12983

12984

12985

12986 LECTURE XIV.

12987

12988 MEASURES TO PROMOTE REVIVALS.

12989

12990 Text.—These men, being Jews, do exceedingly
12991 trouble our city and teach customs which are not

12992 lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being
12993 Romans.—Acts xvi. 20, 21.

12994

12995 “THESE men,” here spoken of, were Paul and
12996 Silas, who went to Philippi to preach the Gospel,
12997 and very much disturbed the people of that city,
12998 because they supposed the preaching would
12999 interfere with their worldly gains. And so they
13000 arranged the preachers of the Gospel before the
13001 magistrates of the city, as culprits, and charged
13002 them with teaching doctrines, and especially
13003 employing measures, that were not lawful.

13004

13005 In discoursing from these words I design to show,

13006

13007 I. That under the Gospel dispensation, God has
13008 established no particular system of measures to be
13009 employed and invariably adhered to in promoting
13010 religion.

13011

13012 II. To show that our present forms of public
13013 worship, and everything, so far as measures are
13014 concerned, have been arrived at by degrees, and by
13015 a succession of New Measures.

13016

13017 I. I am to show that under the Gospel, God has
13018 established no particular measures to be used.

13019

13020 Under the Jewish dispensation, there were
13021 particular forms enjoined and prescribed by God
13022 himself, from which it was not lawful to depart.
13023 But these forms were all typical, and were designed
13024 to shadow forth Christ, or something connected
13025 with the new dispensation that Christ was to
13026 introduce. And therefore they were fixed, and all
13027 their details particularly prescribed by Divine
13028 authority. But it was never so under the Gospel.
13029 When Christ came, the ceremonial or typical
13030 dispensation was abrogated, because the design of
13031 those forms was fulfilled, and therefore themselves
13032 of no further use. He, being the anti-type, the types
13033 were of course done away at his coming. THE
13034 GOSPEL was then preached as the appointed
13035 means of promoting religion; and it was left to the
13036 discretion of the church to determine, from time to
13037 time, what measures shall be adopted, and what
13038 forms pursued, in giving the Gospel its power. We
13039 are left in the dark as to the measures which were
13040 pursued by the apostles and primitive preachers,
13041 except so far as we can gather it from occasional
13042 hints in the book of Acts. We do not know how
13043 many times they sung and how many times they
13044 prayed in public worship, nor even whether they
13045 sung or prayed at all in their ordinary meetings for
13046 preaching. When Jesus Christ was on earth,
13047 laboring among his disciples, he had nothing to do

13048 with forms or measures. He did from time to time
13049 in this respect just as it would be natural for any
13050 man to do in such cases, without anything like a set
13051 form or mode of doing it. The Jews accused him of
13052 disregarding their forms. His object was to preach
13053 and teach mankind the true religion. And when the
13054 apostles preached afterwards, with the Holy Ghost
13055 sent down from heaven, we hear nothing about
13056 their having a particular system of measures to
13057 carry on their work, or one apostle doing a thing in
13058 a particular way because others did it in that way.
13059 Their commission was, “Go and preach the Gospel,
13060 and disciple all nations.” It did not prescribe any
13061 forms. It did not admit any. No person can pretend
13062 to get any set of forms or particular directions as to
13063 measures, out of this commission. Do it—the best
13064 way you can—ask wisdom from God—use the
13065 faculties he has given you—seek the direction of
13066 the Holy Ghost—go forward and do it. This was
13067 their commission. And their object was to make
13068 known the Gospel in the most effectual way, to
13069 make the truth stand out strikingly, so as to obtain
13070 the attention and secure the obedience of the
13071 greatest number possible. No person can find any
13072 form of doing this laid down in the Bible. It is
13073 preaching the Gospel that stands out prominently
13074 there as the great thing. The form is left out of the
13075 question.

13076

13077 It is manifest, that, in preaching the Gospel, there
13078 must be some kind of measures adopted. The
13079 Gospel must be gotten before the minds of the
13080 people, and measures must be taken so that they
13081 can hear it, and to induce them to attend to it. This
13082 is done by building churches, holding stated or
13083 other meetings, and so on. Without some measures,
13084 it can never be made to take effect among men.

13085

13086 II. I am to show that our present forms of public
13087 worship, and everything, so far as measures are
13088 concerned, have been arrived at by degrees, and by
13089 a succession of New Measures.

13090

13091 1. I will mention some things in regard to the
13092 ministry.

13093

13094 Many years ago, ministers were accustomed to
13095 wear a peculiar habit. It is so now in Catholic
13096 countries. It used to be so here. Ministers had a
13097 peculiar dress as much as soldiers. They used to
13098 wear a cocked hat, and bands instead of a cravat or
13099 stock, and small clothes, and a wig. No matter how
13100 much hair a man had on his head, he must cut it off
13101 and wear a wig. And then he must wear a gown.
13102 All these things were customary, and every
13103 clergyman was held bound to wear them, and it

13104 was not considered proper for him to officiate
13105 without them. All these had doubtless been
13106 introduced by a succession of innovations, for we
13107 have no good reason for believing that the apostles
13108 and primitive ministers dressed differently from
13109 other men.

13110

13111 But now all these things have been given up, one
13112 by one, by a succession of innovations or new
13113 measures, until now in many churches a minister
13114 can go into the pulpit and preach without being
13115 noticed, although dressed like any other man. And
13116 when it was done in regard to each one of them, the
13117 church complained as much as if it had been a
13118 Divine institution given up. It was denounced as an
13119 innovation. When ministers began to lay aside their
13120 cocked hats, and wear hats like other men, it
13121 grieved the elderly people very much; it looked so
13122 “undignified,” they said, for a minister to wear a
13123 round hat. When, in 1827 I wore a fur cap, a
13124 minister said, “that was too bad for a minister.”

13125

13126 When ministers first began, a few years since, to
13127 wear white hats, it was thought by many to be a sad
13128 and very undignified innovation. And even now,
13129 they are so bigoted in some places, that a
13130 clergyman told me but a few days since, in
13131 travelling through New England last summer with

13132 a white hat, he could perceive that it injured his
13133 influence. This spirit should not be looked upon as
13134 harmless; I have good reason to know that it is not
13135 harmless. Thinking men see it to be mere bigotry,
13136 and are exceedingly in danger of viewing
13137 everything about religion in the same light on this
13138 account. This has been the result in many instances.
13139 There is at this day scarcely a minister in the land
13140 who does not feel himself obliged to wear a black
13141 coat, as much as if it were a divine institution. The
13142 church is yet filled with a kind of superstitious
13143 reverence for such things. This is a great stumbling
13144 block to many minds.

13145
13146 So, in like manner, when ministers laid aside their
13147 bands, and wore cravats or stocks, it was said they
13148 were becoming secular, and many found fault.
13149 Even now, in some places, a minister would not
13150 dare to be seen in the pulpit in a cravat or stock.
13151 The people would feel as if they had no clergyman,
13152 if he had no bands. A minister in this city asked
13153 another, but a few days since, if it would do to
13154 wear a black stock in the pulpit. He wore one in his
13155 ordinary intercourse with his people, but doubted
13156 whether it would do to wear it in the pulpit.

13157
13158 So in regard to short clothes; they used to be
13159 thought essential to the ministerial character. Even

13160 now, in Catholic countries, every priest wears
13161 small clothes. Even the little boys there, who are
13162 training for the priest's office, wear their cocked
13163 hats, and black stockings, and small clothes. This
13164 would look ridiculous amongst us. But it used to be
13165 practised in this country. The time was when good
13166 people would have been shocked if a minister had
13167 gone into the pulpit with pantaloons on. They
13168 would have thought he was certainly going to ruin
13169 the church by his innovations. I have been told that
13170 some years ago, in New England, a certain elderly
13171 clergyman was so opposed to the new measure of a
13172 minister's wearing pantaloons, that he would on no
13173 account allow them in his pulpit. A young man was
13174 going to preach for him, who had no small clothes,
13175 and the old minister would not let him officiate in
13176 pantaloons. "Why," said he, "my people would
13177 think I had brought a fop into the pulpit, to see a
13178 man there with pantaloons on, and it would
13179 produce an excitement among them." And so,
13180 finally, the young man was obliged to borrow a pair
13181 of the old gentleman's clothes, and they were too
13182 short for him, and made a ridiculous figure enough.
13183 But any thing was better than such a terrible
13184 innovation as preaching in pantaloons. But reason
13185 has triumphed.
13186

13187 Just so it was in regard to wigs. I remember one
13188 minister, who, though quite a young man, used to
13189 wear an enormous white wig. And the people
13190 talked as if there was a divine right about it, and it
13191 was as hard to give it up, almost, as to give up the
13192 Bible itself. Gowns also were considered essential
13193 to the ministerial character. And even now, in
13194 many congregations in this country, the people will
13195 not tolerate a minister in the pulpit, unless he has a
13196 flowing silk gown, with enormous sleeves as big as
13197 his body. Even in some of the Congregational
13198 Churches in New England, they cannot bear to give
13199 it up. Now, how came people to suppose a minister
13200 must have a gown or a wig, in order to preach with
13201 effect? Why was it that every clergyman was held
13202 obliged to use these things? How is it that not one
13203 of these things have been given up in the churches,
13204 without producing a shock among them? They
13205 have all been given up, one by one, and many
13206 congregations have been distracted for a time by
13207 the innovation. But will any one pretend that the
13208 cause of religion has been injured by it? People felt
13209 as if they could hardly worship God without them,
13210 but plainly their attachment to them was no part of
13211 their religion, that is, no part of the Christian
13212 religion. It was mere superstition. And when these
13213 things were taken away they complained, as Micah
13214 did, "Ye have taken away my gods." But no doubt

13215 their religious character was improved, by
13216 removing these objects of superstitious reverence.
13217 So that the church, on the whole, has been greatly
13218 the gainer by the innovations. Thus you see that the
13219 present mode of a minister's dress has been gained
13220 by a series of new measures.

13221

13222 2. In regard to the order of public worship.

13223

13224 The same difficulties have been met in effecting
13225 every change, because the church have felt as if
13226 God had established just the mode which they were
13227 used to.

13228

13229 (1.) Psalm Books. Formerly it was customary to
13230 sing David's Psalms. By and by there was
13231 introduced a version of the Psalms in rhyme. This
13232 was very bad, to be sure. When ministers tried to
13233 introduce them, the churches were distracted,
13234 people violently opposed, and great trouble was
13235 created by the innovation. But the new measure
13236 triumphed.

13237

13238 Afterwards another version was brought forward in
13239 a better style of poetry, and its introduction was
13240 opposed with much contention, as a new measure.
13241 And finally Watt's version, which is still opposed
13242 in many churches. No longer ago than 1828, when

13243 I was in Philadelphia, I was told that a minister
13244 there was preaching a course of lectures on
13245 psalmody to his congregation, for the purpose of
13246 bringing them to use a better version of psalms and
13247 hymns than the one they were accustomed to. And
13248 even now, in a great many congregations, there are
13249 people who will go out of church, if a psalm or
13250 hymn is given out from a new book. And if Watt's
13251 Psalms should be adopted, they would secede and
13252 form a new congregation, rather than tolerate such
13253 an innovation. The same sort of feeling has been
13254 excited by introducing the "Village Hymns" in
13255 prayer meetings. In one Presbyterian congregation
13256 in this city, within a few years, the minister's wife
13257 wished to introduce the Village Hymns into the
13258 female prayer meetings, not daring to go any
13259 further. She thought she was going to succeed. But
13260 some of the careful souls found out that it was
13261 made in New England, and refused to admit it. "It
13262 is a Hopkinsian thing, I dare say."

13263
13264 (2.) Lining the Hymns. Formerly, when there were
13265 but few books, it was the custom to line the hymns,
13266 as it was called. The deacon used to stand up
13267 before the pulpit, and read off the psalm or hymn, a
13268 line at a time, or two lines at a time, and then sing,
13269 and the rest would all fall in. By and by, they began
13270 to introduce books, and let every one sing from his

13271 book. And what an innovation! Alas, what
13272 confusion and disorder it made! How could the
13273 good people worship God in singing, without
13274 having the deacon to line off the hymn in his holy
13275 tone, for the holiness of it seemed to consist very
13276 much in the tone, which was such that you could
13277 hardly tell whether he was reading or singing.

13278
13279 (3.) Choirs. Afterwards another innovation was
13280 carried. It was thought best to have a select choir of
13281 singers sit by themselves and sing, so as to give an
13282 opportunity to improve the music. But this was
13283 bitterly opposed. Oh, how many congregations
13284 were torn and rent in sunder, by the desire of
13285 ministers and some leading individuals to bring
13286 about an improvement in the cultivation of music,
13287 by forming choirs of singers. People talked about
13288 innovations and new measures, and thought great
13289 evils were coming to the churches, because the
13290 singers were seated by themselves, and cultivated
13291 music, and learned new tunes that the old people
13292 could not sing. It did not use to be so when they
13293 were young, and they would not tolerate such new
13294 lights and novelties in the church.

13295
13296 (4.) Pitchpipes. When music was cultivated, and
13297 choirs seated together, then the singers wanted a
13298 pitchpipe. Formerly, when the lines were given out

13299 by the deacon or clerk, he would strike off into the
13300 tune, and the rest would follow as well as they
13301 could. But when the leaders of choirs begun to use
13302 pitchpipes for the purpose of pitching all their
13303 voices on precisely the same key, what vast
13304 confusion it made! I heard a clergyman say that an
13305 elder in the town where he used to live, would get
13306 up and leave the house whenever he heard the
13307 chorister blow his pipe. "Away with your whistle,"
13308 said he. "What! whistle in the house of God!" He
13309 thought it a profanation.

13310

13311 (5.) Instrumental Music. By and by, in some
13312 congregations, various instruments were introduced
13313 for the purpose of aiding the singers, and
13314 improving the music. When the bass viol was first
13315 introduced, it made a great commotion. People
13316 insisted they might just as well have a fiddle in the
13317 house of God. "Why, it is a fiddle, it is made just
13318 like a fiddle, only a little larger, and who can
13319 worship where there is a fiddle? By and by you will
13320 want to dance in the meeting house." Who has not
13321 heard these things talked of, as matters of the most
13322 vital importance to the cause of religion and the
13323 purity of the church? Ministers, in grave
13324 ecclesiastical assemblies, have spent days in
13325 discussing them. In a synod in the Presbyterian
13326 church, only a few years ago, it was seriously

13327 talked of by some, as a matter worthy of discipline
13328 in a certain church, that they had an organ in the
13329 house of God. This within a few years. And there
13330 are many churches now who would not tolerate an
13331 organ. They would not be half so much excited to
13332 be told that sinners are going to hell, as to be told
13333 that there is going to be an organ in the meeting
13334 house. Oh, in how many places can you get the
13335 church to do anything else, easier than to come
13336 along in an easy and natural way to do what is
13337 needed, and wisest, and best, for promoting
13338 religion and saving souls! They act as if they had a
13339 “Thus saith the Lord,” for every custom and
13340 practice that has been handed down to them, or that
13341 they have long followed themselves, however
13342 absurd or injurious.

13343
13344 (6.) Extemporary Prayers. How many people are
13345 there, who talk just as if the Prayer Book was of
13346 divine institution! And I suppose multitudes
13347 believe it is. And in some parts of the church a man
13348 would not be allowed to pray without his book
13349 before him.

13350
13351 (7.) Preaching without notes. A few years since, a
13352 lady in Philadelphia was invited to hear a certain
13353 minister preach, and she refused, because he did
13354 not read his sermons. She seemed to think it would

13355 be profane for a man to go into the pulpit and talk,
13356 just as if he was talking to the people about some
13357 interesting and important subject. Just as if God
13358 had enjoined the use of notes and written sermons.
13359 They do not know that notes themselves are an
13360 innovation, and a modern one too. They were
13361 introduced in a time of political difficulties in
13362 England. The ministers were afraid they should be
13363 accused of preaching something against the
13364 government, unless they could show what they had
13365 preached, by having all written down beforehand.
13366 And with a time-serving spirit, they yielded to
13367 political considerations, and imposed a yoke of
13368 bondage upon the church. And, now in many
13369 places, they cannot tolerate extempore preaching.

13370

13371 (8.) Kneeling in Prayer. This has made a great
13372 disturbance in many parts of the country. The time
13373 has been in the Congregational churches in New
13374 England, when a man or woman would be ashamed
13375 to be seen kneeling at a prayer meeting, for fear of
13376 being taken for a Methodist. I have prayed in
13377 families where I was the only person that would
13378 kneel. The others all stood, lest they should imitate
13379 the Methodists, I suppose, and thus countenance
13380 innovations upon the established form. Others,
13381 again, talk as if there was no other posture but
13382 kneeling, that could be acceptable in prayer.

13383

13384 3. Labors of Laymen.

13385

13386 (1.) Lay Prayers. Much objection was formerly
13387 made against allowing any man to pray or to take a
13388 part in managing a prayer meeting, unless he was a
13389 clergyman. It used to be said that for a layman to
13390 pray in public, was interfering with the dignity of
13391 ministers, and was not to be tolerated. A minister in
13392 Pennsylvania told me that, a few years ago, he
13393 appointed a prayer meeting in the church, and the
13394 elders opposed it and turned it out of the house.
13395 They said they would not have such work, they had
13396 hired a minister to do the praying, and he should do
13397 it, and they were not going to have common men
13398 praying.

13399

13400 Ministers and many others have very extensively
13401 objected against a layman's praying in public, and
13402 especially in the presence of a minister. That would
13403 let down the authority of the clergy, and was not to
13404 be tolerated. At a synod held in this State, there
13405 was a synodical prayer meeting appointed. The
13406 committee of arrangements, as it was to be a formal
13407 thing, designated beforehand the persons who were
13408 to take part, and named two clergymen and one
13409 layman. The layman was a man of talents and
13410 information equal to most ministers. But one doctor

13411 of divinity got up and seriously objected to a
13412 layman's being asked to pray before that synod. It
13413 was not usual, he said; it infringed upon the rights
13414 of the clergy, and he wished no innovations. What
13415 a state of things!

13416
13417 (2.) Lay exhortation. This has been made a
13418 question of vast importance, one which has agitated
13419 all New England, and many other parts of the
13420 country, whether laymen ought to be allowed to
13421 exhort in public meetings. Many ministers have
13422 labored to shut up the mouths of laymen entirely.
13423 They overlooked the practice of the primitive
13424 churches. So much opposition was made to this
13425 practice nearly a hundred years ago, that President
13426 Edwards actually had to take up the subject, and
13427 write a labored defence of the rights and duties of
13428 laymen. But the opposition has not entirely ceased
13429 to this day. "What! A man that is not a minister, to
13430 talk in public! it will create confusion, it will let
13431 down the ministry; what will people think of us,
13432 ministers, if we allow common men to do the same
13433 things that we do?" Astonishing!

13434
13435 But now, all these things are gone by, in most
13436 places, and laymen can pray and exhort without the
13437 least objection. The evils that were feared, from the
13438 labors of laymen, have not been realized, and many

13439 ministers are glad to have them exercise their gifts
13440 in doing good.

13441

13442 4. Female Prayer Meetings. Within the last few
13443 years, female prayer meetings have been
13444 extensively opposed in this State. What dreadful
13445 things! A minister, now dead, said that when he
13446 first attempted to establish these meetings, he had
13447 all the clergy around opposed to him. "Set women
13448 to praying? Why, the next thing, I suppose, will be
13449 to set them to preaching." And serious
13450 apprehensions were entertained for the safety of
13451 Zion, if women should be allowed to get together
13452 to pray. And even now, they are not tolerated in
13453 some churches.

13454

13455 So it has been in regard to all the active movements
13456 of the church. Missions, Sunday Schools, and
13457 everything of the kind, have been opposed, and
13458 have gained their present hold in the church only
13459 by a succession of struggles and a series of
13460 innovations. A Baptist Association in
13461 Pennsylvania, some years since, disclaimed all
13462 fellowship with any minister that had been liberally
13463 educated, or that supported Missions, Bible
13464 Societies, Sabbath Schools, Temperance Societies,
13465 etc. All these were denounced as New Measures,
13466 not found in the Bible, and that would necessarily

13467 lead to distraction and confusion in the churches.
13468 The same thing has been done by some among the
13469 German churches. And in many Presbyterian
13470 churches, there are found those who will take the
13471 same ground, and denounce all these things, with
13472 the exception, perhaps, of an educated ministry, as
13473 innovations, new measures, new lights, going in
13474 their own strength, and the like, and as calculated
13475 to do great evil.

13476

13477 5. I will mention several men who have in Divine
13478 providence been set forward as prominent in
13479 introducing these innovations.

13480

13481 (1.) The apostles were great innovators, as you all
13482 know. After the resurrection, and after the Holy
13483 Spirit was poured out upon them, they set out to
13484 remodel the church. They broke down the Jewish
13485 system of measures and rooted it out, so as to leave
13486 scarcely a vestige.

13487

13488 (2.) Luther and the Reformers. You all know what
13489 difficulties they had to contend with, and the reason
13490 was, that they were trying to introduce new
13491 measures—new modes of performing the public
13492 duties of religion, and new expedients to bring the
13493 Gospel with power to the hearts of men. All the
13494 strange and ridiculous things of the Roman

13495 Catholics were held to in the church with
13496 pertinacious obstinacy, as if they were of Divine
13497 authority. And such an excitement was raised by
13498 the attempt to change them, as well nigh involved
13499 all Europe in blood.

13500
13501 (3.) Wesley and his coadjutors. Wesley did not at
13502 first tear off from the Established Church in
13503 England, but formed little classes everywhere, that
13504 grew into a church within a church. He remained in
13505 the Episcopal church, but he introduced so much of
13506 new measures, as to fill all England with
13507 excitement and uproar and opposition, and he was
13508 everywhere denounced as an innovator and a stirrer
13509 up of sedition, and a teacher of new things which it
13510 was not lawful to receive.

13511
13512 Whitefield was a man of the same school, and like
13513 Wesley was an innovator. I believe he and several
13514 individuals of his associates were expelled from
13515 college for getting up such a new measure, as a
13516 social prayer meeting. They would pray together
13517 and expound the Scriptures, and this was such a
13518 daring novelty that it could not be borne. When
13519 Whitefield came to this country, what an
13520 astonishing opposition was raised! Often he well
13521 nigh lost his life, and barely escaped by the skin of
13522 his teeth. Now, everybody looks upon him as the

13523 glory of the age in which he lived. And many of
13524 our own denomination have so far divested
13525 themselves of prejudice as to think Wesley not only
13526 a good but a wise and pre-eminently useful man.
13527 Then almost the entire church viewed them with
13528 animosity, fearing that the innovations he
13529 introduced would destroy the church.

13530
13531 (4.) President Edwards. This great man was famous
13532 in his day for new measures. Among other
13533 innovations, he refused to baptize the children of
13534 impenitent parents. The practice of baptizing the
13535 children of the ungodly had been introduced in the
13536 New England churches in the preceding century,
13537 and had become nearly universal, President
13538 Edwards saw that the practice was wrong, and he
13539 refused to do it, and the refusal shook all the
13540 churches of New England. A hundred ministers
13541 joined and determined to put him down. He wrote a
13542 book on the subject, and defeated them all. It
13543 produced one of the greatest excitements there ever
13544 was in New England. Nothing, unless it was the
13545 Revolutionary War, ever produced an equal
13546 excitement.

13547
13548 The General Association of Connecticut refused to
13549 countenance Whitefield, he was such an innovator.
13550 “Why, he will preach out of doors and anywhere!”

13551 Awful! What a terrible thing, that a man should
13552 preach in the fields or in the streets. Cast him out.

13553

13554 All these were devoted men, seeking out ways to
13555 do good and save souls. And precisely the same
13556 kind of opposition was experienced by all the
13557 ecclesiastical bodies, obstructing their path and
13558 trying to destroy their character and influence. A
13559 book, now extant, was written in President
13560 Edwards' time, by a doctor of divinity, and signed
13561 by a multitude of ministers, against Whitefield and
13562 Edwards, their associates and their measures. A
13563 letter was published in this city by a minister
13564 against Whitefield, which brought up the same
13565 objections against innovations that we hear now. In
13566 the time of the late opposition to revivals in the
13567 State of New York, a copy of this letter was taken
13568 to the editor of a religious periodical with a request
13569 that he would publish it. He refused, and gave for a
13570 reason, that if published, many would apply it to
13571 the controversy that is going on now. I mention it
13572 merely to show how identical is the opposition that
13573 is raised in different ages against all new measures
13574 designed to advance the cause of religion.

13575

13576 6. In the present generation, many things have been
13577 introduced which have proved useful, but have
13578 been opposed on the ground that they were

13579 innovations. And as many are still unsettled in
13580 regard to them, I have thought it best to make some
13581 remarks concerning them. There are three things in
13582 particular which have chiefly attracted remark, and
13583 therefore I shall speak of them. They are Anxious
13584 Meetings, Protracted Meetings, and the Anxious
13585 Seat. These are all opposed, and are called new
13586 measures.

13587
13588 (1.) Anxious Meetings. The first that I ever heard
13589 of under that name, was in New England, where
13590 they were appointed for the purpose of holding
13591 personal conversation with anxious sinners, and to
13592 adapt instruction to the cases of individuals, so as
13593 to lead them immediately to Christ. The design of
13594 them is evidently philosophical, but they have been
13595 opposed because they were new. There are two
13596 modes of conducting an anxious meeting, either of
13597 which may effect the object of them.

13598
13599 (a.) By spending a few moments in personal
13600 conversation and learning the state of mind of each
13601 individual, and then in a address to the whole, take
13602 up all their errors and remove their difficulties
13603 together.

13604
13605 (b.) By going round to each, and taking up each
13606 individual case, and going over the whole ground

13607 with each one separately, and getting them to
13608 promise to give up their hearts to God. Either way
13609 they are important, and have been found most
13610 successful in practice. But multitudes have
13611 objected to them because they were new.

13612
13613 (2.) Protracted Meetings. These are not new, but
13614 have always been practised, in some form or other,
13615 ever since there was a church on earth. The Jewish
13616 festivals were nothing else but protracted meetings.
13617 In regard to the manner, they were conducted
13618 differently from what they are now. But the design
13619 was the same, to devote a series of days to religious
13620 services, in order to make a more powerful
13621 impression of divine things upon the minds of the
13622 people. All denominations of Christians, when
13623 religion prospers among them, hold protracted
13624 meetings. In Scotland they used to begin on
13625 Thursday at all their communion seasons, and
13626 continue until after the Sabbath. The Episcopalians,
13627 Baptists, and Methodists all hold protracted
13628 meetings. Yet now in our day they have been
13629 opposed, particularly among Presbyterians, and
13630 called new measures, and regarded as fraught with
13631 all manner of evil, notwithstanding they have been
13632 so manifestly and so extensively blessed. I will
13633 suggest a few things that ought to be considered in
13634 regard to them.

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(a.) In appointing them, regard should be had to the circumstances of the people; whether the church are able to give their attention and devote their time to carry on the meeting. In some instances this rule has been neglected. Some have thought it right to break in upon the necessary business of the community. In the country, they would appoint the meeting in harvest time, and in the city in the height of the business season, when all the men were necessarily occupied and pressed with their temporal labors. In defence of this course it is said that our business should always be made to yield to God's business; that eternal things are of so much more importance than temporal things, that worldly business of any kind, and at any time, should be made to yield and give place to a protracted meeting. But the worldly business in which we are engaged is not our business. It is as much God's business, and as much our duty, as our prayers and protracted meetings are. If we do not consider our business in this light, we have not yet taken the first lesson in religion; we have not learned to do all things to the glory of God. With this view of the subject, separating our business from religion, we are living six days for ourselves, and the seventh for God. Real duties never interfere with each other. Week days have their appropriate duties, and

13663 the Sabbath its appropriate duties, and we are to be
13664 equally pious on every day in the week, and in the
13665 performance of the duties of every day. We are to
13666 plough, and sow, and sell our goods, and attend to
13667 our various callings, with the same singleness of
13668 view to the glory of God, that we go to church on
13669 the Sabbath, and pray in our families, and read our
13670 Bibles. This is a first principle in religion. He that
13671 does not know and act on this principle has not
13672 learned the A B C of piety as yet. Now there are
13673 particular seasons of the year in which God in his
13674 providence calls upon men to attend to business,
13675 because worldly business at the time is particularly
13676 urgent, and must be done at that season, if done at
13677 all; seed time and harvest for the farmer, and the
13678 business seasons for the merchant. And we have no
13679 right to say, in those particular seasons, that we
13680 will quit our business and have a protracted
13681 meeting. The fact is, the business is not ours. And
13682 unless God, by some special indication of his
13683 providence, shown it to be his pleasure that we
13684 should turn aside and have a protracted meeting at
13685 such times, I look upon it as tempting God to
13686 appoint them. It is saying, “O God, this worldly
13687 business is our business, and we are willing to lay
13688 it aside for thy business.” Unless God has indicated
13689 it to be his pleasure to pour out his Spirit, and
13690 revive his work at such a season, and has thus

13691 called upon his people to quit, for the time being,
13692 their ordinary employments, and attend especially
13693 to a protracted meeting, it appears to me that God
13694 might say to us in such circumstances, “Who hath
13695 required this of your hand?”

13696
13697 God has a right to dispose of our time as he
13698 pleases, to require us to give up any portion of our
13699 time, or all our time, to duties of instruction and
13700 devotion. And when circumstances plainly call for
13701 it, it is our duty to lay aside every other business,
13702 and make direct and continuous efforts for the
13703 salvation of souls. If we transact our business upon
13704 right principles, and from right motives, and
13705 wholly for the glory of God, we shall never object
13706 to go aside to attend a protracted meeting whenever
13707 there appears to be a call for it in the providence of
13708 God. A man who considers himself a steward or a
13709 clerk, does not consider it a hardship to rest from
13710 his labors on the Sabbath, but a privilege. The
13711 selfish owner may feel unwilling to suspend his
13712 business on the Sabbath. But the clerk, who
13713 transacts business not for himself but for his
13714 employer, considers it a privilege to rest upon the
13715 Sabbath. So we, if we do our business for God,
13716 shall not think it hard if he makes it our duty to
13717 suspend our worldly business and attend a
13718 protracted meeting. We should rather consider it in

13719 the light of a holiday. Whenever, therefore, you
13720 hear a man pleading that he cannot leave his
13721 business to attend a protracted meeting—that it is
13722 his duty to attend to business, there is reason to fear
13723 that he considers the business as his own, and the
13724 meeting as God’s business. If he felt that the
13725 business of the store or farm was as much God’s
13726 business as attending a protracted meeting, he
13727 would doubtless be very willing to rest from his
13728 worldly toils, and go up to the house of God and be
13729 refreshed whenever there was an indication, on the
13730 part of God, that the community was called to that
13731 work. It is highly worthy of remark, that the Jewish
13732 festivals were appointed at those seasons of the
13733 year when there was the least pressure of
13734 indispensable worldly business.

13735
13736 In some instances, such meetings have been
13737 appointed in the very pressure of the business
13738 seasons, and have been followed with no good
13739 results, evidently for the want of attention to the
13740 rule here laid down. In other cases, meetings have
13741 been appointed in seasons when there was a great
13742 pressure of worldly business, and have been
13743 signally blessed. But in those cases the blessing
13744 followed because the meeting was appointed in
13745 obedience to the indications of the will of God, by
13746 those who had spiritual discernment, and

13747 understood the signs of the times. And in many
13748 cases, doubtless, individuals have attended who
13749 really supposed themselves to be giving up their
13750 own business, to attend to God's business, and in
13751 such cases they made what they supposed to be a
13752 real sacrifice, and God in mercy granted them the
13753 blessing.

13754
13755 (b.) Ordinarily, a protracted meeting should be
13756 conducted through, and the labor chiefly performed
13757 by, the same minister, if possible. Sometimes
13758 protracted meetings have been held and
13759 dependence placed on ministers coming in from
13760 day to day. And they would have no blessing. And
13761 the reason was obvious. They did not come in a
13762 state of mind to enter into the work, and they did
13763 not know the state of people's minds, so as to know
13764 what to preach. Suppose a person who was sick
13765 should call in a different physician every day. He
13766 would not know what the symptoms had been, nor
13767 what was the course of the disease or of the
13768 treatment, nor what remedies had been tried, nor
13769 what the patient could bear. Why, he would
13770 certainly kill the patient. Just so in a protracted
13771 meeting, carried on by a succession of ministers.
13772 None of them get into the spirit of it, and generally
13773 they do more hurt than good.
13774

13775 A protracted meeting should not, ordinarily, be
13776 appointed, unless they can secure the right kind of
13777 help, and get a minister or two who will agree to
13778 stay on the ground till the meeting is done. Then
13779 they will probably secure a rich blessing.

13780
13781 (c.) There should not be so many public meetings
13782 as to interfere with the duties of the closet and of
13783 the family. Otherwise Christians will lose their
13784 spirituality and let go their hold of God, and the
13785 meeting will run down.

13786
13787 (d.) Families should not put themselves out so
13788 much in entertaining strangers as to neglect prayer
13789 and other duties. It is often the case that when a
13790 protracted meeting is held, some of the principal
13791 families in the church, I mean those who are
13792 principally relied on to sustain the meetings, do not
13793 get into the work at all. And the reason is, that they
13794 are encumbered with much serving. They often
13795 take needless trouble to provide for guests who
13796 come from a distance to the meeting, and lay
13797 themselves out very foolishly to make an
13798 entertainment, not only comfortable but
13799 sumptuous. It should always be understood that it
13800 is the duty of families to have as little working and
13801 parade as possible, and to get along with their
13802 hospitality in the easiest way, so that they may all

13803 have time to pray, and go to the meeting, and to
13804 attend to the things of the kingdom.

13805

13806 (e.) By all means guard against unnecessarily
13807 keeping late hours. If people keep late hours, night
13808 after night, they will inevitably wear out the body,
13809 and their health will fail, and there will be a
13810 reaction. They sometimes allow themselves to get
13811 so excited as to lose their sleep, and become
13812 irregular in their meals, till they break down, and a
13813 reaction must come. Unless there is the greatest
13814 pains taken to keep regular, the excitement will get
13815 so great that nature will give way, and they run
13816 down, and the work stops.

13817

13818 (f.) All sectarianism should be carefully avoided. If
13819 a sectarian spirit breaks out either in the preaching,
13820 or praying, or conversation, it will counteract all
13821 the good of the meeting.

13822

13823 (g.) Be watchful against placing dependence on a
13824 protracted meeting, as if that of itself would
13825 produce a revival. This is a point of great danger,
13826 and has always been so. This is the great reason
13827 why the church in successive generations has
13828 always had to give up her measures—because
13829 Christians had come to rely on them for success. So
13830 it has been in some places, in regard to Protracted

13831 Meetings. They have been so blessed that in some
13832 places the people have thought that if they should
13833 only have a protracted meeting, they would have a
13834 blessing, and sinners would be converted of course.
13835 And so they have appointed their meeting, without
13836 any preparation in the church, and just sent abroad
13837 for some minister of note, and set him to preaching,
13838 as if that would convert sinners. It is obvious that
13839 the blessing would be withheld from a meeting got
13840 up in this way.

13841
13842 (h.) Avoid adopting the idea that a revival cannot
13843 be enjoyed without a Protracted Meeting. Some
13844 churches have got into a morbid state of feeling on
13845 this subject. Their zeal has become all spasmodic
13846 and feverish, so that they never think of doing
13847 anything to promote a revival, only in that way.
13848 When a protracted meeting is held, they will seem
13849 to be wonderfully zealous, and then sink down to a
13850 torpid state till another protracted meeting produces
13851 another spasm. And now multitudes in the church
13852 think it is necessary to give up protracted meetings
13853 because they are abused in this way. This ought to
13854 be guarded against, in every church, so that they
13855 may not be driven to give them up, and lose all the
13856 benefits that protracted meetings are calculated to
13857 produce.

13858

13859 (3.) The Anxious Seat.

13860

13861 By this I mean the appointment of some particular
13862 seat in the place of meeting, where the anxious may
13863 come and be addressed particularly, and be made
13864 subjects of prayer, and sometimes be conversed
13865 with individually. Of late this measure has met
13866 with more opposition than any of the others. What
13867 is the great objection? I cannot see it. The design of
13868 the anxious seat is undoubtedly philosophical, and
13869 according to the laws of mind. It has two bearings:

13870

13871 1. When a person is seriously troubled in mind,
13872 everybody knows that there is a powerful tendency
13873 to conceal it. When a person is borne down with a
13874 sense of his condition, if you can get him willing to
13875 have it known, if you can get him to break away
13876 from the chains of pride, you have gained an
13877 important point towards his conversion. This is
13878 agreeable to the philosophy of the human mind.
13879 How many thousands are there who will bless God
13880 to eternity, that when pressed by the truth they
13881 were ever brought to take this step, by which they
13882 threw off the idea that it was a dreadful thing to
13883 have anybody know that they were serious about
13884 their souls.

13885

13886 2. Another bearing of the anxious seat, is to detect
13887 deception and delusion, and thus prevent false
13888 hopes. It has been opposed on the ground, that it
13889 was calculated to create delusion and false hopes.
13890 But this objection is unreasonable. The truth is the
13891 other way. Suppose I were preaching on the subject
13892 of Temperance, and that I should first show the
13893 evils of intemperance, and bring up the drunkard
13894 and his family, and show the various evils
13895 produced, till every heart is beating with emotion.
13896 Then I portray the great danger of moderate
13897 drinking, and show how it leads to intoxication and
13898 ruin, and that there is no safety but in TOTAL
13899 ABSTINENCE, till a hundred hearts are ready to
13900 say, "I will never drink another drop of ardent spirit
13901 in the world; if I do, I shall expect to find a
13902 drunkard's grave." Now, I stop short, and let the
13903 pledge be circulated, and everyone that is fully
13904 resolved is ready to sign it. But how many will
13905 begin to draw back and hesitate, when you begin to
13906 call on them to sign a pledge of total abstinence.
13907 One says to himself "Shall I sign it, or not? I
13908 thought my mind was made up, but this signing a
13909 pledge never to drink again, I do not know about
13910 that." Thus you see that when a person is called
13911 upon to give a pledge, if he is found not to be
13912 decided, he makes it manifest that he was not
13913 sincere. That is, he never came to that resolution on

13914 the subject, which could be relied on to control his
13915 future life. Just so with the awakened sinner.
13916 Preach to him, and at the moment he thinks he is
13917 willing to do anything; he thinks he is determined
13918 to serve the Lord; but bring him to the test, call on
13919 him to do one thing, to take one step that shall
13920 identify him with the people of God, or cross his
13921 pride—his pride comes up, and he refuses; his
13922 delusion is brought out, and he finds himself a lost
13923 sinner still; whereas, if you had not done it, he
13924 might have gone away flattering himself that he
13925 was a Christian. If you say to him, “There is the
13926 anxious seat, come out and avow your
13927 determination to be on the Lord’s side,” and if he is
13928 not willing to do so small a thing as that, then he is
13929 not willing to do anything, and there he is, brought
13930 out before his own conscience. It uncovers the
13931 delusion of the human heart, and prevents a great
13932 many spurious conversions, by showing those who
13933 might otherwise imagine themselves willing to do
13934 anything for Christ, that in fact they are willing to
13935 do nothing.

13936
13937 The church has always felt it necessary to have
13938 something of the kind to answer this very purpose.
13939 In the days of the apostles baptism answered this
13940 purpose. The Gospel was preached to the people,
13941 and then all those who were willing to be on the

13942 side of Christ were called on to be baptized. It held
13943 the precise place that the anxious seat does now, as
13944 a public manifestation of their determination to be
13945 Christians. And in modern times, those who have
13946 been violently opposed to the anxious seat have
13947 been obliged to adopt some substitute, or they
13948 could not get along in promoting a revival. Some
13949 have adopted the expedient of inviting the people
13950 who were anxious for their souls to stay for
13951 conversation after the rest of the congregation had
13952 retired. But what is the difference? This is as much
13953 setting up a test as the other. Others, who would be
13954 much ashamed to employ the anxious seat, have
13955 asked those who have any feeling on the subject to
13956 sit still in their seats when the rest retire. Others
13957 have called the anxious to retire into the lecture
13958 room. The object of all these is the same, and the
13959 principle is the same, to bring people out from the
13960 refuge of false shame. One man I heard of who was
13961 very far gone in his opposition to new measures, in
13962 one of his meetings requested all those who were
13963 willing to submit to God, or desired to be made
13964 subjects of prayer, to signify it by leaning forward
13965 and putting their heads down upon the pew before
13966 them. Who does not see that this was a mere
13967 evasion of the anxious seat, and that it was
13968 designed to answer the purpose in its place, and he

13969 adopted this because he felt that something of the
13970 kind was important?

13971

13972 Now what objection is there against taking a
13973 particular seat, or rising up, or going into the
13974 lecture-room? They all mean the same thing, when
13975 properly conducted. And they are not novelties in
13976 principle at all. The thing has always been done in
13977 substance. In Joshua's day, he called on the people
13978 to decide what they would do, and they spoke right
13979 out in the meeting, "We will serve the Lord; the
13980 Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we
13981 obey."

13982

13983 REMARKS.

13984

13985 1. If we examine the history of the church we shall
13986 find that there never has been an extensive
13987 reformation, except by new measures. Whenever
13988 the churches get settled down into a form of doing
13989 things, they soon get to rely upon the outward
13990 doing of it, and so retain the form of religion while
13991 they lose the substance. And then it has always
13992 been found impossible to arouse them so as to
13993 bring about a reformation of the evils, and produce
13994 a revival of religion, by simply pursuing that
13995 established form. Perhaps it is not too much to say,
13996 that it is impossible for God himself to bring about

13997 reformations but by new measures. At least, it is a
13998 fact that God has always chosen this way, as the
13999 wisest and best that he could devise or adopt. And
14000 although it has always been the case, that the very
14001 measures which God has chosen to employ, and
14002 which he has blessed in reviving his work, have
14003 been opposed as new measures, and have been
14004 denounced, yet he has continued to act upon the
14005 same principle. When he has found that a certain
14006 mode has lost its influence by having become a
14007 form, he brings up some new measure, which will
14008 BREAK IN upon their lazy habits, and WAKE UP
14009 a slumbering church. And great good has resulted.

14010
14011 2. The same distinctions, in substance, that now
14012 exist, have always existed, in all seasons of
14013 reformation and revival of religion. There have
14014 always been those who particularly adhered to their
14015 forms and notions, and precise way of doing things,
14016 as if they had a "Thus saith the Lord" for every one
14017 of them. They have called those that differed from
14018 them, who were trying to roll the ark of salvation
14019 forward, Methodists, New Lights, Radicals, New
14020 School, New Divinity, and various other
14021 opprobrious names. And the declensions that have
14022 followed have been uniformly owing to two causes,
14023 which should by no means be overlooked by the
14024 church.

14025

14026 (1.) The Old School, or Old Measure party, have
14027 persevered in their opposition, and eagerly seized
14028 hold of any real or apparent indiscretion in the
14029 friends of the work.

14030

14031 In such cases, the churches have gradually lost their
14032 confidence in the opposition to new measures, and
14033 the cry of “New Divinity,” and “Innovation” has
14034 ceased to alarm them. They see that the blessing of
14035 God is with those that are thus accused of new
14036 measures and innovation, and the continued
14037 opposition of the Old School, together with the
14038 continued success of the New School, have
14039 destroyed their confidence in the opposition, and
14040 they get tired of hearing the incessant cry of “New
14041 Lights,” and “New Divinity,” and “New
14042 Measures.” Thus the scale has turned, and the
14043 churches have pronounced a verdict in favor of the
14044 New School, and of condemnation against the Old
14045 School.

14046

14047 (2.) But now, mark me: right here in this state of
14048 things, the devil has, again and again, taken the
14049 advantage, and individuals have risen up, and being
14050 sustained by the confidence of the churches in the
14051 New Measure party, and finding them sick of
14052 opposition, and ready to do anything that would

14053 promote the interests of Christ's kingdom, they
14054 have driven headlong themselves, and in some
14055 instances have carried the churches into the very
14056 vortex of those difficulties which have been
14057 predicted by their opposers. Thus, when the battle
14058 had been fought, and the victory gained, the rash
14059 zeal of some well-meaning but headlong
14060 individuals, has brought about a reaction that has
14061 spread a pall over the churches for years. This was
14062 the case, as is well known, in the days of President
14063 Edwards. Here is a rock, upon which a light-house
14064 is now built, and upon which if the church now run
14065 aground, both parties are entirely without excuse. It
14066 is now well known, or ought to be known, that the
14067 declension which followed the revivals in those
14068 days, together with the declensions which have
14069 repeatedly occurred, were owing to the combined
14070 influence of the continued and pertinacious
14071 opposition of the Old School, and the ultimate bad
14072 spirit and recklessness of some individuals of the
14073 New School.

14074
14075 And here the note of alarm should be distinctly
14076 sounded to both parties, lest the devil should
14077 prevail against us, at the very point, and under the
14078 very circumstances, where he has so often
14079 prevailed. Shall the church never learn wisdom
14080 from experience? How often, Oh, how often must

14081 these scenes be acted over before the millennium
14082 shall come! When will it once be, that the church
14083 may be revived, and religion prevail, without
14084 exciting such opposition in the church, as
14085 eventually to bring about a reaction?

14086

14087 3. The present cry against new measures is highly
14088 ridiculous, when we consider the quarter from
14089 which it comes, and all the circumstances in the
14090 case. It is truly astonishing that grave ministers
14091 should really feel alarmed at the new measures of
14092 the present day, as if new measures were
14093 something new under the sun, and as if the present
14094 form and manner of doing things had descended
14095 from the apostles, and were established by a "Thus
14096 saith the Lord:" when the truth is, that every step of
14097 the church's advance from the gross darkness of
14098 Popery, has been through the introduction of one
14099 new measure after another. We now look with
14100 astonishment, and are inclined to look almost with
14101 contempt, upon the cry of "Innovation," that has
14102 preceded our day; and as we review the fears that
14103 multitudes in the church have entertained in by-
14104 gone days with respect to innovation, we find it
14105 difficult to account for what appear to us the
14106 groundless and absurd, at least, if not ridiculous
14107 objections and difficulties which they made. But,
14108 my hearers, is it not wonderful, that at this late day,

14109 after the church has had so much experience in
14110 these matters, that grave and pious men should
14111 seriously feel alarmed at the introduction of the
14112 simple, the philosophical, and greatly prospered
14113 measures of the last ten years? As if new measures
14114 were something not to be tolerated, of highly
14115 disastrous tendency, and that should wake the notes
14116 and echoes of alarm in every nook and corner of
14117 the church.

14118

14119 4. We see why it is that those who have been
14120 making the ado about new measures have not been
14121 successful in promoting revivals.

14122

14123 They have been taken up with the evils, real or
14124 imaginary, which have attended this great and
14125 blessed work of God. That there have been evils,
14126 no one will pretend to deny. But I do believe, that
14127 no revival ever existed since the world began, of so
14128 great power and extent as the one that has prevailed
14129 for the last ten years, which has not been attended
14130 with as great or greater evils. Still a large portion of
14131 the church have been frightening themselves and
14132 others, by giving constant attention to the evils of
14133 revivals. One of the professors in a Presbyterian
14134 Theological Seminary, felt it his duty to write a
14135 series of letters to Presbyterians, which were
14136 extensively circulated, the object of which seemed

14137 to be to sound the note of alarm throughout all the
14138 borders of the church, in regard to the evils
14139 attending revivals. While men are taken up with the
14140 evils instead of the excellencies of a blessed work
14141 of God, how can it be expected that they will be
14142 useful in promoting it? I would say all this in great
14143 kindness, but still it is a point upon which I must
14144 not be silent.

14145
14146 5. Without new measures it is impossible that the
14147 church should succeed in gaining the attention of
14148 the world to religion. There are so many exciting
14149 subjects constantly brought before the public mind,
14150 such a running to and fro, so many that cry “Lo
14151 here,” and “Lo there,” that the church cannot
14152 maintain her ground, cannot command attention,
14153 without very exciting preaching, and sufficient
14154 novelty in measures, to get the public ear. The
14155 measures of politicians, of infidels and heretics, the
14156 scrambling after wealth, the increase of luxury, and
14157 the ten thousand exciting and counteracting
14158 influences that bear upon the church and upon the
14159 world, will gain their attention and turn all men
14160 away from the sanctuary and from the altars of the
14161 Lord, unless we increase in wisdom and piety, and
14162 wisely adopt such new measures as are calculated
14163 to get the attention of men to the Gospel of Christ. I
14164 have already said, in the course of these lectures,

14165 that novelties should be introduced no faster than
14166 they are really called for. They should be
14167 introduced with the greatest wisdom, and caution,
14168 and prayerfulness, and in a manner calculated to
14169 excite as little opposition as possible. But new
14170 measures we must have. And may God prevent the
14171 church from settling down in any set of forms, and
14172 getting the present or any other edition of her
14173 measures stereotyped.

14174

14175 6. It is evident that we must have more exciting
14176 preaching, to meet the character and wants of the
14177 age. Ministers are generally beginning to find this
14178 out. And some of them complain of it, and suppose
14179 it to be owing to new measures, as they call them.
14180 They say that such ministers as our fathers would
14181 have been glad to hear, now cannot be heard,
14182 cannot get a settlement, nor collect an audience.
14183 And they think that new measures have perverted
14184 the taste of the people. But this is not the difficulty.
14185 The character of the age is changed, and these men
14186 have not conformed to it, but retain the same stiff,
14187 dry, prosing style of preaching that answered half a
14188 century ago.

14189

14190 Look at the Methodists. Many of their ministers are
14191 unlearned, in the common sense of the term, many
14192 of them taken right from the shop or the farm, and

14193 yet they have gathered congregations, and pushed
14194 their way, and won souls everywhere. Wherever
14195 the Methodists have gone, their plain, pointed and
14196 simple, but warm and animated mode of preaching
14197 has always gathered congregations. Few
14198 Presbyterian ministers have gathered so large
14199 assemblies, or won so many souls. Now are we to
14200 be told that we must pursue the same old, formal
14201 mode of doing things, amidst all these changes? As
14202 well might the North River be rolled back, as the
14203 world converted under such preaching. Those who
14204 adopt a different style of preaching, as the
14205 Methodists have done, will run away from us. The
14206 world will escape from under the influence of this
14207 old fashioned or rather new fashioned ministry. It
14208 is impossible that the public mind should be held
14209 by such preaching. We must have exciting,
14210 powerful preaching, or the devil will have the
14211 people, except what the Methodists can save. It is
14212 impossible that our ministers should continue to do
14213 good, unless we have innovations in regard to the
14214 style of preaching. Many ministers are finding it
14215 out already, that a Methodist preacher, without the
14216 advantages of a liberal education will draw a
14217 congregation around him which a Presbyterian
14218 minister, with perhaps ten times as much learning,
14219 cannot equal, because he has not the earnest

14220 manner of the other, and does not pour out fire
14221 upon his hearers when he preaches.

14222
14223 7. We see the importance of having young
14224 ministers obtain right views of revivals. In a
14225 multitude of cases, I have seen that great pains are
14226 taken to frighten our young men, who are preparing
14227 for the ministry, about the evils of revivals, new
14228 measures, and the like. Young men in some
14229 theological seminaries are taught to look upon new
14230 measures as if they were the very inventions of the
14231 devil. How can such men have revivals. So when
14232 they come out, they look about, and watch, and
14233 start, as if the devil was there. Some young men in
14234 Princeton, a few years ago, came out with an essay
14235 upon the “evils of revivals.” I should like to know,
14236 now, how many of those young men have enjoyed
14237 revivals among their people, since they have been
14238 in the ministry; and if any have, I should like to
14239 know whether they have not repented of that piece
14240 about the evils of revivals.

14241
14242 If I had a voice so loud as to be heard at Princeton,
14243 I would speak to those young men on this subject.
14244 It is high time to talk plainly on this point. The
14245 church is groaning in all her borders for the want of
14246 suitable ministers. Good men are laboring and are
14247 willing to labor night and day to assist in educating

14248 young men for the ministry, to promote revivals of
14249 religion; and when they come out of the seminary,
14250 some of them are as shy of all the measures that
14251 God blesses as they are of popery itself.

14252
14253 Shall it be so always? Must we educate young men
14254 for the ministry, and have them come out
14255 frightened to death about new measures, as if there
14256 had never been any such thing as new measures.
14257 They ought to know that new measures are no new
14258 thing in the church. Let them GO ALONG, and
14259 keep at work themselves, and not be frightened
14260 about new measures. I have been pained to see that
14261 some men, in giving accounts of revivals, have
14262 evidently felt themselves obliged to be particular in
14263 detailing the measures used, to avoid the inference
14264 that new measures were introduced; evidently
14265 feeling that even the church would undervalue the
14266 revival unless it appeared to have been promoted
14267 without new measures. Besides, this caution in
14268 detailing the measures to demonstrate that there
14269 was nothing new, looks like admitting that new
14270 measures are wrong because they are new, and that
14271 a revival is more valuable because it was not
14272 promoted by new measures. In this way, I
14273 apprehend that much evil has been done, already,
14274 and if the practice is to continue, it must come to
14275 this, that a revival must be judged of, by the fact

14276 that it occurred in connection with new or old
14277 measures. I never will countenance such a spirit,
14278 nor condescend to guard an account of a revival
14279 against the imputation of new or old measures. I
14280 believe new measures are right, that is, that it is no
14281 objection to a measure that it is new or old.

14282

14283 Let a minister enter fully into his work, and pour
14284 out his heart to God for a blessing, and whenever
14285 he sees the want of any measure to bring the truth
14286 more powerfully before the minds of the people, let
14287 him adopt it and not be afraid, and God will not
14288 withhold his blessing. If ministers will not go
14289 forward, and will not preach the Gospel with power
14290 and earnestness, and will not turn out of their tracks
14291 to do anything new for the purpose of saving souls,
14292 they will grieve the Holy Spirit away, and God will
14293 visit them with his curse, and raise up other
14294 ministers to do work in the world.

14295

14296 8. It is the right and duty of ministers to adopt new
14297 measures for promoting revivals. In some places
14298 the church have opposed their minister when he has
14299 attempted to employ those measures which God
14300 has blessed for a revival, and have gone so far as to
14301 give up their prayer meetings, and give up laboring
14302 to save souls, and stand aloof from everything,
14303 because their minister has adopted what they call

14304 new measures. No matter how reasonable the
14305 measures are in themselves, nor how seasonable,
14306 nor how much God may bless them. It is enough
14307 that they are called new measures, and they will not
14308 have anything to do with new measures, nor
14309 tolerate them among the people. And thus they fall
14310 out by the way, and grieve away the Spirit of God,
14311 and put a stop to the revival, when the world
14312 around them is going to hell.

14313
14314 Finally.—This zealous adherence to particular
14315 forms and modes of doing things, which has led the
14316 church to resist innovations in measures, savors
14317 strongly of fanaticism. And what is not a little
14318 singular, is that fanatics of this stamp are always
14319 the first to cry out “fanaticism.” What is that but
14320 fanaticism in the Roman Catholic Church, that
14321 causes them to adhere with such pertinacity to their
14322 particular modes, and forms, and ceremonies, and
14323 fooleries? They act as if all these things were
14324 established by divine authority; as if there were a
14325 “Thus saith the Lord” for every one of them. Now
14326 we justly style this a spirit of fanaticism, and
14327 esteem it worthy of rebuke. But it is just as
14328 absolutely fanatical, for the Presbyterian Church, or
14329 any other church, to be sticklish for her particular
14330 forms, and to act as if they were established by
14331 divine authority. The fact is, that God has

14332 established, in no church, any particular form, or
14333 manner of worship, for promoting the interests of
14334 religion. The scriptures are entirely silent on these
14335 subjects, under the Gospel dispensation, and the
14336 church is left to exercise her own discretion in
14337 relation to all such matters. And I hope it will not
14338 be thought unkind, when I say again, that to me it
14339 appears, that the unkind, angry zeal for a certain
14340 mode and manner of doing things, and the
14341 overbearing, exterminating cry against new
14342 measures, SAVORS STRONGLY OF
14343 FANATICISM.

14344
14345 The only thing insisted upon under the Gospel
14346 dispensation, in regard to measures, is that there
14347 should be decency and order. “Let all things be
14348 done decently and in order.” We are required to
14349 guard against all confusion and disorderly conduct.
14350 But what is decency and order? Will it be
14351 pretended that an anxious meeting, or a protracted
14352 meeting, or an anxious seat, is inconsistent with
14353 decency and order? I should most sincerely
14354 deprecate, and most firmly resist whatever was
14355 indecent and disorderly in the worship of God’s
14356 house. But I do not suppose that by “order” we are
14357 to understand any particular set mode, in which any
14358 church may have been accustomed to perform their
14359 service.

14360

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14362

14363 LECTURE XV.

14364

14365 HINDRANCES TO REVIVALS.

14366

14367 Text.—I am doing a great work, so that I cannot
14368 come down. Why should the work cease, whilst I
14369 leave it, and come down to you.”—Nehemiah vi. 3.

14370

14371 THIS servant of God had come down from
14372 Babylon to rebuild the temple and re-establish the
14373 worship of God at Jerusalem, the city of his
14374 fathers' sepulchres. When it was discovered by
14375 Sanballat and certain individuals, his allies, who
14376 had long enjoyed the desolations of Zion, that now
14377 the temple, and the holy city were about to be
14378 rebuilt, they raised a great opposition. Sanballat
14379 and the other leaders tried in several ways to divert
14380 Nehemiah and his friends, and prevent them from
14381 going forward in their work; at one time they
14382 threatened them, and then complained that they
14383 were going to rebel against the king. Again, they
14384 insisted that their design was not pious but
14385 political, to which Nehemiah replied by a simple
14386 and prompt denial, “There are no such things done
14387 as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine

14388 own heart.” Finally, Sanballat sent a message to
14389 Nehemiah, requesting him to meet in the plain of
14390 Ono, to discuss the whole matter amicably and
14391 have the difficulty adjusted, but designed to do him
14392 mischief. They had found that they could not
14393 frighten Nehemiah, and now they wanted to come
14394 round him by artifice and fraud, and draw him off
14395 from the vigorous prosecution of his work. But he
14396 replied, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot
14397 come down: why should the work cease, whilst I
14398 come down to you?”

14399
14400 It has always been the case, whenever any of the
14401 servants of God do anything in his cause, and there
14402 appears to be a probability that they will succeed,
14403 that Satan by his agents regularly attempts to divert
14404 their minds and nullify their labors. So it has been
14405 during the last ten years, in which there have been
14406 such remarkable revivals through the length and
14407 breadth of the land. These revivals have been very
14408 great and powerful, and extensive. It has been
14409 estimated that not less than TWO HUNDRED
14410 THOUSAND persons have been converted to God
14411 in that time.

14412
14413 And the devil has been busy in his devices to divert
14414 and distract the people of God, and turn off their
14415 energies from pushing forward the great work of

14416 salvation. In remarking on the subject, I propose to
14417 show.

14418

14419 I. That a Revival of Religion is a great work.

14420

14421 II. To mention several things which may put a stop
14422 to it.

14423

14424 III. Endeavor to show what must be done for the
14425 continuance of this great revival.

14426

14427 I. I am to show that a Revival of Religion is a great
14428 work.

14429

14430 It is a great work, because in it are great interests
14431 involved. In a Revival of Religion are involved
14432 both the glory of God, so far as it respects the
14433 government of this world, and the salvation of men.

14434 Two things that are of infinite importance are
14435 involved in it. The greatness of a work is to be
14436 estimated by the greatness of the consequences
14437 depending on it. And this is the measure of its
14438 importance.

14439

14440 II. I am to mention several things which may put a
14441 stop to a revival.

14442

14443 Some have talked very foolishly on this subject, as
14444 if nothing could injure a genuine revival. They say,
14445 “If your revival is a work of God, it cannot be
14446 stopped; can any created being stop God?” Now I
14447 ask if this is common sense? Formerly, it used to
14448 be the established belief that a revival could not be
14449 stopped, because it was the work of God. And so
14450 they supposed it would go on, whatever might be
14451 done to hinder it, in the church or out of it. But the
14452 farmer might just as well reason so, and think he
14453 could go and cut down his wheat and not hurt the
14454 crop, because it is God that makes grain grow. A
14455 revival is the work of God, and so is a crop of
14456 wheat; and God is as much dependent on the use of
14457 means in one case as the other. And therefore a
14458 revival is as liable to be injured as a wheat-field.

14459
14460 1. A revival will stop whenever the church believe
14461 it is going to cease. The church are the instruments
14462 with which God carries on this work, and they are
14463 to work in it voluntarily and with their hearts.
14464 Nothing is more fatal to a revival than for its
14465 friends to predict that it is going to stop. No matter
14466 what the enemies of the work may say about it,
14467 predicting that it will all run out and come to
14468 nothing, and the like. They cannot stop it in this
14469 way; but the friends must labor and pray in faith to
14470 carry it on. It is a contradiction to say they are

14471 laboring and praying in faith to carry on the work,
14472 and yet believe that it is going to stop. If they lose
14473 their faith, it will stop, of course. Whenever the
14474 friends of revivals begin to prophecy that the
14475 revival is going to stop, they should be instantly
14476 rebuked, in the name of the Lord. If the idea once
14477 begins to prevail, and if you cannot counteract it
14478 and root it out, the revival will infallibly cease; for
14479 it is indispensable to the work, that Christians
14480 should labor and pray in faith to promote it, and it
14481 is a contradiction to say that they can labor in faith
14482 for its continuance, while they believe that it is
14483 about to cease.

14484
14485 2. A revival will cease when Christians consent
14486 that it should cease. Sometimes Christians see that
14487 the revival is in danger of ceasing, and that if
14488 something effectual is not done, it will come to a
14489 stand. If this fact distresses them, and drives them
14490 to prayer, and to fresh efforts, the work will not
14491 cease. When Christians love the work of God and
14492 the salvation of souls so well that they are
14493 distressed at the mere apprehension of a decline, it
14494 will drive them to an agony of prayer and effort. If
14495 it does not drive them to agony and effort to
14496 prevent its ceasing; if they see the danger, and do
14497 not try to avert it, or to renew the work, **THEY**
14498 **CONSENT THAT IT SHOULD STOP.** There are

14499 at this time many people, all over the country, who
14500 see revivals declining, and that they are in great
14501 danger of ceasing altogether, and yet they manifest
14502 but little distress, and seem to care but little about
14503 it. Whole churches see their condition, and see
14504 what is coming unless there can be a waking up,
14505 and yet they are at ease, and do not groan and
14506 agonize in prayer, that God would revive his work.
14507 Some are even predicting that there is now going to
14508 be a great reaction, and a great dearth come over
14509 the church, as there did after Whitefield's and
14510 Edwards' day. And yet they are not startled at their
14511 own forebodings; they are cool about it, and turn
14512 directly off to other things. THEY CONSENT TO
14513 IT. It seems as if they were the devil's trumpeters,
14514 sent out to scatter dismay throughout the ranks of
14515 God's elect.

14516
14517 3. A revival will cease whenever Christians
14518 become mechanical in their attempts to promote it.
14519 When their faith is strong, and their hearts are
14520 warm and mellow, and their prayers full of holy
14521 emotion, and their words with power, then the
14522 work goes on. But when their prayers begin to be
14523 cold and without emotion, and their deep-toned
14524 feeling is gone, and they begin to labor
14525 mechanically, and to use words without feeling,
14526 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 the world by physical omnipotence, but he is dependent on the moral influence of the church.

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5. The work will cease when the church prefer to attend to their own concerns rather than God's business. I do not admit that men have any business which is properly their own, but they think so, and in fact prefer what they consider as their own, rather than to work for God. They begin to think they cannot afford sufficient time from their worldly employments to carry on a revival. And they pretend they are obliged to give up attending to religion, and let their hearts go out again after the world. And the work must cease, of course.

6. When Christians get proud of their great revival, it will cease. I mean those Christians who have before been instrumental in promoting it. It is almost always the case in a revival, that a part of the church are too proud or too worldly to take any part in the work. They are determined to stand aloof, and wait, and see what it will come to, and see how it will come out. The pride of this part of the church cannot stop the revival, for the revival never rested on them. It begun without them, and it can go on without them. They may fold their arms and do nothing but look on and find fault; and still the work may go on. But when that part of the church who work, begin to think what a great revival they have had, and how they have labored

14583 and prayed, and how bold and how zealous they
14584 have been, and how much good they have done,
14585 then the work will be likely to decline. Perhaps it
14586 has been published in the papers what a revival
14587 there has been in the church, and how much
14588 engaged the members have been, and they think
14589 how high they shall stand in the estimation of other
14590 churches, all over the land, because they have had
14591 such a great revival. And so they get puffed up, and
14592 vain, and then they can no longer enjoy the
14593 presence of God, and the Spirit withdraws from
14594 them, and the revival ceases.

14595
14596 7. The revival will stop when the church gets
14597 exhausted by labor. Multitudes of Christians
14598 commit a great mistake here in time of revival.
14599 They are so thoughtless, and have so little
14600 judgment, that they will break up all their habits of
14601 living, neglect to eat and sleep at the proper hours,
14602 and let the excitement run away with them, so that
14603 they overdo their bodies, and are so imprudent that
14604 they soon become exhausted, and it is impossible
14605 for them to continue in the work. Revivals often
14606 cease, and declension follows, from negligence and
14607 imprudence, in this respect, on the part of those
14608 engaged in carrying them on.
14609

14610 8. A revival will cease when the church begins to
14611 speculate about abstract doctrines, which have
14612 nothing to do with practice. If the church turn off
14613 their attention from the things of salvation, and go
14614 to studying or disputing about abstract points, the
14615 revival will cease, of course.

14616
14617 9. When Christians begin to proselyte. When the
14618 Baptists are so opposed to the Presbyterians, or the
14619 Presbyterians to the Baptists, or both against the
14620 Methodists, or Episcopalians against the rest, that
14621 they begin to make efforts to get the converts to
14622 join their church, you soon see the last of the
14623 revival. Perhaps a revival will go on for a time, and
14624 all sectarian difficulties are banished, till somebody
14625 circulates a book, privately, to gain proselytes.
14626 Perhaps some over-zealous deacon, or some
14627 mischief-making woman, or some proselyting
14628 minister, cannot keep still any longer, and begins to
14629 work the work of the devil, by attempting to gain
14630 proselytes, and so stirs up bitterness, and raising a
14631 selfish strife, grieves away the Spirit, and drives
14632 Christians all into parties. No more revival there.

14633
14634 10. When Christians refuse to render to the Lord
14635 according to the benefits received. This is a fruitful
14636 source of religious declensions. God has opened
14637 the windows of heaven to a church, and poured

14638 them out a blessing, and then he reasonably expects
14639 them to bring in the tithes into his store-house, and
14640 devise and execute liberal things for Zion; and lo!
14641 they have refused; they have not laid themselves
14642 out accordingly to promote the cause of Christ, and
14643 so the Spirit has been grieved and the blessing
14644 withdrawn, and in some instances a great reaction
14645 has taken place because the church would not be
14646 liberal, when God has been so bountiful. I have
14647 known churches who were evidently cursed with
14648 barrenness for such a course. They had a glorious
14649 revival, and afterwards perhaps their meeting-
14650 house needed repairing, or something else was
14651 needed which would cost a little money, and they
14652 refused to do it, and so for their niggardly spirit
14653 God gave them up.

14654
14655 11. When the church, in any way, grieve the Holy
14656 Spirit.

14657
14658 (1.) When they do not feel their dependence on the
14659 Spirit. Whenever Christians get strong in their own
14660 strength, God curses their blessings. In many
14661 instances, Christians sin against their own mercies,
14662 because they get lifted up with their success, and
14663 take the credit to themselves, and do not give to
14664 God all the glory. As he says, "If ye will not hear,
14665 and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto

14666 my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a
14667 curse upon you, and, I will curse your blessings:
14668 yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not
14669 lay it to heart.” There has been a great deal of this
14670 in this country, undoubtedly. I have seen many
14671 things that looked like it, in the papers, where there
14672 seemed a disposition in men to take credit for
14673 success in promoting revivals. There is doubtless a
14674 great temptation to this, and it requires the utmost
14675 watchfulness, on the part of ministers and
14676 churches, to guard against it, and not grieve the
14677 Spirit away by vain-glorying in men.

14678
14679 (2.) The Spirit may be grieved by a spirit of
14680 boasting of the revival. Sometimes, as soon as a
14681 revival commences, you will see it blazed out in
14682 the newspapers. And most commonly this will kill
14683 the revival. There was a case in a neighboring
14684 State, where a revival commenced, and instantly
14685 there came out a letter from the pastor, telling that
14686 he had a revival. I saw the letter and said to myself,
14687 That is the last we shall hear of this revival. And so
14688 it was. In a few days, the work totally ceased. And
14689 such things are not uncommon. I could mention
14690 cases and places, where persons have published
14691 such things as to puff up the church, and make
14692 them so proud that little or nothing more could be
14693 done for the revival.

14694
14695 Some, under pretence of publishing things to the
14696 praise and glory of God, have published things that
14697 savored so strongly of a disposition to exalt
14698 themselves, have made their own agency to stand
14699 out so conspicuously, as was evidently calculated
14700 to make an unhappy impression. At the protracted
14701 meeting held in this church, a year ago last fall,
14702 there were five hundred hopefully converted,
14703 whose names and places of residence we knew. A
14704 considerable number of them joined this church.
14705 Many of them united with other churches. Nothing
14706 was said of this in the papers. I have several times
14707 been asked why we were so silent upon the subject.
14708 I could only reply, that there was such a tendency
14709 to self-exaltation in the churches, that I was afraid
14710 to publish anything on the subject. Perhaps I erred.
14711 But I have so often seen mischief done by
14712 premature publications, that I thought it best to say
14713 nothing about it. In the revival in this city, four
14714 years ago, so much was said in the papers, that
14715 appeared like self-exaltation, that I was afraid to
14716 publish. I am not speaking against the practice
14717 itself, of publishing accounts of revivals. But the
14718 manner of doing it is of vast importance. If it is
14719 done so as to excite vanity, it is always fatal to the
14720 revival.
14721

14722 (3.) So the Spirit is grieved by saying or publishing
14723 things that are calculated to undervalue the work of
14724 God. When a blessed work of God is spoken lightly
14725 of, not rendering to God the glory due to his name,
14726 the Spirit is grieved. If anything is said about a
14727 revival, give only the plain and naked facts just as
14728 they are, and let them pass for what they are worth.
14729

14730 12. A revival may be expected to cease, when
14731 Christians lose the spirit of brotherly love. Jesus
14732 Christ will not continue with people in a revival
14733 any longer than they continue in the exercise of
14734 brotherly love. When Christians are in the spirit of
14735 a revival, they feel this love, and then you will hear
14736 them call each other brother and sister, very
14737 affectionately. But when they begin to get cold,
14738 they lose this warmth and glow of affection for one
14739 another, and then this calling brother and sister will
14740 seem silly and contemptible and they will leave it
14741 off. In some churches they never call each other so,
14742 but where there is a revival, Christians naturally do
14743 it. I never saw a revival, and probably there never
14744 was one, in which they did not do it. But as soon as
14745 this begins to cease, the Spirit of God is grieved,
14746 and departs from among them.

14747
14748 13. A revival will decline and cease, unless
14749 Christians are frequently re-converted. By this I

14750 mean, that Christians, in order to keep in the spirit
14751 of a revival, commonly need to be frequently
14752 convicted, and humbled, and broken down before
14753 God, and re-converted. This is something which
14754 many do not understand, when we talk about a
14755 Christian's being re-converted. But the fact is that
14756 in a revival the Christian's heart is liable to get
14757 crusted over, and lose its exquisite relish for divine
14758 things; his unction and prevalence in prayer abates,
14759 and then he must be converted over again. It is
14760 impossible to keep him in such a state as not to do
14761 injury to the work, unless he pass through such a
14762 process every few days. I have never labored in
14763 revivals in company with any one who would keep
14764 in the work and be fit to manage a revival
14765 continually, who did not pass through this process
14766 of breaking down as often as once in two or three
14767 weeks. Revivals decline, commonly, because it is
14768 found impossible to make the church feel their guilt
14769 and their dependence, so as to break down before
14770 God. It is important that ministers should
14771 understand this, and learn how to break down the
14772 church, and break down themselves when they
14773 need it, or else Christians will soon become
14774 mechanical in their work, and lose their fervor and
14775 their power of prevailing with God. This was the
14776 process through which Peter passed, when he had
14777 denied the Saviour, and by which breaking down,

14778 the Lord prepared him for the great work on the
14779 day of Pentecost. I was surprised, a few years
14780 since, to find that the phrase “breaking down” was
14781 a stumbling block to certain ministers and
14782 professors of religion. They laid themselves open
14783 to the rebuke administered to Nicodemus, “Art
14784 thou a master in Israel and knowest not these
14785 things?” I am confident that until some of them
14786 know what it is to be “broken down,” they will
14787 never do much more for the cause of revivals.

14788
14789 14. A revival cannot continue when Christians will
14790 not practice self-denial. When the church have
14791 enjoyed a revival and begin to grow fat upon it, and
14792 run into self-indulgence, the revival will soon
14793 cease, Unless they sympathize with the Son of
14794 God, who gave up all to save sinners; unless they
14795 are willing to give up their luxuries, and their ease,
14796 and lay themselves out in the work, they need not
14797 expect the Spirit of God will be poured out upon
14798 them. This is undoubtedly one of the principal
14799 causes of personal declension. Let Christians in a
14800 revival BEWARE, when they first find an
14801 inclination creeping upon them, to shrink from self-
14802 denial, and to give in to one form of self-
14803 indulgence after another. It is the device of Satan,
14804 to bait them off from the work of God, and make
14805 them dull and gross, and lazy, and fearful, and

14806 useless, and sensual, and drive away the Spirit and
14807 destroy the revival.

14808

14809 15. A revival will be stopped by controversies
14810 about new measures. Nothing is more certain to
14811 overthrow a revival than this. But as my last lecture
14812 was on the subject of new measures, I need not
14813 dwell longer on the subject now.

14814

14815 16. Revivals can be put down by the continued
14816 opposition of the Old School, combined with a bad
14817 spirit in the New School. If those who do nothing
14818 to promote revivals continue their opposition, and
14819 if those who are laboring to promote them allow
14820 themselves to get impatient, and get into a bad
14821 spirit, the revival will cease. When the Old School
14822 write their letters in the newspapers, against
14823 revivals or revival men, and the New School write
14824 letters back again against them, in an angry,
14825 contentious, bitter spirit, and get into a jangling
14826 controversy, revivals will cease. LET THEM
14827 KEEP ABOUT THEIR WORK, and not talk about
14828 the opposition, nor preach, nor print about it. If
14829 others choose to publish their slang and stuff, let
14830 the Lord's servants keep to their work, and all the
14831 writings and slander will not stop the revival, while
14832 those who are engaged in it mind their business,

14833 and keep to their work. It is astonishing how far
14834 this holds true in fact.

14835
14836 In one place where there was a revival, certain
14837 ministers formed a combination against the pastor
14838 of the church, and a plan was set on foot to ruin
14839 him, and they actually got him prosecuted before
14840 his Presbytery, and had a trial that lasted six weeks,
14841 right in the midst of the revival, and the work still
14842 went on. The praying members of the church laid
14843 themselves out so in the work, that it continued
14844 triumphantly throughout the whole scene. The
14845 pastor was called off, to attend his trial, but there
14846 was another minister that labored among the
14847 people, and the members did not even go to the
14848 trial, generally, but kept praying and laboring for
14849 souls, and the revival rode out the storm. In many
14850 other places, opposition has risen up in the church,
14851 but a few humble souls have kept at their work, and
14852 a gracious God has stretched out his naked arm and
14853 made the revival go forward in spite of all
14854 opposition.

14855
14856 But whenever those who are actively engaged in
14857 promoting a revival get excited at the
14858 unreasonableness and pertinacity of the opposition,
14859 and feel as if they could not have it so, and they
14860 lose their patience, and feel as if they must answer

14861 their cavils and refute their slanders, then they get
14862 down into the plains of Ono, and the work must
14863 cease.

14864
14865 17. Any diversion of the public mind will hinder a
14866 revival. Anything that succeeds in diverting public
14867 attention, will put a stop to a revival. In the case I
14868 have specified, where the minister was put on trial
14869 before his Presbytery, the reason why it did not
14870 ruin the revival was, that the praying members of
14871 the church would not suffer themselves to be
14872 diverted. They did not even attend the trial, but
14873 kept praying and laboring for souls, and so public
14874 attention was kept to the subject, in spite of all the
14875 efforts of the devil.

14876
14877 But whenever he succeeds in absorbing public
14878 attention on any other subject, he will put an end to
14879 the revival. No matter what the subject is. If an
14880 angel from heaven were to come down, and preach,
14881 or pass about the streets, it might be the worst thing
14882 in the world for a revival, for it would turn sinners
14883 all off from their own sins, and turn the church off
14884 from praying for souls, to follow this glorious
14885 being, and gaze upon him, and the revival would
14886 cease.

14887

14888 18. Resistance to the Temperance Reformation will
14889 put a stop to revivals in a church. The time has
14890 come that it can no longer be innocent in a church
14891 to stand aloof from this glorious reformation. The
14892 time was when this could be done ignorantly. The
14893 time has been when ministers and Christians could
14894 enjoy revivals, notwithstanding ardent spirit was
14895 used among them. But since light has been thrown
14896 upon the subject, and it has been found that the use
14897 is only injurious, no church member or minister
14898 can be innocent and stand neutral in the cause.
14899 They must speak out and take sides. And if they do
14900 not take ground on one side, their influence is on
14901 the other. Show me a minister that has taken
14902 ground against the temperance reformation who
14903 has had a revival. Show me one who now stands
14904 aloof from it who has a revival. Show me one who
14905 now temporizes upon this point who does not come
14906 out and take a stand in favor of temperance who
14907 has a revival? It did not use to be so. But now the
14908 subject has come up, and has been discussed, and is
14909 understood, no man can shut his eyes upon the
14910 truth. The man's hands are RED WITH BLOOD
14911 who stands aloof from the temperance cause. And
14912 can he have a revival?
14913
14914 19. Revivals are hindered when ministers and
14915 churches take wrong ground in regard to any

14916 question involving human rights. Take the subject
14917 of SLAVERY, for instance. The time was when
14918 this subject was not before the public mind. John
14919 Newton continued in the slave trade after his
14920 conversion. And so had his mind been perverted,
14921 and so completely was his conscience seared, in
14922 regard to this most nefarious traffic, that the
14923 sinfulness of it never occurred to his thoughts until
14924 some time after he became a child of God. Had
14925 light been poured upon his mind previously to his
14926 conversion, he never could have been converted
14927 without previously abandoning this sin. And after
14928 his conversion, when convinced of its iniquity, he
14929 could no longer enjoy the presence of God, without
14930 abandoning the sin for ever. So, doubtless, many
14931 slave dealers and slave holders in our own country
14932 have been converted, notwithstanding their
14933 participation in this abomination, because the
14934 sinfulness of it was not apparent to their minds. So
14935 ministers and churches, to a great extent throughout
14936 the land, have held their peace, and borne no
14937 testimony against this abominable abomination,
14938 existing in the church and in the nation. But
14939 recently, the subject has come up for discussion,
14940 and the providence of God has brought it distinctly
14941 before the eyes of all men. Light is now shed upon
14942 this subject, as it has been upon the cause of
14943 temperance. Facts are exhibited, and principles

14944 established, and light thrown in upon the minds of
14945 men, and this monster is dragged from his horrid
14946 den, and exhibited before the church, and it is
14947 demanded of them, "IS THIS SIN?" Their
14948 testimony must be given on this subject. They are
14949 God's witnesses. They are sworn to tell "the truth,
14950 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." It is
14951 impossible that their testimony should not be given,
14952 on one side or the other. Their silence can no
14953 longer be accounted for upon the principle of
14954 ignorance, and that they have never had their
14955 attention turned to the subject. Consequently, the
14956 silence of Christians upon the subject is virtually
14957 saying that they do not consider slavery as a sin.
14958 The truth is, it is a subject upon which they cannot
14959 be silent without guilt. The time has come, in the
14960 providence of God, when every southern breeze is
14961 loaded down with the cries of lamentation,
14962 mourning and wo. Two millions of degraded
14963 heathen in our own land stretch their hands, all
14964 shackled and bleeding, and send forth to the church
14965 of God the agonizing cry for help. And shall the
14966 church, in her efforts to reclaim and save the world,
14967 deafen her ears to this voice of agony and despair?
14968 God forbid. The church cannot turn away from this
14969 question. It is a question for the church and for the
14970 nation to decide, and God will push it to a decision.
14971

14972 It is in vain for the churches to resist it for fear of
14973 distraction, contention, and strife. It is in vain to
14974 account it an act of piety to turn away the ear from
14975 hearing this cry of distress.

14976
14977 The church must testify, and testify “the truth, the
14978 whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” on this
14979 subject, or she is perjured, and the Spirit of God
14980 departs from her. She is under oath to testify, and
14981 ministers and churches who do not pronounce it sin
14982 bear false testimony for God. It is doubtless true
14983 that one of the reasons for the low state of religion
14984 at the present time is that many churches have
14985 taken the wrong side on the subject of slavery, have
14986 suffered prejudice to prevail over principle, and
14987 have feared to call this abomination by its true
14988 name.

14989
14990 20. Another thing that hinders revivals is
14991 neglecting the claims of missions. If Christians do
14992 not feel for the heathen, neglect the monthly
14993 concert, and confine their attention to their own
14994 church, do not even read the Missionary Herald, or
14995 use any other means to inform themselves on the
14996 subject of the claims of the world, and reject the
14997 light which God is throwing before them, and will
14998 not do what God calls them to do in this cause, the
14999 Spirit of God will depart from them.

15000

15001 21. When a church rejects the calls of God upon
15002 them for educating young men for the ministry,
15003 they will hinder and destroy a revival. Look at the
15004 Presbyterian church, look at the 200,000 souls
15005 converted within ten years, and means enough to
15006 fill the world with ministers, and yet the ministry is
15007 not increasing so fast as the population of our own
15008 country, and unless something more can be done to
15009 provide ministers, we shall become heathen
15010 ourselves. The churches do not press upon young
15011 men the duty of going into the ministry. God pours
15012 his Spirit on the churches, and converts hundreds
15013 of thousands of souls, and if then the laborers do
15014 not come forth into the harvest, what can be
15015 expected but that the curse of God will come upon
15016 the churches, and his Spirit will be withdrawn, and
15017 revivals will cease. Upon this subject no minister,
15018 no church should be silent or inactive.

15019

15020 22. Slandering revivals will often put them down.
15021 The great revival in the days of President Edwards
15022 suffered greatly by the conduct of the church in this
15023 respect. It is to be expected that the enemies of God
15024 will revile, misrepresent and slander revivals. But
15025 when the church herself engages in this work, and
15026 many of her most influential members are aiding
15027 and abetting in calumniating and misrepresenting a

15028 glorious work of God, it is reasonable that the
15029 Spirit should be grieved away. It cannot be denied
15030 that this has been done, to a grievous and God-
15031 dishonoring extent. It has been estimated that in
15032 one year, since this revival commenced, ONE
15033 HUNDRED THOUSAND SOULS were converted
15034 to God in the United States. This was undoubtedly
15035 the greatest number that were ever converted in one
15036 year, since the world began. [5] It could not be
15037 expected that, in an excitement of this extent,
15038 among human beings, there should be nothing to
15039 deplore. To expect perfection in such a work as
15040 this, of such extent, and carried on by human
15041 instrumentality, is utterly unreasonable and absurd.
15042 Evils doubtless did exist and have existed. They
15043 were to be expected of course, and guarded against,
15044 as far as possible. And I do not believe the world's
15045 history can furnish one instance in which a revival,
15046 approaching to this in extent and influence, has
15047 been attended with so few evils, and so little that is
15048 honestly to be deplored.

15049
15050 But how has this blessed work of God been
15051 treated? Admitting all the evils complained of to be
15052 real, which is far from being true, they would only
15053 be like spots upon the disc of the glorious sun;
15054 things hardly to be thought of, in comparison of the
15055 infinite greatness and excellence of the work. And

15056 yet how have a great portion of the Presbyterian
15057 church, received and treated this blessed work of
15058 God? At the General Assembly, that grave body of
15059 men that represent the Presbyterian church in the
15060 midst of this great work, instead of appointing a
15061 day of thanksgiving, instead of praising and
15062 glorifying God for the greatness of his work, we
15063 hear from them the voice of rebuke. From the
15064 reports that were given of the speeches made there,
15065 it appears that the house was filled with
15066 complainings. Instead of devising measures to
15067 forward the work, their attention seemed to be
15068 taken up with the comparatively trifling evils that
15069 were incidental to it. And after much complaining,
15070 they absolutely appointed a committee, and sent
15071 forth a “Pastoral Letter” to the churches, calculated
15072 to excite suspicions, quench the zeal of God’s
15073 people, and turn them off from giving glory to God
15074 for the greatness of the blessing, to finding fault
15075 and carping about the evils. When I heard what was
15076 done at that General Assembly, when I read their
15077 speeches, when I saw their pastoral letter, my soul
15078 was sick, an unutterable feeling of distress came
15079 over my mind, and I felt that God would “visit” the
15080 Presbyterian church for conduct like this. And ever
15081 since, the glory has been departing, and revivals
15082 have been becoming less and less frequent—less
15083 and less powerful. [6]

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And now I wish it could be known, whether those ministers who poured out those complainings on the floor of the General Assembly, and who were instrumental in getting up that pastoral letter, have since been blest in promoting revivals of religion—whether the Spirit of God has been upon them, and whether their churches can witness that they have an unction from the Holy One.

23. Ecclesiastical difficulties are calculated to grieve away the Spirit, and destroy revivals. It has always been the policy of the devil to turn off the attention of ministers from the work of the Lord to disputes and ecclesiastical litigations. President Edwards was obliged to be taken up for a long time in disputes before ecclesiastical councils; and in our days, and in the midst of these great revivals of religion, these difficulties have been alarmingly and shamefully multiplied. Some of the most efficient ministers in the church have been called off from their direct efforts to win souls to Christ, to attend day after day, and in some instances week after week, to charges preferred against them, or their fellow-laborers in the ministry, which could never be sustained.

15111 Look at Philadelphia: what endless and disgraceful
15112 janglings have distracted and grieved the church of
15113 God in that city, and through the length and breadth
15114 of the land. And in the Presbyterian church at large
15115 these ecclesiastical difficulties have produced evils
15116 enough to make creation weep. Brother Beman was
15117 shamefully and wickedly called off from promoting
15118 revivals, to attend a trial before his own presbytery,
15119 upon charges which, if true, were most of them
15120 ridiculous, but which could never be sustained.
15121 And since that time a great portion of his time has,
15122 it would seem necessarily, been taken up with the
15123 adjustment of ecclesiastical difficulties. Brother
15124 Duffield, of Carlisle, Brother Barnes, of
15125 Philadelphia, and others of God's most successful
15126 ministers, have been hindered a considerable part
15127 of their time for years by these difficulties. Oh, tell
15128 it not in Gath! When will those ministers and
15129 professors of religion who do little or nothing
15130 themselves let others alone, and let them work for
15131 God?

15132
15133 24. Another thing by which revivals may be
15134 hindered is censoriousness on either side, and
15135 especially in those who have been engaged in
15136 carrying forward a revival. It is to be expected that
15137 the opposers of the work will watch for the halting
15138 of its friends, and be sure to censure them for all

15139 that is wrong, and not unfrequently for that which
15140 is right in their conduct. Especially is it to be
15141 expected that many censorious and unchristian
15142 remarks will be made about those that are the most
15143 prominent instruments in promoting the work. This
15144 censoriousness on the part of the opposers of the
15145 work, whether in or out of the church, will not,
15146 however, of itself put a stop to the revival. While
15147 its promoters keep humble, and in a prayerful
15148 spirit, while they do not retaliate, but possess their
15149 souls in patience, while they do not suffer
15150 themselves to be diverted, to recriminate, and
15151 grieve away the spirit of prayer, the work will go
15152 forward; as in the case referred to, where a minister
15153 was on trial for six weeks in the midst of a revival.
15154 There the people kept in the dust, and prayed, not
15155 so much for their minister, for they had left him
15156 with God, but with strong crying and tears pleading
15157 with God for sinners. And God heard and blessed
15158 them, and the work went on. Censoriousness in
15159 those who are opposed to the work is but little to be
15160 dreaded, for they have not the Spirit, and nothing
15161 depends on them, and they can hinder the work
15162 only just so far as they themselves have influence
15163 personally. But the others have the power of the
15164 Holy Spirit, and the work depends on their keeping
15165 in a right temper. If they get wrong and grieve
15166 away the Spirit, there is no help, the work must

15167 cease. Whatever provocation, therefore, the
15168 promoters of this blessed work may have had, if it
15169 ceases, the responsibility be theirs. And one of the
15170 most alarming facts, in regard to this matter, is that
15171 in many instances, those who have been engaged in
15172 carrying forward the work, appear to have lost the
15173 Spirit. They are becoming diverted, are beginning
15174 to think that the opposition is no longer to be
15175 tolerated, and that they must come out and reply in
15176 the newspapers to what they say. It should be
15177 known and universally understood, that whenever
15178 the friends and promoters of this greatest of
15179 revivals suffer themselves to be called off to
15180 newspaper janglings, to attempt to defend
15181 themselves, and reply to those who write against
15182 them, the Spirit of Prayer will be entirely grieved
15183 away, and the work will cease. Nothing is more
15184 detrimental to revivals of religion, and so it has
15185 always been found, than for the promoters of it to
15186 listen to the opposition, and begin to reply. This
15187 was found to be true in the days of President
15188 Edwards, as you who are acquainted with his book
15189 on Revivals are well aware.

15190

15191 III. I proceed to mention some things which ought
15192 to be done, to continue this great and glorious
15193 revival of religion, which has been in progress for
15194 the last ten years.

15195

15196 1. There should be great and deep repentings on the
15197 part of ministers. WE, my brethren, must humble
15198 ourselves before God. It will not do for us to
15199 suppose that it is enough to call on the people to
15200 repent. We must repent, we must take the lead in
15201 repentance, and then call on the churches to follow.

15202

15203 Especially must those repent who have taken the
15204 lead in producing the feelings of opposition and
15205 distrust in regard to revivals. Some ministers have
15206 confined their opposition against revivals and
15207 revival measures to their own congregations, and
15208 created such suspicions among their own people as
15209 to prevent the work from spreading and prevailing
15210 among them. Such ministers would do well to
15211 consider the remarks of President Edwards on this
15212 subject.

15213

15214 “If ministers preach never so good doctrine, and are
15215 never so painful and laborious in their work, yet, if
15216 at such a day as this, they show to their people, that
15217 they are not well-affected to this work, but are very
15218 doubtful and suspicious of it, they will be very
15219 likely to do their people a great deal more hurt than
15220 good; for the very fame of such a great and
15221 extraordinary work of God, if their people were
15222 suffered to believe it to be his work, and the

15223 example of other towns, together with what
15224 preaching they might hear occasionally, would be
15225 likely to have a much greater influence upon the
15226 minds of their people, to awaken and animate them
15227 in religion, than all their labors with them: and
15228 besides their minister's opinion would not only
15229 beget in them a suspicion of the work they hear of
15230 abroad, whereby the mighty hand of God that
15231 appears in it, loses its influence upon their minds,
15232 but it will also tend to create a suspicion of
15233 everything of the like nature, that shall appear
15234 among themselves, as being something of the same
15235 distemper that is become so epidemical in the land,
15236 and that is, in effect, to create a suspicion of all
15237 vital religion, and to put the people upon talking
15238 against it, and discouraging it, wherever it appears,
15239 and knocking it in the head as fast as it rises. And
15240 we that are ministers, by looking on this work,
15241 from year to year, with a displeased countenance,
15242 shall effectually keep the sheep from their pasture,
15243 instead of doing the part of shepherds to them, by
15244 feeding them; and our people had a great deal
15245 better be without any settled minister at all at such
15246 a day as this."

15247
15248 Others have been more public, and aimed at
15249 exerting a wider influence. Some have written
15250 pieces for the public papers. Some men in high

15251 standing in the church have circulated letters which
15252 never were printed. Others have had their letters
15253 printed and circulated. There seems to have been a
15254 system of letter-writing about the country
15255 calculated to create distrust. In the days of
15256 President Edwards, substantially the same course
15257 was pursued, in view of which he says in his work
15258 on revivals:

15259
15260 “Great care should be taken that the press should
15261 be improved to no purpose contrary to the interest
15262 of this work. We read that when God fought
15263 against Sisera, for the deliverance of his oppressed
15264 church, they that handle the pen of the writer came
15265 to the help of the Lord in that affair.—Judges v. 14.
15266 Whatever sort of men in Israel they were that were
15267 intended, yet as the words were indited by a Spirit
15268 that had a perfect view of all events to the end of
15269 the world, and had a special eye in this song, to that
15270 great event of the deliverance of God’s church, in
15271 the latter days, of which this deliverance of Israel
15272 was a type, it is not unlikely that they have respect
15273 to authors, those that should fight against the
15274 kingdom of Satan with their pens. Those therefore
15275 that publish pamphlets to the disadvantage of this
15276 work, and tending either directly or indirectly to
15277 bring it under suspicion, and to discourage or
15278 hinder it, would do well thoroughly to consider

15279 whether this be not indeed the work of God, and
15280 whether, if it be, it is not likely that God will go
15281 forth as fire, to consume all that stand in his way,
15282 and so burn up those pamphlets; and whether there
15283 be not danger that the fire that is kindled in them
15284 will scorch the authors.”

15285
15286 All these must repent. God never will forgive them,
15287 nor will they ever enjoy his blessing on their
15288 preaching, or be honored to labor in revivals till
15289 they repent. This duty President Edwards pressed
15290 upon ministers in his day, in the most forcible
15291 terms. There doubtless have been now, as there
15292 were then, faults on both sides. And there must be
15293 deep repentance, and mutual confessions of faults
15294 on both sides.

15295
15296 “There must be a great deal done at confessing of
15297 faults, on both sides; for undoubtedly many and
15298 great are the faults that have been committed, in the
15299 jangling and confusions, and mixtures of light and
15300 darkness, that have been of late. There is hardly
15301 any duty more contrary to our corrupt dispositions,
15302 and mortifying to the pride of man; but it must be
15303 done. Repentance of faults is, in a peculiar manner,
15304 a proper duty, when the kingdom of heaven is at
15305 hand, or when we especially expect or desire that it
15306 should come, as appears by John the Baptist’s

15307 preaching. And if God does now loudly call upon
15308 us to repent, then he also calls upon us to make
15309 proper manifestations of our repentance. I am
15310 persuaded that those that have openly opposed this
15311 work, or have from time to time spoken lightly of
15312 it, cannot be excused in the sight of God, without
15313 openly confessing their fault therein, especially if
15314 they be ministers. If they have any way, either
15315 directly or indirectly, opposed the work, or have so
15316 behaved in their public performances or private
15317 conversation, as has prejudiced the minds of their
15318 people against the work, if hereafter they shall be
15319 convinced of the goodness and divinity of what
15320 they have opposed, they ought by no means to
15321 palliate the matter, and excuse themselves, and
15322 pretend that they always thought so, and that it was
15323 only such and such imprudences that they objected
15324 against, but they ought openly to declare their
15325 conviction, and condemn themselves for what they
15326 have done; for it is Christ that they have spoken
15327 against, in speaking lightly of, and prejudicing
15328 others against this work; yea, worse than that, it is
15329 the Holy Ghost. And though they have done it
15330 ignorantly, and in unbelief, yet when they find out
15331 who it is that they have opposed, undoubtedly God
15332 will hold them bound publicly to confess it.
15333

15334 “And on the other side, if those that have been
15335 zealous to promote the work, have in any of the
15336 forementioned instances openly gone much out of
15337 the way, and done that which is contrary to
15338 Christian rules, whereby they have openly injured
15339 others, or greatly violated good order, and so done
15340 that which has wounded religion, they must
15341 publicly confess it, and humble themselves, as they
15342 would gather out the stones, and prepare the way of
15343 God’s people. They who have laid great stumbling
15344 blocks in others’ way, by their open transgression,
15345 are bound to remove them, by their open
15346 repentance.”

15347
15348 There are ministers in our day, I say it not in
15349 unkindness but in faithfulness, and I would that I
15350 had them all here before me while I say it, who
15351 seem to have been engaged much of their time for
15352 years in doing little else than acting and talking and
15353 writing in such a way as to create suspicion in
15354 regard to revivals. And I cannot doubt that their
15355 churches would, as President Edwards says, be
15356 better with no minister at all, unless they will
15357 repent, and regain his blessing.

15358
15359 2. Those churches which have opposed revivals
15360 must humble themselves and repent. Churches
15361 which have stood aloof or hindered the work must

15362 repent of their sin, or God will not go with them.
15363 Look at those churches now, who have been
15364 throwing suspicion upon revivals. Do they enjoy
15365 revivals? Does the Holy Ghost descend upon them,
15366 to enlarge them and build them up? There is one of
15367 the churches in this city, where the session have
15368 been publishing in the newspapers what they call
15369 their “Act and Testimony,” calculated to excite an
15370 unreasonable and groundless suspicion against
15371 many ministers who are laboring successfully to
15372 promote revivals.” And what is the state of that
15373 church? Have they had a revival? Why it appears
15374 from the official report to the General Assembly,
15375 that it has dwindled in one year twenty-seven per
15376 cent. And all such churches will continue to
15377 dwindle, in spite of everything else that can be
15378 done, unless they repent and have a revival. They
15379 may pretend to be mighty pious, and jealous for the
15380 honor of God, but God will not believe they are
15381 sincere. And he will manifest his displeasure, by
15382 not pouring out his Spirit. If I had a voice loud
15383 enough, I should like to make every one of these
15384 churches and ministers that have slandered
15385 revivals, hear me, when I say, that I believe they
15386 have helped to bring the pall of death over the
15387 church, and that the curse of God is on them
15388 already, and will remain unless they repent. God

15389 has already sent leanness into their souls, and many
15390 of them know it.

15391

15392 3. Those who have been engaged in promoting the
15393 work must also repent. Whatever they have done
15394 that was wrong must be repented of, or revivals
15395 will not return as in days past. Whenever a wrong
15396 spirit has been manifested, or they have got
15397 irritated and provoked at the opposition, and lost
15398 their temper, or mistaken Christian faithfulness for
15399 hard words and a wrong spirit, they must repent.
15400 Those who are opposed could never stop a revival
15401 alone, unless those who promote it get wrong. So
15402 we must repent if we have said things that were
15403 censorious, or proud, or arrogant, or severe. Such a
15404 time as this is no time to stand justifying ourselves.
15405 Our first call is to repent. Let each one repent of his
15406 own sins, and not fall out, and quarrel about who is
15407 most to blame.

15408

15409 4. The church must take right ground in regard to
15410 politics. Do not suppose, now, that I am going to
15411 preach a political sermon, or that I wish to have
15412 you join and get up a Christian party in politics.
15413 No, I do not believe in that. But the time has come
15414 that Christians must vote for honest men, and take
15415 consistent ground in politics, or the Lord will curse
15416 them. They must be honest men themselves, and

15417 instead of voting for a man because he belongs to
15418 their party, Bank or Anti-Bank, Jackson, or Anti-
15419 Jackson, they must find out whether he is honest
15420 and upright, and fit to be trusted. They must let the
15421 world see that the church will uphold no man in
15422 office, who is known to be a knave, or an adulterer,
15423 or a Sabbath-breaker, or a gambler, or a drunkard.
15424 Such is the spread of intelligence and the facility of
15425 communication in our country, that every man can
15426 know for whom he gives his vote. And if he will
15427 give his vote only for honest men, the country will
15428 be obliged to have upright rulers. All parties will be
15429 compelled to put up honest men as candidates.
15430 Christians have been exceedingly guilty in this
15431 matter. But the time has come when they must act
15432 differently, or God will curse the nation, and
15433 withdraw his spirit. As on the subject of slavery
15434 and temperance, so on this subject, the church must
15435 act right or the country will be ruined. God cannot
15436 sustain this free and blessed country, which we
15437 love and pray for, unless the church will take right
15438 ground. Politics are a part of religion in such a
15439 country as this, and Christians must do their duty to
15440 the country as a part of their duty to God. It seems
15441 sometimes as if the foundations of the nation were
15442 becoming rotten, and Christians seem to act as if
15443 they thought God did not see what they do in
15444 politics. But I tell you, he does see it, and he will

15445 bless or curse this nation, according to the course
15446 they take.

15447

15448 5. The churches must take right ground on the
15449 subject of slavery. And here the question arises,
15450 what is right ground? And FIRST I will state some
15451 things that should be avoided.

15452

15453 (1.) First of all, a bad spirit should be avoided.
15454 Nothing is more calculated to injure religion, and
15455 to injure the slaves themselves, than for Christians
15456 to get into an angry controversy on the subject. It is
15457 a subject upon which there needs to be no angry
15458 controversy among Christians. Slave-holding
15459 professors, like rum-selling professors, may
15460 endeavor to justify themselves, and may be angry
15461 with those who press their consciences, and call
15462 upon them to give up their sins. Those proud
15463 professors of religion who think a man to blame, or
15464 think it is a shame to have a black skin, may allow
15465 their prejudices so far to prevail, as to shut their
15466 ears, and be disposed to quarrel with those who
15467 urge the subject upon them. But I repeat it, the
15468 subject of slavery is a subject upon which
15469 Christians, praying men, need not and must not
15470 differ.

15471

15472 (2.) Another thing to be avoided is an attempt to
15473 take neutral ground on this subject. Christians can
15474 no more take neutral ground on this subject, since it
15475 has come up for discussion, than they can take
15476 neutral ground on the subject of the sanctification
15477 of the Sabbath. It is a great national sin. It is a sin
15478 of the church. The churches by their silence, and by
15479 permitting slaveholders to belong to their
15480 communion, have been consenting to it. All
15481 denominations have been more or less guilty,
15482 although the Quakers have of late years washed
15483 their hands of it. It is in vain for the churches to
15484 pretend it is merely a political sin. I repeat it, it is
15485 the sin of the church, to which all denominations
15486 have consented. They have virtually declared that it
15487 is lawful. The very fact of suffering slaveholders
15488 quietly to remain in good standing in their
15489 churches, is the strongest and most public
15490 expression of their views that it is not sin. For the
15491 church, therefore, to pretend to take neutral ground
15492 on the subject, is perfectly absurd. The fact is that
15493 she is not on neutral ground at all. While she
15494 tolerates slaveholders in her communion SHE
15495 JUSTIFIES THE PRACTICE. And as well might
15496 an enemy of God pretend that he was neither saint
15497 nor sinner, that he was going to take neutral
15498 ground, and pray “good Lord and good devil,”

15499 because he did not know which side would be the
15500 most popular.

15501

15502 (3.) Great care should be taken to avoid a
15503 censorious spirit on both sides. It is a subject on
15504 which there has been, and probably will be for
15505 some time to come, a difference of opinion among
15506 Christians, as to the best method of disposing of the
15507 question. And it ought to be treated with great
15508 forbearance on both sides. A denunciatory spirit,
15509 impeaching each other's motives, is unchristian,
15510 calculated to grieve the Spirit of God, and to put
15511 down revivals, and is alike injurious to the church,
15512 and to the slaves themselves.

15513

15514 In the SECOND place, I will mention several
15515 things, that in my judgment the church are
15516 imperatively called upon to do, on this subject:

15517

15518 (1.) Christians of all denominations, should lay
15519 aside prejudice and inform themselves on this
15520 subject, without any delay. Vast multitudes of
15521 professors of religion have indulged prejudice to
15522 such a degree, as to be unwilling to read and hear,
15523 and come to a right understanding of the subject.
15524 But Christians cannot pray in this state of mind. I
15525 defy any one to possess the spirit of prayer, while
15526 he is too prejudiced to examine this, or any other

15527 question of duty. If the light did not shine,
15528 Christians might remain in the dark upon this point,
15529 and still possess the spirit of prayer. But if they
15530 refuse to come to the light, they cannot pray. Now I
15531 call upon all you who are here present, and who
15532 have not examined this subject because you were
15533 indisposed to examine it, to say whether you have
15534 the spirit of prayer. Where ministers, individual
15535 Christians, or whole churches, resist truth upon this
15536 point now, when it is so extensively diffused and
15537 before the public mind, I do not believe they will or
15538 can enjoy a revival of religion.

15539
15540 (2.) Writings, containing temperate and judicious
15541 discussions on this subject, and such developments
15542 of facts as are before the public, should be quietly
15543 and extensively circulated, and should be carefully
15544 and prayerfully examined by the whole church. I
15545 do not mean by this, that the attention of the church
15546 should be so absorbed by this, as to neglect the
15547 main question, of saving souls in the midst of them.
15548 I do not mean that such premature movements on
15549 this subject should be made, as to astound the
15550 Christian community, and involve them in a broil;
15551 but that praying men should act judiciously, and
15552 that, as soon as sufficient information can be
15553 diffused through the community, the churches
15554 should meekly, but FIRMLY take decided ground

15555 on the subject, and express before the whole nation
15556 and the world, their abhorrence of this sin.

15557

15558 The anti-masonic excitement which prevailed a few
15559 years since, made such desolations in the churches,
15560 and produced for a time so much alienation of
15561 feeling and ill will among ministers and people,
15562 and the first introduction of this subject has been
15563 attended with such commotions, that many good
15564 ministers, who are themselves entirely opposed to
15565 slavery, dread to introduce the subject among their
15566 people, through fear that their churches have not
15567 religion enough to take it up, and consider it
15568 calmly, and decide upon it in the spirit of the
15569 Gospel. I know there is danger of this. But still the
15570 subject must be presented to the churches. And if
15571 introduced with discretion, and with great prayer,
15572 there are very few churches that have enjoyed
15573 revivals, and that are at the present time anywhere
15574 near a revival spirit, which may not be brought to
15575 receive the truth on this subject. Let there be no
15576 mistake here. William Morgan's expose of
15577 freemasonry was published in 1826. The
15578 consequent excitement and discussion continued
15579 until 1830. In the meantime the churches had very
15580 generally borne their testimony against
15581 freemasonry, and resolved that they could not
15582 fellowship adhering masons. As a consequence the

15583 Masonic Lodges generally disbanded and gave up
15584 their charters. There was a general stampede of
15585 professed Christians from the lodges. This prepared
15586 the way, and in 1830, the greatest revival the world
15587 had then ever seen commenced in the center of the
15588 anti-masonic region, and spread over the whole
15589 field where the church action had been taken until
15590 its converts numbered 100,000 souls.

15591
15592 Perhaps no church in this country has had a more
15593 severe trial upon this subject than this. They were a
15594 church of young and for the most part
15595 inexperienced Christians. And many circumstances
15596 conspired, in my absence, to produce confusion
15597 and wrong feeling among them. But so far as I am
15598 now acquainted with the state of feeling in this
15599 church, I know of no ill will among them on this
15600 subject. The Lord has blessed us, the Spirit has
15601 been distilled upon us, and considerable numbers
15602 added to our communion every month since my
15603 return. There are doubtless in this church those
15604 who feel on this subject in very different degrees.
15605 And yet I can honestly say that I am not aware of
15606 the least difference in sentiment among them. We
15607 have from the beginning, previous to my going on
15608 my foreign tour, taken the same ground on the
15609 subject of slavery that we have on temperance. We
15610 have excluded slaveholders and all concerned in

15611 the traffic from our communion. By some out of
15612 this church this course has been censured as
15613 unwarrantable and uncharitable, and I would by no
15614 means make my own judgment, or the example of
15615 this church, a rule for the government of other
15616 ministers and churches. Still, I conscientiously
15617 believe that the time is not far distant when the
15618 churches will be united in this expression of
15619 abhorrence against this sin. If I do not baptize
15620 slavery by some soft and Christian name, if I call it
15621 SIN, both consistency and conscience conduct to
15622 the inevitable conclusion, that while the sin is
15623 persevered in, its perpetrators cannot be fit subjects
15624 for Christian communion and fellowship.

15625
15626 To this it is objected, that there are many ministers
15627 in the Presbyterian church who are slaveholders.
15628 And it is said to be very inconsistent that we should
15629 refuse to suffer a slaveholder to come to our
15630 communion, and yet belong to the same church
15631 with them, sit with them in ecclesiastical bodies,
15632 and acknowledge them as ministers. To this I
15633 answer, that I have not the power to deal with those
15634 ministers, and certainly I am not to withdraw from
15635 the church because some of its ministers or
15636 members are slaveholders. My duty is to belong to
15637 the church, even if the devil belong to it. Where I
15638 have authority, I exclude slaveholders from the

15639 communion, and I always will as long as I live. But
15640 where I have no authority, if the table of Christ is
15641 spread, I will sit down to it, in obedience to his
15642 commandment, whoever else may sit down or stay
15643 away.

15644
15645 I do not mean, by any means, to denounce all those
15646 slaveholding ministers and professors as
15647 hypocrites, and to say that they are not Christians.
15648 But this I say, that while they continue in that
15649 attitude, the cause of Christ and of humanity
15650 demands, that they should not be recognized as
15651 such, unless we mean to be partakers of other
15652 men's sins. It is no more inconsistent to exclude
15653 slaveholders because they belong to the
15654 Presbyterian church, than it is to exclude persons
15655 who drink or sell ardent spirits. For there are a
15656 great many rum-sellers belonging to the
15657 Presbyterian church.

15658
15659 I believe the time has come, and although I am no
15660 prophet, I believe it will be found to have come,
15661 that the revival in the United States will continue
15662 and prevail, no farther and faster than the church
15663 take right ground upon this subject. The church are
15664 God's witnesses. The fact is that slavery is, pre-
15665 eminently, the sin of the church. It is the very fact
15666 that ministers and professors of religion of different

15667 denominations hold slaves, which sanctifies the
15668 whole abomination, in the eyes of ungodly men.
15669 Who does not know that on the subject of
15670 temperance every drunkard in the land will skulk
15671 behind some rum-selling deacon, or wine-drinking
15672 minister? It is the most common objection and
15673 refuge of the intemperate, and of moderate
15674 drinkers, that it is practised by professors of
15675 religion. It is this that creates the imperious
15676 necessity for excluding traffickers in ardent spirit,
15677 and rum-drinkers from the communion. Let the
15678 churches of all denominations speak out on the
15679 subject of temperance; let them close their doors
15680 against all who have anything to do with the death-
15681 dealing abomination, and the cause of temperance
15682 is triumphant. A few years would annihilate the
15683 traffic. just so with slavery.

15684
15685 It is the church that mainly supports this sin. Her
15686 united testimony upon this subject would settle the
15687 question. Let Christians of all denominations
15688 meekly but firmly come forth, and pronounce their
15689 verdict; let them clear their communions, and wash
15690 their hands of this thing; let them give forth and
15691 write on the head and front of this great
15692 abomination, SIN! and in three years a public
15693 sentiment would be formed that would carry all

15694 before it, and there would not be a shackled slave,
15695 nor a bristling, cruel slave-driver in this land.

15696

15697 Still it may be said, that in many churches, this
15698 subject cannot be introduced without creating
15699 confusion and ill-will. This may be. It has been so
15700 upon the subject of temperance, and upon the
15701 subject of revivals too. In some churches, neither
15702 temperance nor revivals can be introduced without
15703 producing dissension. Sabbath-schools, and
15704 missionary operations, and everything of the kind
15705 have been opposed, and have produced dissensions
15706 in many churches. But is this a sufficient reason for
15707 excluding these subjects? And where churches
15708 have excluded these subjects for fear of contention,
15709 have they been blessed with revivals? Every body
15710 knows that they have not. But where churches have
15711 taken firm ground on these subjects, although
15712 individuals and sometimes numbers have opposed,
15713 still they have been blessed with revivals. Where
15714 any of these subjects are carefully and prayerfully
15715 introduced; where they are brought forward with a
15716 right spirit, and the true relative importance is
15717 attached to each one of them; if in such cases, there
15718 are those who will make disturbance and resist, let
15719 the blame fall where it ought. There are some
15720 individuals, who are themselves disposed to quarrel
15721 with this subject, who are always ready to exclaim,

15722 “Do not introduce these things into the church, they
15723 will create opposition.” And if the minister and
15724 praying people feel it their duty to bring the matter
15725 forward, they will themselves create a disturbance,
15726 and then say, “There, I told you so; now see what
15727 your introducing this subject has done; it will tear
15728 the church all to pieces.” And while they are
15729 themselves doing all they can to create division,
15730 they are charging the division upon the subject, and
15731 not upon themselves. There are some such people
15732 in many of our churches. And neither sabbath-
15733 schools, nor missions, nor revivals, nor anti-
15734 slavery, nor anything else that honors God or
15735 benefits the souls of men, will be carried in the
15736 churches, without these careful souls being
15737 offended by it.

15738
15739 These things, however, have been introduced, and
15740 carried, one by one, in some churches with more,
15741 and others with less opposition, and perhaps in
15742 some churches with no opposition at all. And as
15743 true as God is the God of the church, as certain as
15744 that the world must be converted, this subject must
15745 be considered and pronounced sin by the church.
15746 There might, infinitely better, be no church in the
15747 world, than that she should attempt to remain
15748 neutral or give a false testimony on a subject of
15749 such importance as slavery, especially since the

15750 subject has come up, and it is impossible from the
15751 nature of the case, that her testimony should not be
15752 in the scale, on the one side or the other.

15753

15754 Do you ask, “What shall be done—shall we make it
15755 the all-absorbing topic of conversation, and divert
15756 attention from the all-important subject of the
15757 salvation of souls in the midst of us?” I answer, No.
15758 Let a church express her opinion upon the subject,
15759 and be at peace. So far as I know, we are entirely at
15760 peace upon this subject. We have expressed our
15761 opinion; we have closed our communion against
15762 slaveholders, and are attending to other things. I am
15763 not aware of the least unhealthy excitement among
15764 us on this subject. And where it has become an
15765 absorbing topic of conversation in a place, in most
15766 instances I believe it has been owing to the
15767 pertinacious and unreasonable opposition of a few
15768 individuals against even granting the subject a
15769 hearing.

15770

15771 6. If the church wishes to promote revivals, she
15772 must sanctify the Sabbath. There is a vast deal of
15773 Sabbath-breaking in the land. Merchants break it,
15774 travellers break it, the Government breaks it. A few
15775 years ago an attempt was made in the western part
15776 of this State, to establish and sustain a Sabbath-
15777 keeping line of boats and stages. But it was found

15778 that the church would not sustain the enterprise.
15779 Many professors of religion would not travel in
15780 these stages, and would not have their goods
15781 forwarded in canal-boats that would be detained
15782 from travelling on the Sabbath. At one time,
15783 Christians were much engaged in petitioning
15784 Congress to suspend the Sabbath mails, and now
15785 they seem to be ashamed of it. But one thing is
15786 most certain, that unless something is done, and
15787 done speedily, and done effectually, to promote the
15788 sanctification of the Sabbath by the church, the
15789 Sabbath will go by the board, and we shall not only
15790 have our mails running on the Sabbath, and post
15791 offices open, but by and by our courts of justice
15792 and halls of legislation will be kept open on the
15793 Sabbath. And what can the church do, what will
15794 this nation do, WITHOUT ANY SABBATH?

15795
15796 7. The church must take right ground on the subject
15797 of Temperance and Moral Reform, and all the
15798 subject of practical morality which come up for
15799 decision from time to time.

15800
15801 There are those in the churches who are standing
15802 aloof from the subject of Moral Reform, and who
15803 are afraid to have anything said in the pulpit
15804 against lewdness. On this subject the church need
15805 not expect to be permitted to take neutral ground.

15806 In the providence of God, it is up for discussion.
15807 The evils have been exhibited, the call has been
15808 made for reform. And what is to reform mankind
15809 but the truth? And who shall present the truth if not
15810 the church and the ministry? Away with the idea
15811 that Christians can remain neutral and keep still,
15812 and yet enjoy the approbation and blessing of God.

15813

15814 In all such cases, the minister who holds his peace
15815 is counted among those on the other side.

15816 Everybody knows that it is so in a revival. It is not
15817 necessary for a person to rail out against the work.
15818 If he only keeps still and takes neutral ground, the
15819 enemies of the revival will all consider him as on
15820 their side. So on the subject of temperance. It is not
15821 needful that a person should rail at the cold-water
15822 society, in order to be on the best terms with
15823 drunkards and moderate drinkers. Only let him
15824 plead for the moderate use of wine, only let him
15825 continue to drink it as a luxury, and all the
15826 drunkards account him on their side. If he refuses
15827 to give his influence to the temperance cause, he is
15828 claimed of course by the other side as a friend. On
15829 all these subjects, when they come up, the churches
15830 and ministers must take the right ground, and take
15831 it openly and stand to it, and carry it through, if
15832 they expect to enjoy the blessing of God in
15833 revivals. They must cast out from their

15834 communions such members, as in contempt of the
15835 light that is shed upon them, continue to drink or
15836 traffic in ardent spirits.

15837

15838 8. There must be more done for all the great objects
15839 of Christian benevolence. There must be much
15840 greater efforts for the cause of missions, and
15841 education, and the Bible, and all the other branches
15842 of religious enterprise, or the church will displease
15843 God. Look at it. Think of the mercies we have
15844 received, of the wealth, numbers and prosperity of
15845 the church. Have we rendered unto God according
15846 to the benefits we have received, so as to show that
15847 the church is bountiful and willing to give their
15848 money and to work for God? No. Far from it. Have
15849 we multiplied our means and enlarged our plans, in
15850 proportion as the church has increased? Is God
15851 satisfied with what has been done, or has he reason
15852 to be? Such a revival as has been enjoyed by the
15853 churches of America for the last ten years! We
15854 ought to have done ten times as much as we have
15855 for missions, Bibles, education, tracts, free
15856 churches, and in all the ways designed to promote
15857 religion and save souls. If the churches do not wake
15858 up on this subject, and lay themselves out on a
15859 larger scale, they may expect the revival in the
15860 United States will cease.

15861

15862 9. If Christians in the United States expect revivals
15863 to spread, and prevail, till the world is converted,
15864 they must give up writing letters and publishing
15865 pieces calculated to excite suspicion and jealousy
15866 in regard to revivals, and must take hold of the
15867 work themselves. If the whole church as a body
15868 had gone to work ten years ago, and continued it as
15869 a few individuals, whom I could name, have done,
15870 there would not now have been an impenitent
15871 sinner in the land. The millennium would have
15872 fully come in the United States before this day.
15873 Instead of standing still, and writing letters from
15874 Berkshire, let ministers who think we are going
15875 wrong, just buckle on the harness and go forward,
15876 and show us a more excellent way. Let them teach
15877 us by their example how to do better. I do not deny
15878 that we have made mistakes, and committed errors.
15879 I do not deny that there are many things which are
15880 wrong done in revivals by some persons. But is that
15881 the way to correct them, brethren? So did not Paul.
15882 He corrected his brethren by telling them kindly
15883 that he would show them a more excellent way. Let
15884 our brethren take hold and go forward. Let us hear
15885 the cry from all their pulpits. TO THE WORK. Let
15886 them lead on, where the Lord will go with them
15887 and make bare his arm, and I, for one, will follow.
15888 Only let them GO ON, and let us have the United

15889 States converted to God, and let all minor questions
15890 cease.

15891

15892 If not, and if revivals do cease in this land, the
15893 ministers and churches will be guilty of all the
15894 blood of all the souls that shall go to hell in
15895 consequence of it. There is no need that the work
15896 should cease. If the church will do all her duty, the
15897 millennium may come in this country in three
15898 years. But if this writing letters is to be kept up,
15899 filling the country with suspicions and jealousies, if
15900 it is to be always so, that two-thirds of the church
15901 will hang back and do nothing but find fault in time
15902 of revival, the curse of God will be on this nation,
15903 and that before long.

15904

15905 REMARKS.

15906

15907 1. It is high time there should be great searchings
15908 of heart among Christians and ministers. Brethren,
15909 this is no time to resist the truth, or to cavil and find
15910 fault because the truth is spoken out plainly. It is no
15911 time to recriminate or to strive, but we must search
15912 our own hearts, and humble ourselves before God.

15913

15914 2. We must repent and forsake our sins, and amend
15915 our ways and our doings, or the revival will cease.
15916 Our ecclesiastical difficulties **MUST CEASE**, and

15917 all minor differences must be laid aside and given
15918 up, to unite in promoting the great interests of
15919 religion. If not, revivals will cease from among us,
15920 and the blood of lost millions will be found in our
15921 skirts.

15922
15923 If the church would do all her duty, she would soon
15924 complete the triumph of religion in the world. But
15925 if this Act and Testimony warfare is to be kept up,
15926 and this system of espionage, and insinuation and
15927 denunciation, not only will revivals cease, but the
15928 blood of millions who will go to hell before the
15929 church will get over the shock, will be found in the
15930 skirts of the men who have got up and carried on
15931 this dreadful contention.

15932
15933 4. Those who have circulated slanderous reports in
15934 regard to revivals, must repent. A great deal has
15935 been said about heresy, and about some men's
15936 denying the Spirit's influence, which is wholly
15937 groundless, and has been made up out of nothing.
15938 And those who have made up the reports, and those
15939 who have circulated them against their brethren,
15940 must repent and pray to God that they may receive
15941 his forgiveness.

15942
15943 5. We see the constant tendency there is in
15944 Christians to declension and backsliding. This is

15945 true in all converts of all revivals. Look at the
15946 revival in President Edwards' day. The work went
15947 on till 30,000 souls had been converted, and by this
15948 time so many ministers and Christians got in such a
15949 state, by writing books and pamphlets, on one side
15950 and the other, that they carried all by the board, and
15951 the revival ceased. Those who had opposed the
15952 work grew obstinate and violent, and those who
15953 promoted it lost their meekness, and got ill-
15954 tempered, and were then driven into the very evils
15955 that had been falsely charged upon them.

15956
15957 And now, what shall we do? This great and
15958 glorious work of God seems to be indicating a
15959 decline. The revival is not dead—blessed be God
15960 for that—it is not dead! No, we hear from all parts
15961 of the land that Christians are reading on the
15962 subject and inquiring about the revival. In some
15963 places there are now powerful revivals. And what
15964 shall we do, to lift up the standard, to move this
15965 entire nation and turn all this great people to the
15966 Lord? We must DO RIGHT. We must all have a
15967 better spirit, we must get down in the dust, we must
15968 act unitedly, we must take hold of this great work
15969 with all our hearts, and then God will bless us, and
15970 the work will go on.
15971

15972 What is the condition of this nation? No doubt,
15973 God is holding the rod of WAR over the heads of
15974 this nation. He is waiting before he lets loose his
15975 judgments, to see whether the church will do right.
15976 The nation is under his displeasure, because the
15977 church has conducted in such a manner with
15978 respect to revivals. And now suppose war should
15979 come, where would be our revivals? How quickly
15980 would war swallow up the revival spirit. The spirit
15981 of war is anything but the spirit of revivals. Who
15982 will attend to the claims of religion, when the
15983 public mind is engrossed by the all-absorbing topic
15984 of war. See now, how this nation is, all at once,
15985 brought upon the brink of war. God brandishes his
15986 blazing sword over our heads. Will the church
15987 repent? It is THE CHURCH that God chiefly has in
15988 view. How shall we avoid the curse of war? Only
15989 by a reformation in the church. It is in vain to look
15990 to politicians to avert war. Perhaps they would
15991 generally be in favor of war. Very likely the things
15992 they would do to avert it would run us right into it.
15993 If the church will not feel, will not awake, will not
15994 act, where shall we look for help? If the church
15995 absolutely will not move, will not tremble in view
15996 of the just judgments of God hanging over our
15997 heads, we are certainly nigh unto cursing, as a
15998 nation.
15999

16000 6. Whatever is done must be done quickly. The
16001 scale is on a poise. If we do not go forward, we
16002 must go back. Things cannot remain as they are. If
16003 the church do not come up, if we do not have a
16004 more powerful revival than we have had, very soon
16005 we shall have none at all. We have had such a great
16006 revival, that now small revivals do not interest the
16007 public mind. You must act as individuals. Do your
16008 own duty. You have a responsibility. Repent
16009 quickly. Do not wait till another year. Who but
16010 God knows what will be the state of these
16011 churches, if things go on another year without a
16012 great and general revival of religion?

16013
16014 7. It is common, when things get all wrong in the
16015 church, for each individual to find fault with the
16016 church, and with his brethren, and overlook his
16017 own share of the blame. Do not let any one spend
16018 his time in finding fault with that abstract thing,
16019 "The Church." But as individual members of the
16020 church of Christ, let each one act, and act right, and
16021 get down in the dust, and never speak proudly, or
16022 censoriously. GO FORWARD. Who would leave
16023 such a work, and go to writing letters, and go down
16024 into the plain of Ono, and see if all these petty
16025 disputes cannot be adjusted, and let the work cease.
16026 Let us mind our work, and let the Lord take care of
16027 the rest. Do our duty, and leave the issue to God.

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Since these lectures were delivered great progress has been made in all benevolent enterprises in this country. Time has settled the question of the purity and inestimable value of those revivals, against which so much mistaken opposition existed in the Presbyterian church. It is now known that the great and disastrous reaction predicted by opposers has not been witnessed. It must now be admitted that the converts of those revivals have composed the strength of the churches, and that their Christian influence has been felt throughout the land. No revivals have ever existed the power and purity of which have been more thoroughly established by time and experience, than that great and blessed work of God, against which such a storm of opposition was raised. The opposition was evidently a great mistake. Let it not be said that the opposition was demanded by the great evils attending that work, and that those evils and errors were arrested and corrected by the opposition. The fact is that the supposed errors and evils that were made the justification of the opposition, never existed to any such extent as to justify alarm or opposition. I have written a narrative of those revivals in which I have considered the question more fully. The churches did take hold of temperance and other branches of reform to such

16056 an extent as to avoid those evils against which they
16057 were warned. Upon the question of slavery the
16058 church was too late in her testimony to avoid the
16059 war. But the slaveholders were much alarmed and
16060 exasperated by the constantly growing opposition
16061 to their institution throughout all that region of the
16062 north where revival influences had been felt. They
16063 took up arms to defend and perpetuate the
16064 abomination, and by so doing abolished it.

16065

16066 [5] This was in 1831. There have been more
16067 extensive revivals since. In 1857-8 it was estimated
16068 that 50,000 conversions per week occurred for six
16069 or eight weeks in succession in the northern part of
16070 the United States.

16071

16072 [6] The strange opposition of such men as Dr.
16073 Lyman Beecher and Mr. Nettleton had much to do
16074 with provoking and sustaining this opposition.

16075

16076

16077

16078 LECTURE XVI.

16079

16080 THE NECESSITY AND EFFECT OF UNION.

16081

16082 Text.—Again I say unto you, That if two of you
16083 shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they

16084 shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father
16085 which is in heaven.—Matthew xviii. 19.

16086

16087 SOME weeks since, I used this text, in preaching
16088 on the subject of prayer meetings. At present I
16089 design to enter more into the spirit and meaning of
16090 the text. The evident design of our Lord in this text
16091 was to teach the importance and influence of union
16092 in prayer and effort to promote religion. He states
16093 the strongest possible case by taking the number
16094 two, as the least number between whom there can
16095 be an agreement, and says that “where two of you
16096 are agreed on earth, as touching anything that they
16097 shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father
16098 which is in heaven.” It is the fact of their
16099 agreement, upon which he lays the stress, and
16100 mentioning the number two, appears to have been
16101 designed merely to afford encouragement to the
16102 smallest number between whom there can be an
16103 agreement. But what are we to understand “being it
16104 agreed as touching” the things we shall ask? I will
16105 answer this question under the two following
16106 heads:

16107

16108 I. By showing that we are to be “agreed” in prayer.

16109

16110 II. We are to agree in everything that is essential to
16111 obtaining the blessing that we seek.

16112

16113 I. In order to come within this promise, we are to
16114 be agreed in prayer. This is particularly taught in
16115 the text. That is,

16116

16117 1. We should agree in our desires for the object, It
16118 is necessary to have desires for the object, and to
16119 be agreed in those desires. Very often individuals
16120 pray in words for the same thing, when they are by
16121 no means agreed in desiring that thing. Nay,
16122 perhaps some of them, in their hearts desire the
16123 very opposite. People are called on to pray for an
16124 object, and they all pray for it in words, but God
16125 knows they often do not desire it, and perhaps he
16126 sees that the hearts of some may, all the while, be
16127 resisting the prayer.

16128

16129 2. We must agree in the motive from which we
16130 desire the object. It is not enough that our desires
16131 for an object should be the same, but the reason
16132 why must be the same. An individual may desire a
16133 revival, for the glory of God and the salvation of
16134 sinners. Another member of the church may also
16135 desire a revival, but from very different motives.
16136 Some, perhaps, desire a revival in order to have the
16137 congregation built up and strengthened, so as to
16138 make it more easy for them to pay their expenses in
16139 supporting the Gospel. Another desires a revival

16140 for the sake of having the church increased so as to
16141 be more numerous and more respectable. Others
16142 desire a revival because they have been opposed or
16143 evil spoken of, and they wish to have their enemies
16144 know that whatever they may think or say, God
16145 blesses them. Sometimes people desire a revival
16146 from mere natural affection, so as to have their
16147 friends converted and saved. If they mean to be so
16148 united in prayer as to obtain a blessing, they must
16149 not only desire the blessing, and be agreed in
16150 desiring it, but they must also agree in desiring it
16151 for the same reasons.

16152

16153 3. We must be agreed in desiring it for good
16154 reasons. These desires must not only be united, and
16155 from the same motives, but they must be from good
16156 motives. The supreme motive must be to honor and
16157 glorify God. People may even desire a revival, and
16158 agree in desiring it, and agree in the motives, and
16159 yet if these motives are not good, God will not
16160 grant their desires. Thus parents may be agreed in
16161 prayer for the conversion of their children, and may
16162 have the same feelings and the same motives, and
16163 yet if they have no higher motives than because
16164 they are their children, their prayers will not be
16165 granted. They are agreed in the reason, but it is not
16166 the right reason.

16167

16168 In like manner, any number of persons might be
16169 agreed in their desires and motives, but if their
16170 motives are selfish, their being agreed in them will
16171 only make them more offensive to God. “How is it
16172 that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of
16173 the Lord?” I have seen a great deal of this, where
16174 churches have been engaged in prayer for an
16175 object, and their motives were evidently selfish.
16176 Sometimes they are engaged in praying for a
16177 revival, and you would think by their earnestness
16178 and union that they would certainly move God to
16179 grant the blessing, till you find out the reason. And
16180 what is it? Why, they see their congregation is
16181 about to be broken up, unless something can be
16182 done. Or they see some other denomination gaining
16183 ground, and there is no way to counteract them but
16184 by having a revival in their church. And all their
16185 praying is only an attempt to get the Almighty in to
16186 help them out of their difficulty, and is purely
16187 selfish and offensive to God. A woman in
16188 Philadelphia, was invited to attend a female prayer
16189 meeting at a certain place. She inquired what they
16190 met there for, and for what they were going to
16191 pray? She was answered that they were going to
16192 pray for the outpouring of the Spirit upon the city.
16193 “Well,” said she, “I shall not go; if they were going
16194 to pray for our congregation I would go, but I am

16195 not going there to pray for other churches!” Oh,
16196 what a spirit!

16197

16198 I have had a multitude of letters and requests that I
16199 should visit such and such places, and endeavor to
16200 promote a revival, and many reasons have been
16201 urged why I should go, but when I came to weigh
16202 their reasons, I have sometimes found every one of
16203 them selfish. And God would look upon every one
16204 with abhorrence.

16205

16206 In prayer meetings, how often do we hear people
16207 offer such reasons why they desire such and such
16208 blessings, as are not right in the sight of God. Such
16209 reasons, that if they are the true ones, and if
16210 Christians are actually excited by those reasons, it
16211 would render their prayers not acceptable to God,
16212 because their motive was not right.

16213

16214 There are a great many things often said in favor of
16215 the cause of missions, which are of this character,
16216 appealing to wrong motives. How often are we told
16217 of six hundred millions of heathens, who are in
16218 danger of going to hell, and how little is said of the
16219 guilt of six hundred millions engaged and banded
16220 together as rebels against God, or of the dishonor
16221 and contempt poured upon God our Maker by such
16222 a world of outlaws. Now I know that God refers to

16223 those motives which appeal to our mere natural
16224 sympathies, and compassion, and uses them, but
16225 always in subordination to his glory. If these lower
16226 motives are placed foremost, it must always
16227 produce a defective piety and zeal, and a great deal
16228 that is false. Until the church will look at the
16229 dishonor done to God, little will be done. It is this
16230 which must be made to stand out before the world,
16231 it is this which must be deeply felt by the church, it
16232 is this which must be fully exhibited to sinners,
16233 before the world can ever be converted.

16234
16235 Parents never agree in praying for the conversion
16236 of their children in such a way as to have their
16237 prayers answered, until they feel that their children
16238 are rebels. Parents often pray very earnestly for
16239 their children because they wish God to save them,
16240 and they almost think hard of God if he does not
16241 save their children. But if they would have their
16242 prayers prevail, they must come to take God's part
16243 against their children, even though for their
16244 perverseness and incorrigible wickedness he should
16245 be obliged to send them to hell. I knew a woman
16246 who was very anxious for the salvation of her son,
16247 and she used to pray for him with agony, but still
16248 he remained impenitent, until at length she became
16249 convinced that her prayers and agonies had been
16250 nothing but the fond yearnings of parental feeling,

16251 and were not dictated at all by a just view of her
16252 son's character as a wilful and wicked rebel against
16253 God. And there was never any impression made on
16254 his mind until she was made to take strong ground
16255 against him as a rebel, and to look on him as
16256 deserving to be sent to hell. And then he was
16257 converted. The reason was, she never before was
16258 influenced by the right motive in prayer, desiring
16259 his salvation with a supreme regard to the glory of
16260 God.

16261
16262 4. If we would be so united as to prevail in prayer,
16263 we must agree in faith. That is, we must concur in
16264 expecting the blessing prayed for. We must
16265 understand the reason why it is to be expected, we
16266 must see the evidence on which faith ought to rest,
16267 and must absolutely believe that the blessing will
16268 come, or we do not bring ourselves within the
16269 promise. Faith is always understood as an
16270 indispensable condition of prevailing prayer. If it is
16271 not expressed in any particular case, it is always
16272 implied, for no prayer can be effectual but that
16273 which is offered in faith. And in order that united
16274 prayer may prevail, there must be united faith.

16275
16276 5. So, again, we must be agreed as to the time when
16277 we desire the blessing to come. If two or more
16278 agree in desiring a particular blessing, and one of

16279 them desires to have it come now, while others are
16280 not ready to have it quite yet, it is plain they are not
16281 agreed. They are not united in regard to one
16282 essential point. If the blessing is to come in answer
16283 to their united prayer, it must come as they prayed
16284 for it. And if it comes, it must be at some time. But
16285 if they disagree as to the time when they will have
16286 it, plainly it can never come in answer to their
16287 prayer.

16288

16289 Suppose a church should undertake to pray for a
16290 revival, and should be all agreed in desiring a
16291 revival, but not as to the time when it shall be.

16292 Suppose some wish to have the revival come now,
16293 and are all prepared, and their hearts waiting for the
16294 Spirit of God to come down, and are willing to give
16295 time and attention and labor to it NOW; but others
16296 are not quite ready, they have something else to
16297 attend to at present, some worldly object which
16298 they want to accomplish, some piece of business in
16299 hand and want just to finish this thing, and then—
16300 but they cannot possibly find time to attend to it
16301 now, they are not prepared to humble themselves,
16302 to search their hearts and break up their fallow
16303 ground, and put themselves in a posture to receive
16304 the blessing. Is it not plain that here is no real
16305 union, for they are not agreed in that which is
16306 essential? While one part are praying that the

16307 revival may come now, the others are praying with
16308 equal earnestness that it may not come now.

16309

16310 Suppose the question were now put to this church,
16311 whether you are agreed in praying for a revival of
16312 religion here? Do you all desire a revival, and
16313 would you all like to have it come now? Would
16314 you be heartily agreed now to break down in the
16315 dust, and open your hearts to the Holy Ghost if he
16316 should come to-night? I do not ask what you would
16317 say, if I should propose the question. Perhaps if I
16318 should put it to you now, you would all rise up and
16319 vote that you were agreed in desiring a revival, and
16320 agreed to have it now, You know how you ought to
16321 feel and what you ought to say, and you know you
16322 ought to be ready for a revival now. But, I ask,
16323 would GOD see it to be so in your hearts, that you
16324 are agreed on this point? Has there been a time,
16325 since I came back from the country, that this
16326 church were all agreed in desiring and praying for a
16327 revival, and in wishing to have it come now? Have
16328 any two of you agreed on this point, and prayed
16329 accordingly? If not, when will you be agreed to
16330 pray for a revival? And if this church cannot be
16331 agreed among yourselves, how can you expect a
16332 revival? It is of no use for you to take the outward
16333 attitude, and stand up here and say you are agreed,
16334 when God reads the heart, and sees that you are not

16335 agreed. Here is the promise—”Again I say unto
16336 you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as
16337 touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be
16338 done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”
16339 Now this is either true, or it is false. Which ground
16340 will you take? If it is true, then it is true that you
16341 are not agreed, and never have been, except in
16342 those cases where you have had a revival.

16343
16344 But we must agree not only upon a time, but it
16345 must be the present time, or we are not agreed in
16346 everything essential to the work. Unless we agree
16347 to have the revival now, we shall not now use the
16348 means. But until the means are used, it cannot
16349 come. It is plain, then, that we must be agreed upon
16350 the present time, that is, we are not agreed in the
16351 sense of the text, until we agree that now we will
16352 have the blessing, and conduct accordingly. To
16353 agree upon a future time is of no use, for when that
16354 future time comes, we must then be agreed upon
16355 that present time, and use means accordingly, so
16356 that you see you are never properly agreed until
16357 you agree that now is the time.

16358
16359 II. We are to agree in everything that is essential to
16360 obtaining the blessing that we seek.
16361

16362 You see the language of the text, “If two of you
16363 shall agree as touching anything that they shall
16364 ask.” Many people seem to read it as if it referred
16365 merely to an agreement in asking, and they
16366 understand it to promise, that whenever two are
16367 agreed in asking for any blessing, it shall be given,
16368 But Christ says there must be an agreement “as
16369 touching” the thing prayed for. That is, the
16370 agreement or union must comprise everything that
16371 is essential to the bestowment and reception of the
16372 blessing.

16373
16374 1. If Christians would enjoy the benefits of this
16375 promise in praying for a revival, they must be
16376 agreed in believing revivals of religion to be a
16377 reality. There are many individuals, even in the
16378 church, who do not in their hearts believe that the
16379 revivals which take place are the work of God.
16380 Some of them may pray in words for an outpouring
16381 of the Spirit and a revival of religion, while in their
16382 hearts they doubt whether there are any such things
16383 known in modern times. In united prayer there
16384 must be no hypocrisy.

16385
16386 2. They must agree in feeling the necessity of
16387 revivals. There are some who believe in the reality
16388 of revivals, as a work of God, while at the same
16389 time they are unsettled as to the necessity of having

16390 them in order to the success of the Gospel. They
16391 think there is a real work of God in revivals, but
16392 after all, perhaps it is quite as well to have sinners
16393 converted and brought into the church in a more
16394 quiet and gradual way, and without so much
16395 excitement. Whenever revivals are abroad in the
16396 land, and prevail, and are popular, they may appear
16397 in favor of them, and may put up their cold prayers
16398 for a revival, while at the same time they would be
16399 sorry on the whole to have a revival come among
16400 them. They think it so much safer and better to
16401 indoctrinate the people, and spread the matter
16402 before them in a calm way, and to bring them in
16403 gradually, and not run the risk of having animal
16404 feeling or wild-fire in their congregations.

16405
16406 3. They must be agreed in regard to the importance
16407 of revivals. Men are not blessed with revivals, in
16408 answer to prayers that are not half in earnest. They
16409 must feel the infinite importance of a revival before
16410 they will pray so as to prevail. Blessings of this
16411 kind are not granted but in answer to such prayers
16412 as arise from a sense of their importance. As I have
16413 shown before, when preaching on the subject of
16414 prevailing prayer, it is when men desire the
16415 blessing with UNUTTERABLE AGONY, that they
16416 offer such prayer as will infallibly prevail with
16417 God. Those who feel less of the importance of a

16418 revival may pray for it in words, but they will
16419 never have the blessing. But when a church has
16420 been united in prayer, and really felt the importance
16421 of a revival, they never have failed of having one. I
16422 do not believe a case can be found of such a church
16423 being turned empty away. Such an agreement,
16424 when sincere, will secure an agreement also on all
16425 other subjects that are indispensable.

16426
16427 4. They must be agreed also, in having correct
16428 scriptural notions about several things connected
16429 with revivals.

16430
16431 (1.) The necessity of divine agency to produce a
16432 revival. It is not enough that they all hold this in
16433 theory, and pray for it in words. They must fully
16434 understand and deeply feel this necessity, they
16435 must realize their entire dependence on the Spirit of
16436 God, or the whole will fail.

16437
16438 (2.) Why divine agency is necessary. There must be
16439 an agreement on correct principles in regard to the
16440 reason that divine agency is so indispensable. If
16441 they get wrong ideas on this point, they will be
16442 hindered. If Christians get the idea that this
16443 necessity of divine influence lies in the inability of
16444 sinners, or if they feel as if God was under
16445 obligation to give the Holy Spirit, in order to make

16446 sinners able to obey the Gospel, they insult God,
16447 and their prayers will not avail. For in that case
16448 they must feel that it is a mere matter of common
16449 justice for God to pour out his Spirit, before he can
16450 justly require Christians to work, or sinners to
16451 repent.

16452

16453 Suppose a church get the idea that sinners are poor,
16454 unfortunate creatures, who come into the world
16455 with such a nature that they cannot help sinning,
16456 and that sinners are just as unable to repent and
16457 believe the Gospel as they are to fly to the moon,
16458 how can they feel that the sinner is a rebel against
16459 God, and that he deserves to be sent to hell? How
16460 can they feel that the sinner is to blame? And how
16461 can they take God's part when they pray? If they
16462 do not take God's part against the sinner, they
16463 cannot expect God will regard their prayers, for
16464 they do not pray with right motives. No doubt one
16465 great reason why so many prayers are not
16466 answered, is that those who pray do in fact take the
16467 sinner's part against God. They pray as if the sinner
16468 was a poor unfortunate being, to be pitied, rather
16469 than as if he was a guilty wretch, to be blamed.
16470 And the reason is that they do not believe sinners
16471 are able to obey God. If a person does not believe
16472 that sinners are able to obey their Maker, and really
16473 believes that the Spirit's influences are necessary to

16474 make him able, it is impossible, with these views,
16475 to offer acceptable and prevailing prayer for the
16476 sinner, and it is not wonderful that persons with
16477 these views should not prevail with God, and
16478 should doubt about the efficacy of the prayer of
16479 faith.

16480

16481 How often do you hear people pray for sinners in
16482 this style, “O Lord, help this poor soul to do what
16483 he is required to do—O Lord, enable him to do so
16484 and so.” Now this language implies that they take
16485 the sinner’s part, and not God’s. If it was
16486 understood by those who use it, as it is sometimes
16487 explained, and if people meant by it what they
16488 ought to mean when they plead for sinners, I would
16489 not find so much fault with it, But the truth is, that
16490 when people use this language, they often mean
16491 just what the language itself would be naturally at
16492 first sight, understood to mean, which is just as if
16493 they should pray, “Lord, thou commandest these
16494 poor sinners to repent, when, O Lord, thou knowest
16495 they cannot repent unless thou givest them thy
16496 Spirit, to enable them to do it, though thou hast
16497 declared that thou wilt send them to hell if they do
16498 not, whether they ever receive the Spirit or not, and
16499 now, Lord, this seems very hard, and we pray thee
16500 to have pity upon these poor creatures, and do not
16501 deal so hardly with them, for Christ’s sake.” Who

16502 does not see that such a prayer, or a prayer which
16503 means this, whatever language it may be couched
16504 in, is an insult to God, charging him with infinite
16505 injustice, if he continues to exact from sinners a
16506 duty which they are unable to perform without that
16507 aid which he will not grant. People may pray in this
16508 way till the day of judgment, and never obtain a
16509 blessing, because they take the sinners part against
16510 God. They cannot pray successfully, until they
16511 understand that the sinner is a rebel, and obstinate
16512 in his rebellion—so obstinate that he never will,
16513 without the Holy Spirit, do what he might do as
16514 well as not, instantly, and this obstinacy is the
16515 reason, and the only reason, why he needs the
16516 influence of the Holy Spirit for his conversion. The
16517 only ground on which the sinner needs divine
16518 agency is to overcome his obstinacy, and make him
16519 willing to do what he can do, and what God justly
16520 requires him to do. And a church are never in an
16521 attitude in which God will hear their united
16522 prayers, unless they are agreed in so understanding
16523 their dependence on God, as to feel it in perfect
16524 consistency with the sinner's blame. If it is the
16525 other way, they are agreed in understanding it
16526 wrong, and their prayers for divine help to the
16527 unfortunate instead of divine favor to make a rebel
16528 submit, are wide of the mark, are an insult to God,
16529 and they never will obtain favor in heaven.

16530

16531 (3.) They must be agreed in understanding that
16532 revivals are not miracles, but that they are brought
16533 about by the use of means like other events. No
16534 wonder revivals formerly came so seldom and
16535 continued so short a time, when people generally
16536 regarded them as miracles, or like a mere shower of
16537 rain, that will come on a place and continue a little
16538 while, and then blow over; that is, as something
16539 over which we have no control. For what can
16540 people do to get a shower of rain? Or how can they
16541 make it rain any longer than it does rain? It is
16542 necessary that those who pray should be agreed in
16543 understanding a revival as something to be brought
16544 about by means, or they never will be agreed in
16545 using them.

16546

16547 (4.) They must be agreed in understanding that
16548 human agency is just as indispensable to a revival
16549 as divine agency. Such a thing as a revival of
16550 religion, I venture to say, never did occur without
16551 divine agency, and never did occur without human
16552 agency. How often do people say, "God can, if he
16553 pleases, carry on the work without means." But I
16554 have no faith in it, for there is no evidence of it.
16555 What is religion? Obedience to God's law. But the
16556 law cannot be obeyed unless it is known. And how
16557 can God make sinners obey but by making known

16558 his commandments? And how can he make them
16559 known but by revealing them himself, or sending
16560 them by others—that is, by bringing THE TRUTH
16561 to bear upon the person’s mind till he obeys it. God
16562 never did and never can convert a sinner except
16563 with the truth. What is conversion? Obeying the
16564 truth. He may communicate it himself, directly to
16565 the sinner. But then, the sinner’s own agency is
16566 indispensable, for conversion consists in the right
16567 employment of the sinner’s own agency. And
16568 ordinarily, he employs the agency of others also, in
16569 printing, writing, conversation, and preaching. God
16570 has put the Gospel treasure in earthen vessels. He
16571 has seen fit to employ men in preaching the word.
16572 That is, he has seen that human agency is that
16573 which he can best employ in saving sinners. And if
16574 there ever was a case, of which we have no
16575 evidence, there is not one in a thousand, if one in a
16576 million, converted in any other way than through
16577 the truth, made known and urged by human
16578 instrumentality. And as the church must be united
16579 in using those means, it is plainly necessary that
16580 they should be united in understanding the true
16581 reason why means are to be used, and the true
16582 principles on which they are to be governed and
16583 applied.
16584

16585 5. It is important that there should be union in
16586 regard to the measures essential to the promotion of
16587 a revival. Let individuals agree to do anything
16588 whatever, and if they are not agreed in their
16589 measures, they will run into confusion, and
16590 counteract one another. Set them to sail a ship, and
16591 they never can get along without agreement. If they
16592 attempt to do business as merchants when they are
16593 not agreed in their measures, what will they do?
16594 Why, they will only undo each other's work, and
16595 thwart the whole business of the concern. All this is
16596 pre-eminently true in regard to the work of
16597 promoting a revival. Otherwise the members of the
16598 church will counteract each other's influence, and
16599 they need not expect a revival.

16600

16601 (1.) The church must be agreed in regard to the
16602 meetings which are held, as to what meeting shall
16603 be held, and how many, and where, and when they
16604 shall be held. Some people always desire to
16605 multiply meetings in a revival, as if the more
16606 meetings they had, the more religion. Others are
16607 always opposed to any new meetings in a revival.
16608 Some are always for having a protracted meeting,
16609 and others are never ready to hold a protracted
16610 meeting at all. Whatever difference there may be, it
16611 is essential that the church should come to a good

16612 understanding on the subject, so that they can go on
16613 together in harmony, and labor with zeal and effect.

16614

16615 (2.) They must be agreed as to the manner of
16616 conducting meetings. It is necessary that the church
16617 should be united and cordial on this subject, if they
16618 expect to offer united prayer with effect.

16619 Sometimes there are individuals who want to adopt
16620 every new thing they can hear of or imagine, while
16621 others are totally unwilling to have anything altered
16622 in regard to the management of the meeting, but
16623 would have everything done precisely as they are
16624 accustomed to. They ought to be agreed in some
16625 way, either to have the meetings altered, or to keep
16626 them on in the old way. The best possible way is,
16627 for the church to agree in this, that they will let the
16628 meetings go on and take their course, just as the
16629 Spirit of God shapes them, and not even attempt to
16630 make two meetings just alike. The church never
16631 will give the fullest effect to the truth, until they are
16632 agreed in this principle,—that in promoting a
16633 revival they will accommodate their measures to
16634 circumstances, and not attempt to interrupt the
16635 natural course which pious feeling and sound
16636 judgment indicate, but cast themselves entirely
16637 upon the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit,
16638 introducing any measure, at any time, that shall

16639 seem called for in the Providence of God, without
16640 laying any stress upon its being new or old.

16641

16642 6. They must be agreed in the manner of dealing
16643 with impenitent sinners. This is a point immensely
16644 important, that the church should be agreed in their
16645 treatment of sinners. Suppose that they are not
16646 agreed, and one will tell a sinner one thing and
16647 another another. What confusion! How can they
16648 agree in prayer, when it is plain that they are not
16649 agreed as to the things they shall pray for. Go
16650 among such a church, and hear them pray for
16651 sinners. Attend a prayer meeting and listen. Here is
16652 one man prays that the sinners present may repent.
16653 Another prays that they may be convicted, and
16654 perhaps, if he is very much engaged, will go so far
16655 as to pray that they may be deeply convicted.
16656 Another prays that sinners may go home solemn,
16657 and pensive, and silent, meditating upon the truths
16658 they have heard. Another prays in such a manner,
16659 that you can see he is afraid to have them converted
16660 now. Another prays very solemnly that they may
16661 not attempt to do anything in their own strength.
16662 And so on. How easy it is to see that the church are
16663 not agreed as touching the things they ask for, and
16664 of course they have no interest in the promise.

16665

16666 If you set them to talk with sinners, their courses
16667 would be just as discordant, for it is plain that they
16668 are not agreed, and have no clear views in regard to
16669 what a sinner must do to be saved, or of what ought
16670 to be said to sinners, to bring them to repent. And
16671 the consequence is, that sinners who are awakened
16672 and anxious, presently get confounded, and do not
16673 know what to do, and perhaps give it all up in
16674 despair, or conclude there is in reality nothing
16675 rational or consistent in religion. One will tell the
16676 sinner he must repent, immediately. Another will
16677 give him a book, Doddridge's Rise and Progress
16678 perhaps, and tell him to read that book. Another
16679 will tell him he must pray and persevere, and in
16680 God's time he will obtain the blessing. A revival
16681 can never go on for any length of time amidst such
16682 difficulties. If it begins, it must soon run out;
16683 unless, perhaps, the body of the church will keep
16684 still and say nothing at all, and let others carry on
16685 the work. And there the work will suffer materially
16686 for want of their co-operation and support. A
16687 church ought to be agreed. Every Christian ought
16688 to have a clear understanding of this subject, and
16689 all speak the same thing, and give the same
16690 directions. And then the sinner will find no one to
16691 take his part, and can get no relief or comfort till he
16692 repents.
16693

16694 7. They must be agreed in removing the
16695 impediments to a revival. If a church expect a
16696 revival, they must take up the stumbling blocks out
16697 of the way.

16698
16699 (1.) In the exercise of discipline. If there are rotten
16700 members in the church, they should be removed,
16701 and the church should all agree to cut them off. If
16702 they remain in the church, they are such a reproach
16703 to religion, as to hinder a revival. Sometimes when
16704 an attempt is made to cast them out, this creates
16705 division, and thus the work is stopped. Sometimes
16706 the offenders are persons of influence, or they have
16707 family friends who will take their part, and make a
16708 party, and thus create a bad spirit, and prevent a
16709 revival.

16710
16711 (2.) In mutual confessions. Whenever wrong has
16712 been done to any, there should be a full confession.
16713 I do not mean a cold and forced acknowledgment,
16714 such as saying, "If I have done wrong, I am sorry
16715 for it." But a hearty confession, going the full
16716 length of the wrong, and showing that it comes out
16717 of a broken heart.

16718
16719 (3.) Forgiveness of enemies. A great obstruction to
16720 revivals is often found in the fact that active and
16721 leading individuals harbor a revengeful and

16722 unforgiving spirit towards those who have injured
16723 them, which destroys their spirituality, makes them
16724 harsh and disagreeable in their manner, and
16725 prevents them from enjoying either communion
16726 with God in prayer, or the blessing of God to give
16727 them success in labor. But let the members of a
16728 church be truly agreed in breaking down and
16729 confessing their own faults, and in cherishing a
16730 tender, merciful, forgiving, Christ-like spirit toward
16731 those who they think have done them wrong, and
16732 then the Spirit will come down upon them not by
16733 measure.

16734
16735 8. They must be agreed in making all the necessary
16736 preparations for a revival. They should be agreed in
16737 having all necessary preparation made, and agreed
16738 in bearing their part of the labor or expense of
16739 making it. There should be an equality, and not let
16740 a few be burdened and the rest do little or nothing,
16741 but every one his proportion, according to his
16742 several ability. Then there will be no envying nor
16743 jealousy, nor any of those mutual recriminations
16744 and altercations and disrespectful remarks about
16745 one another, which are so inconsistent with
16746 brotherly love, and such a stumbling block in the
16747 way of sinners.
16748

16749 9. They must be agreed in doing heartily whatever
16750 is necessary to be done for the promotion of the
16751 revival. Sometimes a slight disagreement about a
16752 very little thing will be allowed to break in and
16753 destroy a revival. A minister told me that he once
16754 went to labor in a place as an evangelist, and the
16755 Spirit of God was evidently present, and sinners
16756 began to inquire, and things looked quite favorable,
16757 until some of the members in the church began to
16758 agitate the inquiry how they should pay him for his
16759 services. They said “If he stays among us any
16760 longer, he will expect we should give him
16761 something,” and they did not see how they could
16762 afford to do it. And they talked about it until the
16763 minds of the brethren got distracted and divided,
16764 and the minister went away. Look at it. There God
16765 stood in the door of that church, with his hands full
16766 of mercies but these parsimonious and wicked
16767 professors thought it would cost something to have
16768 a revival, and their expenses were about as much as
16769 they felt willing or able to bear. And so they let
16770 him depart and the work ceased. The minister
16771 would not have left at the time, whether they gave
16772 him anything or not, for what he should receive, or
16773 whether he should receive anything from them, was
16774 a question about which he felt no concern. But the
16775 church by their parsimonious spirit got into such a
16776 state as to grieve the Spirit, and he saw that to stay

16777 longer with them would do no good. Oh, how will
16778 those professors feel when they meet sinners from
16779 that town in judgment, when it will all come out,
16780 that God was ready and waiting to grant them a
16781 blessing, but they allowed themselves to get
16782 agitated and divided by inquiring how much they
16783 should have to pay!

16784
16785 10. They must be agreed in laboring to carry on the
16786 work. It is not enough that they should agree to
16787 pray for a revival, but they should agree also in
16788 laboring to promote it. They should set themselves
16789 to it systematically, and as a matter of business, to
16790 visit and converse and pray with their neighbors, to
16791 look out for opportunities of doing good; to watch
16792 the effect of the word, and watch the signs of the
16793 times, that they may know when anything needs to
16794 be done, and do it.

16795
16796 (1.) They should be agreed to labor.

16797
16798 (2.) They should be agreed how to labor.

16799
16800 (3.) They should be agreed to live accordingly.

16801
16802 11. They must agree in a determination to
16803 persevere. It will not answer for some members of
16804 the church to-day to begin to move and bluster

16805 about, and then, as soon as the least thing turns up
16806 unfavorable, to get discouraged, and faint, and one-
16807 half of them give over. They should be all united
16808 and agree to persevere, and labor, and pray, and
16809 hold on, until the blessing comes.

16810
16811 In a word, if Christians expect to unite in prayer
16812 and effort, so as to prevail with God, they must be
16813 agreed in speaking and doing the same things, in
16814 walking by the same rule, and maintaining the
16815 same principles, and in persevering till they obtain
16816 the blessing, so as not to hinder or thwart each
16817 other's efforts. All this is evidently implied in
16818 being agreed as touching the things for which they
16819 are praying.

16820

16821 REMARKS.

16822

16823 1. We see why it is that so many of the children of
16824 professing parents are not converted.

16825

16826 It is because the parents have not been agreed as
16827 touching the things they should pray for in behalf
16828 of their children. Perhaps they never had any kind
16829 of agreement respecting them. Perhaps they were
16830 never agreed even as to what was the very best
16831 thing they could ask them. Sometimes parents are
16832 not agreed in anything, but their opinions clash,

16833 and they are perpetually disagreeing, and their
16834 children see it, and then no wonder they are not
16835 converted.

16836
16837 Or perhaps they may not be agreed as touching the
16838 salvation of their children. Are they sincere in
16839 desiring it? Do they agree to desire and agree from
16840 right motives? Do they agree in regard to the
16841 importance of it? Are they agreed how their
16842 children ought to be dealt with, to effect their
16843 conversion—what shall be said to them—how it
16844 shall be said—when—by whom. Alas! in how
16845 many cases is it evident they are not agreed.
16846 Probably few cases will be found, where children
16847 remain unconverted, but what it will prove that the
16848 parents were never truly agreed as touching the
16849 things they should ask for the salvation of their
16850 children.

16851
16852 Often there is such disagreement that we could not
16853 expect any good to result, or anything but ruin to
16854 the children. The husband and wife often disagree
16855 entirely and fundamentally in regard to the manner
16856 of bringing up their children. Perhaps the wife is
16857 fond of dress, and display, and visiting, while the
16858 husband is plain and humble, and is grieved and
16859 distressed, and mourns and prays to see how his
16860 children are puffed up with vanity. Or it may be

16861 that the father is ambitious, and wants to have his
16862 daughters fashionably educated and make a
16863 display, and his sons become great men, and so he
16864 will send his daughters to a polite boarding-school,
16865 where they may learn anything but their duty to
16866 God, and will be all the time pushing his sons
16867 forward, and goading their ambition, while the
16868 mother grieves and weeps in secret to see her dear
16869 children hurried on to destruction, and all her own
16870 influence counteracted, and her sons and daughters
16871 trained up to serve the god of this world, and go to
16872 hell.

16873

16874 2. We see the hypocrisy of those who profess to be
16875 praying for a revival while they are doing nothing
16876 to promote it. There are many who appear to be
16877 very zealous in praying for a revival, while they are
16878 not doing anything at all for one. What do they
16879 mean? Are they agreed as touching the things they
16880 ask for? Certainly not. They cannot be agreed in
16881 offering acceptable prayer for a revival until they
16882 are prepared TO DO what God requires them to do
16883 to promote it. What would you think of the farmer
16884 who should pray for a crop, and not plough or sow?
16885 Would you think such prayers pious, or an insult to
16886 God?

16887

16888 3. We see why so many prayers offered in the
16889 church are never answered. It is because those who
16890 offered them never were agreed as touching the
16891 things they asked for. Perhaps the minister never
16892 laid the subject before them, never explained what
16893 it is to be agreed, nor showed them its importance,
16894 nor set before them the great encouragement which
16895 the promise before us affords to churches that will
16896 agree. Perhaps the members of the church have
16897 never conferred together, and compared their
16898 views, to see whether they understood the subject
16899 alike, whether they were agreed in regard to the
16900 motives, grounds, and importance of being united
16901 in prayer and labor for a revival. Suppose you were
16902 to go through the churches in this city, and learn
16903 the precise views and feelings of the members on
16904 this subject. How many would you find who were
16905 agreed even in regard to the essential and
16906 indispensable things, concerning which it is
16907 necessary Christians should be agreed in order to
16908 unite in prevailing prayer? Perhaps no two could be
16909 found who are agreed, and if two were found
16910 whose views and desires were alike, it would
16911 probably be ascertained that they are unacquainted
16912 with each other, and of course neither act nor pray
16913 together.
16914

16915 4. We see why it is that this text has been generally
16916 understood to mean something different from what
16917 it says. People have first read it wrong. They have
16918 read it as if it was, "If any two of you shall agree to
16919 ask anything, it shall be done." And as they have
16920 often agreed to ask for things, and the things were
16921 not done, they have said, "The literal meaning of
16922 the text cannot be true, for we have tried it and
16923 know it is not true. How many prayer meetings
16924 have we held, and how many petitions have we put
16925 up, in which we have perfectly agreed in asking for
16926 blessings, and yet they have not been granted?"
16927 Now the fact is, that they have never yet
16928 understood what it is to be agreed as touching the
16929 things they are to ask for. I am sure this is no
16930 strained construction of the text, but is its true and
16931 obvious meaning, as a plain, pious reader would
16932 understand it, if he inquired seriously and earnestly
16933 the true import. They must be agreed not only in
16934 asking, but in everything else that is indispensable
16935 to the existence of the thing prayed for. Suppose
16936 two of you were agreed in desiring to go to London
16937 together. If you were not agreed in regard to the
16938 means, what route you shall take, and what ship
16939 you will go in, you will never get there together.
16940 Just so in praying for a revival, you must be agreed
16941 in regard to the means and circumstances, and

16942 everything essential to the existence and progress
16943 of a revival.

16944

16945 5. We may ordinarily expect a revival of religion to
16946 prevail and extend among those without the church,
16947 just in proportion to the union of prayer and effort
16948 within. If there is a general union within the
16949 church, the revival will be general. If the union
16950 continues, the revival will continue. If anything
16951 begins to break in upon this perfect union in prayer
16952 and effort, it will begin to limit the revival. How
16953 great and powerful would be the revival in this city,
16954 if all the churches in the city were thus united in
16955 promoting it!

16956

16957 There is another fact which I have witnessed,
16958 worthy of notice. I have observed, that a revival
16959 will prevail out of the church, among persons in
16960 that class of society, amongst whom it prevails in
16961 the church. If the females in the church are most
16962 awake and prayerful, the work may ordinarily be
16963 expected to prevail mostly among females out of
16964 the church, and more women will be converted
16965 than men. If the youth of either, or of both sexes, in
16966 the church are most awake, the work is most likely
16967 to prevail among youth, male or female, or both, as
16968 the work may be in the church, in this respect. If
16969 the heads of families and the principal men in the

16970 church are awake, the revival is, I have observed,
16971 more likely to prevail among that class out of the
16972 church. I have known a revival mostly confined to
16973 females, and few males converted, apparently
16974 because the male part of the church did not take
16975 hold and work. Again I have repeatedly known the
16976 greatest number of converts among men, owing
16977 apparently to the fact that the male part of the
16978 church were most engaged. When the revival does
16979 not reach a particular class of the impenitent, pains
16980 should be taken to arouse that portion of the church
16981 who are of their own age and standing, to make
16982 more direct efforts for their conversion. There
16983 seems to be a philosophy in this fact, which has
16984 often been witnessed. Different classes of
16985 professors naturally feel a sympathy for the
16986 impenitent of their own sex and age and rank, and
16987 more naturally pray for them, and have more
16988 intercourse with them, and more influence over
16989 them, and this seems to be at least one of the
16990 reasons why revivals are apt to be the most
16991 powerful and general in that class without the
16992 church, who are the most awake in the church.
16993 Christians should understand this, and feel their
16994 responsibility. One great reason why so few of the
16995 principal men are sometimes converted in revivals,
16996 doubtless is, that that class in the church are often
16997 so worldly, they cannot be aroused. The revival

16998 will generally prevail mostly in those families
16999 where the professors belonging to them are awake,
17000 and the impenitent belonging to those families
17001 where the professors are not awake, are apt to be
17002 left unconverted. One principal reason, obviously
17003 is, that when the professors in a family or
17004 neighborhood are awake, there is not only prayer
17005 offered for sinners in the midst of them, but there
17006 are corresponding influences acting upon the
17007 impenitent among them. If they are awake, their
17008 looks and lives and warnings, all tend to promote
17009 the conversion of their impenitent friends. But if
17010 they are asleep, all their influences tend to prevent
17011 their conversion. Their coldness grieves the Spirit,
17012 their worldliness contradicts the Gospel, and all
17013 their intercourse with their impenitent friends is in
17014 favor of impenitence, and calculated to perpetuate
17015 it.

17016
17017 6. We see why different denominations have been
17018 suffered to spring up in the church, and under the
17019 government of God.

17020
17021 Christians often see and deplore the evils that have
17022 arisen to the church of God, from the division of
17023 his people into jarring sects. And they have
17024 wondered and been perplexed, to think that God
17025 should suffer it to be so. But in the light of this

17026 subject we can see, that considering what
17027 diversities of opinions and feelings and views
17028 actually exist in the church, much good results
17029 from this division of sects. Considering this
17030 diversity of opinion, many would never agree to
17031 pray and labor together, so as to do it with success,
17032 and so it is better they should separate, and let
17033 those unite who are agreed. In all cases where there
17034 cannot be a cordial agreement in labor, it is better
17035 that each denomination should labor by
17036 themselves, so long as this difference exists. I have
17037 sometimes seen revivals broken up by attempting
17038 to unite Christians of different denominations in
17039 prayer and labor together, while they were not
17040 agreed as to the principles or measures by which
17041 the work was to be promoted. They would then
17042 undo each other's work, and destroy each other's
17043 influence, perplex the anxious, and give occasion to
17044 enemies to blaspheme, and soon their feelings
17045 would get soured, and the Spirit of God is grieved
17046 away, and the work stops, and perhaps painful
17047 confusion and controversy follow.

17048

17049 7. We see why God sometimes suffers churches to
17050 be divided. It is because he finds that the members
17051 are so much at variance that they will not pray and
17052 labor together with effect. Sometimes churches that
17053 are in such a state, will still keep together from

17054 worldly considerations and worldly policy, because
17055 it is so much easier for the whole to support public
17056 worship. Perhaps both parties want to keep the
17057 meeting-house, or both want to retain the minister,
17058 and they cannot agree which shall go off, and so
17059 they continue along, jealous and jangling for years,
17060 accomplishing little or nothing for the salvation of
17061 sinners. In such cases, God has often let something
17062 turn up among them, that would tear them asunder,
17063 and then each party would go to work in their own
17064 way, and perhaps both would prosper. While they
17065 were in the same church, they were always making
17066 each other trouble, as they did not think nor feel
17067 alike, but as soon as they were separated, every
17068 thing settled down in peace, and made it evident
17069 that it was better they should divide. I have known
17070 some cases in this State, where this has been done
17071 with the happiest results, and both churches have
17072 been speedily blessed with revivals.

17073

17074 8. It is evident that many more churches need to be
17075 divided. How many churches there are, who are
17076 holding together, and yet are doing no good, for the
17077 simple reason that they are not sufficiently agreed.
17078 They do not think alike nor feel alike on the
17079 subjects connected with revivals, and while this is
17080 so, they never can work together. Unless they can
17081 be brought to such a change of views and feelings

17082 on the subject as will unite them, they are only a
17083 hindrance to each other and to the work of God. In
17084 many cases they see and feel that it is so, and yet
17085 they keep together, conscientiously, for fear a
17086 division should dishonor religion, when in fact the
17087 division that now exists may be making religion a
17088 by-word and a reproach. Far better would it be if
17089 they would just agree to divide amicably, like
17090 Abraham and Lot. "If thou wilt take the left hand, I
17091 will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right
17092 hand, then I will go to the left." Let them separate,
17093 and each work in his own way, and they may both
17094 enjoy the blessing.

17095
17096 9. We see why a few individuals, who are perfectly
17097 united may be successful in gathering and building
17098 up a new church, and may do so much better than a
17099 much larger number who are not agreed among
17100 themselves. If I were going to gather a new church
17101 in this city, I should rather have five persons, or
17102 three, or even two that were perfectly agreed as
17103 touching the things they were to pray for, and the
17104 manner in which they should labor for them, and in
17105 all that is essential to the prosperity of a church,
17106 and who would stand by me, and stand by each
17107 other, than to have a church to begin with, or five
17108 hundred members who were not agreed.
17109

17110 10. We see what glorious things may be expected
17111 for Zion, whenever the churches generally shall be
17112 agreed on these subjects. When ministers shall lay
17113 aside their prejudices, and their misconstructions,
17114 and their jealousies, and shall see eye to eye, and
17115 when the churches shall understand the Bible alike,
17116 and see their duty alike, and pray alike, and shall be
17117 “agreed as touching the things they shall ask for,” a
17118 nation shall be born in a day. Only let them feel as
17119 the heart of one man, and be agreed as to what
17120 ought to be done for the salvation of the world, and
17121 the millennium will come at once.

17122
17123 11. There is vast ignorance in the churches on the
17124 subject of revivals. After all the revivals that have
17125 been enjoyed, and all that has been said and written
17126 and printed concerning revivals, there are very few
17127 who have any real, consistent knowledge on the
17128 subject. And when there is a revival, how few are
17129 there who can take hold to labor and promote it as
17130 if they understood what they were about. How few
17131 persons are to be found, who have ever taken up
17132 revivals of religion as a subject to be studied and
17133 understood. Every body knows, that in a revival
17134 Christians must pray, and must do some things
17135 which they have not been in the habit of doing. But
17136 multitudes know nothing of the REASON WHY
17137 they should do this, or why one thing is better than

17138 another, and of course they have no principles to
17139 guide them, and when anything occurs which they
17140 did not expect, they are all at a fault and know
17141 nothing what to do. If men should go to work to
17142 build a house of worship, and know as little how to
17143 proceed as many ministers and professors know
17144 how to build the spiritual temple of God, they
17145 never would get up a house in the world. And yet
17146 people make themselves believe they are building
17147 the church of God, when they know nothing at all
17148 what they are about, and are utterly unable to give a
17149 reason why they are doing as they do, or why one
17150 thing should be done rather than another. There are
17151 multitudes in the church who never seem to
17152 suppose that the work of promoting revivals of
17153 religion is one that requires study, and thought, and
17154 knowledge of principles, and skill in applying the
17155 word of God, so as to give every one his portion in
17156 season. And so they go on, generally doing little or
17157 nothing because they are attempting nothing, and if
17158 they ever do awake, go headlong to work, without
17159 any system or plan, as if God had left this part of
17160 our duty out of the reach of sound judgment and
17161 good sense.

17162
17163 12. There is vast ignorance among ministers upon
17164 this subject, and one great reason of this ignorance
17165 is, that many get the idea that they already

17166 understand all about revivals, when in reality they
17167 know next to nothing about them. I once knew a
17168 minister come in where there was a powerful
17169 revival, and bluster about and found fault with
17170 many things, speaking of his knowledge of
17171 revivals, that he had been in seventeen of them and
17172 so on, when it was evident that he knew nothing as
17173 he ought to know of revivals.

17174
17175 13. How important it is that the church should be
17176 trained and instructed, so as to know what to do in
17177 a revival. They should be trained and disciplined
17178 like an army; each one having a place to fill, and
17179 something to do, and knowing where he belongs,
17180 and what he has to do, and how to do it. Instead of
17181 this, how often do you see a church in a time of
17182 revival take hold of the work to promote it, just like
17183 a parcel of children taking hold to build a house.
17184 How few are there that really know how to do—
17185 what?—Why, the very thing for which God suffers
17186 Christians to live in this world, the very thing for
17187 which ALONE he would ever let them remain
17188 away from heaven a day, is the very thing of all
17189 others that they do not study and do not try to
17190 understand.

17191
17192 14. We see why revivals are often so short, and
17193 why they so often produce a reaction. It is because

17194 the church do not understand the subject. Revivals
17195 are short, because professors have been stirred up
17196 to a spasmodical kind of action. They have gone to
17197 work by impulse rather than from deliberate
17198 conviction of duty, and have been guided by their
17199 feelings rather than by a sound understanding of
17200 what they ought to do. The church did not know
17201 what to do, what they could do, and what they
17202 could not, nor how to husband their strength, nor
17203 what the state of things would bear, and perhaps
17204 their zeal led them into some indiscretions, and
17205 they lost their hold on God, and so the enemy
17206 prevailed. The church ought to be so trained as to
17207 know what to do, so as never to fail, and never to
17208 suffer defeat or reaction, when they attempt to
17209 promote a revival. They should understand all the
17210 tactics of the devil, and know where to guard
17211 against his devices, so that they may know him
17212 when they see him, and not mistake him for an
17213 angel of light come to give them lessons of wisdom
17214 in promoting the revival, and so that they can co-
17215 operate wisely with the minister, and with one
17216 another, and with the Holy Ghost, in carrying on
17217 the work. No person who has been conversant in
17218 revivals can overlook the fact, that the ignorance of
17219 professors of religion concerning revivals, and their
17220 stupid blunders are among the most common things
17221 that put revivals down, and bring back a fearful

17222 reaction upon the church. Brethren, How long shall
17223 this be so? It ought not to be so, it need not be so,
17224 shall it always be so?

17225

17226 15. We see that every church is justly responsible
17227 for the souls that are among them. If God has given
17228 such a promise, and if it is true that where so many
17229 as two are agreed, as touching the things they ask
17230 for, it shall be done, then certainly Christians are
17231 responsible, and if sinners are lost, their blood will
17232 be found upon the church. If the churches can have
17233 what they ask, as soon as they are agreed as
17234 touching it, then certainly the damnation of the
17235 world will be required at the hands of the church.

17236

17237 16. We see the guilt of ministers, in not informing
17238 themselves, and rightly and speedily instructing the
17239 churches upon this momentous subject. Why, what
17240 is the end of the Christian ministry! What have
17241 they to do, but to instruct and marshal the
17242 sacramental host, and lead them on to conquest.
17243 What! let the church remain in ignorance upon the
17244 very subject, and the only point of duty, for the
17245 performance of which they are in the world, the
17246 salvation of sinners. Some ministers have acted as
17247 mysteriously about revivals, as if they thought
17248 Christians were either incapable of understanding
17249 how to promote them, or that is was of no

17250 importance that they should know. But this is all
17251 wrong. No minister has yet begun to understand, or
17252 do his duty, if he has neglected to teach his church
17253 to work for God in the promotion of revivals. What
17254 is he about? What does he mean? Why is he a
17255 minister? To what end has he taken the sacred
17256 office? Is it that he “may eat a piece of bread?”

17257
17258 17. We see that pious parents can render the
17259 salvation of their children certain. Only let them
17260 pray in faith, and be agreed as touching the things
17261 they shall ask for, and God has promised them the
17262 desire of their hearts. Who can be agreed so well as
17263 parents? Let them be agreed in prayer, and agreed
17264 what to do, and agreed in doing all their duty; let
17265 them thus train up their children in the way they
17266 should go, and when they are old, they will not
17267 depart from it.

17268
17269 And now, brethren, do you believe you are agreed,
17270 according to the meaning of this promise? I know
17271 that where a few individuals may be agreed in
17272 some things, they may produce some effect. But
17273 while the body of the church are not agreed, there
17274 will always be so many things to counteract, that
17275 they will accomplish but little. **THE CHURCH**
17276 **MUST BE AGREED.** Oh, if we could find one
17277 church that were perfectly and heartily agreed in all

17278 these points, so that they could pray and labor
17279 together, all as one, what good would be done! But
17280 now, while things are as they are, we see colony
17281 after colony peopling hell, because the church are
17282 not agreed. Oh, what do Christians think, how can
17283 they keep still, when God has brought down his
17284 blessings so that if any two were agreed, as
17285 touching the things they ask for, it would be done.
17286 Alas! alas! how bitter will be the remembrance of
17287 these janglings in the church, when Christians
17288 come to see the crowds of lost souls that have gone
17289 down to hell, because we were not agreed to labor
17290 and pray for their salvation.

17291
17292 Finally.—In the light of this promise we see the
17293 awful guilt of the church. God has given it to be the
17294 precious inheritance of his people at all times, and
17295 in all places. If his people agree, their prayers will
17296 be answered. We see the awful guilt of this church,
17297 who come here and listen to lectures about revivals
17298 and then go away and have no revival, and also the
17299 guilt of members of other churches who hear these
17300 lectures and go home and refuse to do their duty.
17301 How can you meet the thousands of impenitent
17302 sinners around you, at the bar of God, and see them
17303 sink away into everlasting burnings? Have you
17304 been united in heart to pray for them? If you have

17305 not, why have you disagreed? Why have you not
17306 prayed with this promise until you have prevailed?

17307

17308 You will now either be agreed, and pray for the
17309 Holy Ghost, and receive him before you leave the
17310 house, or the anger of the Lord will be upon you.
17311 Should you now agree to pray in the sense of this
17312 promise, for the Spirit of God to come down on
17313 this city, the heavenly dove would fly through the
17314 city in the midst of the night and would rouse the
17315 consciences and break up the guilty slumbers of the
17316 wicked. What then is the crimson guilt of those
17317 professors of religion who are sleeping in sight of
17318 such a promise? They seem to have skipped over,
17319 or to have entirely forgotten it. Multitudes of
17320 sinners going to hell in all directions, and yet this
17321 blessed promise is neglected; yea, more, is
17322 practically despised by the church. There it stands
17323 in the solemn record, and the church might take
17324 hold of it in such a manner that vast numbers might
17325 be saved, but they are not agreed. Therefore souls
17326 will perish. And where is the responsibility? Who
17327 can take this promise and look the perishing in the
17328 face at the day of judgment?

17329

17330 These lectures were greatly instrumental in
17331 reviving religion in the church to which they were
17332 preached, and their publication in this country and

17333 in Europe has been the means of promoting
17334 revivals in very many places. To God belongs all
17335 the glory.

17336

17337

17338

17339 LECTURE XVII.

17340

17341 FALSE COMFORTS FOR SINNERS.

17342

17343 Text.—How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in
17344 your answers there remaineth falsehood.—Job xxi.
17345 34.

17346

17347 JOB'S three friends insisted on it that the
17348 afflictions which he suffered were sent as a
17349 punishment for his sins, and were evidence
17350 conclusive that he was a hypocrite, and not a good
17351 man as he professed to be. A lengthy argument
17352 ensued, in which job referred to all past experience,
17353 to prove that men are not dealt with in this world
17354 according to their character; that the distinction is
17355 not observed in the allotments of Providence. His
17356 friends maintained the opposite, and intimated that
17357 this world is also a place of rewards and
17358 punishments, in which men receive good or evil,
17359 according to their deeds. In this chapter, Job shows
17360 by appealing to common sense and common

17361 observation, and experience, that this cannot be
17362 true, because it is a matter of fact that the wicked
17363 are often prosperous in the world and through life,
17364 and hence infers that their judgment and
17365 punishment must be reserved for a future state.
17366 “The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction,”
17367 and “they shall be brought forth to the day of his
17368 wrath.” And inasmuch as his friends came to
17369 comfort him, but being in the dark on this
17370 fundamental point, had not been able to understand
17371 his case, and so could not afford him any comfort,
17372 but rather aggravated his grief, Job insisted upon it
17373 that he would still look to a future state for
17374 consolation, and rebukes them by exclaiming, in
17375 the bitterness of his soul, “How then comfort ye me
17376 in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth
17377 falsehood?”

17378
17379 My present purpose is, to make some remarks upon
17380 the various methods employed in comforting
17381 anxious sinners, and I design:

17382
17383 I. To notice briefly the necessity and design of
17384 instructing anxious sinners.

17385
17386 II. To show that anxious sinners are always seeking
17387 comfort. Their supreme object is to get comfort in
17388 their distress.

17389

17390 III. To notice some of the false comforts often
17391 administered.

17392

17393 I. The necessity and design of instructing anxious
17394 sinners.

17395

17396 The very idea of anxiety implies some instruction.

17397 A sinner would not be anxious at all about his

17398 future state, unless he had light enough to know

17399 that he is a sinner, and that he is in danger of

17400 punishment and needs forgiveness. But men are to

17401 be converted, not by physical force, or by a change

17402 wrought in their nature or constitution by creative

17403 power, but by the truth made effectual by the Holy

17404 Spirit. Conversion is yielding to the truth. And

17405 therefore, the more truth can be brought to bear

17406 upon the mind, other things being equal, so much

17407 the more probable is it that the individual will be

17408 converted. Unless the truth is brought to bear upon

17409 him, it is certain he will not be converted. If it is

17410 brought to bear, it is not absolutely certain that it

17411 will be effectual, but the probability is in

17412 proportion to the extent to which the truth is

17413 brought to bear. The great design of dealing with

17414 an anxious sinner is to clear up all his difficulties

17415 and darkness, and do away all his errors, and sap

17416 the foundation of his self-righteous hopes, and

17417 sweep away every vestige of comfort that he could
17418 find in himself. There is often much difficulty in
17419 this, and much instruction is required. Sinners often
17420 cling with a death grasp to their false dependences.
17421 The last place to which a sinner ever betakes
17422 himself for relief is to Jesus Christ. Sinners had
17423 rather be saved in any other way in the world. They
17424 had rather make any sacrifice, go to any expense, or
17425 endure any suffering, than just to throw themselves
17426 as guilty and lost rebels upon Christ alone for
17427 salvation. This is the very last way in which they
17428 are ever willing to be saved. It cuts up all their self-
17429 righteousness, and annihilates their pride and self-
17430 satisfaction so completely, that they are
17431 exceedingly unwilling to adopt it. But it is as true
17432 in philosophy as it is in fact, that this is, after all,
17433 the only way in which a sinner could find relief. If
17434 God should attempt to relieve sinners, and save
17435 them without humbling their pride and turning
17436 them from their sins, he could not do it. Now the
17437 object of instructing an anxious sinner should be to
17438 lead him by the shortest possible way to do this. It
17439 is to bring his mind, by the shortest route, to the
17440 practical conclusion that there is, in fact, no other
17441 way in which he can be relieved and saved, but to
17442 renounce himself and rest in Christ alone. To do
17443 this with effect requires great skill. It requires a
17444 thorough knowledge of the human heart, a clear

17445 understanding of the plan of salvation, and a
17446 precise and definite idea of the very thing that a
17447 sinner MUST DO in order to be saved. To know
17448 how to do this effectually is one of the rarest
17449 qualifications in the ministry at the present day. It
17450 is distressing to see how few ministers, and how
17451 few professors of religion there are who have in
17452 their own minds that distinct idea of the thing to be
17453 done, that they can go to an anxious sinner and tell
17454 him exactly what he has to do, and how to do it,
17455 and can show him clearly that there is no possible
17456 way for him to be saved but by doing that very
17457 thing which they tell him, and can make him feel
17458 the certainty that he must do it, and that unless he
17459 does that very thing, he will be damned.

17460

17461 II. I am to show that anxious sinners are always
17462 seeking comfort.

17463

17464 Sinners often imagine they are seeking Jesus
17465 Christ, and seeking religion, but this is a mistake,
17466 No person ever sought religion, and yet remained
17467 irreligious. What is religion? It is obeying God.
17468 Seeking religion is seeking to obey God. The soul
17469 that hungers and thirsts after righteousness is the
17470 soul of a Christian. To say that a person can seek to
17471 obey God, and yet not obey him, is absurd. For if
17472 he is seeking religion he is not an impenitent

17473 sinner. To seek religion, implies a willingness to
17474 obey God, and a willingness to obey God is
17475 religion. It Is a contradiction to say that an
17476 impenitent sinner is seeking religion. It is the same
17477 as to say, that he seeks and actually longs to obey
17478 God, and God will not let him, or that he longs to
17479 embrace Jesus Christ, and Christ will not let him
17480 come. The fact is, the anxious sinner is seeking a
17481 hope, he is seeking pardon, and comfort, and
17482 deliverance from hell. He is anxiously looking for
17483 some one to comfort him, and make him feel
17484 better, without being obliged to conform to such
17485 humiliating conditions as those of the Gospel. And
17486 his anxiety and distress continue, only because he
17487 will not yield to the terms. Unfortunately, anxious
17488 sinners find comforters enough to their liking.
17489 Miserable comforters they all are, too, “seeing in
17490 their answers there remaineth falsehood.” No
17491 doubt, millions and millions are now in hell,
17492 because there were those around them who gave
17493 them false comfort, who had so much false pity, or
17494 were themselves so much in the dark, that they
17495 would not let them remain in anxiety till they had
17496 submitted their hearts to God, but administered
17497 falsehood, and relieved their distress in this way,
17498 and now their souls are lost.
17499

17500 III. I am to notice several of the ways in which
17501 false comfort is given to anxious sinners.

17502

17503 I might almost say, there is an endless variety of
17504 ways in which this is done. The more experience I
17505 have, and the more I observe the ways in which
17506 even good people deal with anxious sinners, the
17507 more I feel grieved at the endless fooleries and
17508 falsehoods with which they attempt to comfort
17509 their anxious friends, and thus, in fact, deceive
17510 them and beguile them out of their salvation. It
17511 often reminds me of the manner in which people
17512 act when any one is sick. Let any one of you be
17513 sick, with almost any disease in the world, and you
17514 will find that every person you meet with has a
17515 remedy for that disorder, a certain cure, a specific,
17516 a panacea; and you will find such a world of
17517 quackery all around you, that if you do not take
17518 care and SHUT IT ALL OUT, you will certainly
17519 lose your life. A man must exercise his own
17520 judgment, for he will find as many remedies as he
17521 has friends, and each one is tenacious of his own
17522 medicine, and perhaps will think hard if it is not
17523 taken. And no doubt this miserable system of
17524 quackery kills a great many people.

17525

17526 This is true to no greater extent respecting the
17527 diseases of the body than respecting the diseases of

17528 the mind. People have their specifics and their
17529 catholicons and their panaceas to comfort
17530 distressed souls, and whenever they begin to talk
17531 with an anxious sinner, they will bring in their false
17532 comforts, so much that if he does not TAKE
17533 CARE, and mind the word of God, he will
17534 infallibly be deceived to his own destruction. I
17535 propose to mention a few of the falsehoods that are
17536 often brought forward in attempting to comfort
17537 anxious sinners. Time would fail me, even to name
17538 them all.

17539
17540 The direct object of many persons is to comfort
17541 sinners, and they are often so intent upon this that
17542 they do not stick at means or kind of comfort. They
17543 see their friends distressed, and they pity them,
17544 they feel very compassionate, “Oh, oh, I cannot
17545 bear to see them so distressed, I must comfort them
17546 somehow,” and so they try one way, and another,
17547 and all to comfort them! Now, God desires they
17548 should be comforted. He is benevolent, and has
17549 kind feelings, and his heart yearns over them, when
17550 he sees them so distressed. But he sees that there is
17551 only one way to give a sinner real comfort. He has
17552 more benevolence and compassion than all men,
17553 and wishes to comfort them. But he has fixed the
17554 terms as unyielding as his throne, on which he will
17555 give a sinner relief. And he will not alter. He

17556 knows that nothing else will do the sinner effectual
17557 good, for nothing can make him happy, until he
17558 repents of his sins and forsakes them, and turns to
17559 God. And therefore God will not yield. Our object
17560 should be the same as that of God. We should feel
17561 compassion and benevolence, just as he does, and
17562 be as ready to give comfort, but be sure that it be of
17563 the right kind. The fact is, our prime object should
17564 be to induce the sinner to obey God. His comfort
17565 ought to be with us, and with him, but a secondary
17566 object, and while we are more anxious to relieve
17567 his distress than to have him cease to abuse, and
17568 dishonor God, we are not likely, by our
17569 instructions, to do him any real good. This is a
17570 fundamental distinction, in dealing with anxious
17571 sinners, but it is evidently overlooked by many,
17572 who seem to have no higher motives, than
17573 sympathy or compassion for the sinner. If in
17574 preaching the Gospel, or instructing the anxious,
17575 we are not actuated by a high regard to the honor of
17576 God, and rise no higher, than to desire to relieve
17577 the distressed; this is going no farther than a
17578 constitutional sympathy, or compassion, would
17579 carry us. Overlooking this principle, has often
17580 misled professors of religion, and when they have
17581 heard others dealing faithfully with anxious
17582 sinners, they have accused them of cruelty. I have
17583 often had professors bring anxious sinners to me,

17584 and beg me to comfort them, and, when I have
17585 probed their consciences to the quick, they have
17586 shuddered, and sometimes taken the sinners' part.
17587 It is sometimes impossible to deal effectually with
17588 youth who are anxious, in the presence of their
17589 parents, because they have so much more
17590 compassion for their children, than regard to the
17591 honor of God. This is all wrong, and with such
17592 views and feelings you had better hold your
17593 tongue, than to say anything to the anxious.

17594
17595 1. One of the ways in which people give false
17596 comfort to distressed sinners, is, by asking them
17597 "What have you done? you are not so bad." They
17598 see them distressed, and cry out, "Why, what have
17599 you done?" as if they had never done anything
17600 wicked, and had in reality no occasion to feel
17601 distressed at all. I have before mentioned the case
17602 of a fashionable lady, who was awakened in this
17603 city, and was going to see a minister to converse
17604 with him, when she was met by a friend, who
17605 turned her back, and drove off her anxiety, by the
17606 cry, "What have you done, to make you feel so? I
17607 am sure you have never committed any sin, that
17608 need to make you feel so." [7]

17609
17610 I have often met with cases of this kind. A mother
17611 will tell her son, who is anxious, what an obedient

17612 child he has always been, how good and how kind,
17613 and she begs him not to take on so. So a husband
17614 will tell his wife, or a wife her husband, how good
17615 they are, and ask, “What have you done?” When
17616 they see them in great distress, they begin to
17617 comfort them, “Why you are not so bad. You have
17618 been to hear that frightful minister, that frightens
17619 people, and you have got excited. Be comforted,
17620 for I am sure you have not been bad enough to feel
17621 so much distressed.” When the truth is, they have
17622 been a great deal worse than they think they have.
17623 No sinner ever had an idea that his sins were
17624 greater than they are. No sinner ever had an
17625 adequate idea of how great a sinner he is. It is not
17626 probable that any man could live under the full
17627 sight of his sins. God has, in mercy, spared all his
17628 creatures on earth that worst of sights, a naked
17629 human heart. The sinner’s guilt is much more deep
17630 and damning than he thinks, and his danger is
17631 much greater than he thinks it is, and if he should
17632 see them as they are, probably he would not live a
17633 moment. A sinner may have some false notions on
17634 the subject, that creates distress, which have no
17635 foundation. He may think he has committed the
17636 unpardonable sin, or that he has grieved away the
17637 Spirit, or sinned away his day of grace. But to tell
17638 the most moral and naturally amiable person in the
17639 world that he is good enough, or that he is not so

17640 bad as he thinks he is, is not giving him rational
17641 comfort, but is deceiving him, and ruining his soul.
17642 Let those who do it, take care.

17643

17644 2. Others tell awakened sinners that “Conversion is
17645 a progressive work,” and in this way ease their
17646 anxiety. When a man is distressed, because he sees
17647 himself to be such a sinner, and that unless he turns
17648 to God, he will be damned; it is a great relief to
17649 have some friend hold out the idea that he can get
17650 better by degrees, and that he is now coming on, by
17651 little and little, They tell him, “Why you cannot
17652 expect to get along all at once; I do not believe in
17653 these sudden conversions, you must wait and let it
17654 work, you have begun well, and by and by you will
17655 get comfort.” All this is false as the bottomless pit.
17656 The truth is, Regeneration, or conversion, is not a
17657 progressive work. What is regeneration? What is it
17658 but the beginning of obedience to God? And is the
17659 beginning of a thing progressive? It is the first act
17660 of genuine obedience to God—the first voluntary
17661 action of the mind that is what God approves, or
17662 that can be regarded as obedience to God. That is
17663 conversion. When persons talk about conversion as
17664 a progressive work, it is absurd. They show that
17665 they know just as much about regeneration or
17666 conversion, as Nicodemus did. They know nothing
17667 about it, as they ought to know, and are no more fit

17668 to conduct an anxious meeting, or to advise or
17669 instruct anxious sinners, than Nicodemus was.

17670

17671 3. Another way in which anxious sinners are
17672 deceived with false comfort, is by being advised to
17673 dismiss the subject for the present.

17674

17675 Men who are supposed to be wise and good, have
17676 assumed to be so much wiser than God, that when
17677 God is dealing with a sinner, by his Spirit, and
17678 endeavoring to bring him to an immediate decision;
17679 they think God is crowding too hard, and that it is
17680 necessary for them to interfere; and they will
17681 advise the person to take a ride, or go into
17682 company, or engage in business, or something that
17683 will relieve his mind a little, at least for the present.
17684 They might just as well say to God, in plain words,
17685 “O God, you are too hard, you go too fast, you will
17686 make him crazy, or kill him, he cannot stand it;
17687 poor creature, if he is so pressed, he will die.” Just
17688 so they takes sides against God, and do the same as
17689 to tell the sinner himself, “God will make you
17690 crazy if you do not dismiss the subject, and resist
17691 the Spirit, and drive him away from your mind.”

17692

17693 Such advice, if it be truly conviction of sin that
17694 distresses the sinner, is in no case, either safe or
17695 lawful. The strivings of the Spirit, to bring a sinner

17696 to himself, will never hurt him, nor drive him
17697 crazy. He may make himself deranged by resisting,
17698 but it is blasphemous, to think, that the blessed,
17699 wise and benevolent Spirit of God, would ever
17700 conduct with so little care, as to derange and
17701 destroy the soul he came to sanctify and save. The
17702 proper course to take with a sinner, when the
17703 striving of the Spirit throws him into distress, is, to
17704 instruct him, to clear up his views, correct his
17705 mistakes, and make the way of salvation so plain
17706 that he can see it right before him. Not to dismiss
17707 the subject, but fall in with the Spirit, and thus hush
17708 all those dreadful agonies which are produced by
17709 resisting the Holy Ghost. REMEMBER, if an
17710 awakened sinner voluntarily dismiss the subject
17711 once, probably he will never take it up again.

17712
17713 4. Sometimes an awakened sinner is comforted by
17714 being told that religion does not consist in feeling
17715 bad. I once heard of a Doctor of Divinity, giving an
17716 anxious sinner such counsel, when he was actually
17717 writhing under the arrows of the Almighty. Said he,
17718 “Religion is cheerful, religion is not gloomy, do not
17719 be distressed, be comforted, dismiss your fears, you
17720 should not feel so bad,” and such like miserable
17721 comforts, when, in fact, the man had infinite reason
17722 to be distressed, for he was resisting the Holy

17723 Ghost, and in danger of grieving him away for
17724 ever.

17725
17726 It is true, religion does not consist in feeling bad.
17727 But the sinner has reason to be distressed, because
17728 he has no religion. If he had religion, he would not
17729 feel so. Were he a Christian, he would rejoice. But
17730 to tell an impenitent sinner to be cheerful! why,
17731 you might as well preach this doctrine in hell, and
17732 tell them there, "Cheer up here, cheer up, do not
17733 feel so bad."

17734
17735 The sinner is on the very verge of hell, he is in
17736 rebellion against God, and his danger is infinitely
17737 greater than he imagines. Oh, what a doctrine of
17738 devils! to tell a rebel against heaven not to be
17739 distressed. What is all his distress but rebellion
17740 itself? He is not comforted, because he refuses to
17741 be comforted. God is ready to comfort him. You
17742 need not think to be more compassionate than God.
17743 He will fill him with comfort, in an instant, if he
17744 will submit. But there he stands, struggling against
17745 God, and against the Holy Ghost, and against
17746 conscience, until he is distressed almost to death,
17747 and still he will not yield; and now some one
17748 comes in, "Oh, I hate to see you feel so bad, do not
17749 be so distressed, cheer up, cheer up, religion do not
17750 consist in being gloomy, be comforted." Horrid!

17751

17752 5. Whatever involves the subject of religion in
17753 mystery, is calculated to give a sinner false
17754 comfort.

17755

17756 When a sinner is anxious on the subject of religion,
17757 very often, if you becloud it in mystery, he will feel
17758 relieved. The sinner's distress arises from the
17759 pressure of present obligation. Enlighten him on
17760 this point, and clear it up, and if he will not yield, it
17761 will only increase his distress. But tell him that
17762 regeneration is all a mystery, something he cannot
17763 understand; and leave him all in a fog of darkness,
17764 and you relieve his anxiety. It is his clear view of
17765 the nature and duty of repentance, that produces his
17766 distress. It is the light that brings agony to his
17767 mind, while he refuses to obey. It is that, which
17768 will make up the pains of hell. And it will almost
17769 make hell in the sinner's breast here, if only made
17770 clear enough. But only cover up this light, and his
17771 anxiety will immediately become far less acute and
17772 thrilling. But if you lift up a certain and clear light,
17773 and flash it broad upon his soul, and if he will not
17774 yield, you kindle up to the tortures of hell in his
17775 bosom.

17776

17777 6. Whatever relieves the sinner from a sense of
17778 blame, is calculated to give him false comfort.

17779

17780 The more a man feels himself to blame, the deeper
17781 is his distress. But anything that lessens his sense
17782 of blame, of course lessens his distress, but it is a
17783 comfort full of death. If anything will help him
17784 divide the blame, and throw off a part of it upon
17785 God, it will afford comfort, but it is a relief that
17786 will destroy his soul.

17787

17788 7. To tell him of his inability, is false comfort. Tell
17789 an anxious sinner “What can you do? you are a
17790 poor, feeble creature, you can do nothing.” You
17791 will make him feel a kind of despondency. But it is
17792 not that keen agony of remorse, with which God
17793 wrings the soul, when he is laboring to cut him
17794 down and bring him to repentance.

17795

17796 If you tell him he is unable to comply with the
17797 Gospel, he naturally falls in with it as a relief. He
17798 says to himself, “Yes, I am unable, I am a poor,
17799 feeble creature, I cannot do this, and certainly God
17800 cannot send me to hell for not doing what I cannot
17801 do.” Why, if I believed that the sinner was unable, I
17802 would tell him plainly, “Do not be afraid, you are
17803 not to blame for not complying with the call of the
17804 Gospel: for you are unable, and God will never
17805 send you to hell for not doing what you have no
17806 strength to do. “Will not the Judge of all the earth

17807 do right?" I know it is not common for those who
17808 talk about the sinner's being unable, to be so
17809 consistent, and carry out their theory. But the
17810 sinner infers all this, and so he feels relieved. It is
17811 all false, and all the comfort derived from it, is only
17812 treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

17813

17814 8. Whatever makes the impression on a sinner's
17815 mind that he is to be passive in religion, is
17816 calculated to give him false comfort.

17817

17818 Give him the idea he has nothing to do but to wait
17819 God's time; tell him conversion is the work of God,
17820 and he ought to leave it to him; and that he must be
17821 careful, not to try to take the work out of God's
17822 hand; and he will infer, as before, that he is not to
17823 blame, and will feel relieved. If he is only to hold
17824 still, and let God do the work, just as a man holds
17825 still to have his arm amputated, he feels relieved.

17826 But such instruction as this, is all wrong. If the
17827 sinner is thus to hold still and let God do it, he
17828 instantly infers that he is not to blame for not doing
17829 it himself. And the inference is not only natural but
17830 legitimate, for he is not to blame,

17831

17832 It is true that there is a sense in which conversion is
17833 the work of God. But it is false, as it is often
17834 represented. It is also true that there is a sense, in

17835 which conversion is the sinner's own act. It is
17836 ridiculous, therefore, to say, that a sinner is passive
17837 in regeneration, or passive in being converted, for
17838 conversion is his own act. The thing to be done is
17839 that which cannot be done for him. It is something
17840 which he must do, or it will never be done.

17841

17842 9. Telling a sinner to wait God's time.

17843

17844 Some years ago, I met a woman in Philadelphia,
17845 who was anxious about her soul, and had been a
17846 long time in that state. I conversed with her, and
17847 endeavored to learn her state. She told me a good
17848 many things, and finally said she knew she ought to
17849 be willing to wait on God as long as he had waited
17850 upon her. She said, God had waited on her a great
17851 many years, before she would give any attention to
17852 his calls, and now she believed it was her duty to
17853 wait God's time to show mercy and convert her
17854 soul. And she said, this was the instruction she had
17855 received. She must be patient, and wait God's time,
17856 and by and by he would give her relief. Oh,
17857 amazing folly!

17858

17859 Here is the sinner in rebellion. God comes with
17860 pardon in one hand, and a sword in the other, and
17861 tells the sinner to repent and receive pardon, or
17862 refuse and perish. And now here comes a minister

17863 of the Gospel, and tells the sinner to “wait God’s
17864 time.” Virtually he says, that God is not ready to
17865 have him repent now, and is not ready to pardon
17866 him now, and thus, in fact, throws off the blame of
17867 his impenitence upon God. Instead of pointing out
17868 the sinner’s guilt, in not submitting at once to God,
17869 he points out God’s insincerity in making the offer,
17870 when, in fact, he was not ready to grant the
17871 blessing.

17872

17873 I have often thought such teachers needed the
17874 rebuke of Elijah when he met the priests of Baal.
17875 “Cry aloud, for he is a God; either he is talking, or
17876 he is pursuing, or he is in a journey; or
17877 peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.”
17878 The minister who ventures to intimate that God is
17879 not ready, and that tells the sinner to wait God’s
17880 time, might almost as well tell him, that now God
17881 is asleep, or gone on a journey, and cannot attend
17882 to him at present. Miserable comforters indeed! It
17883 is little less than outrageous blasphemy of God.
17884 How many have gone to the judgment, red all over
17885 with the blood of souls, that they have deceived
17886 and destroyed, by telling them God was not ready
17887 to save them, and they must wait God’s time. No
17888 doubt, such a doctrine is exceedingly calculated to
17889 afford present relief to an anxious sinner. It
17890 warrants him to say, “Oh, yes, God is not ready, I

17891 must wait God's time and so I can live in sin, and
17892 take it out a while longer, till he gets ready to
17893 attend to me, and then I will get religion.”

17894

17895 10. It is false comfort to tell an anxious sinner to do
17896 any thing for relief, which he can do, and not
17897 submit his heart to God.

17898

17899 An anxious sinner is often willing to do anything
17900 else, but the very thing which God requires him to
17901 do. He is willing to go to the ends of the earth, or to
17902 pay his money, or to endure suffering, or anything,
17903 but full and instantaneous submission to God.

17904 Now, if you will compromise the matter with him,
17905 and tell him of something else that he may do, and
17906 yet evade that point, he will be very much
17907 comforted. He likes that instruction. He says, “Oh,
17908 yes, I will do that, I like that minister, he is not so
17909 severe as others, he seems to understand my
17910 particular case, and knows how to make
17911 allowances.”

17912

17913 It often reminds me of the conduct of a patient who
17914 is very sick, but has a great dislike for a certain
17915 physician and a particular medicine; but that is the
17916 very physician who alone understands treating his
17917 disease, and that the only remedy for it. Now the
17918 patient is willing to do anything else, and call in

17919 any other physician; and he is anxious and in
17920 distress, and is asking all his friends if they cannot
17921 tell him what he shall do, and he will take all the
17922 nostrums and quack medicines in the country,
17923 before he will submit to the only course that can
17924 bring him relief. By and by, after he has tried
17925 everything without any benefit, if he does not die in
17926 the experiment, he gives up his unreasonable
17927 opposition, calls in the physician, takes the proper
17928 medicine, and is cured. Just so it is with sinners.
17929 They will eagerly do anything, if you will let them
17930 off from this intolerable pressure of present
17931 obligation to submit to God. I will mention a few
17932 of the things which sinners are told to do.

17933
17934 (1.) Telling a sinner he must use the means. Tell an
17935 anxious sinner this—You must use the means, and
17936 he is relieved. “Oh, yes, I will do that, if that is all.
17937 I thought that God required me to repent and
17938 submit to him now. But if using the means will
17939 answer, I will do that with all my heart.” He was
17940 distressed before, because he was cornered up, and
17941 did not know which way to turn. Conscience had
17942 beset him, like a wall of fire, and urged him to
17943 repent now. But this relieves him at once, and he
17944 feels better, and is very thankful, he says, that he
17945 found such a good adviser in his distress. But he
17946 may use the means, as he calls it, till the day of

17947 judgment, and not be a particle the better for it, but
17948 will only hasten his way to death. What is the
17949 sinner's use of means, but rebellion against God?
17950 God uses means. The church uses means to convert
17951 and save sinners, to bear down upon them, and
17952 bring them to submission. But what has the sinner
17953 to do with using means? Will you set him to use
17954 means back upon God, and so make an offset in the
17955 matter? Or is he to use means to make himself
17956 submit to God? How shall he go to work with his
17957 means to make himself submit? It is just telling the
17958 sinner, "You need not submit to God now, but just
17959 use the means awhile, and see if you cannot melt
17960 God's heart down to you, so that he will yield this
17961 point of unconditional submission." It is a mere
17962 cavil to evade the duty of immediate submission to
17963 God. It is true that sinners, actuated by a regard to
17964 their own happiness, often give attention to the
17965 subject of religion, attend meetings, and pray, and
17966 read, and many such things. But in all this, they
17967 have no regard to the honor of God, nor do they so
17968 much as mean to obey him. Their design, is not
17969 obedience, for if it were, they would not be
17970 impenitent sinners. They are not, therefore, using
17971 means to be Christians, but to obtain pardon, and a
17972 hope. It is absurd to say that an impenitent sinner is
17973 using means to repent, for this is the same as to say
17974 that he is willing to repent, or in other words, that

17975 he does repent, and is not an impenitent sinner. So,
17976 to say that an unconverted sinner uses means with
17977 design to become a Christian, is a contradiction, for
17978 it is saying, that he is willing to be a Christian,
17979 which is the same as to say that he is a Christian
17980 already.

17981

17982 (2.) Telling the sinner to pray for a new heart. I
17983 once heard a celebrated Sunday-school teacher do
17984 this. He was almost the father of Sunday-schools in
17985 this country. He called a little girl up to him, and
17986 began to talk to her. "My little daughter, are you a
17987 Christian?" No, sir. "Well, you cannot be a
17988 Christian, yourself, can you?" No, sir. "No, you
17989 cannot be a Christian, you cannot change your
17990 heart yourself, but you must pray for a new heart,
17991 that is all you can do, pray to God, God will give
17992 you a new heart." He was an aged and venerable
17993 man, but I felt almost disposed to rebuke him
17994 openly in the name of the Lord, I could not bear to
17995 hear him deceive that child, telling her she could
17996 not be a Christian. Does God say "Pray for a new
17997 heart?" Never. He says, "Make you a new heart."
17998 And the sinner is not to be told to pray to God to do
17999 his duty for him, but to go and do it himself. I
18000 know the Psalmist, a good man, prayed. "Create in
18001 me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within
18002 me." He had faith and prayed in faith. But that is a

18003 very different thing from setting an obstinate rebel
18004 to pray for a new heart. No doubt, an anxious
18005 sinner will be delighted with such instruction.
18006 “Why, I knew I needed a new heart, and that I
18007 ought to repent, but I thought I must do it myself, I
18008 am very willing to ask God to do it, I hated to do it
18009 myself, but have no objection that God should do
18010 it, if he will, and I will pray for it, if that is all that
18011 is required.”

18012
18013 (3.) Telling the sinner to persevere. And suppose he
18014 does persevere. He is as certain to be damned as if
18015 he had been in hell ever since the foundation of the
18016 world. His anxiety arises only from his resistance,
18017 and if he would submit, it would cease. And now,
18018 will you tell him to persevere in the very thing that
18019 causes his distress? Suppose my child should, in a
18020 fit of passion, throw a book or something on the
18021 floor. I tell him “Take it up,” and instead of
18022 minding what I say, he runs off and plays. “Take it
18023 up!” He sees I am in earnest, and begins to look
18024 serious. “Take it up, or I shall get a rod.” And I put
18025 up my arm to get the rod. He stands still. “Take it
18026 up, or you must be whipped.” He comes slowly
18027 along to the place, and then begins to weep. “Take
18028 it up, my child, or you will certainly be punished.”
18029 Now he is in distress, and sobs and sighs as if his
18030 bosom would burst, but still remains as stubborn as

18031 if he knew I could not punish him. Now I begin to
18032 press him with motives to submit and obey, but
18033 there he stands, in agony, and at length bursts out,
18034 “Oh, father, I do feel so bad, I think I am growing
18035 better.” And now, suppose a neighbor to come in,
18036 and see the child standing there, in all this agony of
18037 stubbornness. The neighbor asks him what he is
18038 standing there for, and what he is doing. “Oh, I am
18039 using means to pick up that book.” If this neighbor
18040 should tell the child, “Persevere, persevere, my
18041 boy, you will get it by and by,” what should I do?
18042 Why, I would turn him out of the house. What does
18043 he mean by encouraging my child in his rebellion.

18044
18045 Now, God calls the sinner to repent, he threatens
18046 him, he draws the glittering sword, he persuades
18047 him, he uses motives, and the sinner is distressed to
18048 agony, for he sees himself driven to the dreadful
18049 alternative of giving up his sins or going to hell. He
18050 ought instantly to lay down his weapons, and break
18051 his heart at once. But he resists, and struggles
18052 against conviction, and that creates his distress.
18053 Now will you tell him to persevere? Persevere in
18054 what? In struggling against God! That is just the
18055 direction the devil would give. All the devil wants
18056 is to see him persevere in just the way he is going
18057 on, and his destruction is sure. Satan may go to
18058 sleep.

18059

18060 (4.) Telling the sinner to press forward. That is,
18061 “You are in a good way, only press forward, and
18062 you will get to heaven.” This is on the supposition
18063 that his face is towards heaven, when in fact his
18064 face is towards hell, and he is pressing forward,
18065 and never more rapidly than now, while he is
18066 resisting the Holy Ghost. Often have I heard this
18067 direction given, when the sinner was in as bad a
18068 way as he could be. What you ought to tell him is,
18069 “STOP—sinner, stop, do not take another step that
18070 way, it leads to hell.” God tells him to stop, and
18071 because he does not wish to stop, he is distressed.
18072 Now, why should you attempt to comfort him in
18073 this way?

18074

18075 (5.) Tell a sinner that he must try to repent and give
18076 his heart to God. “Oh, yes,” says the sinner, “I am
18077 willing to try. I have often tried to do it, and I will
18078 try again.” Ah, does God tell you to try to repent?
18079 All the world would be willing to try to repent, in
18080 their way. Giving this direction implies that it is
18081 very difficult to repent, and perhaps impossible,
18082 and that the best thing a sinner can do is to try and
18083 see whether he can do it or not. What is this but
18084 substituting your own commandment in the place
18085 of God’s. God requires nothing short of repentance
18086 and a holy heart. Anything short of that is

18087 comforting him in vain, “seeing in your answers
18088 there remaineth falsehood.”

18089

18090 (6.) To tell him to pray for repentance. “Oh yes, I
18091 will pray for repentance, if that is all. I was
18092 distressed because I thought God required me to
18093 repent, but if he will do it, I can wait.” And so he
18094 feels relieved, and is quite comfortable.

18095

18096 (7.) To tell a sinner to pray for conviction, or pray
18097 for the Holy Ghost to show him his sins, or to labor
18098 to get more light on the subject of his guilt, in order
18099 to increase his conviction.

18100

18101 All this is just what the sinner wants, because it lets
18102 him off from the pressure of present obligation. He
18103 wants just a little more time. Anything that will
18104 defer that present pressure of obligation to repent
18105 immediately is a relief. What does he want more
18106 conviction for? Does God give any such direction
18107 to an impenitent sinner? God takes it for granted
18108 that he has conviction enough already. And so he
18109 has. Do you say he cannot realize all his sins? If he
18110 can realize only one of them, let him repent of that
18111 one, and he is a Christian. Suppose he could see
18112 them all, what reason is there to think he would
18113 repent of them all, any more than that he would
18114 repent of that one that he does see? All this is

18115 comforting the sinner by setting him to do that
18116 which he can do and will not submit his heart to
18117 God.

18118
18119 11. Another way in which false comfort is given to
18120 anxious sinners, is to tell them God is trying their
18121 faith by keeping them in the furnace, and they must
18122 wait patiently upon the Lord. Just as if God was in
18123 fault, or stood in the way, of his being a Christian.
18124 Or as if an impenitent sinner had faith! What an
18125 abomination! Suppose somebody should tell my
18126 child, while he was standing by the book as I have
18127 described, "Wait patiently, boy, your father is
18128 trying your faith." No. The sinner is trying the
18129 patience and forbearance of God. God is not setting
18130 himself to torture a sinner, and teach him a lesson
18131 of patience. But he is waiting upon him, and
18132 laboring to bring him at once into such a state of
18133 mind as will render it consistent to fill his soul with
18134 the peace of heaven. And shall the sinner be
18135 encouraged to resist by the idea that God is
18136 bantering? TAKE CARE. God has said his Spirit
18137 shall not always strive.

18138
18139 12. Another false comfort is telling a sinner, Do
18140 your duty, and leave your conversion with God.
18141

18142 I once heard an elder of a church say to an anxious
18143 sinner, “Do your duty, and leave your conversion
18144 to God, he will do it in his own time and way.”
18145 That was just the same as telling him that it was not
18146 his duty to be converted now. He did not say, Do
18147 your duty, and leave your salvation with God. That
18148 would have been proper enough, for it would have
18149 been simply telling him to submit to God, and
18150 would have included conversion as the first duty of
18151 all. But he told him to leave his conversion to God.
18152 And this elder, that gave such advice, was a man of
18153 liberal education too. How absurd! Just as if he
18154 could do his duty and not be converted. Just as if
18155 God was going to convert a sinner and let the
18156 sinner sit calmly under it in the use of means.
18157 Horrible! No. God has required him to make him a
18158 new heart, and do you beware how you comfort
18159 him with an answer of falsehood.

18160
18161 13. Sometimes professors of religion will try to
18162 comfort a sinner, by telling him, “Do not be
18163 discouraged; I was a long time in this way before I
18164 found comfort.” They will tell him, “I was under
18165 conviction so many weeks—or perhaps so many
18166 months, or sometimes years, and have gone
18167 through with all this, and know just how you feel,
18168 your experience is the same with mine, precisely,
18169 and after so long a time I found relief, and I do not

18170 doubt you will find it by and by. Do not despair,
18171 God will comfort you soon.” Tell a sinner to take
18172 courage in his rebellion! Oh, horrible. Such
18173 professors ought to be ashamed. Suppose you were
18174 under conviction so many weeks, and afterwards
18175 found relief, it is the very last thing you ought to
18176 tell to an anxious sinner. What is it but encouraging
18177 him to hold on, when his business is to submit. Did
18178 you hold out so many weeks while the Spirit was
18179 striving with you. You only deserved so much the
18180 more to be damned, for your obstinacy and
18181 stupidity.

18182
18183 Sinner! it is no sign God will spare you so long, or
18184 that his Spirit will remain with you to be resisted.
18185 And remember, if the Spirit is taken away, you will
18186 be sent to hell.

18187
18188 14. “I have faith to believe you will be converted.”

18189
18190 You have faith to believe! On what does your faith
18191 rest? On the promise of God? On the influences of
18192 the Holy Ghost? Then you are counteracting your
18193 own faith. The very design and object of the Spirit
18194 of God, is, to tear away from the sinner his last
18195 vestige of a hope, while remaining in sin; to
18196 annihilate every crag and twig he may cling to.
18197 And the object of your instruction should be the

18198 same. You should fall in with the plan of God. It is
18199 only in this way that you can ever do any good, by
18200 crowding him right up to the work, to submit at
18201 once and leave his soul in the hands of God. But
18202 when one that he thinks is a Christian tells him, “I
18203 have faith to believe you will be converted,” it
18204 upholds him in his false expectation. Instead of
18205 tearing him away from his false hopes, and
18206 throwing him upon Christ, you just turn him off to
18207 hang upon your faith, and find comfort because you
18208 have faith for him. This is all false comfort, that
18209 worketh death.

18210
18211 15. “I will pray for you.” Sometimes professors of
18212 religion try to comfort an anxious sinner in this
18213 way, by telling him, “I will pray for you.” This is
18214 false comfort, for it leads the sinner to trust in those
18215 prayers, instead of trusting in Christ. The sinner
18216 says, “He is a good man, and God hears the prayers
18217 of good men, no doubt his prayers will prevail
18218 some time, and I shall be converted, I do not think I
18219 shall be lost.” And his anxiety, his agony, is all
18220 gone. A woman said to a minister, “I have no hope
18221 now, but I have faith in your prayers.” Just such
18222 faith, this is, as the devil wants them to have—faith
18223 in prayers instead of faith in Christ.
18224

18225 16. "I rejoice to see you in this way, and I hope you
18226 will be faithful, and hold out." What is that but
18227 rejoicing to see him in rebellion against God? For
18228 that is precisely the ground on which he stands. He
18229 is resisting conviction, and resisting conscience,
18230 and resisting the Holy Ghost, and yet you rejoice to
18231 see him in this way, and hope he will be faithful
18232 and hold out. There is a sense, indeed, in which it
18233 may be said that his situation is more hopeful than
18234 when he was in stupidity. For God has convinced
18235 him, and may succeed in turning and subduing him.
18236 But that is not the sense in which the sinner himself
18237 will understand it. He will suppose that you think
18238 him in a hopeful way, because he is doing better
18239 than formerly. When his guilt and danger are, in
18240 fact, greater than they ever were before. And
18241 instead of rejoicing, you ought to be distressed and
18242 in agony, to see him thus resisting the Holy Ghost,
18243 for every moment he does this, he is in danger of
18244 being left of God, and given up to hardness of heart
18245 and to despair.

18246
18247 17. "You will have your pay for this, by and by,
18248 God will reward you." Yes, sinners, God will
18249 reward you, if you continue in this way, he will put
18250 you in the fires of hell. Reward for all this distress!
18251 Yes, if you are ever rewarded for it, it will be in
18252 hell. I once heard a sinner say, "I feel very bad, I

18253 have strong hopes that I shall get my reward.” But
18254 that individual afterwards said, “Nowhere can there
18255 be found so black a sinner as I am, and no sin of
18256 my life seems so black, and damning as that
18257 expression.” He was overwhelmed with contrition,
18258 that he should ever have had such an idea, as to
18259 think God would reward him for suffering so much
18260 distress, when he brought it all upon himself,
18261 needlessly, by his wicked resistance to the truth,
18262 The truth is, what such people want, is to comfort
18263 the sinner, and being all in the dark themselves on
18264 the subject of religion, they of course give him
18265 false comfort.

18266
18267 18. Another false comfort, is to tell the sinner he
18268 has not repented enough. The truth is, he has nor
18269 repented at all. God always comforts the sinner as
18270 soon as he repents. This direction implies that his
18271 feelings are right as far as they go. To imply that he
18272 has any repentance, is to tell him a lie, and cheat
18273 him out of his soul.

18274
18275 19. People sometimes comfort a sinner by telling
18276 him “If you are elected, you will be brought in.” I
18277 once heard of a case where a person under great
18278 distress of mind was sent to converse with a
18279 neighboring minister, They conversed a long time.
18280 As the person went away, the minister said to him,

18281 “I should like to write a line by you, to your
18282 father.” His father was a pious man. The minister
18283 wrote the letter, and forgot to seal it. As the sinner
18284 was going home, he saw that the letter was not
18285 sealed, and he thought to himself, that probably the
18286 minister had written about him, and his curiosity at
18287 length led him to open and read it. And there he
18288 found it written to this purport: “Dear sir. I find
18289 your son under conviction, and in great distress,
18290 and it seems not easy to say anything to give him
18291 relief. But, if he is one of the elect, he will surely
18292 be brought in.” He wanted to say something to
18293 comfort the father. But now, mark. That letter had
18294 well-nigh ruined his soul. He settled down on the
18295 doctrine of election—”If I am elected, I shall be
18296 brought in,” and his conviction was all gone. Years
18297 afterwards he was awakened and converted, but
18298 only after a great struggle, and never until that false
18299 impression was obliterated from his mind, and he
18300 was made to see that he had nothing at all to do
18301 with the doctrine of election, but if he did not
18302 repent, he would be damned.

18303
18304 20. It is very common for some people to tell an
18305 awakened sinner, “You are in a very prosperous
18306 way, I am glad to see you so, and feel encouraged
18307 about you.” It sometimes seems as if the church
18308 was in league with the devil to help sinners resist

18309 the Holy Ghost. The thing that the Holy Ghost
18310 wants to make the sinner feel, is, that all his ways
18311 are wrong, and that they lead to hell. And
18312 everybody is conspiring to make the opposite
18313 impression. The Spirit is trying to discourage him,
18314 and they are trying to encourage him; the Spirit to
18315 distress, by showing him he is all wrong, and they
18316 to comfort him by saying he is doing well. Has it
18317 come to this, that the worst counteraction to the
18318 truth, and the greatest obstacle to the Spirit shall
18319 spring from the church? Sinner! Do not believe any
18320 such thing. You are not in a hopeful way. You are
18321 not doing well, but ill; as ill as you can, while
18322 resisting the Holy Ghost.

18323
18324 21. Another very fatal way, in which false comfort
18325 is given to sinners, is by applying to them certain
18326 Scripture promises, which were designed only for
18327 saints. This is a grand device of the devil. It is
18328 much practised by the Universalists. But Christians
18329 often do it. For example:

18330
18331 (1.) "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be
18332 comforted." How often has this passage been
18333 applied to anxious sinners, who were in distress
18334 because they would not submit to God; blessed are
18335 ye that mourn. Indeed! That is true, where they
18336 mourn with godly sorrow. But what is this sinner

18337 mourning about? He is mourning because God's
18338 law is holy and his terms of salvation so fixed that
18339 he cannot bring them down to his mind. Tell such a
18340 rebel—Blessed are they that mourn! You might
18341 just as well apply it to those that are in hell. There
18342 is mourning there too. The sinner is mourning
18343 because there is no other way of salvation, because
18344 God is so holy that he requires him to give up all
18345 his sins, and he feels, that the time has come, that
18346 he must either give them up, or be damned. Shall
18347 we tell him, he shall be comforted? Go and tell the
18348 devil, "Poor devil, you mourn now, but the Bible
18349 says you are blessed if you mourn, and you shall be
18350 comforted by and by."

18351
18352 (2.) "They that seek shall find." This is said to
18353 sinners in such a way as to imply that the anxious
18354 sinner is seeking religion. This promise was made
18355 in reference to Christians, who ask in faith, and
18356 seek to do the will of God, and is not applicable to
18357 those who are seeking hope or comfort; but to holy
18358 seeking. To apply it to an impenitent sinner, is only
18359 to deceive him, for his seeking is not of this
18360 character. To tell him "You are seeking, are you?
18361 Well, seek, and you shall find," is to cherish a fatal
18362 delusion. While he remains impenitent, he has not a
18363 desire, which the devil might not have, and remain
18364 a devil still.

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If he had desire to do his duty, if he was seeking to do the will of God, and give up his sins, he would be a Christian. But to comfort an impenitent sinner, with such a promise, you might just as well comfort Satan.

(3.) “Be not weary in well doing, for in due time you shall reap if you faint not.” To apply this to a sinner for comfort, is absurd. Just as if he was doing something to please God. He has never done well, and never has done more ill, than now. Suppose my neighbor, who came in while I was trying to subdue my child, should say to the child, “In due time you shall reap, if you faint not,” what should I say? “Reap, yes, you shall reap, if you do not give up your obstinacy, you shall reap indeed, for I will apply the rod.” So the struggling sinner shall reap the damnation of hell, if he does not give up his sins.

22. Some professors of religion, when they attempt to converse with awakened sinners, are very fond of saying, “I will tell you my experience.” This is a dangerous snare, and often gives the devil a handle to lead him to hell, by trying to copy your experience. If you tell it to him, and he thinks it is a Christian experience, he will almost infallibly be

18393 trying to imitate it, and instead of following the
18394 Gospel, or the leadings of the Spirit in his own
18395 soul, he is following your example. This is absurd
18396 as well as dangerous. He never will have just such
18397 feelings as you had. No two persons were ever
18398 exercised just alike. Men's experiences are as much
18399 unlike as their countenances. Such a course is very
18400 likely to mislead him. The design, is often, nothing
18401 but to encourage him, at the very point where he
18402 ought not to be encouraged, before he has
18403 submitted to God, And it is calculated to impede
18404 the work of God in his soul.

18405
18406 23. How many times will people tell an awakened
18407 sinner that God has begun a good work in him, and
18408 he will carry it on. I have known parents talk so
18409 with their children, and as soon as they saw their
18410 children awakened, give up all former anxiety
18411 about them, and settle down at their ease, thinking
18412 that now God had begun a good work in their
18413 children, he would carry it on. It would be just as
18414 rational for a farmer to say so about his grain, and
18415 as soon as it comes up out of the ground, say,
18416 "Well, God has begun a good work in my field, and
18417 he will carry it on." What would be thought of a
18418 farmer who should neglect to put up his fence,
18419 because God had begun the work of giving him a
18420 crop of grain? If you tell a sinner so, and he

18421 believes you, it will certainly be his destruction, for
18422 it will prevent his doing that which is absolutely
18423 indispensable to his being saved. If, as soon as the
18424 sinner is awakened, he is taught that now God has
18425 begun a good work, that only needs to be carried
18426 on, and that God will surely carry it on, he sees that
18427 he has no further occasion to be anxious, for, in
18428 fact, he has nothing more to do. And so he will be
18429 relieved from that intolerable pressure of present
18430 obligation, to repent and submit to God. And if he
18431 is relieved from his sense of obligation to do it, he
18432 will never do it.

18433

18434 24. Some will tell the sinner, “Well, you have
18435 broken off your sins, have you?” “Oh, yes,” says
18436 the sinner. When it is all false, he has never
18437 forsaken his sins for a moment, he has only
18438 exchanged one form of sin for another; only placed
18439 himself in a new attitude of resistance. And to tell
18440 him, he has broken them off, is to give him false
18441 comfort.

18442

18443 25. Sometimes this direction is given for the
18444 purpose of relieving the agony of an anxious
18445 sinner, “Do what you can, and God will do the
18446 rest,” or “Do what you can, and God will help
18447 you.” This is the same as telling a sinner, “You
18448 cannot do what God requires you to do, but if you

18449 will do what you can, God will help you, as to the
18450 rest.” Now sinners often get the idea that they have
18451 done all they can, when, in fact, they have done
18452 nothing at all, only resisted God with all their
18453 might. I have often heard them say, “I have done
18454 all I can, and I get no relief, what can I do more?”
18455 Now, you can see how comforting it must be to
18456 such a one to have a professor of religion come in
18457 and say, “If you will do what you can, God will
18458 help you.” It relieves all his keen distress at once.
18459 He may be uneasy, and unhappy, but his agony is
18460 gone.

18461
18462 26. Again they say, “You should be thankful for
18463 what you have, and hope for more.” If the sinner is
18464 convicted, they tell him he should be thankful for
18465 conviction, and hope for conversion. If he has any
18466 feeling, he should be thankful for what feeling he
18467 has, just as if his feeling was religious feeling,
18468 when he has no more religion, than Satan. He has
18469 reason to be thankful, indeed; thankful that he is
18470 out of hell, and thankful that God is yet waiting on
18471 him. But it is ridiculous to tell him he should be
18472 thankful in regard to the state of his mind, when he
18473 is all the while resisting his Maker with all his
18474 might.

18475

18476 ERRORS IN PRAYING FOR SINNERS.

18477

18478 I will here mention a few errors in praying for
18479 sinners in their presence, by which an unhappy
18480 impression is made on their minds, in consequence
18481 of which, they often obtain false comfort in their
18482 distress.

18483

18484 1. People sometimes pray for sinners, as if they
18485 deserved TO BE PITIED more than BLAMED.
18486 They pray for them as MOURNERS. “Lord help
18487 these pensive mourners,” as if they were just
18488 mourning, like one that had lost a friend, or met
18489 some other calamity, and they could not help it,
18490 and were very sorry for it, but death would come,
18491 and so they were greatly to be pitied, as they were
18492 sitting there, sad, pensive, and sighing. The Bible
18493 never talks so. It pities sinners, but it pities them as
18494 mad and guilty rebels, guilty, and deserving to go
18495 to hell, not as poor pensive mourners, that cannot
18496 help it, that want to be relieved, but can do nothing
18497 but sit and mourn.

18498

18499 2. Praying for them as poor sinners. Does the Bible
18500 ever use any such language as this? The Bible
18501 never speaks of them as “poor sinners,” as if they
18502 deserved to be pitied more than blamed. Christ
18503 pities sinners in his heart. And so does God pity
18504 them. He feels in his heart, all the gushings of

18505 compassion for them, when he sees them going on,
18506 obstinate and wilful in gratifying their own lusts, at
18507 the peril of his eternal wrath. But he never lets an
18508 expression escape from him, as if the sinner was
18509 just a “poor creature” to be pitied, as if he could not
18510 help it. The idea that he is poor, rather than wicked,
18511 unfortunate, rather than guilty, relieves the sinner
18512 greatly. I have seen the sinner writhe with agony
18513 under the truth, in a meeting, until somebody begun
18514 to pray for him as a poor creature. And then he
18515 would gush out into tears, and weep profusely, and
18516 think he was greatly benefited by such a prayer.
18517 “Oh, what a good prayer that was.” If you go now
18518 and converse with that sinner, you will find he is
18519 pitying himself as a poor unfortunate creature,
18520 perhaps weeping over his unhappy condition, but
18521 his CONVICTIONS OF SIN, his deep impressions
18522 of AWFUL GUILT, are all gone.

18523

18524 3. Praying that God would help the sinner to
18525 repent. “O Lord, enable this poor sinner to repent
18526 now.” This conveys the idea to the sinner’s mind,
18527 that he is now trying with all his might to repent,
18528 and that he cannot do it, and therefore Christians
18529 are calling on God to help him, and enable him to
18530 do it. Most professors of religion pray for sinners,
18531 not that God would make them WILLING to
18532 repent, but that he would ENABLE them, or make

18533 them able. No wonder their prayers are not heard.
18534 They relieve the sinner of his sense of
18535 responsibility, and that relieves his distress. But it
18536 is an insult to God, as if God had commanded a
18537 sinner to do what he could not do.

18538

18539 4. People sometimes pray: “Lord, these sinners are
18540 seeking thee, sorrowing.” This language is an
18541 allusion to what took place at the time when Jesus
18542 was a little boy, and went into the temple to talk
18543 with the rabbis and doctors. His parents, you
18544 recollect, went a day’s journey towards home,
18545 before they missed him, and then they turned back,
18546 and after looking all around, they found the little
18547 Jesus standing in the temple and disputing with the
18548 learned men, and his mother said to him, “Son,
18549 why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father
18550 and I have sought thee sorrowing.” And so this
18551 prayer represents sinners as seeking Jesus, and he
18552 hides himself from them, and they look all around,
18553 and hunt, and try to find him, and wonder where
18554 Jesus is, and say, “Lord, we have sought Jesus
18555 these three days sorrowing.” It is a LIE. No sinner
18556 ever sought Jesus with all his heart three days, or
18557 three minutes, and could not find him. There Jesus
18558 stands at his door and knocks, there he is right
18559 before him pleading with him, and facing him
18560 down with all his false pretences. Seeking him!

18561 The sinner may whine and cry, “Oh, how I am
18562 sorrowing, and seeking Jesus.” It is no such thing;
18563 Jesus is seeking you. And yet how many oppressed
18564 consciences are relieved and comforted by hearing
18565 one of these prayers.

18566
18567 5. “Lord, have mercy on these sinners, who are
18568 seeking thy love to know.” This is a favorite
18569 expression with many, as if sinners were seeking to
18570 know the love of Christ, and could not. No such
18571 thing. They are not seeking the love of Christ, but
18572 seeking to get to heaven without Jesus Christ. Just
18573 as if they were seeking it, and he was so hard-
18574 hearted that he would not let them have it.

18575
18576 6. “Lord, have mercy on these penitent souls;”
18577 calling anxious sinners penitent souls. If they are
18578 penitent, they are Christians. To make an
18579 impression on an unconverted sinner that he is
18580 penitent, is to make him believe a lie. But it is very
18581 comforting to the sinner, and he likes to take it up,
18582 and pray it over again, “O Lord, I am a poor
18583 penitent soul, I am very penitent, I am so
18584 distressed, Lord have mercy on a poor penitent.”
18585 Dreadful delusion!

18586
18587 7. Sometimes people pray for anxious sinners as
18588 humble souls. “O Lord, these sinners have humbled

18589 themselves.” Why, that is not true, they have not
18590 humbled themselves; if they had, the Lord would
18591 have raised them up and comforted them, as he has
18592 promised. There is a hymn of this character, that
18593 has done great mischief. It begins,

18594

18595

18596 “Come HUMBLE sinner in whose breast

18597

18598 A thousand thoughts revolve.”

18599

18600 This hymn was once given by a minister to an
18601 awakened sinner, as one applicable to his case. He
18602 began to read, “Come humble sinner.” He stopped,
18603 “Humble sinner, that is not applicable to me, I am
18604 not a humble sinner.” Ah, how well was it for him
18605 that the Holy Ghost had taught him better than the
18606 hymn. If the hymn had said, Come anxious sinner,
18607 or guilty sinner, or trembling sinner, it would have
18608 been well enough, but to call him a humble sinner
18609 would not do. There are a vast many hymns of the
18610 same character. It is very common to find sinners
18611 quoting the false sentiments of some hymn, to
18612 excuse themselves in rebellion against God.

18613

18614 A minister told me he heard a prayer, quite lately,
18615 in these words, “O Lord, these sinners have
18616 humbled themselves, and come to thee as well as

18617 they know how. If they knew any better, they
18618 would do better, but O Lord, as they have come to
18619 thee, in the best manner they can, we pray thee
18620 accept them and shew mercy.” Horrible!

18621

18622 8. Many pray, “Father, forgive them, they know not
18623 what they do.” This is the prayer which Christ
18624 made for his murderers. And, in that case, it was
18625 true, they did not know what they were doing, for
18626 they did not believe that Jesus Christ was the
18627 Messiah. But it cannot be said of sinners under the
18628 Gospel, they do not know what they are doing.
18629 They do know what they are doing. They do not
18630 see the full extent of it, but they do know that they
18631 are sinning against God, and rejecting Christ, and
18632 the difficulty is, that they are unwilling to submit to
18633 God. But such a prayer is calculated to make him
18634 feel relieved, and make him say, “Lord, how can
18635 you blame me so, I am a poor ignorant creature, I
18636 do not know how to do what is required of me. If I
18637 knew how, I would do it.”

18638

18639 9. Another expression is, “Lord, direct these
18640 sinners, who are inquiring the way to Zion, with
18641 their faces thitherward.” But this language is only
18642 applicable to Christians. Sinners have not their
18643 faces toward Zion, their faces are set toward hell.
18644 And how can a sinner be said to be “inquiring the

18645 way” to Zion, when he has no disposition to go
18646 there. The real difficulty is, that he is unwilling to
18647 WALK in the way in which he knows he ought to
18648 go.

18649
18650 10. People pray that sinners may have more
18651 conviction. Or, they pray that sinners may go home
18652 solemn and tender, and take the subject into
18653 consideration, instead of praying that they may
18654 repent now. Or, they pray as if they supposed the
18655 sinner was willing to do what is required. All such
18656 prayers, are just such prayers as the devil wants. He
18657 wishes to have such prayers, and I dare say he does
18658 not care how many such are offered.

18659
18660 Sometimes I have seen in an anxious meeting, or
18661 when sinners have been called to the anxious seats,
18662 and the minister has made the way of salvation all
18663 plain to them, and taken away all the stumbling
18664 blocks out of their path, and removed the darkness
18665 of their minds on the several points, and when they
18666 are just ready to YIELD, some one will be called
18667 on to pray, and instead of praying that they may
18668 repent now, he begins to pray, “O Lord, we pray,
18669 that these sinners may be solemn, that they may
18670 have a deep sense of their sinfulness, that they may
18671 go home impressed with their lost condition, that
18672 they may attempt nothing in their own strength,

18673 that they may not lose their convictions, and that,
18674 in thine own time and way, they may be brought
18675 out into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of
18676 God.”

18677
18678 Instead of bringing them right up to the point of
18679 IMMEDIATE submission, on the spot, it gives
18680 them time to breathe, it lets off all the pressure of
18681 conviction, and he breathes freely again and feels
18682 relieved, and sits down at his ease. Thus, when the
18683 sinner is brought up, as it were, and stands at the
18684 gate of heaven, such a prayer, instead of pushing
18685 him in, sets him away back again,—”There, poor
18686 thing, sit there till God helps you.”

18687
18688 11. Christians sometimes pray in such a manner as
18689 to make the impression that CHRIST IS THE
18690 SINNER’S FRIEND, in a different sense from what
18691 God the Father is. They pray to him, “O, thou
18692 friend of sinners,” as if God was full of wrath, and
18693 stern vengeance, just going to crush the poor
18694 wretch, till Jesus Christ comes in and takes his part,
18695 and delivers him. Now this is all wrong. The Father
18696 and the Son are perfectly agreed, their feelings are
18697 all the same, and both are equally disposed to have
18698 sinners saved. And to make such an impression,
18699 deceives the sinner, and leads to wrong feelings
18700 towards God. To represent God the Father as

18701 standing over him, with the sword of justice in his
18702 hand, eager to strike the blow, till Christ interposes,
18703 is not true. The Father is as much the sinner's
18704 friend as the Son. His compassion is equal. But if
18705 the sinner gets this unfavorable idea of God the
18706 Father, how is he ever to love him with all his
18707 heart, so as to say "Abba, Father."

18708
18709 12. The impression is often made by the manner of
18710 praying, that you do not expect sinners to repent
18711 NOW, or that you expect God to do THEIR duty,
18712 or that you wish to encourage them to trust in your
18713 prayers. And so, sinners are ruined. Never pray so
18714 as to make the impression on sinners, that you
18715 secretly hope they are Christians already, or that
18716 you feel a strong confidence they will be, by and
18717 by, or that you half believe they are converted now.
18718 This is always unhappy. Multitudes are deceived
18719 with false comfort, in this way, and prevented, just
18720 at the critical point, from making the final
18721 surrender of themselves to God.

18722
18723 Brethren, I find this field so broad that I cannot
18724 possibly mention all I wished to say. There are
18725 many other things that I intended to touch upon this
18726 evening, but the time is too far spent. I must close
18727 with a few brief
18728

18729 REMARKS.

18730

18731 1. Many persons who deal in this way with anxious
18732 sinners, do it from false pity. They feel so much
18733 sympathy and compassion that they cannot bear to
18734 tell them the truth, which is necessary to save them.
18735 As well might a surgeon, when he sees that a man's
18736 arm must be amputated, or he will die, indulge this
18737 feeling of false pity, and just put on a plaster, and
18738 give him an opiate. There is no benevolence in that.
18739 True benevolence would lead the surgeon to hide
18740 his feelings, and to be cool and calm, and with a
18741 keen knife, cut the limb off, and save the life. It is
18742 false tenderness to do anything short of that. I once
18743 saw a woman under distress of mind, who had been
18744 well nigh driven to despair for months. Her friends
18745 had tried all these false comforts without effect,
18746 and they brought her to see a minister, She was
18747 emaciated, and worn out with agony. The minister
18748 set his eye upon her, and poured in the truth upon
18749 her mind, and rebuked her in a most pointed
18750 manner. The woman who was with her interfered,
18751 she thought it cruel, and said, "Oh, do comfort her,
18752 she is so distressed, do not trouble her any more,
18753 she cannot bear it." He turned, and rebuked her,
18754 and sent her away, and then poured in the truth
18755 upon the anxious sinner like fire, and in five
18756 minutes she was converted, and went home full of

18757 joy. The plain truth swept all her false notions
18758 away, and in a few moments she was joyful in God.

18759

18760 2. This treatment of anxious sinners, administering
18761 their false comfort, is, in fact, cruelty. It is cruel as
18762 the grave, as cruel as hell, for it is calculated to
18763 send the sinner down to its burning abyss.

18764 Christians feel compassion for the anxious, and so
18765 they ought. But the last thing they ought to do, is to
18766 flinch just at the point where it comes to a crisis.

18767 They should feel compassion, but they should show
18768 it just as the surgeon does, when he deliberately
18769 goes to work, in the right and best way, and cuts
18770 off the man's arm, and thus cures him and saves his
18771 life. just so Christians should let the sinner see their
18772 compassion and tenderness, but they should take
18773 God's part, fully and decidedly. They should lay
18774 open to the sinner, the worst of his case, expose his
18775 guilt and danger, and then lead him right up to the
18776 cross, and insist on instant submission. They must
18777 have firmness enough to do this work thoroughly,
18778 and if they see the sinner distressed and in agony,
18779 still they must press him right on, and not give way
18780 in the least, however much he may be in agony, but
18781 still press on till he yield.

18782

18783 To do this often requires nerve. I have often been
18784 placed in circumstances, to know this by

18785 experience. I have found myself surrounded by
18786 anxious sinners, in such distress, as to make every
18787 nerve tremble, some overcome with emotion and
18788 lying on the floor, some applying camphor to
18789 prevent their fainting, others shrieking out as if
18790 they were just going to hell. Now, suppose any one
18791 should give false comfort in such a case as this.
18792 Suppose he had not nerve enough to bring them
18793 right up to the point of instant and absolute
18794 submission. How unfit is such a man to be trusted
18795 in a case like this.

18796
18797 3. Sometimes sinners become deranged through
18798 despair and anguish of mind. Where this is the
18799 case, it is almost always because those who deal
18800 with them try to encourage them with false
18801 comfort, and thus lead them to such a conflict with
18802 the Holy Ghost. They try to hold them up, while
18803 God is trying to break them down. And by and by,
18804 the sinner's mind gets confused with this
18805 contrariety of influences, and he either goes
18806 deranged, or is driven to despair.

18807
18808 4. If you are going to deal with sinners, remember
18809 that you are soon to meet them in judgment, and be
18810 sure to treat them in such a way that if they are lost,
18811 it will be their own fault. Do not try to comfort
18812 them with false notions now, and have them

18813 reproach you with it then. Better suppress your
18814 false sympathy, and let the naked truth cleave them
18815 asunder, joints and marrow, than to sooth them
18816 with false comfort, and beguile them away from
18817 God.

18818

18819 4. Sinner! if you converse with any Christians, and
18820 they tell you to do anything, first ask, “If I do that,
18821 shall I be saved?” You may be anxious, and not be
18822 saved. You may pray, and not be saved. You may
18823 read your Bible, and not be saved. You may use
18824 means, in your way, and not be saved. Whatever
18825 they tell you to do, if you can do it and not be
18826 saved, do not attend to such instructions. They are
18827 calculated to give you false comfort, and divert
18828 your attention from the main thing to be done, and
18829 beguile you down to hell. Do not follow any such
18830 directions, lest you should die while doing it, and
18831 then there is no retrieve.

18832

18833 Finally, never tell a sinner anything, or give him
18834 any direction, that will lead him to stop short, or
18835 that does not include absolute submission to God.
18836 To let him stop at any point short of this, is
18837 infinitely dangerous. Suppose you are at an anxious
18838 meeting, or a prayer meeting, and tell a sinner to
18839 pray, or to read a book, or anything short of saving
18840 repentance, and he should fall and break his neck

18841 that night, of whom would his blood be required?
18842 A youth in New England once met a minister in the
18843 street, and asked him what he should do to be
18844 saved. The minister told him to go home and go
18845 into his chamber, and kneel down and give his
18846 heart to God. "Oh, sir," said the boy, "I feel so bad,
18847 I am afraid I shall not live to get home." The
18848 minister saw his error, and felt the rebuke, thus
18849 unconsciously given by a child, and he told him,
18850 "Well, then, give your heart to God here, and go
18851 home to your chamber and tell him of it."

18852
18853 Oh, it is enough to make one's heart bleed, to see
18854 so many miserable comforters for anxious sinners,
18855 in whose answers there remaineth falsehood. What
18856 a vast amount of spiritual quackery there is in the
18857 world, and how many "forgers of lies" there are,
18858 "physicians of no value," who know no better than
18859 to comfort sinners with false hopes, and delude
18860 them with their "old wives' fables," and nonsense,
18861 or who give way to false tenderness and sympathy,
18862 till they have not firmness enough to see the sword
18863 of the Spirit applied, to cut men to the soul, and lay
18864 open the sinner's naked heart. Alas! that so many
18865 are ever put into the ministry, who have not skill
18866 enough to stand by and see the Spirit of God do its
18867 work, in breaking up the old foundations, and

18868 crushing all the rotten hopes of a sinner, and
18869 breaking him all down at the feet of Jesus.

18870

18871 [7] I believe the reporter passed over and did not
18872 mention this case.

18873

18874

18875

18876 LECTURE XVIII.

18877

18878 DIRECTIONS TO SINNERS.

18879

18880 Text—What shall I do to be saved.—Acts xvi. 30.

18881

18882 THESE are the words of the jailor at Philippi, the
18883 question which he put to Paul and Silas, who were
18884 then under his care as prisoners. Satan had, in
18885 many ways, opposed these servants of God in their
18886 work of preaching the Gospel, and had been as
18887 often defeated and disgraced. But here, at Philippi,
18888 he devised a new and peculiar project for
18889 frustrating their labors. There was a certain woman
18890 at Philippi, who was possessed with a spirit of
18891 divination, or in other words, the spirit of the devil,
18892 and brought her masters much gain by her
18893 soothsaying. The devil set this woman to follow
18894 Paul and Silas about the streets, and as soon as they
18895 had begun to gain the attention of the people, she

18896 would come in and cry, “These men are the
18897 servants of the most high God, which show unto us
18898 the way of salvation.” That is, she undertook to
18899 second the exhortations of the preachers, and added
18900 her testimony, as if to give additional weight to
18901 their instructions. The effect of it was just what
18902 Satan desired. The people all knew that this was a
18903 wicked, base woman, and when they heard her
18904 attempting to recommend this new preaching, they
18905 were disgusted, and concluded it was all of a piece.
18906 The devil knew that it would not do him any good,
18907 but would help their cause, to set such a person to
18908 oppose the preaching of the apostles, or to speak
18909 against it. The time had gone by, for that to
18910 succeed. And, therefore, he comes round the other
18911 way, and takes the opposite ground, and by setting
18912 her to praise them as the servants of God, and to
18913 bear her polluted testimony in favor of their
18914 instructions, he led people to suppose the apostles.
18915 were of the same character with her, and had the
18916 same spirit that she had, and thus all their efforts
18917 were defeated. Paul saw that if things went on so,
18918 he should be totally baffled, and never succeed in
18919 establishing a church at Philippi. And he turns
18920 round to her, and commands the foul spirit, in the
18921 name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. When her
18922 masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone,
18923 they raised a great persecution, and caught Paul and

18924 Silas, and made a great ado, and brought them
18925 before the magistrates, and raised such a clamor
18926 that the magistrates shut them up in prison, and
18927 made their feet fast in the stocks.
18928
18929 Thus, they thought they had put down the
18930 excitement. But at midnight Paul and Silas prayed
18931 and sang praises, and the prisoners heard them.
18932 This old prison that had so long echoed to the voice
18933 of blasphemy and oaths, now resounded with the
18934 praises of God, and these walls, that had stood so
18935 firm, now trembled under the power of prayer. The
18936 stocks were unloosed, the gates thrown open, and
18937 every one's bands broken. The jailor was aroused
18938 from his sleep, and when he saw the prison doors
18939 opened, as he knew that if the prisoners had
18940 escaped he must pay for it with his life, he drew his
18941 sword, and was about to kill himself. But Paul, who
18942 had no notion of escaping clandestinely, cried out
18943 to him instantly. "Do thyself no harm, for we are
18944 all here." And the Jailor called for a light, and
18945 sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down
18946 before his prisoners, Paul and Silas, and brought
18947 them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be
18948 saved?"
18949
18950 In my last lecture, I dwelt at some length on the
18951 false instructions given to sinners under conviction,

18952 and the false comforts too often administered, and
18953 the erroneous instructions which such persons
18954 receive. It is my design, to-night, to show what are
18955 the instructions that should be given to anxious
18956 sinners in order to their speedy and effectual
18957 conversion. Or, in other words, to explain to you,
18958 what answer should be given to those who make
18959 the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" In
18960 doing it, I propose,

18961

18962 I. To show what is not a proper direction to be
18963 given to sinners, when they make the inquiry in the
18964 text.

18965

18966 II. Show what is a proper answer to the inquiry.
18967 And,

18968

18969 III. To specify several errors, which anxious
18970 sinners are apt to fall into.

18971

18972 I. I am to show what are not proper directions to be
18973 given to anxious sinners.

18974

18975 No more important inquiry was ever made than
18976 this, "What must I do to be saved?" Mankind are
18977 apt enough to inquire "What shall I eat, and what
18978 shall I drink," and the question may be answered in
18979 various ways, with little danger. But when a sinner

18980 asks in earnest, “What must I do to be saved?” it is
18981 of infinite importance that he should receive the
18982 right answer. It is my desire, to-night, to tell you,
18983 professors of religion, what to answer to this
18984 inquiry, and to tell you, who are sinners, what you
18985 must do to be saved.

18986
18987 1. No direction should be given to a sinner, that
18988 will leave him still in the gall of bitterness and the
18989 bonds of iniquity. No answer is proper to be given,
18990 with which, if he complies, he would not go to
18991 heaven, if he should die the next moment.

18992
18993 2. No direction should be given, that does not
18994 include a change of heart, or a right heart, or hearty
18995 obedience to Christ. In other words, nothing is
18996 proper, which does not imply actually becoming a
18997 Christian. Any direction that falls short of this, is of
18998 no use. It will not bring him any nearer to the
18999 kingdom, it will do no good, but will only lead him
19000 to defer the very thing which he must do, in order
19001 to be saved. The sinner should be told plainly, at
19002 once, what he must do, or die; and he should be
19003 told nothing that does not include a right state of
19004 heart. Whatever you may do, sinner, that does not
19005 include a right heart, is sin. Whether you read the
19006 Bible or not, it is sin, so long as you remain in
19007 rebellion. Whether you go to meeting, or stay

19008 away, whether you pray or not, it is nothing but
19009 rebellion, every moment. It is surprising, that a
19010 sinner should suppose himself doing God's
19011 services, when he prays, and reads his Bible.
19012 Should a rebel against this government, read the
19013 statute book, while he continues in rebellion, and
19014 has no design to obey; should he ask for pardon,
19015 while he holds on to his weapons of resistance and
19016 warfare, would you think him doing his country a
19017 service, and laying them under obligations to show
19018 him favor. No, you would say that all his reading
19019 and praying, were only an insult to the majesty
19020 both of the lawgiver and the law. So you, sinner,
19021 while you remain in impenitence, are insulting God
19022 and setting him at defiance, whether you read his
19023 word and pray or let it alone. No matter what place
19024 or what attitude your body is in, on your knees, or
19025 in the house of God, so long as your heart is not
19026 right, so long as you resist the Holy Ghost, and
19027 reject Christ, you are a rebel against your Maker.

19028

19029 II. I am to show what is a proper answer to this
19030 inquiry. "What must I do to be saved?"

19031

19032 And, generally, you may give the sinner any
19033 direction, or tell him to do anything, that includes a
19034 right heart, and if you make him understand it, and
19035 do it, he will be saved. The Spirit of God, in

19036 striving with sinners, suits his strivings to the state
19037 of mind in which he finds them. His great object in
19038 striving with them, is, to dislodge them from their
19039 hiding-places, and bring them to submit to God, at
19040 once. Now these objections, and difficulties, and
19041 states of mind, are as various as the circumstances
19042 of mankind, as many as there are individuals. The
19043 characters of individuals affords an endless
19044 diversity. What is to be done with each one, and
19045 how he is to be converted, depends on his
19046 particular errors. It is necessary to ascertain his
19047 errors, to find out what he understands, and what he
19048 needs to be taught more perfectly, to see what
19049 points the Spirit of God is pressing upon his
19050 conscience, and to press the same things and thus
19051 bring him to Christ. The most common directions
19052 are the following:

19053
19054 1. It is generally in point, and a safe and suitable
19055 direction, to tell a sinner to repent. I say, generally.
19056 For sometimes the Spirit of God seems not so
19057 much to direct the sinner's attention to his own sins
19058 as to some other thing. In the days of the apostles,
19059 the minds of the people seem to have been agitated
19060 mainly on the question, whether Jesus was the true
19061 Messiah. And so the apostles directed much of
19062 their instructions to this point, to prove that he was
19063 the Christ. And whenever anxious sinners asked

19064 them what they must do, they most commonly
19065 exhorted them to “Believe in the Lord Jesus
19066 Christ.” They bore down on this point, because
19067 here was where the Spirit of God was striving with
19068 them, and this was the subject that especially
19069 agitated people’s minds, and, consequently, this
19070 would probably be the first thing a person would do
19071 on submitting to God. It was the grand point at
19072 issue between God and the Jew and Gentile of
19073 those days, whether Jesus Christ was the son of
19074 God. It was the point in dispute. To bring a sinner
19075 to yield this controverted question, was the way the
19076 most effectually to humble him.

19077
19078 At other times, it will be found, that the Spirit of
19079 God is dealing with sinners chiefly in reference to
19080 their own sins. Sometimes he deals with them in
19081 regard to a particular duty, as prayer, perhaps
19082 family prayer. The sinner will be found to be
19083 contesting that point with God, whether it is right
19084 for him to pray, or whether he ought to pray in his
19085 family. I have known striking cases of this kind,
19086 where the individual was struggling on this point,
19087 and as soon as he fell on his knees to pray, he
19088 yielded his heart, showing that this was the very
19089 point which the Spirit of God was contesting, and
19090 the hinge on which his controversy with God all
19091 turned. That was conversion.

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The direction to repent is always proper, but will not always be effectual, for there may be some other thing that the sinner needs to be told also. And where it is the pertinent direction, sinners need not only to be told to repent, but to have it explained to them what repentance is. Since there has been so much mysticism, and false philosophy and false theology, thrown around the subject, it has become necessary to tell sinners not only what you mean by repentance, but also to tell them what you do not mean. Words that used to be plain and easily understood have now become so perverted that they need to be explained to sinners, or they will often convey a wrong impression to their minds. This is the case with the word repentance. Many suppose that remorse, or a sense of guilt, is repentance. Then hell is full of repentance, for it is full of remorse, unutterable and eternal. Others feel regret that they have done such a thing, and they call that repenting of it. But they only regret that they have sinned, because of the consequences, and not because they abhor sin. This is not repentance. Others suppose that convictions of sin and strong fears of hell are repentance. Others consider the remonstrances of conscience as repentance; they say, "I never do anything wrong but that I repent; that I always feel sorry I did it." Others regard

19120 repentance as a feeling of sorrow for sin. But
19121 repentance is not an involuntary feeling of any kind
19122 or degree. Sinners must be shown that all these
19123 things are not repentance. They are not only
19124 consistent with the utmost wickedness, but the
19125 devil might have them all, and doubtless has them
19126 all, and yet remains a devil. Repentance is a change
19127 of mind, as regards God and towards sin itself. It is
19128 not only a change of views, but a change of the
19129 ultimate preference or choice of the soul. It is a
19130 voluntary change, and by consequence involves a
19131 change of feeling and of action toward God and
19132 toward sin. It is what is naturally understood by a
19133 change of mind on any subject of interest and
19134 importance. We hear that such a man has changed
19135 his mind on the subject of Abolition, for instance,
19136 or that he has changed his views in politics.
19137 Everybody understands that he has undergone a
19138 change in his views, his feelings, and his conduct.
19139 This is repentance, on that subject, it is a change of
19140 mind, but not towards God. Evangelical repentance
19141 is a change of willing, of feeling, and of life, in
19142 respect to God.
19143
19144 Repentance always implies abhorrence of sin. It is
19145 willing and feeling as God does in respect to sin. It
19146 of course involves the love of God, and an
19147 abhorrence of sin. It always implies forsaking sin.

19148 Sinners should be made to understand this. The
19149 sinner that repents does not feel as impenitent
19150 sinners think they should feel, at giving up their
19151 sins if they should become religious. Impenitent
19152 sinners look upon religion just like this, that if they
19153 become pious, they shall be obliged to stay away
19154 from balls and parties, and obliged to give up
19155 theatres, or gambling, or other things that they now
19156 take delight in. And they see not how they could
19157 ever enjoy themselves, if they should break off
19158 from all those things. But this is very far from
19159 being a correct view of the matter. Religion does
19160 not make them unhappy, by shutting them out from
19161 things in which they delight, because the first step
19162 in it is to repent, to change their mind in regard to
19163 all these things. They do not seem to realize that
19164 the person who has repented has no disposition for
19165 these things, he has given them up, and turned their
19166 mind away from them. Sinners feel as if they
19167 should want to go to such places, and want to
19168 mingle in such scenes, just as much as they do
19169 now, and that it will be such a continued sacrifice
19170 as to make them unhappy. This is a great mistake.

19171

19172 I know there are some professors who would be
19173 very glad to betake themselves to their former
19174 practices, were it not that they feel constrained, by
19175 fear of losing their character, or the like. Now,

19176 mark me. If they feel so, it is because they have no
19177 religion, they do not hate sin. If they desire their
19178 former ways, they have no religion, they have
19179 never repented, for repentance always consists in a
19180 change of choice of views and feelings. If they
19181 were really converted, instead of choosing such
19182 things, they would turn away from them with
19183 loathing. Instead of lusting after the flesh-pots of
19184 Egypt, and desiring to go into their former circles,
19185 parties, balls, and the like, they find their highest
19186 pleasure in obeying God.

19187
19188 2. Sinners should be told to believe the Gospel.
19189 Here, also, they need to have it explained to them,
19190 and to be told what is not faith, and what is.
19191 Nothing is more common than for a sinner, when
19192 told to believe the Gospel, to say, "I do believe it."
19193 The fact is, he has been brought up to admit the
19194 fact, that the Gospel is true, but he does not believe
19195 it, he knows nothing about the evidence of it, and
19196 all his faith is a mere admission without evidence.
19197 He holds it to be true, in a kind of loose, indefinite
19198 sense, so that he is always ready to say, "I do
19199 believe the Bible." It is strange they do not see that
19200 they are deceived in thinking that they believe, for
19201 they must see that they have never acted upon these
19202 truths, as they do upon those things that they do

19203 believe. Yet it is often quite difficult to convince
19204 them that they do not believe.

19205

19206 But the fact is, that the careless sinner does not
19207 believe the Gospel at all. The idea that the careless
19208 sinner is an intellectual believer, is absurd. The
19209 devil is an intellectual believer, and that is what
19210 makes him tremble. What makes a sinner anxious
19211 is, that he begins to be an intellectual believer, and
19212 that makes him feel. No being in heaven, earth, or
19213 hell, can intellectually believe the truths of the
19214 Gospel, and not feel on the subject. The anxious
19215 sinner has faith of the same kind with devils, but he
19216 has not so much of it, and, therefore, he does not
19217 feel so much. The man that does not feel nor act at
19218 all, on the subject of religion is an infidel, let his
19219 professions be what they may. He that feels
19220 nothing and does nothing, believes nothing. This is
19221 a philosophical fact.

19222

19223 Faith does not consist in an intellectual conviction
19224 that Christ died for you in particular, nor in a belief
19225 that you are a Christian, or that you ever shall be,
19226 or that your sins are forgiven. But faith is that trust
19227 or confidence in God, and in Christ, that commits
19228 the whole soul to him in all his relations to us. It is
19229 a voluntary trust in his person, his veracity, his
19230 word. This was the faith of Abraham. He had that

19231 confidence in what God said, which led him to act
19232 as if it were true. This is the way the apostle
19233 illustrates it in the eleventh of Hebrews. “Faith is
19234 the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of
19235 things not seen.” And he goes on to illustrate it by
19236 various examples. “Through faith we understand
19237 that the worlds were made,” that is, we believe this,
19238 and act accordingly. Take the case of Noah. Noah
19239 was warned of God of things not seen as yet, that
19240 is, he was assured that God was going to drown the
19241 world, and he believed it, and acted accordingly; he
19242 prepared an ark to save his family, and by so doing,
19243 he condemned the world that would not believe; his
19244 actions gave evidence that he was sincere.
19245 Abraham, too, was called of God to leave his
19246 country, with the promise that he should be the
19247 gainer by it, and he obeyed and went out, without
19248 knowing where he should go. Read the whole
19249 chapter and you will find many instances of the
19250 same kind. The whole design of the chapter is to
19251 illustrate the nature of faith, and to show that it
19252 invariably results in action. The sinner should have
19253 it explained to him, and be made to see that the
19254 faith which the Gospel requires is just that
19255 confidence in Christ which leads him to act on
19256 what he says as a certain fact. This is believing in
19257 Christ,
19258

19259 3. Another direction proper to be given to the
19260 sinner is that he should give his heart to God. God
19261 says, “My son, give me thine heart.” But here also
19262 there needs to be explanation, to make him
19263 understand what it is. It is amazing that there
19264 should be any darkness here. It is the language of
19265 common life, in everybody’s mouth, and
19266 everybody understands just what it means, when
19267 we use it in regard to any thing else. But when it
19268 comes to religion, they seem to be all in the dark.
19269 Ask a sinner, no matter what may be his age, or
19270 education, what it means to give the heart to God,
19271 and, strange as it may appear, he is at a loss for an
19272 answer. Ask a woman what it is to give her heart to
19273 her husband, or a man what it is to give his heart to
19274 his wife, and they understand it. But then they are
19275 totally blind as to giving their hearts to God. I
19276 suppose I have asked more than a thousand anxious
19277 sinners this question. When I have told them they
19278 must give their hearts to God, they would always
19279 say they were willing to do it, and, sometimes, that
19280 they were anxious to do it, and even seem to be in
19281 an agony of desire about it. Then I have asked them
19282 what they understood to be giving their hearts to
19283 God, as they were so willing to do it. And very
19284 seldom have I received a correct or rational answer
19285 from a sinner of any age. I have sometimes had the
19286 strangest answers that can be imagined—anything

19287 but what they ought to say. Now, to give your heart
19288 to God is the same thing as to give your heart to
19289 anybody else; the same as for a woman to give her
19290 heart to her husband. Ask that woman if she
19291 understands this? “Oh, yes, that is plain enough, it
19292 is to place my affections on him, and strive to
19293 please him in everything.” Very well, place your
19294 affections on God, and strive to please him in
19295 everything. But alas, when they come to the subject
19296 of religion, people suppose there is some wonderful
19297 mystery about it. Some talk as if they supposed it
19298 was to take out this bundle of muscles, or fleshy
19299 organ, in their bosom, and give it to God. Sinner,
19300 what God asks of you is, that you should love him
19301 supremely.

19302
19303 3. Submit to God, is also a proper direction to
19304 anxious sinners. And, Oh, how dark sinners are
19305 here too. Scarcely a sinner can be found, who will
19306 not tell you he is willing to submit to God. But they
19307 do not understand it. They need to be told what true
19308 submission is. Sometimes they think it means that
19309 they should be willing to be damned. Sometimes
19310 they place themselves in this attitude, and call it
19311 submission; they say, if they are elected, they shall
19312 be saved, and if not, they shall be damned. This is
19313 not submission. True submission, is yielding
19314 obedience to God. Suppose a rebel, in arms against

19315 the government, was called on to submit. What
19316 would he understand by it? Why, that he should
19317 yield the point, and lay down his arms, and obey
19318 the laws. That is just what it means, for a sinner to
19319 submit to God. He must cease his strife and conflict
19320 against his Maker, and take the attitude of a willing
19321 and obedient child, willing to be and do whatever
19322 God requires. "Here, Lord, am I; Lord, what wilt
19323 thou have me to do?"

19324

19325 Suppose a company of soldiers had rebelled, and
19326 Government had an army to put them down, and
19327 had driven them into a strong hold, where they
19328 were out of provisions, and had no way to escape,
19329 and they should not know what to do. Suppose the
19330 rebels to have met in this extremity, to consider
19331 what is to be done? and one rises up, and says,
19332 "Well, comrades, I am convinced we are all wrong
19333 from the beginning, and now the reward of our
19334 deeds is like to overtake us, and we cannot escape,
19335 and as for remaining here to die, I am resolved not
19336 to do it. I am going to throw myself on the mercy
19337 of the commander-in-chief." That man submits. He
19338 ceases, from that moment, to be a rebel in his heart,
19339 just as soon as he comes to this conclusion. So it is
19340 with the sinner when he yields the point, and
19341 consents in his heart to do, and be, whatever God
19342 shall require. The sinner may be in doubt what to

19343 do, and may feel afraid to put himself in God's
19344 hands, thinking that if he does, perhaps God will
19345 send him down to hell, as he deserves. But it is his
19346 business to leave all that question with God, and
19347 not resist his Maker any longer, but give all up to
19348 God, make no conditions, and trust it wholly to
19349 God's benevolence and wisdom to decide what
19350 shall be done, and to appoint his future condition.
19351 Until you do this, sinner, you have done nothing to
19352 the purpose.

19353

19354 5. Another proper direction to be given to sinners,
19355 is to confess and forsake your sins. This means that
19356 they should both confess and forsake them. They
19357 must confess to God their sins against God, and
19358 confess to men their sins against men, and forsake
19359 them all. A man does not forsake his sins till he has
19360 made all the reparation in his power. If he has
19361 stolen money, or defrauded his neighbor out of
19362 property, he does not forsake his sins by merely
19363 resolving not to steal any more, or not to cheat
19364 again; he must make reparation to the extent of his
19365 power. So, if he has slandered any one, he does not
19366 forsake his sin by merely saying he will not do so
19367 again. He must make reparation. So, in like
19368 manner, if he has robbed God, as all sinners have,
19369 he must make reparation, as far as he has the
19370 power. Suppose a man has made money in

19371 rebellion against God, and has withheld from him
19372 his time, talents and service, has lived and rioted
19373 upon the bounties of his providence, and refused to
19374 lay himself out for the salvation of the world; he
19375 has robbed God. Now, if he should die feeling that
19376 this money was his own, and should he leave it to
19377 his heirs without consulting the will of God—why,
19378 he is just as certain to go to hell as the highway
19379 robber. He has never made any satisfaction to God.
19380 With all his whining and pious talk, he has never
19381 confessed HIS SIN to God, nor forsaken his sin, for
19382 he has never felt nor acknowledged himself to be
19383 the steward of God. If he refuses to hold the
19384 property in his possession, as the steward of God; if
19385 he accounts it his own, and as such gives it to his
19386 children, he says, in effect, to God. “That property
19387 is not yours, it is mine, and I will give it to my
19388 children.” He has continued to persevere in his sin,
19389 for he does not relinquish the ownership of that of
19390 which he has robbed God.

19391
19392 What would a merchant think, if his hired clerk
19393 should take all the capital and set up a store of his
19394 own, and die with it in his hands? Will such a man
19395 go to heaven? “No,” you say, every one of you, “If
19396 such a man does not go to hell, there might just as
19397 well be no hell.” God would prove himself
19398 infinitely unjust, to let such a character go

19399 unpunished. What, then, shall we say of the man
19400 who has robbed God all his life? Here God set him
19401 to be his clerk, to manage some of his affairs, and
19402 he has gone and stolen all the money, and says it is
19403 his, and he keeps it, and dies, and gives it to his
19404 children, as if it was all his own lawful property. Is
19405 that man going to heaven? Has that man forsaken
19406 sin? I tell you, no. If he has not surrendered himself
19407 and all to God, he has not taken the first step in the
19408 way to heaven.

19409
19410 6. Another proper direction to be given to sinners
19411 is, "Choose ye this day, whom ye will serve."
19412 Under the Old Testament dispensation, this or
19413 something equivalent to it, was the most common
19414 direction given. It was not common to call on men
19415 to believe in Christ until the days of John the
19416 Baptist. He baptized those who came to him, with
19417 the baptism of repentance, and directed them to
19418 believe on him who should come after him. Under
19419 Joshua, the text was something which the people
19420 all understood more easily than they would a call to
19421 believe on the distant Messiah; it was "Choose ye,
19422 this day, whom ye will serve." On another
19423 occasion, Moses said to them, "I call heaven and
19424 earth to record this day against you, that I have set
19425 before you life and death, blessing and cursing:
19426 therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed

19427 may live.” The direction was accommodated to the
19428 people’s knowledge. And it is good now, as it was
19429 then. Sinners are called upon to choose—what?
19430 Whether they will serve God or the world—
19431 whether they will follow holiness or sin. Let them
19432 be made to understand what is meant by choosing,
19433 and what is to be chosen, and then if the thing is
19434 done from the heart, they will be saved.

19435
19436 Any of these directions, if complied with, will
19437 constitute true conversion. The particular exercises
19438 may vary in different cases. Sometimes the first
19439 exercise in conversion, is submission to God,
19440 sometimes repentance, sometimes faith, sometimes
19441 the choice of God and his service, in short,
19442 whatever their thoughts are taken up with at the
19443 time. If their thoughts are directed to Christ at the
19444 moment, the first exercise will be faith. If to sin,
19445 the first exercise will be repentance. If to their
19446 future course of life, it is choosing the service of
19447 God. If to the Divine government, it is submission.
19448 It is important to find out just where the Holy Spirit
19449 is pressing the sinner at the time, and then take care
19450 to push that point. If it is in regard to Christ, press
19451 that; if it is in regard to his future course of life,
19452 push him right up to an immediate choice of
19453 obedience to God.
19454

19455 It is a great error to suppose that any one particular
19456 exercise is always foremost in conversion, or, that
19457 every sinner must have faith first, or submission
19458 first. It is not true, either in philosophy or in fact.
19459 There is a great variety in people's exercises.
19460 Whatever point is taken hold of, between God and
19461 the sinner, when the sinner YIELDS that, he is
19462 converted. Whatever the particular exercise may
19463 be, if it includes obedience of heart to God on any
19464 point, it is true conversion. When he yields one
19465 point to God's authority, he is ready to yield all.
19466 When he changes his mind, and obeys in one thing,
19467 because it is God's will, he will obey in other
19468 things, so far as he sees it to be God's will. Where
19469 there is this right choice, then, whenever the mind
19470 is directed to any one point of duty, he is ready to
19471 follow. It matters very little which of these
19472 directions is given, if it is only made plain, and if it
19473 is to the point, so as to serve as a test of obedience
19474 to God. If it is to the point that the Spirit of God is
19475 debating with the sinner's mind, so as to fall in
19476 with the Spirit's work, and not to divert the sinner's
19477 attention from the very point in controversy, let it
19478 be made perfectly clear, and then pressed till the
19479 sinner yields, and he will be saved.
19480

19481 III. I am to mention several errors which anxious
19482 sinners are apt to fall into, respecting this great
19483 inquiry.
19484
19485 1. The first error is, in supposing that they must
19486 make themselves better, or prepare themselves, so
19487 as in some way to recommend themselves to the
19488 mercy of God. It is marvelous, that sinners will not
19489 understand, that all they have to do is to accept
19490 salvation from God, all prepared to their hands. But
19491 they all, learned or unlearned, at first, betake
19492 themselves to a legal course to get relief. This is
19493 one principal reason why they will not become
19494 Christians at once, just as soon as they begin to
19495 attend to the subject. They imagine that they must
19496 be, in some way or other, prepared to come. They
19497 must change their dress, and make themselves look
19498 a little better; they are not willing to come just as
19499 they are, in their rags and poverty. They must have
19500 something more on, before they can approach to
19501 God. They should be shown, at once, that it is
19502 impossible they should be any better, until they do
19503 what God requires. Every pulse that beats, every
19504 breath they draw, they are growing worse, because
19505 they are standing out in rebellion against God, so
19506 long as they do not do the very thing which God
19507 requires of them as the first thing to be done.
19508

19509 2. Another error is, in supposing that they must
19510 suffer a considerable time under conviction, as a
19511 kind of punishment, before they are ready properly
19512 to come to Christ. And so they will pray for
19513 conviction. And they think, that if they are ground
19514 down to the earth, with distress, for a sufficient
19515 time, then God will pity them, and be more ready
19516 to help them, when he sees them so very miserable.
19517 They should be made to understand clearly, that
19518 they are thus unhappy and miserable, merely
19519 because they refuse to accept the relief which God
19520 offers. Take the case of the stubborn child, when
19521 his parent stands over him with the rod, and the
19522 child shudders and screams. Should that child
19523 imagine he is gaining anything by his agony? His
19524 distress arises from his conviction, and shall he
19525 pray for more conviction? Does that make him any
19526 better? Does his father pity him any more, because
19527 he stands out? Who does not see that he is all the
19528 while growing worse?

19529
19530 3. Sometimes sinners imagine that they must wait
19531 for different feelings, before they submit to God.
19532 They say, "I do not think I feel right yet, to accept
19533 of Christ; I do not think I am prepared to be
19534 converted yet." They ought to be made to see what
19535 God requires of them is to will right. If they obey
19536 and submit with the will the feelings will adjust

19537 themselves in due time. It is not a question of
19538 feeling, but of willing and acting.

19539

19540 The feelings are involuntary, and have no moral
19541 character except what they derive from the action
19542 of the will, with which action they sympathize.
19543 Before the will is right, the feelings will not be, of
19544 course. The sinner should come to Christ by
19545 accepting him at once; and this he must do, not in
19546 obedience to his feelings, but in obedience to his
19547 conscience. Obey, submit, trust. Give up all
19548 instantly, and your feelings will come right. Do not
19549 wait for better feelings, but commit your whole
19550 being to God at once, and this will soon result in
19551 the feelings for which you are waiting. What God
19552 requires of you, is the present act of your own
19553 mind, in turning from sin to holiness, and from the
19554 service of Satan to the service of the living God.

19555

19556 4. Another error of sinners, is to suppose they must
19557 wait till their hearts are changed. "What?" say they,
19558 "am I to believe in Christ before my heart is
19559 changed? Do you mean that I am to repent before
19560 my heart is changed?" Now, the simple answer to
19561 all this is, that the change of heart is the very thing
19562 in question. God requires sinners to love him. That
19563 is to change their heart. God requires the sinner to
19564 believe the Gospel. That is to change his heart. God

19565 requires him to repent. That is to change his heart.
19566 God does not tell him to wait till his heart is
19567 changed, and then repent and believe, and love
19568 God. The very word itself, repent, signifies a
19569 change of mind or heart. To do either of these
19570 things, is to change your heart, and to make you a
19571 new heart, just as God requires.

19572
19573 5. Sinners often get the idea that they are perfectly
19574 willing to do what God requires. Tell them to do
19575 this thing, or that, to repent, or believe, or give God
19576 their hearts, and they say, “Oh, yes, I am perfectly
19577 willing to do that, I wish I could do it, I would give
19578 anything if I could do it.” They ought to
19579 understand, that, being truly willing is doing it, but
19580 there is a difference between willing and desiring.
19581 People often desire to be Christians, when they are
19582 wholly unwilling to be so. When we see anything
19583 which appears to us to be a good, we are so
19584 constituted that we desire it. We necessarily desire
19585 it when it is before our minds. We cannot help
19586 desiring it in proportion as its goodness is
19587 presented to our minds. But yet we may not be
19588 willing to have it, under all the circumstances. It
19589 may be that we prefer, upon the whole, that the
19590 present possessor should continue to possess it still.
19591 Or that we choose to have our friend or child
19592 possess it, instead of ourselves. A man may desire

19593 to go to Philadelphia on many accounts, while, for
19594 still more weighty reasons, he chooses not to go
19595 there. So the sinner may desire to be a Christian.
19596 He may see many good things in being a Christian.
19597 He may see that if he were a Christian he would be
19598 a great deal more happy, and that he should go to
19599 heaven when he dies, but yet he is not willing to be
19600 a Christian. WILLING to obey Christ is to be a
19601 Christian. When an individual actually chooses to
19602 obey God, he is a Christian. But all such desires, as
19603 do not terminate in actual choice, are nothing.

19604
19605 6. The sinner will sometimes say, that he offers to
19606 give God his heart, but he intimates that God is
19607 unwilling. But this is absurd. What does God ask?
19608 Why, that you should love him. Now, for you to
19609 say you are willing to give God your heart, but God
19610 is unwilling, is the same as saying that you are
19611 willing to love God, but God is not willing to be
19612 loved by you, and will not suffer you to love him.
19613 It is important to clear up all these points in the
19614 sinner's mind, that he may have no dark and
19615 mysterious comer to rest in, where the truth will
19616 not reach him.

19617
19618 7. Sinners sometimes get the idea that they repent,
19619 when they are only convicted. Whenever the sinner
19620 is found resting in any LIE, let the truth sweep it

19621 away, however much it may pain and distress him.
19622 If he has any error of this kind, you must tear it
19623 away from him, if you do not mean that he shall
19624 stumble into the depths of hell.

19625

19626 8. Sinners are often wholly taken up with looking
19627 at themselves, to see if they cannot find something
19628 there, some kind of feeling or other, that will
19629 recommend them to God. Evidently, for want of
19630 proper instruction, David Brainard was a long time
19631 taken up with his state of mind, looking for some
19632 feelings that would recommend him to God.

19633 Sometimes he imagined that he had such feelings,
19634 and would tell God in prayer, that now he felt as he
19635 ought, to receive his mercy; and then he would see
19636 that he had been all wrong, and be ashamed that he
19637 had told God that he felt right. Thus, the poor man,
19638 for want of correct instruction, was driven almost
19639 to despair, and it is easy to see that his Christian
19640 exercises through life were greatly modified, and
19641 his comfort and usefulness much impaired by the
19642 false philosophy he had adopted on this point. You
19643 must turn the sinner away from himself to
19644 something else. Suppose he keeps poring over
19645 himself, until he is going into a state of despair.
19646 The proper course then is, to turn off his attention
19647 from looking at himself, and make him look at
19648 some duty to be performed, or make him look at

19649 Christ, and, perhaps, before he is aware, he will
19650 find that he has submitted to God. His attention was
19651 diverted away from himself, to contemplate the
19652 reasonableness of God's requirements, or the
19653 sufficiency of Christ's atonement, or something of
19654 this kind, and as he dwelt upon it, he just gave up
19655 his heart, and the agony was over.

19656

19657 REMARKS.

19658

19659 1. The labor of ministers is greatly increased, and
19660 the difficulties in the way of salvation are greatly
19661 multiplied, by the false instructions that have been
19662 given to sinners. The consequence has been, that
19663 directions which used to be plain are now obscure.
19664 People have been taught so long, that there is
19665 something awfully mysterious and unintelligible
19666 about conversion, that they do not try to understand
19667 it. Sinners have been taught these false notions, till
19668 now they are every where entrenched behind these
19669 sentiments, such as "cannot repent," "must wait for
19670 God," and the like. It was once sufficient, as we
19671 learn from the Bible, to tell sinners to repent, or to
19672 tell them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But
19673 now faith has been talked about as a principle,
19674 instead of an act, and repentance as something put
19675 into the mind, instead of an exercise of the mind,
19676 and sinners are perplexed. Ministers are charged

19677 with preaching heresy, because they presume to
19678 teach that faith is an exercise, and not a principle,
19679 and that sin is an act, and not a part of the
19680 constitution of man. And sinners have become so
19681 sophisticated, that you have to be at great pains in
19682 explaining not only what you do not mean, but
19683 what you do mean, otherwise they will be almost
19684 sure to misunderstand you, and either gain a false
19685 relief from their anxiety, by throwing their duty off
19686 upon God, or else run into despair from the
19687 supposed impracticability of doing what is requisite
19688 for their salvation. It is often the greatest difficulty
19689 to lead them out of these theological labyrinths and
19690 mazes, into which they have been deluded, and to
19691 lead them along the straight and simple way of the
19692 Gospel. It seems as if the greatest ingenuity had
19693 been employed to mystify the minds of people and
19694 weave a most subtle web of false theology,
19695 calculated to involve a sinner in endless darkness.

19696
19697 Who that has been in revivals, has not encountered
19698 that endless train of fooleries, which have been
19699 inculcated, till it has become necessary to be as
19700 plain as A B C, and the best educated have to be
19701 talked to just like children. So much has been done
19702 to mystify and befool people's minds, in the
19703 plainest matters. Tell a sinner to believe, and he
19704 turns round to you, and stares, "Why, how you talk;

19705 is not faith a principle implanted in the soul, and
19706 how am I to believe until I get this principle?" So,
19707 if a minister tells a sinner the very words that the
19708 apostles used, in the great revival at the day of
19709 pentecost, "Repent and be converted, every one of
19710 you," and they reply as they have been taught, "Oh,
19711 I guess you are an Arminian; I do not want any of
19712 your Arminian teaching for me; do not you deny
19713 the Spirit's influences?" It is enough to make
19714 humanity weep to see the fog and darkness that
19715 have been thrown around the plain directions of the
19716 Gospel, till many generations have been emptied
19717 into hell.

19718
19719 2. These false instructions to sinners are infinitely
19720 worse than none. The Lord Jesus Christ found it
19721 more difficult to get the people to yield up their
19722 false notions of theology than anything else. This
19723 has been the great difficulty with the Jews to this
19724 day, that they have received false notions in
19725 theology, have perverted the truth on certain points,
19726 and you cannot make them understand the plainest
19727 points in the Gospel. So it is with sinners, the most
19728 difficult thing to be done is to get away these
19729 refuges of lies, which they have gotten from false
19730 theology. They are so fond of holding on to these
19731 refuges, because they are called orthodox, and
19732 because they excuse the sinner, and condemn God,

19733 that it is found to be the most perplexing, and
19734 difficult, and discouraging part of a minister's labor
19735 to drive them away.

19736

19737 3. No wonder the Gospel has taken so little effect,
19738 encumbered as it has been with these strange
19739 dogmas. The truth is, that very little of the Gospel
19740 has come out upon the world, for these hundreds of
19741 years, without being clogged and obscured by false
19742 theology. People have been told that they must
19743 repent, and, in the same breath, told that they could
19744 not repent until the truth itself has been all mixed
19745 up with error, so as to produce the same practical
19746 effect with error, and the Gospel that is preached
19747 has been another Gospel, or no Gospel at all.

19748

19749 4. You can understand what is meant by healing
19750 slightly the hurt of the daughter of God's people,
19751 and the danger of doing it. It is very easy when
19752 sinners are under conviction, to say something that
19753 shall smooth over the case, and relieve their
19754 anxiety, so that they will either get a false hope, or
19755 will be converted with their views so obscure, that
19756 they will always be poor, feeble, wavering,
19757 doubting, inefficient Christians.

19758

19759 5. Much depends on the manner in which a person
19760 is dealt with, when under conviction. Much of his

19761 future comfort and usefulness depends on the
19762 clearness, and strength, and firmness, with which
19763 the directions of the Gospel are given, when he is
19764 under conviction. If those who deal with him are
19765 afraid to use the probe thoroughly, he will always
19766 be a poor, sickly, doubting Christian. If converted
19767 at all, he will never do much good. The true mode,
19768 is to deal thoroughly and plainly with a sinner, to
19769 tear away every excuse he can get up, and show
19770 him plainly what he is, and what he ought to be,
19771 and he will bless God to all eternity, that he fell in
19772 with those who would be so faithful to his soul. For
19773 the want of this thorough and searching
19774 management, many are converted who seem to be
19775 stillborn. And the reason is, they never were
19776 faithfully dealt with. We may charitably hope they
19777 are Christians, but still it is uncertain and doubtful.
19778 Their conversion seems rather a change of opinion,
19779 than a change of heart. But if, when a sinner is
19780 under conviction, you pour in the truth, put in the
19781 probe, break up the old foundations, and sweep
19782 away his refuges of lies, and use the word of God,
19783 like fire and like a hammer, you will find that they
19784 will come out with clear views, and strong faith,
19785 and firm principles, not doubting, halting, irresolute
19786 Christians, but such as follow the Lord wholly.
19787 This is the way to make strong Christians. This has
19788 been eminently the case in many revivals of

19789 modern days. I have heard old Christians say of the
19790 converts, “These converts were born men and
19791 women, full grown, they never were children, but
19792 have, at the very outset, all the clearness of view,
19793 and strength of faith, of old Christians. They seem
19794 to understand the doctrines of religion, and to know
19795 what to do, and how to take hold, to promote
19796 revivals, better than one in a hundred of the old
19797 members in the church.”

19798

19799 I once knew a young man who was converted,
19800 away from home. The place where he lived had no
19801 minister, and no preaching, and no religion. He
19802 went home in three days after he was converted,
19803 and immediately set himself to work, to labor for a
19804 revival. He set up meetings in his neighborhood,
19805 and prayed and labored, and a revival broke out, of
19806 which he had the principal management through a
19807 powerful work, which converted most of the
19808 principal men of the place. The truth was, he had
19809 been so dealt with, that he knew what he was
19810 about. He understood the subject, and knew where
19811 he stood himself. He was not all the while troubled
19812 with doubts, whether he was himself a Christian.
19813 He knew that he was serving God, and that God
19814 was with him, and so he went boldly and resolutely
19815 forward to his object. But if you undertake to make
19816 converts, without cutting up all their errors, and

19817 tearing away their false hopes, you may make a
19818 host of hypocrites, or of puny, dwarfish Christians,
19819 always doubting, and easily turned back from a
19820 revival spirit, and worth nothing. The way is, to
19821 bring them right out to the light. When a man is
19822 converted in this way, you can depend on him, and
19823 know where to find him.

19824
19825 7. Protracted seasons of conviction are generally
19826 owing to defective instruction. Wherever clear and
19827 faithful instructions are given to sinners, there you
19828 will generally find that convictions are deep and
19829 pungent, but short.

19830
19831 8. Where clear and discriminating instructions are
19832 given to convicted sinners, if they do not soon
19833 submit, their convictions will generally leave them.
19834 Convictions in such cases are generally short.
19835 Where sinners are deceived by false views, they
19836 may be kept along for weeks, and perhaps months,
19837 and sometimes for years, in a languishing state, and
19838 at last, perhaps, be crowded into the kingdom and
19839 saved. But where the truth is made perfectly clear
19840 to the sinner's mind, and all his errors are torn
19841 away, if he does not soon submit, his case is
19842 hopeless. Where the truth is brought to bear upon
19843 his mind, and he directly resists the very truth that
19844 must convert him, there is nothing more to be done.

19845 The Spirit will soon leave him, for the very
19846 weapons he uses are resisted. Where instructions
19847 are not clear, and are mixed up with errors, the
19848 Spirit may strive even for years, in great mercy, to
19849 get sinners through the fog of false instruction. But
19850 not so, where their duty is clearly explained to
19851 them, and they are brought right up to the single
19852 point of immediate submission, and have all their
19853 false pretences exposed, and the path of duty made
19854 perfectly plain. Then, if they do not submit, the
19855 Spirit of God forsakes them, and their state is well
19856 nigh hopeless.

19857
19858 If there be sinners in this house, and you see your
19859 duty clearly, TAKE CARE how you delay. If you
19860 do not submit, you may expect the Spirit of God
19861 will forsake you, and you are LOST.

19862
19863 8. A vast deal of the direction given to anxious
19864 sinners amounts to little less than the popish
19865 doctrine of indulgences. The pope used to sell
19866 indulgences to sin, and this led to the reformation
19867 under Luther. Sometimes people would purchase
19868 an indulgence to sin for a certain time, or to
19869 commit some particular sin, or a number of sins.
19870 Now, there is a vast deal in Protestant churches,
19871 which is little less than the same thing. What does
19872 it differ from this, to tell a sinner to wait? The

19873 amount of it is, telling him to continue in sin a
19874 while longer, while he is waiting for God to
19875 convert him. And what is that but an indulgence to
19876 commit sin? Any direction given to sinners that
19877 does not require them immediately to obey God, is
19878 an indulgence to sin. It is in effect, giving them
19879 liberty to continue in sin against God. Such
19880 directions are not only wicked, but ruinous and
19881 cruel. If they do not destroy the soul, as no doubt
19882 they often do, they defer, at all events, the sinner's
19883 enjoyment of God and of Christ, and he stands a
19884 great chance of being lost for ever, while listening
19885 to such instructions. Oh, how dangerous it is, to
19886 give a sinner reason to think he may wait a
19887 moment, before giving his heart to God.

19888
19889 9. So far as I have had opportunity to observe,
19890 those conversions which are most sudden have
19891 commonly turned out to be the best Christians. I
19892 know the reverse of this has often been held and
19893 maintained. But I am satisfied there is no reason for
19894 it, although multitudes, even now, regard it as a
19895 suspicious circumstance, if a man has been
19896 converted very suddenly. But the Bible gives no
19897 warrant for this supposition. There is not a case of
19898 protracted conviction recorded in the whole Bible.
19899 All the conversions recorded there, are sudden
19900 conversions. And I am persuaded there never

19901 would have been such multitudes of tedious
19902 convictions, and often ending in nothing after all, if
19903 it had not been for those theological perversions
19904 which have filled the world with cannot-ism. In
19905 Bible days, they told sinners to repent, and they did
19906 it then. Cannot-ism had not been broached in that
19907 day. It is this speculation, about the inability of
19908 sinners to obey God, that lays the foundation for all
19909 the protracted anguish and distress, and perhaps
19910 ruin, through which so many are led. Where a
19911 sinner is brought to see what he has to do, and he
19912 takes his stand at once, AND DOES IT, he
19913 generally does so afterwards, and you generally
19914 find that such a person will hold out so, and prove a
19915 decided character. You will not find him one of
19916 those that you always have to warp up to duty, like
19917 a ship, against wind and tide. Look at those
19918 professors who always have to be dragged forward
19919 in duty, and you will generally find that they had
19920 not clear and consistent directions when they were
19921 converted, and most likely they will be very much
19922 “afraid of these sudden conversions.”

19923
19924 Afraid of sudden conversions! Some of the best
19925 Christians of my acquaintance were convicted and
19926 converted in the space of a few minutes. In one
19927 quarter of the time that I have been speaking, many
19928 of them were awakened, and came right out on the

19929 Lord's side, and have been shining lights in the
19930 church ever since, and have generally manifested
19931 the same decision of character in religion, that they
19932 did when they first came out and took a stand on
19933 the Lord's side.

19934

19935

19936

19937 LECTURE XIX.

19938

19939 INSTRUCTIONS TO CONVERTS.

19940

19941 Text.—Feed my lambs.—John xxi. 15.

19942

19943 YOU, who read your Bibles, recollect the
19944 connection in which these words are found, and by
19945 whom they were spoken. They were addressed by
19946 the Lord Jesus Christ to Peter, after he had denied
19947 his Lord, and had professed repentance. Probably
19948 one of the designs which Christ had in view, in
19949 suffering Peter to sin so awfully as to deny his
19950 master, was to produce a deeper work of grace in
19951 him, and thus fit him for the peculiar duty to which
19952 he intended to call him, in laying the foundations of
19953 the Christian Church, and watching over the
19954 spiritual interests of the converts. It needed a
19955 peculiar work of grace in his soul, to fit him to lead
19956 others through those scenes of trial and temptation

19957 to which the early Christians, in particular, were
19958 exposed.

19959

19960 It is evident, that, though Peter had special natural
19961 qualifications for such a work, yet he was quite a
19962 superficial saint. He was probably converted before
19963 this, but he was weak, and there was left so much
19964 of his natural roughness and turbulence of temper,
19965 that he was still ready to bristle up on any occasion,
19966 and take offence at everything that crossed him, so
19967 that he was still quite unfit for that particular work
19968 to which he was destined. Christ designed him for
19969 such a peculiar service, that it seems something
19970 was indispensable to fit him for it, and make him
19971 such a saint, that future opposition would not
19972 irritate him, nor difficulties dishearten him, nor
19973 success and honor spoil him, by lifting up his heart
19974 with pride. And, therefore, Christ takes the
19975 effectual method recorded before us, of dealing
19976 with him once for all, to secure a thorough work in
19977 his soul.

19978

19979 He asked him this question, to remind him, in an
19980 affecting manner, at once of his sin and of the love
19981 of Christ, “Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me
19982 more than these?” Strongly implying a doubt
19983 whether he did love him. Peter answers, “Yea,
19984 Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” He said unto

19985 him, “Feed my lambs.” He then repeated the
19986 question, as if he would read his inmost soul,
19987 “Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me?” Peter was
19988 still firm, and promptly answers again, “Yea, Lord,
19989 thou knowest that I love thee.” Jesus still asked him
19990 the question again, the third time, emphatically. He
19991 seemed to urge the point, as if he would search his
19992 inmost thoughts, to see whether Peter would ever
19993 deny him again. Peter was touched, he was grieved,
19994 it is said; he did not fly into a passion—he did not
19995 boast, as he did on a former occasion, “Though I
19996 should die with thee, yet would I not deny thee,”
19997 but he was grieved, he was subdued, he spoke
19998 tenderly, he appealed to the Saviour himself, as if
19999 he would implore him not to doubt his sincerity
20000 any longer, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou
20001 knowest that I love thee.” Christ then gave him his
20002 final charge, “Feed my sheep.”

20003
20004 By the terms sheep and lambs here, the Saviour
20005 undoubtedly designated Christians,—members of
20006 his church; the lambs probably represent young
20007 converts, those that have but little experience and
20008 but little knowledge of religion, and therefore, need
20009 to have special attention and pains taken with them,
20010 to guard from harm, and to train them for future
20011 usefulness. And when our Saviour told Peter to
20012 feed his sheep, he doubtless referred to the

20013 important part which Peter was to perform in
20014 watching over the newly formed churches in
20015 different parts of the world, and in training the
20016 young converts, and leading them along to
20017 usefulness and happiness.

20018
20019 My last lecture was on the subject of giving right
20020 instruction to anxious sinners. And this naturally
20021 brings me along, in this Course of Lectures, to
20022 consider the manner in which young converts
20023 should be treated and the instructions that should
20024 be given to them.

20025

20026 INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUNG CONVERTS.

20027

20028 In speaking on this subject, it is my design,

20029

20030 I. To state several things that ought to be
20031 considered, in regard to the hopes of young
20032 converts.

20033

20034 II. Several things respecting their making a
20035 profession of religion, and joining the church.

20036

20037 III. The importance of having correct instruction
20038 given to young converts.

20039

20040 IV. What should not be taught to young converts.

20041
20042 V. What particular things are specially necessary to
20043 be taught to young converts.
20044
20045 VI. How young converts should be treated by
20046 church members.
20047
20048 I. I am to state several matters in regard to the
20049 hopes of young converts.
20050
20051 1. Nothing should be said to them to create a hope.
20052 Nothing should ordinarily be intimated to persons
20053 under conviction, calculated to make them think
20054 they have experienced religion, till they find it out
20055 themselves. I do not like this term, “experienced
20056 religion,” and I use it only because it is a phrase in
20057 common use. It is an absurdity in itself. What is
20058 religion? Obedience to God. Suppose you should
20059 hear a good citizen say he had experienced
20060 obedience to the government of the country. You
20061 see it is nonsense. Or suppose a child should talk
20062 about experiencing obedience to his father. If he
20063 knew what he was saying, he would say he had
20064 obeyed his father, just as the apostle Paul says to
20065 the Roman believers, “Ye have obeyed from the
20066 heart that form of doctrine which was delivered
20067 you.”
20068

20069 What I mean to say is, that ordinarily, it is best to
20070 let their hope or belief that they are converted
20071 spring up spontaneously in their own minds.
20072 Sometimes it will happen that persons may be
20073 really converted, but owing to some notions which
20074 they have been taught about religion, they do not
20075 realize it. Their views of what religion is, and its
20076 effect upon the mind, are so entirely wide of the
20077 truth, that they do not think that they have it. I will
20078 give you an illustration of this point.

20079
20080 Some years since, I labored in a place where a
20081 revival was in progress, and there was in the place
20082 a young lady from Boston. She had been brought
20083 up a Unitarian, she had considerable education, and
20084 was intelligent on many subjects, but on the subject
20085 of religion she was very ignorant. At length she
20086 was convicted of sin. She became awfully
20087 convinced of her horrible enmity against God. She
20088 had been so educated as to have a sense of
20089 propriety, but her enmity against God became so
20090 great, and broke out so frightfully, that it was
20091 horrible to hear her talk. She used to come to the
20092 anxious meetings, where we conversed with each
20093 one separately. And her feelings of opposition to
20094 God were such that she used to create disturbance.
20095 By the time I came within two or three seats from
20096 her, where she could hear what I said in a low

20097 voice to others, she would begin to make remarks
20098 in reply, so that they could be heard. And she
20099 would say the most bitter things against God, and
20100 against his providence, and his method of dealing
20101 with mankind, as if God was an infinite tyrant. She
20102 would speak of him as the most unjust and cruel
20103 being in the universe. I would try to hush her, and
20104 make her keep still, because she distracted the
20105 attention of others. Sometimes she would stop and
20106 command her temper awhile, and sometimes she
20107 would rise and go out. I have seldom seen a case,
20108 where the enmity of the heart rose so high against
20109 God. One night at the anxious meeting, after she
20110 had been very restless, as I came towards her, she
20111 began as usual to reply, but I hushed her, and told
20112 her I could not converse with her there, but invited
20113 her to my room the next morning, and then I would
20114 talk with her. She promised to come, but, says she,
20115 “God is unjust, he is infinitely unjust. Is he not
20116 almighty? Why then has he never shown me my
20117 enmity before? Why has he let me run on so long?
20118 Why does he let my friends at Boston remain in
20119 this ignorance? They are the enemies of God, as
20120 much as I am, and are going to hell. Why does he
20121 not show them the truth in regard to their
20122 condition?” And in this temper she left the room.
20123

20124 The next morning she came to my room, as she had
20125 promised. I saw as soon as she came in that her
20126 countenance was changed, but I said nothing about
20127 it. “Oh,” said she, “I have changed my mind, as to
20128 what I said last night about God, I do not think he
20129 has done me any wrong, and I think I shall get
20130 religion sometime, for now I love to think about
20131 God. I have been all wrong; the reason why I had
20132 never known my enmity before, was, that I would
20133 not. I used to read the Bible, but I always passed
20134 over the passages that would make me feel as if I
20135 was a lost sinner, and those passages that spoke of
20136 Jesus Christ as God, I passed over without
20137 consideration, and now I see that it was my fault,
20138 not God’s fault, that I did not know any more about
20139 myself; I have changed my mind now.” She had no
20140 idea that this was religion, but she was encouraged
20141 now to expect religion at some future time, because
20142 she loved God so much. I said nothing to make her
20143 imagine that I thought her a Christian, but left her
20144 to find it out. And, for a time, her mind was so
20145 entirely occupied with thinking about God, that she
20146 never seemed to ask whether this is religion or not.
20147
20148 It is a great evil, ordinarily, to encourage persons to
20149 hope they are Christians. Very likely you may
20150 judge prematurely. Or if not, it is better they should
20151 find it out for themselves, suppose they do not see

20152 it at once. They may break down lower than ever,
20153 and then they will come out so clear and decided,
20154 that they will know where they are.

20155

20156 2 When you see persons expressing a hope, and yet
20157 they express doubts too, it is generally because the
20158 work is not thorough. It they are convicted, they
20159 need breaking up. They are still lingering around
20160 the world, or they have not broken off effectually
20161 from their sins, and they need to be pushed back,
20162 rather than urged forward. If you see reason to
20163 doubt, or if you find that they have doubts, most
20164 probably there is some good reason to doubt.

20165 Sometimes persons express a hope in Christ, and
20166 afterwards remember some sin, that needs to be
20167 confessed to men, or some case where they have
20168 slandered, or defrauded, where it is necessary to
20169 make satisfaction, and where either their character,
20170 or their purse, is so deeply implicated that they
20171 hesitate, and refuse to perform their duty. This
20172 grieves the Spirit, brings darkness over their minds
20173 of course, and justly leads them to doubt whether
20174 they are truly converted. If a soul is truly
20175 converted, it will generally be found when there are
20176 doubts, that on some point they are neglecting duty.
20177 They should be searched as with a lighted candle,
20178 and brought up to the performance of duty, and not
20179 suffered to hope until they do it. Ordinarily it is

20180 proper just there to throw in some plain and
20181 searching truth, that will go through them,
20182 something that will wither their hopes like a moth.
20183 Do it while the Spirit of God is dealing with them,
20184 and do it in the right way, and there is no danger of
20185 its doing harm.

20186
20187 To illustrate this: I knew a person, who was a
20188 member of the church, but an abominable
20189 hypocrite, proved to be so by her conduct, and
20190 afterwards fully confessed to be so. In a revival of
20191 religion she was awakened and deeply convicted,
20192 and after a while she got a hope. She came to a
20193 minister to talk with him about her hope, and he
20194 poured in the truth to her mind in such a manner as
20195 to annihilate all her hopes. She then remained
20196 under conviction many days, and at last she broke
20197 out in hope again. The minister knew her
20198 temperament, and knew what she needed, and he
20199 tore away her hope again. And then she broke
20200 down, clear to the ground, so that she could not
20201 stand or go. So deeply did the Spirit of God
20202 PROBE her heart, that, for a time, it took away all
20203 her bodily strength. And then she came out
20204 subdued. Before, she had been one of the proudest
20205 rebels against God's government that ever was, but
20206 now she became humbled, and was one of the most
20207 modest, tender, lovely of Christians. No doubt that

20208 was just the way to deal with her. It was just the
20209 treatment that her case required.

20210

20211 It is often useful to deal with individuals in this
20212 way. Some persons are naturally unamiable in their
20213 temper, and unlovely in their deportment. And it is
20214 particularly important that such persons should be
20215 dealt with most thoroughly whenever they first
20216 begin to express hope in Christ. Unless the work
20217 with them, is, in the first place, uncommonly deep
20218 and thorough, they will be vastly less useful, and
20219 interesting, and happy, than they would have been,
20220 had the probe been thoroughly and skilfully applied
20221 to their heart. If they are encouraged at first,
20222 without being thoroughly dealt with, if they are left
20223 to go right along, and not sufficiently probed and
20224 broken down, these unlovely traits of character will
20225 remain unsubdued, and will be always breaking out
20226 to the great injury, both of their personal peace, and
20227 their general influence and usefulness as Christians.

20228

20229 It is important to take advantage of such characters
20230 while they are just in these peculiar circumstances,
20231 so that they can be moulded into proper form. Do
20232 not spare, though it should be a child, or a brother,
20233 or a husband, or a wife. Let it be a thorough work.
20234 If they express a hope, and you find they bear the
20235 image of Christ, they are Christians. But if that

20236 appears doubtful—if they do not appear to be fully
20237 changed, just tear away their hope, by searching
20238 them with the most discriminating truth, and leave
20239 the Spirit to do the work more deeply. If still the
20240 image is not perfect, do it again—break them down
20241 into a child-like spirit, and then let them hope.
20242 They will then be clear and thorough Christians.
20243 By such a mode of treatment, I have often known
20244 people of the crookedest and hatefulest natural
20245 character, so transformed in a few days, that they
20246 appear like different beings. You would think the
20247 work of a whole life of Christian cultivation had
20248 been done at once. Doubtless this was the intent of
20249 our Saviour’s dealing with Peter. He had been
20250 converted, but became puffed up with spiritual
20251 pride and self-confidence, and then he fell. After
20252 that, Christ broke him down again, by three times
20253 searching him with the inquiry, “Simon, son of
20254 Jona, lovest thou me?” after which, he seems to
20255 have been a stable and devoted saint the rest of his
20256 days.

20257
20258 3. There is no need of young converts having or
20259 expressing doubts as to their conversion. There is
20260 no more need of a person doubting whether he is
20261 now in favor of God’s government, than there is for
20262 a man to doubt whether he is in favor of our
20263 government or another. It is, in fact, on the face of

20264 it, absurd, for a person to talk of doubting on such a
20265 point, if he is intelligent and understands what he is
20266 talking about. It has long been supposed to be a
20267 virtue, and a mark of humility, for a person to
20268 doubt whether he is a Christian, and this notion that
20269 there is virtue in doubting is a device of the devil.
20270 “I say, neighbor, are you in favor of our
20271 government, or do you prefer that of Russia?”
20272 “Why, I have some hopes that I love our own
20273 government, but I have many doubts.” Wonderful!
20274 “Woman, do you love your children?” “Why, sir, I
20275 sometimes have a trembling hope that I love them,
20276 but you know the best have doubts.” “Wife, do you
20277 love your husband?” “I do not know—I sometimes
20278 think I do, but you know the heart is deceitful, and
20279 we ought to be careful and not be too confident.”
20280 Who would have such a wife? “Man do you love
20281 your wife, do you love your family?” “Ah, you
20282 know we are poor creatures, we do not know our
20283 own hearts. I think I do love them, but perhaps I
20284 am deceived.” Ridiculous!
20285
20286 Ordinarily, the very idea of a person’s expressing
20287 doubts, renders his piety truly doubtful. A real
20288 Christian has no need to doubt. And when one is
20289 full of doubts, ordinarily you ought to doubt for
20290 him and help him doubt. Affection to God is as
20291 much a matter of consciousness as any other

20292 affection. A woman knows she loves her child.
20293 How? By consciousness. She is conscious of the
20294 exercise of this affection. And, then, she sees it
20295 carried out into action every day. In the same way a
20296 Christian may know that he loves God, by his
20297 consciousness of this affection, and by seeing that
20298 it influences his daily conduct.

20299
20300 In the case of young converts, truly such, these
20301 doubts generally arise from their having been
20302 wrongly dealt with, and not sufficiently taught, or
20303 not thoroughly humbled. In any case, they should
20304 never be left in such a state, but should be brought,
20305 if possible, to such a thorough change, that they
20306 will doubt no longer. It is inconsistent with the
20307 greatest usefulness, for a Christian to be always
20308 entertaining doubts. It not only makes him gloomy.
20309 but it renders his religion a stumbling block to
20310 sinners. What do sinners think of such religion?
20311 They say, "These converts are always afraid to
20312 think they have got any thing real. They are always
20313 trembling, and doubting whether it is a reality, and
20314 they ought to know whether there is anything in it
20315 or not; for if it is any thing, these people seem to
20316 have it, and I am inclined to think it rather
20317 doubtful. At any rate, I will let it pass for the
20318 present; for I do not believe God will damn me for
20319 not attending to what appears so uncertain." No, a

20320 cheerful, settled hope in Christ, is indispensable to
20321 usefulness, and therefore you should deal so with
20322 young converts, as to lead them to a consistent,
20323 well-grounded, stable hope. Ordinarily this may be
20324 done, if pursued wisely, at the proper time, and that
20325 is at the commencement of their religious life. And
20326 they should not be left till it is done.

20327
20328 I know there are some exceptions; there are cases
20329 where the best instructions will be ineffectual, but
20330 these generally depend on the state of the health,
20331 and the condition of the nervous system.

20332 Sometimes you find a person incapable of
20333 reasoning on a certain topic, and so their errors will
20334 not yield to instruction. But most commonly they
20335 mistake the state of their own hearts, because they
20336 judge under the influence of a physical disease.

20337 Sometimes persons under a nervous depression will
20338 go almost into despair. I will not take time now to
20339 show the connection, but persons who are
20340 acquainted with physiology will easily explain the
20341 matter, and this will make it plain that the only way
20342 to deal with such cases is first to recruit their
20343 health, and get their nervous system in a proper
20344 tone, and thus remove the physical cause of their
20345 gloom and depression, and then they will be able to
20346 receive and apply your instructions to the state of
20347 their minds. But if you cannot remove their gloom

20348 and doubts and fears in this way, you can at least
20349 avoid doing any positive harm, by giving them
20350 wrong instructions. I have known even experienced
20351 Christians to have the error fastened upon them,
20352 thinking it was necessary, or was virtuous, or a
20353 mark of humility to be always in doubt, and Satan
20354 would take advantage of it, and of the state of their
20355 health, to drive them almost into despair. You
20356 ought to guard against this, by avoiding the error in
20357 teaching young converts. Teach them that instead
20358 of there being any virtue in doubting, it is a sin to
20359 have any reason to doubt, and a sin if they doubt
20360 without any reason, and a sin to be gloomy, and
20361 disgust sinners with their despondency. And if you
20362 teach them thoroughly what religion is, and make
20363 them SEE CLEARLY what God wishes to have
20364 them do, and lead them to do it promptly and
20365 decidedly, ordinarily they will not be harassed with
20366 doubts and fears, but will be clear, open-hearted,
20367 cheerful and growing Christians, an honor to the
20368 religion they profess, and a blessing to the church
20369 and the world.

20370
20371 II. I proceed to mention some things worthy of
20372 consideration in regard to their making a profession
20373 of religion, or joining the church.
20374

20375 1. Young converts should, ordinarily, offer
20376 themselves for admission to some church of Christ
20377 immediately. By immediately, I mean that they
20378 should do it the first opportunity they have. They
20379 should not wait. If they set out in religion by
20380 waiting, most likely they will always be waiting
20381 and never do anything to much purpose. If they are
20382 taught to wait under conviction, before they give
20383 themselves up to Christ, or if they are taught to
20384 wait after conversion, before they give themselves
20385 publicly to God, by joining the church, they will
20386 probably go halting and stumbling along through
20387 life. The first thing they should be taught, always
20388 is, NEVER TO WAIT WHERE GOD HAS
20389 POINTED OUT YOUR DUTY. We profess to
20390 have given up the waiting system, let us carry it
20391 through and be consistent.

20392
20393 While I say it is the duty of young converts to offer
20394 themselves to the church immediately, I do not say
20395 that they should, in all cases, be received
20396 immediately. But the church may, and have an
20397 undoubted right to assume the responsibility of
20398 receiving them immediately or not. If the church
20399 are not satisfied in the case, they have the power to
20400 bid candidates wait till they can make inquiries, or
20401 in any other way obtain satisfaction, as to their
20402 character and their sincerity. This is more

20403 necessary in large cities than it is in the country,
20404 because the church is liable to receive so many
20405 applications from persons that are entire strangers,
20406 where it is necessary to make inquiries before
20407 admitting them to communion. But if the church
20408 think it necessary to postpone an applicant, the
20409 responsibility is not his. He has not postponed
20410 obedience to the dying command of Christ, and so
20411 he has not grieved the Spirit away, and so he may
20412 not be essentially injured if he is faithful in other
20413 respects. Whereas, if he had neglected the duty
20414 voluntarily, he would soon get into the dark, and
20415 very likely backslide.

20416
20417 If there is no particular reason for delay, ordinarily
20418 the church ought to receive them when they apply.
20419 If they are sufficiently instructed on the subject of
20420 religion to know what they are doing, and if their
20421 general character is such that they can be trusted as
20422 to their sincerity and honesty in making a
20423 profession, I see no reason why they should delay.
20424 But if there are sufficient reasons, in the view of
20425 the church, for making them wait a reasonable
20426 time, let them do it, on their responsibility to Jesus
20427 Christ. They should, however, remember, what is
20428 the responsibility they assume, and that if they
20429 keep those out of the church who ought to be in it,
20430 they sin, and grieve the Holy Spirit.

20431

20432 It is impossible to lay down particular rules on this
20433 subject, applicable to all cases. There is so great a
20434 variety of reasons which may warrant keeping
20435 persons back, that no general rules can reach them
20436 all. Our practice, in this church, is to propound
20437 persons for a month after they make application,
20438 before they are received to full communion. The
20439 reason of this is, that the Session may have
20440 opportunity to inquire respecting individuals who
20441 offer themselves, as so many of them are strangers.
20442 But in the country, where there are regular
20443 congregations, and all the people have been
20444 instructed from their youth in the doctrines of
20445 religion, and where everybody is perfectly known,
20446 the case is different, and ordinarily I see no reason
20447 why persons of fair character should not be
20448 admitted immediately. If a person has not been a
20449 drunkard, or otherwise of bad character, let him be
20450 admitted at once, as soon as he can give a rational
20451 and satisfactory account of the hope that is in him.

20452

20453 That is evidently the way the apostles did. There is
20454 not the least evidence in the New Testament, that
20455 they ever put off a person that wanted to be
20456 baptized and join the church. I know this does not
20457 satisfy some people, because they think the case is
20458 different. But I do not see it so. They say the

20459 apostles were inspired. That is true; but it does not
20460 follow that they were inspired to read the
20461 characters of men, so as to prevent their making
20462 mistakes in this matter. On the other hand, we
20463 know they were not inspired in this way, for we
20464 know they did make mistakes, just as ministers
20465 may do now, and, therefore, it is not true that their
20466 being inspired men alters the case on this point.
20467 Simon Magus was supposed to be a Christian, and
20468 was baptised and admitted to the communion, and
20469 remained in good standing till he undertook to
20470 purchase the Holy Ghost with money. The apostles
20471 used to admit converts from Heathenism
20472 immediately, and without delay. If they could
20473 receive persons who, perhaps, never heard more
20474 than one Gospel sermon, and who never had a
20475 Bible, nor attended a Sabbath-school or Bible-class
20476 in their lives, surely it is not necessary to wake up
20477 such an outcry and alarm, if a church thinks proper
20478 to receive persons of fair character who have had
20479 the Bible all their lives, and been trained in the
20480 Sabbath-school, and sat under the preaching of the
20481 Gospel, and who, therefore, may be supposed to
20482 understand what they are about, and not to profess
20483 what they do not feel.
20484
20485 I know it may be said that persons who make a
20486 profession of religion now, are not obliged to make

20487 such sacrifices for their religion as the early
20488 believers were, and, consequently, people may be
20489 more ready to play the hypocrite. And, to some
20490 extent, that is true. But then, on the other hand, it
20491 should be remembered, that, with the instructions
20492 which they have on the subject of religion, they are
20493 not so easily led to deceive themselves, as those
20494 who were converted without the previous
20495 advantages of a religious education. They may be
20496 strongly tempted to deceive others, but I insist
20497 upon it, that, with the instructions which they have
20498 received, the converts of these great revivals are
20499 not half so liable to deceive themselves, and take
20500 up with a false hope, as they were in the days of the
20501 Apostles. And on this ground I believe that those
20502 churches who are faithful in dealing with young
20503 converts, and who exhibit habitually the power of
20504 religion, are not likely to receive so many
20505 unconverted persons, as the Apostles did.

20506
20507 It is important that the churches should act wisely
20508 on this point. Great evil has been done by this
20509 practice of keeping persons out of the church a
20510 long time to see if they were Christians. This is
20511 almost as absurd as it would be to throw out a
20512 young child into the street, to see whether it will
20513 live; to say, if it lives and promises to be a healthy
20514 child, we will take care of it, when that is the very

20515 time it wants nursing, and taking care of, at the
20516 moment when the scale is turning, whether it shall
20517 live or die. Is that the way to deal with young
20518 converts? Should the church throw her new-born
20519 children out to the winds, and say, if they live
20520 there, let them be raised; but if they die, they ought
20521 to die. I have not a doubt that thousands of
20522 converts, in consequence of this treatment, have
20523 gone through life, and never have joined any
20524 church, but have lingered along, full of doubts, and
20525 fears, and darkness, and in this way have spent
20526 their days, and gone to the grave without the
20527 comforts or the usefulness which they might have
20528 enjoyed, simply because the church, in her folly,
20529 has suffered them to wait outside of the pale, to see
20530 whether they would grow and thrive, without those
20531 ordinances which Jesus Christ established
20532 particularly for their benefit.

20533

20534 Jesus Christ says to his church, “Here, take these
20535 lambs, and feed them, and shelter them and watch
20536 over them, and protect them:” and what does the
20537 church do? Why, turn them out alone upon the cold
20538 mountains, among the wild beasts, to starve or
20539 perish, to see whether they are alive or not. This
20540 whole system is as unphilosophical as it is
20541 unscriptural. Did Jesus Christ tell his churches to
20542 do so? Did God of Abraham teach any such

20543 doctrine as this, in regard to the children of
20544 Abraham? Never. He never taught us to treat young
20545 converts in such a barbarous manner. It is the very
20546 best way that could be taken to render it doubtful
20547 whether they are converts. The very way to lead
20548 them into doubts and darkness, is to keep them
20549 away from the church, from its fellowship, and its
20550 ordinances.

20551
20552 I have understood there is a church, not very far
20553 from here, who have passed a resolution that no
20554 young converts shall be admitted till they have had
20555 a hope for at least six months. Where did they get
20556 any such rule? Not from the Bible, nor the example
20557 of the early churches.

20558
20559 3. In examining young converts for admission to
20560 the church, their consciences should not be
20561 ensnared by examining them too extensively or
20562 minutely on doctrinal points. From the manner in
20563 which examinations are conducted in some
20564 churches, it would seem as if they expected that
20565 young converts would be all at once acquainted
20566 with the whole system of divinity, and able to
20567 answer every puzzling question in theology. The
20568 effect of it is, that young converts are perplexed
20569 and confused, and give their assent to things they
20570 do not understand, and thus their conscience is

20571 ensnared, and consequently weakened. Why, one
20572 great design of receiving young converts into the
20573 church, is to teach them doctrines, but if they are to
20574 be kept out of the church till they understand the
20575 whole system of doctrines, this end is defeated.
20576 Will you keep them out till one main design of
20577 receiving them is accomplished by other means? It
20578 is absurd. There are certain cardinal doctrines of
20579 Christianity, which are embraced in the experience
20580 of every true convert. And these, young converts
20581 will testify to, on their examination, if they are
20582 questioned in such a way as to draw out their
20583 knowledge, and not in such a way as to puzzle and
20584 confound them. The questions should be such, as
20585 are calculated to draw out from them what they
20586 have learned by experience, and not what they may
20587 have got in theory before or since their conversion.
20588 The object is, not to find out how much they know,
20589 or how good scholars they are in divinity, as you
20590 would examine a school, or a number of young
20591 men striving for a premium. It is to find out
20592 whether they have a change of heart, to learn
20593 whether they have experienced the great truths of
20594 religion by their power in their own souls. You see
20595 therefore how absurd, and injurious too, it must be,
20596 to examine as is sometimes done, like a lawyer at
20597 the bar, cross-examining a suspicious witness. It
20598 should rather be like a faithful physician anxious to

20599 find out his patient's true condition, and therefore
20600 leading his mind, by inquiries and hints, to disclose
20601 the real symptoms of his case.

20602

20603 You will always find, if you put your questions
20604 right, that real converts will see clearly those great
20605 fundamental points, the divine authority of the
20606 scriptures, the necessity of the influences of the
20607 Holy Spirit, the divinity of Christ, the doctrine of
20608 total depravity and regeneration, the necessity of
20609 the atonement, justification by faith, and the justice
20610 of the eternal punishment of the wicked. By a
20611 proper course of inquiries you will find all these
20612 points come out, as a part of their experience, if
20613 you put your questions in such a way that they
20614 understand them.

20615

20616 A church session in this city have, as we are
20617 informed, passed a vote, that no person shall join
20618 that church till he will give his assent to the whole
20619 Presbyterian Confession of Faith, and adopt it as
20620 his "rule of faith and practice and Christian
20621 obedience." That is, they must read the book
20622 through, which is about three times as large as this
20623 hymn-book, and must understand it, and agree to it
20624 all, before they can be admitted to the church,
20625 before they can make a profession of religion, or
20626 obey the command of Christ. By what authority

20627 does a church say that no one shall join their
20628 communion till he understands all the points and
20629 technicalities of this long confession of faith? Is
20630 that their charity, to cram this whole confession of
20631 faith down the throat of a young convert, before
20632 they let him so much as come to the communion?
20633 He says, "I love the Lord Jesus Christ, and wish to
20634 obey his command." "Very well, but do you
20635 understand and adopt the confession of Faith?" He
20636 says, "I do not know, for I never read that, but I
20637 have read the Bible, and I love that, and wish to
20638 follow the directions in it, and to come to the table
20639 of the Lord." "Do you love the confession of faith?
20640 If not, YOU SHALL NOT COME," is the reply of
20641 this charitable session, "you shall not sit down at
20642 the Lord's table, till you have adopted all this
20643 confession of faith." Did Jesus Christ ever
20644 authorise a church session to say this—to tell that
20645 child of God, who stands there with tears, and asks
20646 permission to obey his Lord, and who understands
20647 the grounds of his faith, and can give a satisfactory
20648 reason of his hope, to tell him he cannot join the
20649 church till he understands the confession of faith?
20650 No doubt, Jesus Christ is angry with such a church,
20651 and he will show his displeasure in a way that
20652 admits of no mistake, if they do not repent. Shut
20653 the door against young converts till they swallow

20654 the confession of faith! And will such a church
20655 prosper? Never.

20656

20657 No church on earth has a right to impose its
20658 extended confession of faith on a young convert,
20659 who admits the fundamentals of religion. They may
20660 let the young convert know their own faith on ever
20661 so many points, and they may examine him, if they
20662 think it necessary, as to his belief; but suppose he
20663 has doubts on some points not essential to Christian
20664 experience, as the doctrine of Infant Baptism, or of
20665 Election, or the Perseverance of the Saints, and
20666 suppose he honestly and frankly tells you he has
20667 not made up his mind concerning these points. Has
20668 any minister or church a right to say, he shall not
20669 come to the Lord's table till he has finished all his
20670 researches into these subjects? That he shall not
20671 obey Jesus Christ till he has fully made up his mind
20672 on every such point on which Christians, and
20673 devoted ones too, differ among themselves? I
20674 would sooner cut off my right hand than debar a
20675 convert under such circumstances. I would teach a
20676 young convert as well as I could in the time before
20677 he made his application, and I would examine him
20678 candidly as to his views, and after he was in the
20679 church, I would endeavor to make him grow in
20680 knowledge as he grows in grace. And by just as
20681 much confidence as I have that my own doctrines

20682 are the doctrines of God, I should expect to make
20683 him adopt them, if I could have a fair hearing
20684 before his mind. But I never would bid one, whom
20685 I charitably believed to be a child of God, to stay
20686 away from his Father's table, because he did not
20687 see all I see, or believe all I believe, through the
20688 whole system of divinity. The thing is utterly
20689 irrational, ridiculous and wicked.

20690

20691 4. Sometimes persons who are known to entertain a
20692 hope dare not make a profession of religion for fear
20693 they should be deceived. I would always deal
20694 decidedly with such cases. A hope that will not
20695 warrant a profession of religion is manifestly worse
20696 than no hope, and the sooner it is torn away the
20697 better. Shall a man hope he loves God, and yet not
20698 dare obey Jesus Christ? Preposterous. Such a hope
20699 had better be given up at once.

20700

20701 5. Sometimes persons professing to be converts
20702 will make an excuse for not joining the church, that
20703 they can enjoy religion just as well without it. This
20704 is always suspicious. I should look out for such
20705 characters. It is almost certain they have no
20706 religion. Ordinarily, if a person does not desire to
20707 be associated with the people of God, he is rotten at
20708 the bottom. It is because he wants to keep out of
20709 the responsibilities of a public profession. He has a

20710 feeling within him that he had rather be free, so
20711 that he can by and by go back to the world again if
20712 he likes, without the reproach of instability or
20713 hypocrisy. Enjoy religion just as well without
20714 obeying Jesus Christ! It is false on the face of it. He
20715 overlooks the fact that religion consists in obeying
20716 Jesus Christ.

20717
20718 III. I am to consider the importance of giving right
20719 instruction to young converts.

20720
20721 Ordinarily, their Christian character through life is
20722 moulded and fashioned according to the manner in
20723 which they are dealt with when first converted.
20724 There are many who have been poorly taught at
20725 first, but have been afterwards re-converted, and if
20726 they are then dealt with properly, they may be
20727 made something of. But the proper time to do this
20728 is when they are first brought in, when their minds
20729 are soft and tender, and easily yield to the truth.
20730 Then they may be led with a hair, if they think it is
20731 the truth of God. And whatever notions in religion
20732 they get then they are apt to cleave to for ever
20733 afterwards. It is almost impossible to get away a
20734 man's notions that he got when he was a young
20735 convert. You may reason him down, but he cleaves
20736 to them. How often is it the case where persons
20737 have been taught certain things when first

20738 converted, that if they afterwards get a new
20739 minister, who teaches somewhat differently, they
20740 will rise up against him, as if he was going to
20741 subvert the faith and carry away the church to
20742 error, and throw everything into confusion. Thus
20743 you see that young converts are thrown into the
20744 hands of the church, and it depends on the church
20745 to mould them, and form them into Christians of
20746 the right stamp. Much of their future comfort and
20747 usefulness depends on the manner in which they
20748 are instructed at the outset. The future character of
20749 the church, the progress of revivals, the coming of
20750 the millennium, depend on having right instruction
20751 given, and a right direction of thought and life to
20752 those who are young converts.

20753
20754 IV. I am to mention some things which should not
20755 be taught to young converts.

20756
20757 1. “You will not always feel as you do now.” When
20758 the young convert is rejoicing in his Saviour, and
20759 calculating to live for the glory of God and the
20760 good of mankind, how often is he met with this
20761 reply, “You will not always feel so.” Thus
20762 preparing his mind to expect that he shall
20763 backslide, and not to be much surprised when he
20764 does. This is just the way the devil wants young
20765 converts dealt with, to have old Christians tell

20766 them, your feelings will not last, and that by and by
20767 you will be as cold as we are. It has made my heart
20768 bleed to see it. When the young convert has been
20769 pouring out his warm heart to some old professor,
20770 and expecting to meet the warm burstings of a
20771 kindred spirit responding to his own, what does he
20772 meet with? This cold answer, coming like a
20773 northern blast over his soul, “You will not always
20774 feel so.” SHAME! Just preparing the young
20775 convert to expect that he shall backslide as a matter
20776 of course; so that when he begins to decline, as
20777 under the very influences of this instruction it is
20778 most likely he will, it produces no surprise or alarm
20779 in his mind, but he looks at it just as a thing of
20780 course, doing as every body else does.

20781
20782 I have heard it preached as well as prayed, that
20783 seasons of backsliding are necessary to test the
20784 church. They say, “when it rains, you can find
20785 water anywhere: it is only in seasons of drought
20786 that you can tell where the deep springs are.”
20787 Wonderful logic! And so you would teach that
20788 Christians must get cold and stupid, and backslide
20789 from God, and for what reason? Why forsooth, to
20790 show that they are not hypocrites. Amazing! You
20791 would prove that they are hypocrites in order to
20792 show that they are not.
20793

20794 Such doctrine as this is the very last that should be
20795 taught to young converts. They should be told that
20796 now they have only begun the Christian life, and
20797 that their religion is to consist in going on in it.
20798 They should be taught to go forward all the time,
20799 and grow in grace continually. Do not teach them
20800 to taper off their religion, let it grow smaller and
20801 smaller till it comes to a point. God says, "The path
20802 of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more
20803 and more to the perfect day." Now whose path is
20804 that which grows dimmer and dimmer until the
20805 perfect night? They should be brought to such a
20806 state of mind that the first indications of decay in
20807 spirituality or zeal will alarm them and spur them
20808 up to duty. There is no need that young converts
20809 should backslide as they do. Paul did not backslide.
20810 And I do not doubt that this very doctrine, "You
20811 will not always feel so," is one of the grand devices
20812 of Satan to bring about the result which it predicts.

20813
20814 2. "Learn to walk by faith and not by sight." This is
20815 sometimes said to young converts in reference to
20816 their continuing to exhibit the power of religion,
20817 and is a manifest perversion of scripture. If they
20818 begin to lose their faith and zeal, and to get into
20819 darkness, some old professor will tell them, "Ah,
20820 you cannot expect to have the Saviour always with
20821 you, you have been walking by sight, you must

20822 learn to walk by faith and not by sight.” That is,
20823 you must learn to get as cold as death, and then
20824 hang on to the doctrine of the Saints’ Perseverance,
20825 as your only ground of hope that you shall be
20826 saved. And that is walking by faith. Cease to
20827 persevere, and then hold on to the doctrine of
20828 perseverance. “One of guilt’s blunders, and the
20829 loudest laugh of hell.” And living in the enjoyment
20830 of God’s favor and the comforts of the Holy Ghost,
20831 they call walking by sight! Do you suppose young
20832 converts see the Saviour at the time they believe on
20833 him? When they are so full of the enjoyments of
20834 heaven, do you suppose they see heaven, and so
20835 walk by sight? It is absurd on the face of it. It is not
20836 faith, it is presumption, that makes a backslider
20837 hold on to the doctrine of perseverance, as if that
20838 would save him, without any sensible exercise of
20839 godliness in his soul. Those who attempt to walk
20840 by faith in this way had better take care, or they
20841 will walk into hell with their faith. Faith indeed!
20842 Faith without works is dead. Can dead faith make
20843 the soul live?

20844
20845 3. “Wait till you see whether you can hold out.”
20846 When a young convert feels zealous and warm-
20847 hearted, and wants to lay himself out for God,
20848 some prudent old professor will caution him not to
20849 go too fast. “You had better not be too forward in

20850 religion, till you see whether you can hold out; for
20851 if you take this high ground and then fall, you will
20852 disgrace religion.” That is, in plain English, “Do
20853 not do anything that constitutes religion, till you
20854 see whether you have religion.” Religion consists
20855 in obeying God. Now these wise teachers tell a
20856 young convert, “Do not obey God till you see”—
20857 what?—till you see whether you have obeyed
20858 him—or, till you see whether you have gotten that
20859 substance, that mysterious thing which they
20860 imagine is created and put into a man, like a lump
20861 of new flesh, and called religion. This waiting
20862 system is all alike, and all wrong. There is no
20863 scripture warrant for telling a person to wait, when
20864 the command of God is upon him and the path of
20865 duty before him. Let him go along.

20866
20867 Young converts should be fully taught that this is
20868 the only consistent way to find out whether they
20869 have any religion.—The only evidence they can
20870 have is to find that they are heartily engaged in
20871 doing the will of God. To tell him to wait,
20872 therefore, before he does these things, till he gets
20873 his evidence, is reversing the matter, and is absurd.

20874
20875 4. “Wait till you get strength, before you take up
20876 the cross.” This is applied to various religious
20877 duties. Sometimes it is applied to prayer, just as if

20878 prayer was a cross. But I have known young
20879 converts advised not to attempt to pray in their
20880 families, or not to attempt quite yet to pray in
20881 meetings and social circles. "Wait till you get
20882 strength." Just as if they would get strength without
20883 exercise. Strength comes by exercise. You cannot
20884 get strength by lying still. Let a child lie in the
20885 cradle all his life, and he would never have any
20886 strength, he might grow in size, but he never could
20887 be any thing more than a great baby. This is a law
20888 of nature. There is no substitute for exercise in
20889 producing strength. The body as every one knows,
20890 can be strengthened only by exercise. It is so in the
20891 nature of things. And it is just so with the mind. It
20892 is so with the affections, so with the judgment, so
20893 with conscience. All the powers of the soul are
20894 strengthened by exercise. I need not now enter into
20895 the philosophy of this. Every body knows it is so. If
20896 the mind is not exercised, the brain will not grow,
20897 and the man will become an idiot. If the affections
20898 are not exercised he will become a stoic. To talk to
20899 a convert about neglecting Christian action till he
20900 gets strength, is absurd. If he wants to gain
20901 strength, let him go to work.

20902
20903 5. Young converts should not be made sectarian in
20904 their feelings. They should not be taught to dwell
20905 upon sectarian distinctions, or to be sticklish about

20906 sectarian points. They ought to examine these
20907 points, at a proper time, and in a proper way, and
20908 make up their minds for themselves, according to
20909 their importance. But they should not be taught to
20910 dwell upon them, or to make much of them in the
20911 outset of their religious life. Otherwise there is
20912 great danger that their whole religion will run into
20913 sectarianism. I have seen some most sad and
20914 melancholy exhibitions of the effects of this upon
20915 young converts. And whenever I see professed
20916 converts taking a strong hold of sectarian
20917 peculiarities, no matter of what denomination of
20918 Christians, I always feel in doubt about them.
20919 When I hear them asking, “Do you believe in the
20920 doctrine of election?” or, “Do you believe in
20921 sprinkling?” or, “Do you believe in plunging?” I
20922 feel sad. I never knew such converts to be worth
20923 much. Their sectarian zeal soon sours their
20924 feelings, eats out all the heart of their religion, and
20925 moulds their whole character into sinful sectarian
20926 bigotry. They generally become mighty zealous for
20927 the traditions of the elders, and very little
20928 concerned for the salvation of souls.

20929
20930 V. I proceed to mention some of the things which it
20931 is important should be taught to young converts.
20932

20933 1. One of the first things young converts should be
20934 taught is to distinguish between emotion and
20935 principle in religion. Do you understand me? I am
20936 going to explain what I mean, but I want you to get
20937 hold of the words, and have them fixed in your
20938 mind. What I want is to have you distinguish
20939 between emotion and principle.

20940
20941 By emotion, I mean that state of mind of which we
20942 are conscious, and which we call feeling, an
20943 involuntary state of mind, that arises of course
20944 when we are in certain circumstances or under
20945 certain influences. There may be high-wrought
20946 feelings, or they may subside into tranquillity, or
20947 disappear entirely. But these emotions should be
20948 carefully distinguished from religious principle. By
20949 principle I do not mean any substance or root or
20950 seed or sprout implanted in the soul. But I mean the
20951 voluntary decision of the mind, the firm
20952 determination to act out duty and to obey the will
20953 of God, by which a Christian should always be
20954 governed. When a man is fully determined to obey
20955 God, because it is RIGHT that he should obey God,
20956 I call that principle. Whether he feels any lively
20957 religious emotion at the time or not, he will do his
20958 duty cheerfully, and readily, and heartily, whatever
20959 may be the state of his feelings. This is acting upon
20960 principle, and not from emotion. Many young

20961 converts have mistaken views upon this subject,
20962 and depend almost entirely upon the state of their
20963 feelings to go forward in duty. Some will not lead
20964 in a prayer meeting, unless they feel as if they
20965 could make an eloquent prayer. Multitudes are
20966 influenced almost entirely by their emotions, and
20967 they give way to this, as if they thought themselves
20968 under no obligation to duty unless urged on by
20969 some strong emotion. They will be very zealous in
20970 religion when they feel like it, when their emotions
20971 are warm and lively, but they will not act out
20972 religion consistently, and carry it into all the
20973 concerns of life. They are religious only as they are
20974 impelled by a gush of feeling. But this is not true
20975 religion.

20976
20977 Young converts should be carefully taught, when
20978 duty is before them to do it. However dull their
20979 feelings may be, if duty calls, DO IT. Do not wait
20980 for feeling, but DO IT. Most likely the very
20981 emotions for which you would wait will be called
20982 into exercise when you begin to do your duty. If
20983 the duty is prayer, for instance, and you have not
20984 the feelings you would wish, do not wait for
20985 emotions before you pray, but pray, and open your
20986 mouth wide. And in doing it, you are most likely to
20987 have the emotions for which you were inclined to

20988 wait, and which constitute the conscious happiness
20989 of religion.

20990

20991 2. Young converts should be taught that they have
20992 renounced the ownership of all their possessions,
20993 and of themselves, or if they have not done this
20994 they are not Christians. They should not be left to
20995 think that any thing is their own, their time,
20996 property, influence, faculties, bodies or souls. “Ye
20997 are not your own;” all belongs to God; and when
20998 they submitted to God they made a free surrender
20999 of all to him, to be ruled and disposed of at his
21000 pleasure. They have no right to spend one hour as
21001 if their time was their own. No right to go any
21002 where, or do anything, for themselves, but should
21003 hold all at the disposal of God, and employ all for
21004 the glory of God. If they do not, they ought not to
21005 call themselves Christians, for the very idea of
21006 being a Christian is to renounce self and become
21007 entirely consecrated to God. A man has no more
21008 right to withhold anything from God, than he has to
21009 rob or steal. It is robbery in the highest sense of the
21010 term. It is an infinitely higher crime than it would
21011 be for a clerk in a store to go and take the money of
21012 his employer, and spend it on his own lusts and
21013 pleasures. I mean, that for a man to withhold from
21014 God, is a higher crime against HIM, than a man can
21015 commit against his fellow man, inasmuch as God is

21016 the owner of all things in an infinitely higher sense
21017 than man can be the owner of any thing. If God
21018 calls on them to employ anything they have, their
21019 money, or their time, or to give their children, or to
21020 dedicate themselves, in advancing his kingdom,
21021 and they refuse, because they want to use them in
21022 their own way, or prefer to do something else, it is
21023 vastly more blamable than for a clerk or an agent to
21024 go and embezzle the money that is intrusted to him
21025 by his employer, and spend it for his family, or lay
21026 it out in bank stock or in speculation for himself.

21027
21028 God is, in an infinitely higher sense, the owner of
21029 all, than any employer can be said to be the owner
21030 of what he has. And the church of Christ never will
21031 take high ground, never will be disentangled from
21032 the world, never will be able to go forward without
21033 these continual declensions and backslidings, until
21034 Christians, and the churches generally, take the
21035 ground, and hold to it, that it is just as much a
21036 matter of discipline for a church member
21037 practically to deny his stewardship as to deny the
21038 divinity of Christ, and that covetousness fairly
21039 proved shall just as certainly exclude a man from
21040 communion as adultery.

21041
21042 The church is mighty orthodox in notions, but very
21043 heretical in practice, but the time must come when

21044 the church will be just as vigilant in guarding
21045 orthodoxy in practice as orthodoxy in doctrine, and
21046 just as prompt to turn out heretics in practice as
21047 heretics that corrupt the doctrines of the Gospel. In
21048 fact, it is vastly more important. The only design of
21049 doctrine is to produce practice, and it does not
21050 seem to be understood by the church, that true faith
21051 “works by love and purifies the heart,” that heresy
21052 in practice, is proof conclusive of heresy in
21053 sentiment. The church are very sticklish for correct
21054 doctrine and very careless about correct living.
21055 This is preposterous. Has it come to this, that the
21056 church of Jesus Christ is to be satisfied with correct
21057 notions on some abstract points, and never reduce
21058 her orthodoxy to practice? Let it be so no longer.

21059
21060 It is high time these matters were set right. And the
21061 only way to set them right, is to begin right with
21062 those who are just entering upon religion. Young
21063 converts must be told that they are just as worthy of
21064 damnation, and that the church cannot and will not
21065 hold fellowship with them, if they show a covetous
21066 spirit, and turn a deaf ear when the whole world is
21067 calling for help, as if they were living in adultery,
21068 or in the daily worship of idols.

21069
21070 3. Teach them how to cultivate a tender conscience.
21071 I have often been amazed to find how little

21072 conscience there is, even among those who we
21073 hope are Christians. And here we see the reason of
21074 it. Their consciences were never cultivated. They
21075 never were taught and told how to cultivate a
21076 tender conscience. They have not even a natural
21077 conscience. They have dealt so rudely with their
21078 conscience, and resisted it so often, that it has got
21079 blunted, and does not act. The usefulness of a
21080 Christian, greatly depends on his knowing how to
21081 cultivate his conscience. Young converts should be
21082 taught to keep their conscience just as tender as the
21083 apple of the eye. They should watch their conduct
21084 and their motives, and let their motives be so pure
21085 and their conduct so disinterested as not to offend
21086 or injure or stifle conscience. They should maintain
21087 such a habit of listening to conscience, that it will
21088 be always ready to give forth a stern verdict on all
21089 occasions. It is astonishing to see how much the
21090 conscience may be cultivated by a proper course. If
21091 rightly attended to, it may be made so pure, and so
21092 powerful, that it will always respond exactly to the
21093 word of God. Present any duty to such a Christian,
21094 or any self-denial, or suffering, and only show him
21095 the word of God and he will do it without a word.
21096 In a few months, if properly taught and attended to,
21097 young converts may have a conscience so
21098 delicately poised that the weight of a feather will
21099 turn them. Only bring a “Thus saith the Lord,” and

21100 they will be always ready to do that, be it what it
21101 may.

21102

21103 4. Young converts should be taught to pray without
21104 ceasing. That is, they should always keep up a
21105 watch over their minds, and be all the time in a
21106 prayerful spirit. They should be taught to pray
21107 always, whatever may take place. For the want of
21108 right instruction on this point many young converts
21109 suffer loss and get far away from God. For
21110 instance, sometimes it happens that a young
21111 convert will fall into some sin, and then he feels as
21112 if he could not pray, and instead of overcoming this
21113 he feels so distressed that he waits for the keen
21114 edge of his distress to pass away. Instead of going
21115 right to Jesus Christ in the midst of his agony, and
21116 confessing his sin out of the fulness of his heart and
21117 getting a renewed pardon and peace restored, he
21118 waits till all the keenness of his feelings have
21119 subsided, and then his repentance, if he does
21120 repent, is cold and half-hearted. Let me tell you,
21121 beloved, never to do this, but when your
21122 conscience presses you, go then right to Christ,
21123 confess your sin fully, and pour out your heart to
21124 God.

21125

21126 Sometimes people will neglect to pray because
21127 they are in the dark, and feel no desire to pray. But

21128 that is the very time when they need prayer. That is
21129 the very reason why they ought to pray. You
21130 should go right to God and confess your coldness
21131 and darkness of mind. Tell him just how you feel,
21132 Tell him, “O Lord, I have no desire to pray, but I
21133 know I ought to pray.” And the first you will know,
21134 the Spirit may come, and lead your heart out in
21135 prayer, and all the dark clouds will pass away.

21136

21137 5. Young converts should be faithfully warned
21138 against adopting a false standard in religion. They
21139 should not be left to fall in behind old professors,
21140 and keep them before their minds as a standard of
21141 holy living. They should always look at Christ as
21142 their model. Not aim at being as good Christians as
21143 the old church members, and not think they are
21144 doing pretty well because they are as much awake
21145 as the old members of the church. But they should
21146 aim at being holy, and not rest satisfied till they are
21147 as perfect as God. The church has been greatly
21148 injured for the want of attention to this matter.
21149 Young converts have come forward, and their
21150 hearts were warm and their zeal ardent enough to
21151 aim at a high standard, but they were not directed
21152 properly, and so they soon settle down into the
21153 notion that what is good enough for others is good
21154 enough for them, and therefore they never aim
21155 higher than those who are before them. And in this

21156 way the church instead of rising with every revival,
21157 higher and higher in holiness, is kept nearly
21158 stationary.

21159

21160 6. Young converts should be taught to do all their
21161 duty. They should never make a compromise with
21162 duty, nor think of saying “I will do this as an offset
21163 for neglecting that.” They should never rest
21164 satisfied till they have done their duty of every
21165 kind, in relation to their families, the church,
21166 Sabbath Schools, the impenitent around them, the
21167 disposal of their property, the conversion of the
21168 world. Let them do their duty, as they feel it when
21169 their hearts are warm; and never attempt to pick
21170 and choose among the commandments of God.

21171

21172 7. They should be made to feel that they have no
21173 separate interest. It is time Christians were made
21174 actually to feel that they have no interest whatever,
21175 separate from the interest of Jesus Christ and his
21176 kingdom. They should understand that they are
21177 incorporated into the family of Jesus Christ, as
21178 members in full, so that their whole interest is
21179 identified with his. They are embarked with him,
21180 they have gone on board, and taken them all. And
21181 henceforth they have nothing to do, or nothing to
21182 say, except as it is connected with this interest and
21183 bears on the cause and kingdom of Christ.

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8. They should be taught to maintain singleness of motive. Young converts should not begin to have a double mind, on any subject, or let selfish motives mingle in with good motives in anything they do. But this can never be, so long as Christians are allowed to hold a separate interest of their own, distinct from the interest of Jesus Christ. If they feel that they have a separate interest, it is impossible to keep them from regarding it, and having an eye to it as well as to Christ's interest, in many things that they do. It is only by becoming entirely consecrated to God, and giving up all to his service, that they can ever keep their eye single and their motives pure.

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9. They should set out with a determination to aim at being useful in the highest degree possible. They should not rest satisfied with merely being useful, or remaining in a situation where they can do some good. But if they see an opportunity where they can do more good, they must embrace it, whatever may be the sacrifice to themselves. No matter what it may cost them, no matter what danger or what suffering, no matter what change in their outward circumstances, or habits, or employments it may lead to. If they are satisfied that they will on the whole do more good, they should not even hesitate.

21212 How else can they be like God? How can they
21213 think to bear the image of Jesus Christ, if they are
21214 not prepared to do all the good that is in their
21215 power? When a man is converted he comes into a
21216 new world, and should consider himself as a new
21217 man. If he finds he can do the most good by
21218 remaining in his old employment, let it be so. But if
21219 he can do more good in some other way, he is
21220 bound to change. It is for the want of attention to
21221 this subject, in the outset, that Christians have got
21222 such low ideas on the subject of duty. And that is
21223 the reason why there are so many useless members
21224 in our churches.

21225
21226 10. They must be taught not to aim at comfort but
21227 usefulness in religion. There are a great many
21228 spiritual epicures in the churches, who are all the
21229 while seeking to be happy in religion, while they
21230 take very little pains to be useful. They had much
21231 rather spend their time in singing joyful hymns,
21232 and in pouring out their happy feelings in a gushing
21233 tide of exultation and triumph, than to spend it in
21234 agonizing prayer for sinners, or in going about and
21235 pulling dying men out of the fire. They seem to feel
21236 as if they were born to enjoy themselves. But I do
21237 not think such Christians show such fruits as to
21238 make their example one to be imitated. Such was
21239 not the temper of the apostles. They travailed for

21240 souls, and laboured in weariness and painfulness,
21241 and in deaths oft, to save sinners. Nor is it safe.
21242 Ordinarily, Christians are not qualified to drink
21243 deep at the fountain of joy. In ordinary cases, a
21244 deep agony of prayer for souls is more profitable
21245 than high flights of joy. Let young converts be
21246 taught, plainly, not to calculate upon a life of joy
21247 and triumph. They may be called to go through
21248 fiery trials. Satan may sift them like wheat. But
21249 they must go forward, not calculating so much to
21250 be happy as to be useful, not talking about comfort
21251 but duty, not desiring flights of joy and triumph,
21252 but hungering and thirsting after righteousness, not
21253 studying how to create new flights of rapture, but
21254 how to know the will of God, and do it. They will
21255 be happy enough in heaven. There they may sing
21256 the song of Moses and the Lamb. And they will in
21257 fact enjoy a more solid and rational happiness here,
21258 by thinking nothing about it, but patiently devoting
21259 themselves to do the will of God.

21260
21261 11. They should be taught to have moral courage,
21262 and not to be afraid of going forward in duty. The
21263 Bible insists fully on Christian boldness and
21264 courage in action as a duty. I do not mean that they
21265 should indulge in their bravadoes, like Peter, telling
21266 what they will do, and boasting of their courage.
21267 The boaster is generally a coward at heart. But I

21268 mean moral courage, a humble and fixed decision
21269 of purpose, that will go forward in any duty,
21270 unangered and unawed, with the meekness and
21271 firmness of the Son of God.

21272

21273 12. They should be so instructed as to be sound in
21274 the faith. That is, they should be early made, as far
21275 as possible, complete and correct in regard to their
21276 doctrinal belief. As soon as may be, without
21277 turning their minds off from their practical duties,
21278 in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of
21279 men, they should be taught fully and plainly, all the
21280 leading doctrines of the Bible. Doctrinal
21281 knowledge is indispensable to growth in grace.
21282 Knowledge is the food of the mind. "That the soul
21283 be without knowledge," says the Wise Man, "It is
21284 not good." The mind cannot grow without
21285 knowledge, any more than the body without food.
21286 And therefore it is important that young converts
21287 should be thoroughly indoctrinated, and made to
21288 understand the Bible. By indoctrinating I do not
21289 mean teaching the catechism, but teaching them to
21290 draw knowledge from the fountain head. Create in
21291 their minds such an appetite for knowledge that
21292 they will eat the Bible up, will devour it, will love
21293 it and love it all. All scripture is profitable, that the
21294 man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished
21295 unto all good works.

21296

21297 13. Great pains should be taken to guard young
21298 converts against censoriousness. Young converts,
21299 when they first come out on the Lord's side, and
21300 are all warm and zealous, sometimes find old
21301 professors so cold and dead that they are strongly
21302 tempted to be censorious. This should be corrected
21303 immediately, otherwise the habit will poison their
21304 minds and destroy their religion.

21305

21306 14. They must learn to say, No. This is a very
21307 difficult lesson to many. See that young woman.
21308 Formerly she loved the gay circle, and took delight
21309 in its pleasures. She joined the church, and then
21310 found herself aloof from all her old associates.
21311 They ask her not now to their balls and parties,
21312 because they know she will not join them, and
21313 perhaps they keep entirely away for a time, for fear
21314 she should converse with them about their souls.
21315 But by and by they grow a little bold, and some of
21316 them venture to ask her just to take a ride with a
21317 few friends. She does not like to say, No. They are
21318 her old friends, only a few of them are going, and
21319 surely a ride is so innocent a recreation, that she
21320 accepts the invitation. But now she has begun to
21321 comply, the ice is broken, and they have her again
21322 as one of them. It goes on, and she begins to attend
21323 their social visits—"only a few friends," you know,

21324 till by and by the carpet is taken up for a dance, and
21325 the next thing, perhaps, she is gone to a sleigh ride,
21326 on Saturday night, and comes home after midnight,
21327 and then sleeps all the forenoon on the Sabbath to
21328 make up for it, perhaps communion Sabbath too.
21329 All for the want of learning to say, No.

21330

21331 See that young man. For a time he was always in
21332 his place, in the Sabbath school and in the prayer
21333 meeting. But by and by his old friends begin to
21334 treat him with attention again, and they draw him
21335 along step by step. Every one seems a very small
21336 thing, and it would look like rudeness to deny so
21337 small a thing. He reasons that if he refuses to go
21338 with them in things that are innocent, he will lose
21339 his influence with them. And so he goes on, till
21340 prayer meeting, Bible class, and even Bible and
21341 closet are neglected. Ah, young man, stop there!
21342 Go only a little farther without learning to say, No,
21343 and you are gone. If you do not wish to hang up the
21344 cause of Christ to scorn and contempt, learn to
21345 resist the beginnings of temptation. Otherwise it
21346 will come upon you, by and by, like the letting out
21347 of water.

21348

21349 15. They should be taught what is and what is not
21350 Christian experience. It is necessary, both for their
21351 comfort and their usefulness, that they should

21352 understand this, so that they need not run
21353 themselves into needless distress for the want of
21354 that which is by no means essential to Christian
21355 experience, nor flatter themselves that they have
21356 more religion than they really exercise. But I
21357 cannot dwell on this topic to-night.

21358
21359 16. Teach them not to count anything a sacrifice
21360 which they do for God. Some persons are always
21361 telling about the sacrifices they make in religion. I
21362 have no confidence in such piety. Why keep telling
21363 about their sacrifices, as if everything they did for
21364 God was a sacrifice. If they loved God they would
21365 not talk so. If they considered their own interests
21366 and the interest of Christ identical, they would not
21367 talk of making sacrifices for Christ; it would be like
21368 talking of making sacrifices for themselves.

21369
21370 17. It is of great importance that young converts
21371 should be taught to be strictly honest. I mean more
21372 by this than perhaps you would think. It is a great
21373 thing to be strictly honest. It is being very different
21374 from the world at large, and very different even
21375 from the great body of professors of religion. The
21376 holiest man I ever knew, and one who had been
21377 many years a Christian and a minister, once made
21378 the remark to me, "Brother, it is a great thing to be
21379 strictly honest, upright, straight in everything, so

21380 that God's pure eye can see that the mind is
21381 perfectly upright."

21382

21383 It is of the utmost importance that young converts
21384 should understand what it is to be strictly honest in
21385 everything, so that they can maintain a conscience
21386 void of offence, both towards God and towards
21387 men. Alas, alas! how little conscience there is.
21388 How little of that real honesty, that pure, simple
21389 uprightness, which ought to mark the life of a child
21390 of God. How little do many regard even an express
21391 promise. I heard the other day of a number of
21392 individuals who subscribed to the Anti-Slavery
21393 Society, and not half of them will pay their
21394 subscriptions. The plea is, that they signed when
21395 they were under excitement, and they do not
21396 choose to pay. Just as if their being excited released
21397 them from the obligation to keep their promise.
21398 Why it is just as dishonest as it would be to refuse
21399 payment of a note of hand. They promised, signed
21400 their names, did they, and now will not pay? And
21401 they call that honesty!

21402

21403 I have heard that there are a number of men in the
21404 city who have signed hundreds of dollars for the
21405 Oneida Institute, promising to pay the money when
21406 called on; and when they were called on they
21407 refused to pay the money. And the reason was, they

21408 had all turned abolitionist in the Institute. Very
21409 well. Suppose they have. Does that alter your
21410 promise? Did you sign on the condition that if they
21411 got Abolitionism introduced there you should be
21412 clear? If you did, then you are clear. But if you
21413 gave your promise without any condition, it is just
21414 as dishonest to refuse as if you had given a note of
21415 hand. And yet some of you might be almost angry
21416 if anybody should charge you with refusing to pay
21417 money when you promised it.

21418
21419 Look at this seriously. Who does God say will go
21420 to heaven? Read the 15th Psalm, and see. "He that
21421 sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." What
21422 do you think of that? If a man has promised
21423 anything, except it be to commit sin, let him keep
21424 his promise, if he means to be honest or to go to
21425 heaven. But here these people will make promises,
21426 and because they cannot be prosecuted, will break
21427 them as easily as if they were nothing. They would
21428 not let a note be protested at the bank. Why?
21429 Because they would lose credit, and would be sued.
21430 But the Oneida Institute, and the Anti-Slavery
21431 Society, and other societies, will not sue for the
21432 money, and therefore these people take some
21433 offence at something, and refuse to pay. Is this
21434 honest? Will such honesty as this get them
21435 admitted to heaven? What? Break your promises,

21436 and go up and carry a lie in your hand before God?
21437 If you refuse or neglect to fulfill your promise you
21438 are a liar, and if you persist in this, you shall have
21439 your part in the lake that bums with fire and
21440 brimstone. I would not, for ten thousand worlds,
21441 die with money in my hands, that I had
21442 unrighteously withheld from any other object to
21443 which I had promised it. Such money will “eat like
21444 a canker.”

21445
21446 If you are not able to pay the money, that is a good
21447 excuse. But then say so. But if you refuse to pay
21448 what you have promised, because you have altered
21449 your mind, rely upon it, you are guilty. You cannot
21450 pray till you pay that money. What will you pray?
21451 “O Lord, I promised to give that money, but I
21452 altered my mind, and broke my promise; but still,
21453 O Lord, I pray thee to bless me, and forgive my sin,
21454 although I keep my money, and make me happy in
21455 thy love.” Will such prayers be heard? Never.

21456
21457 But, brethren, I find it impossible to touch upon all
21458 the points I intended to speak upon, and so I will
21459 break off here, and finish this subject another time.

21460
21461
21462
21463

LECTURE XX.

21464

21465 INSTRUCTIONS TO CONVERTS.

21466

21467 Text.—Feed my lambs.—John xxi. 15.

21468

21469 I REMARKED on this text in my last lecture, and
21470 was obliged, for want of time, to omit many of the
21471 points which I wished to present in regard to the

21472

21473 INSTRUCTION OF YOUNG CONVERTS.

21474

21475 To-night I propose to continue the subject by
21476 noticing,

21477

21478 I. Several other points upon which young converts
21479 ought to be instructed.

21480

21481 II. To show the manner in which young converts
21482 should be treated by the church.

21483

21484 III. Mention some of the evils which naturally
21485 result from defective instructions given in that
21486 stage of Christian experience.

21487

21488 I. I shall pursue the subject, taking it up where I left
21489 off, by mentioning some further instructions which
21490 it is important should be given to young converts.

21491

21492 1. It is of great importance that young converts
21493 should early be made to understand what religion
21494 consists in. Perhaps you will be surprised at my
21495 mentioning this. “What! Are they converts, and do
21496 they not know what religion consists in?” I answer,
21497 They would know, if they had had no instruction
21498 but such as is drawn from the Bible. But multitudes
21499 of people have imbibed such notions about
21500 religion, that not only young converts, but a great
21501 part of the church do not know what religion
21502 consists in, so as to have a clear and distinct idea of
21503 it. There are many ministers who do not. I do not
21504 mean to say that they have no religion, for it may
21505 be charitably believed they have; but what I mean
21506 is, that they do not discriminate as to what it
21507 consists in, and cannot give a correct statement of
21508 what does and what does not constitute real
21509 religion. It is important that young converts should
21510 be taught.

21511
21512 Negatively, what religion does not consist in

21513
21514 (1.) Not in doctrinal knowledge. Knowledge is
21515 essential to religion, but it is not religion. The devil
21516 has doctrinal knowledge, but he has no religion. A
21517 man may have doctrinal knowledge to any extent
21518 without a particle of religion. Yet some people
21519 have very strange ideas on this subject, as though

21520 having doctrinal knowledge indicated an increase
21521 of piety. I once heard a remark of this kind: in a
21522 certain instance, where some young converts had
21523 made rapid progress in doctrinal knowledge, a
21524 person who saw it said, “How these young converts
21525 grow in grace.” Here he confounded improvement
21526 in knowledge with improvement in piety. The truth
21527 was, that he had no means of judging of their
21528 growth in grace, and it was no evidence of it
21529 because they were making progress in doctrinal
21530 knowledge.

21531
21532 (2.) They should be taught that religion is not a
21533 substance. It is not any root, or sprout, or seed, or
21534 anything else in the mind, as a part of the mind
21535 itself. Persons often speak of religion as if it was
21536 something that may be covered up in the mind, just
21537 as a spark of fire may be covered up in the ashes,
21538 which does not show itself, and which produces no
21539 effects, but yet lives and is ready to act as soon as it
21540 is uncovered. And in like manner they think they
21541 may have religion, as something remaining in
21542 them, although they do not manifest it by obeying
21543 God. But they should be taught that this is not the
21544 nature of religion. It is no part of the mind itself, or
21545 of the body, nor is it a root, or seed, or spark, that
21546 can exist and yet be hid and produce no effects.
21547

21548 (3.) Teach them that religion does not consist in
21549 raptures, or ecstasies, or high flights of feeling.
21550 There may be a great deal of these where there is
21551 religion. But it ought to be understood that they are
21552 all involuntary emotions, and may exist in full
21553 power where there is no religion. They may be the
21554 mere workings of the imagination, without any
21555 truly religious affection at all. Persons may have
21556 them to such a degree as actually to swoon away
21557 with ecstasy, even on the subject of religion,
21558 without having any religion. I have known one
21559 person almost carried away with rapture, by a mere
21560 view of the natural attributes of God, his power and
21561 wisdom, as displayed in the starry heavens, and yet
21562 the person had no religion. Religion is obedience to
21563 God, the voluntary submission of the soul to the
21564 will of God.

21565
21566 (4.) Neither does religion consist in going to
21567 meeting or reading the Bible, or praying, or any
21568 other of what are commonly called religious duties.
21569 The very phrase, “religious duties,” ought to be
21570 stricken out of the vocabulary of young converts.
21571 They should be made to know that these acts are
21572 not religion. Many become very strict in
21573 performing certain things, which they call religious
21574 duties, and suppose that is being religious; while
21575 they are careless about the ordinary duties of life,

21576 which in fact constitute A LIFE OF PIETY. Prayer
21577 may be an expression and an act of piety, or it may
21578 not be. Going to church or to a prayer meeting,
21579 may be considered either as a means, an act, or an
21580 expression of pious sentiment; but the performance
21581 of these does not constitute a man a Christian, and
21582 there may be great strictness and zeal in these,
21583 without a particle of religion. If young converts are
21584 not taught to discriminate, they may be led to think
21585 there is something peculiar in what are called
21586 religious duties, and to imagine they have a great
21587 deal of religion because they abound in certain
21588 actions that are commonly called religious duties,
21589 although they may at the same time be very
21590 deficient in honesty or faithfulness or punctuality,
21591 or temperance, or any other of what they choose to
21592 call their common duties. They may be very
21593 punctilious in some things, may tithe mint, anise
21594 and cummin, and yet neglect the weightier matters
21595 of the law, justice and the love of God.

21596
21597 (5.) Religion does not consist in desires to do good
21598 actions. Desires that do not result in choice and
21599 action are not virtuous. Nor are such desires
21600 necessarily vicious. They may arise involuntarily in
21601 the mind, in view of certain objects, but while they
21602 produce no voluntary act, they are no more
21603 virtuous or vicious than the beating of the pulse,

21604 except in cases where we have indirectly willed
21605 them into existence, by voluntarily putting
21606 ourselves under circumstances to excite them. The
21607 wickedest man on earth may have strong desires
21608 after holiness. Did you ever think of that? He may
21609 see clearly that holiness is the only and
21610 indispensable means of happiness, he naturally
21611 desires it. It is to be feared, that multitudes are
21612 deceiving themselves with the supposition, that a
21613 desire for holiness, as a means of happiness, is
21614 religion. Many, doubtless, give themselves great
21615 credit for desires that never result in choosing right.
21616 They feel desires to do their duty, but do not
21617 choose to do it, because upon the whole they have
21618 still stronger desires not to do it. In such desires,
21619 there is no virtue. An action or desire to be virtuous
21620 in the sight of God, must be an act of the will.
21621 People often talk most absurdly on this subject, as
21622 though their desires had anything good, while they
21623 remain mere desires. "I think I desire to do so and
21624 so." But do you do it? "Oh, no, but I often feel a
21625 desire to do it." This is practical Atheism.

21626
21627 Whatever desires a person may have, if they are not
21628 carried out into actual choice and action, they are
21629 not virtuous. And no degree of desire is itself
21630 virtuous. If this idea could be made prominent, and
21631 fully riveted in the minds of men, it would

21632 probably annihilate the hopes of half the church,
21633 who are living on their good desires, while doing
21634 nothing for God.

21635
21636 (6.) They should be made to understand that
21637 nothing which is selfish, is religion. Whatever
21638 desires they may have, and whatever choices and
21639 actions they may put forth, if after all the reason of
21640 them is selfish, there is no religion in them. A man
21641 may just as well commit sin in praying, or reading
21642 the Bible, or going to meeting, as in anything else,
21643 if his motive is selfish. Suppose a man prays simply
21644 with a view to promote his own happiness. Is that
21645 religion? What is it, but attempting to make God
21646 his almighty servant? It is nothing else but to
21647 attempt a great speculation, and put the universe,
21648 God and all, under contribution to make him
21649 happy. It is the sublime degree of wickedness. It is
21650 so far from being piety, that it is in fact superlative
21651 wickedness.

21652
21653 (7.) Nothing is acceptable to God, as religion,
21654 unless it be performed heartily, to please God. No
21655 outward action has anything good, or anything that
21656 God approves, unless it is performed from right
21657 motives, and from the heart.
21658

21659 (a) Young converts should be taught fully and
21660 positively that all religion consists in obeying God
21661 from the heart. All religion consists in voluntary
21662 action. All that is holy, all that is lovely in the sight
21663 of God, all that is properly called religion, consists
21664 in voluntary action, in voluntarily obeying the will
21665 of God from the heart.

21666
21667 2. Young converts should be taught that the duty of
21668 self-denial is one of the leading features of the
21669 Gospel. They should understand that they are not
21670 pious at all, any farther than they are willing to take
21671 up the cross daily, and deny themselves, for Christ.
21672 There is but very little self-denial in the church,
21673 and the reason is, that the duty is so much lost sight
21674 of, in giving instruction to young converts. How
21675 seldom are they told that self-denial is the leading
21676 feature of Christianity. In pleading for benevolent
21677 objects, how often will you find, that ministers and
21678 agents do not even ask Christians to deny
21679 themselves for the sake of promoting the object.
21680 They only ask them to give what they can spare as
21681 well as not, or in other words, to offer unto the
21682 Lord that which costs them nothing. What an
21683 abomination! They only ask for the surplus, for
21684 what they do not want, for what they can give just
21685 as well as not. There is no religion in this kind of
21686 giving. A man may give to a benevolent object, a

21687 hundred thousand dollars, and there would be no
21688 religion in it, if he could give it as well as not, and
21689 there was no self-denial in it. Jesus Christ exercised
21690 self-denial to save sinners. So has God the Father
21691 exercised self-denial in giving his Son to die for us,
21692 and in sparing us, and in bearing with our
21693 perverseness. The Holy Ghost exercises self-denial,
21694 in condescending to strive with such unholy beings
21695 to bring them to God. The angels exercise self-
21696 denial, in watching over this world. The apostles
21697 planted the Christian religion among the nations by
21698 the exercise of self-denial. And are we to think of
21699 being religious without any self-denial? Are we to
21700 call ourselves Christians, the followers of Christ,
21701 the temples of the Holy Ghost, and to claim
21702 fellowship with the apostles, when we have never
21703 deprived ourselves of anything that would promote
21704 our personal enjoyment for the sake of promoting
21705 Christ's kingdom? Young converts should be made
21706 to see that unless they are willing to lay themselves
21707 out for God and ready to sacrifice life and
21708 everything else for Christ, they have not the spirit
21709 of Christ, and are none of his.

21710

21711 3. They must be taught what sanctification is.

21712 "What!" you will say, "do not all who are

21713 Christians know what sanctification is?" No, many

21714 do not. Multitudes would be as much at a loss to

21715 tell intelligibly what sanctification is, as they would
21716 be to tell what religion is. If the question were
21717 asked of every professor of religion in this city,
21718 What is sanctification? I doubt if one in ten would
21719 give a right answer. They would blunder just as
21720 they do when they undertake to tell what religion
21721 is, and speak of it as something dormant in the
21722 soul, something that is put in, and lies there,
21723 something that may be practised or not, and still be
21724 in them. So they speak of sanctification as if it were
21725 a sort of washing off of some defilement, or a
21726 purging out of some physical impurity. Or they will
21727 speak of it as if the faculties were steeped in sin,
21728 and sanctification is taking out the stains. This is
21729 the reason why some people will pray for
21730 sanctification, and practise sin, evidently supposing
21731 that sanctification is something that precedes
21732 obedience. They should be taught that
21733 sanctification is not something that precedes
21734 obedience, some change in the nature or the
21735 constitution of the soul. But sanctification is
21736 obedience, and, as a progressive thing, consists in
21737 obeying God more and more perfectly and
21738 perpetually.

21739
21740 4. Young converts should be taught so as to
21741 understand what perseverance is. It is astonishing
21742 how people talk about perseverance. As if the

21743 doctrine of perseverance was “Once in grace,
21744 always in grace,” or “Once converted, sure to go to
21745 heaven.” This is not the idea of perseverance. The
21746 true idea is, that if a man is truly converted, HE
21747 WILL CONTINUE TO OBEY GOD. And as a
21748 consequence, he will surely go to heaven. But if a
21749 person gets the idea, that because he is converted,
21750 therefore he will assuredly go to heaven, that man
21751 will almost assuredly go to hell.

21752

21753 5. Young converts should be taught to be religious
21754 in everything. They should aim to be religious in
21755 every department of life and in all that they do. If
21756 they do not aim at this, they should understand that
21757 they have no religion at all. If they do not intend
21758 and aim to keep all the commandments of God,
21759 what pretence can they make to piety? Whosoever
21760 shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one
21761 point, he is guilty of all. He is justly subject to the
21762 whole penalty. If he disobeys God habitually in one
21763 particular, he does not in fact obey him in any
21764 particular. Obedience to God consists in the state of
21765 the heart. It is being willing to obey God; willing
21766 that God should rule in all things. But if a man
21767 habitually disobeys God, in any one particular, he
21768 is in a state of mind that renders obedience in
21769 anything else impossible. To say that in some
21770 things a man obeys God, out of respect to his

21771 authority, and that in some other things he refuses
21772 obedience, is absurd. The fact is that obedience to
21773 God consists in an obedient state of heart, a
21774 preference of God's authority and commandments
21775 to everything else. If, therefore, an individual
21776 appears to obey in some things, and yet
21777 perseveringly and knowingly disobeys in any one
21778 thing, he is deceived. He offends in one point, and
21779 this proves that he is guilty of all; in other words,
21780 that he does not, from the heart, obey at all. A man
21781 may pray half of the time and have no religion; if
21782 he does not keep the commandments of God, his
21783 very prayer will be hateful to God. "He that turneth
21784 away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer
21785 shall be abomination." Do you hear that? If a man
21786 refuses to obey God's law, if he refuses to comply
21787 with any one duty, he cannot pray, he has no
21788 religion, his very devotions are hateful.

21789
21790 6. Young converts, by proper instructions, are
21791 easily brought to be "temperate in all things." Yet
21792 this is a subject greatly neglected in regard to
21793 young converts, and almost lost sight of in the
21794 churches. There is a vast deal of intemperance in
21795 the churches. I do not mean intemperate drinking,
21796 in particular, but intemperance in eating, and in
21797 living generally. There is in fact but little
21798 conscience about it in the churches. And therefore

21799 the progress of reform in the matter is so slow.
21800 Nothing but an enlightened conscience can carry
21801 forward a permanent reform. Ten years ago, most
21802 ministers used ardent spirit, and kept it in their
21803 houses to treat their friends and their ministering
21804 brethren with. And the great body of the members
21805 in the churches did the same. Now there are but
21806 few of either, who are not actual drunkards, that
21807 will do it. But still there are many that indulge
21808 without scruple in the use of wine. There are some
21809 ministers, and many professors, who will drink
21810 down wine that has as much spirit in it as brandy
21811 and water. This is intemperance. Chewing and
21812 smoking tobacco are mere acts of intemperance. If
21813 they use these mere stimulants when there is no
21814 necessity for it, what is that but intemperance? That
21815 is not being temperate in all things. Until Christians
21816 shall have a conscience on this subject, and be
21817 made to feel that they have no right to be
21818 intemperate in anything, they will make but little
21819 progress in religion. It is well known, or ought to
21820 be, that TEA AND COFFEE have no nutriment in
21821 them. They are mere stimulants. They go through
21822 the system without being digested. The milk and
21823 sugar you put in them are nourishing. And so they
21824 would be just as much so if you mixed them with
21825 rum, and made milk punch. But the tea and the
21826 coffee afford no nourishment. And yet I dare say,

21827 that a majority of the families in this city give more
21828 in a year for their tea and coffee, than they do to
21829 save the world from hell. Probably this is true
21830 respecting entire churches. Even agents of
21831 benevolent societies will dare to go through the
21832 churches soliciting funds for the support of
21833 missionary and other institutions, and yet use tea,
21834 coffee, and in some cases tobacco. Strange! There
21835 is now in this city an agent employed in soliciting
21836 funds, who uses all three of these worse than
21837 useless stimulants. And he is, moreover, a minister
21838 of the Gospel! No doubt many are giving five times
21839 as much for mere intemperance as they give for
21840 every effort to save the world. If the church could
21841 be made to know how much they spend for what
21842 are mere poisons, and nothing else, they would be
21843 amazed. Sit down and talk with many persons, and
21844 they will strenuously maintain that they cannot get
21845 along without these stimulants, these poisons, and
21846 they cannot give them up—no, not to redeem the
21847 world from eternal damnation. And very often they
21848 will absolutely show anger if argued with, just as
21849 soon as the argument begins to pinch their
21850 consciences. Oh, how long shall the church show
21851 her hypocritical face at the Monthly Concert, and
21852 pray God to save the world, while she is actually
21853 throwing away five times as much for sheer
21854 intemperance, as she will give to save the world.

21855 Some of you may think these are little things, and
21856 that it is quite beneath the dignity of the pulpit to
21857 lecture against tea and coffee. But I tell you it is a
21858 great mistake of yours, if you think these are little
21859 things, when they make the church odious in the
21860 sight of God, by exposing her hypocrisy and lust.
21861 Here is an individual who pretends he has given
21862 himself up to serve Jesus Christ, and yet he refuses
21863 to deny himself any darling lust, and then he will
21864 go and pray, "O Lord, save the world; O Lord, thy
21865 kingdom come." I tell you it is hypocrisy. Shall
21866 such prayers be heard? Unless men are willing to
21867 deny themselves, I would not give a groat for the
21868 prayers of as many such professors as would cover
21869 the whole United States.

21870
21871 These things must be taught to young converts. It
21872 must come to this point in the church, that men
21873 shall not be called Christians, unless they will cut
21874 off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye, and
21875 deny themselves for Christ's sake. A little thing?
21876 See it poison the spirit of prayer? See it debase and
21877 sensualize the soul! Is that a trifle beneath the
21878 dignity of the pulpit? When these intemperate
21879 indulgences of one kind and another, cost the
21880 church five times if not fifty times more than all
21881 they do for the salvation of the world.
21882

21883 An estimate has recently been made, showing, that
21884 the United States consume seven millions of
21885 dollars worth of coffee yearly; and who does not
21886 know that a great part of this is consumed by the
21887 church. And yet, grave ministers and members of
21888 Christian churches are not ashamed to be seen
21889 countenancing this enormous waste of money;
21890 while at the same time the poor heathen are sending
21891 upon every wind of heaven their agonizing wail for
21892 help. Heaven calls from above, “go preach the
21893 Gospel to every creature.” Hell groans from
21894 beneath, and ten thousand voices cry out from
21895 heaven, earth and hell, “Do something to save the
21896 world!” Do it now! Oh, NOW, or millions more are
21897 in hell through your neglect. And Oh, tell it not in
21898 Gath, the church, the ministry, will not deny even
21899 their lusts to save a world. Is this Christianity?
21900 What business have you to use Christ’s money for
21901 such a purpose? Are you a steward? Who gave you
21902 this liberty? Look to it, lest it should be found at
21903 last that you have preferred self-gratification to
21904 obedience, and made a “god of your belly.”

21905
21906 The time to teach these things with effect is when
21907 they are young converts. If they are not properly
21908 taught then, if they get a wrong habit, and begin
21909 with an easy, self-indulgent mode of living, it is
21910 rare that they are ever thoroughly reformed. I have

21911 conversed with old professors on these subjects,
21912 and have been astonished at their pertinacious
21913 obstinacy in indulging their lusts. And I am
21914 satisfied that the church never can rise out of this
21915 sloth until young converts are faithfully taught in
21916 the outset of their religious course to be temperate
21917 in all things.

21918
21919 7. They should be taught to have just as much
21920 religion in all their business, as they have in prayer,
21921 or in going to meeting. They should be just as holy,
21922 just as watchful, aim just as singly at the glory of
21923 God, be just as sincere and solemn in all their daily
21924 employments, as when they come to the throne of
21925 grace. If they are not, their Sabbath performances
21926 will be an abomination.

21927
21928 8. They should be taught that it is necessary for
21929 them to be just as holy as they think ministers
21930 ought to be. There has for a long time been an idea
21931 that ministers are bound to be holy and practice
21932 self-denial. And so they are. But it is strange they
21933 should suppose that ministers are bound to be any
21934 more holy than other people. They would be
21935 shocked to see a minister show levity, or running
21936 after the fashions, or getting out of temper, or
21937 living in a fine house, or riding in a coach. Oh, that
21938 is dreadful. It does not look well in a minister.

21939 Indeed! For a minister's wife to wear such a fine
21940 bonnet, or such a silk shawl. Oh, no. But they think
21941 nothing of all this in a layman or a layman's wife.
21942 That is no offence at all. I am not saying that these
21943 things do look well in a minister; I know they do
21944 not. But they look, in God's eyes, just as well in a
21945 minister as they do in a layman. You have no more
21946 right to indulge in vanity and folly and pride than a
21947 minister. Can you go to heaven without being
21948 sanctified? Can you be holy without living for God,
21949 and doing all that you do to his glory? I have heard
21950 professedly good men speak against ministers
21951 having large salaries, and living in an expensive
21952 style, when they themselves were actually spending
21953 a great deal more money for the support of their
21954 families than any ministers. What would be thought
21955 of a minister living in the style in which many
21956 professors of religion and elders of churches are
21957 living in this city? Why everybody would say that
21958 they were hypocrites. But, it is just as much an
21959 evidence of hypocrisy in a layman to spend God's
21960 money to gratify his lusts, or to please the world, or
21961 his family, as it is for a minister to do the same. It
21962 is distressing to hear some of our foremost laymen
21963 talk of its being dishonorable to religion to give
21964 ministers a large salary, and let them live in an
21965 expensive style, when it is a fact that their own
21966 expenses are, for the number of their families and

21967 the company they have, far above that of any
21968 minister. All this arises out of fundamentally wrong
21969 notions imbibed while they were young converts.
21970 Young converts have been taught to expect that
21971 ministers will have all the religion, especially all
21972 the self-denial, and so long as this continues there
21973 can be no hope that the church will ever do much
21974 for the glory of God, or for the conversion of the
21975 world. There is nothing of all this in the Bible.
21976 Where has God said, "You, ministers, love God
21977 with all your heart and soul and mind and
21978 strength," or "You, ministers, do all that you do to
21979 the glory of God?" This is said to all alike, and he
21980 who attempts to excuse himself from any duty or
21981 self-denial, from any watchfulness or sobriety, by
21982 putting it off upon ministers, or who ventures to
21983 adopt a lower scale of holy living for himself than
21984 he thinks is proper for a minister, is in great danger
21985 of proving himself a hypocrite, and paying the
21986 forfeit of his foolishness in hell.
21987
21988 Much depends on the instructions given to young
21989 converts. If they once get into the habit of
21990 supposing that they may indulge in things which
21991 they would condemn in a minister, it is ten to one if
21992 they ever get out of it.
21993

21994 8. They should aim at being perfect. Every young
21995 convert should be taught that if it is not his purpose
21996 to live without sin, he has not yet begun to be
21997 religious. What is religion, but a supreme love to
21998 God and a supreme purpose of heart or disposition
21999 to obey God. If there is not this, there is no religion
22000 at all. It is one thing to profess to be perfect, and
22001 another thing to profess and feel that you ought to
22002 be perfect. It is one thing to say that men ought to
22003 be perfect, and can be if they are so disposed, and
22004 another thing to say that they are perfect. If any are
22005 prepared to say that they are perfect, all I have to
22006 say is, Let them prove it. If they are so, I hope they
22007 will show it by their actions, otherwise we can
22008 never believe they are perfect.

22009
22010 But it is the duty of all to be perfect and to purpose
22011 entire, perpetual and universal obedience to God. It
22012 should be their constant purpose to live wholly to
22013 God, and obey all his commandments. They should
22014 live so that if they should sin it would be an
22015 inconsistency, an exception, an individual case, in
22016 which they act contrary to the fixed and general
22017 purpose and tenor of their lives. They ought not to
22018 sin at all; they are bound to be as holy as God is,
22019 and young converts should be taught to set out in
22020 the right course, or they will never be right.
22021

22022 9. They should be taught to exhibit their light.

22023

22024 If the young convert does not exhibit his light, and
22025 hold it up to the world, it will go out. If he does not
22026 bestir himself, and go forth and try to enlighten
22027 those around him, his light will go out, and his own
22028 soul will soon be in darkness. Sometimes young
22029 converts seem disposed to be still and not do
22030 anything in public till they get a great deal of light,
22031 or a great deal of religion. But this is not the way.
22032 Let the convert use what he has; let him hold up his
22033 little twinkling rush-light boldly and honestly, and
22034 then God will pour in the oil and make him like a
22035 blazing torch. But God will not take the trouble to
22036 keep a light burning that is hid. Why should he?
22037 Where is the use?

22038

22039 This is the reason why so many people enjoy so
22040 little in religion, They do not exert themselves to
22041 honor God. They keep what little they do enjoy so
22042 entirely to themselves, that there is no good reason
22043 why God should bestow blessings and benefits on
22044 them.

22045

22046 10. They should be taught how to win souls to
22047 Christ. Young converts should be taught
22048 particularly what to do for this, and how to do it,
22049 and then taught to live for this end as the great

22050 leading object of life. How strange has been the
22051 course sometimes pursued. These persons have
22052 been converted, and there they are. They get into
22053 the church, and then they are left to go along in
22054 their business just as they did before; they do
22055 nothing and are taught to do nothing for Christ, and
22056 the only change is that they go more regularly to
22057 church on the Sabbath, and let the minister feed
22058 them, as it is called. But suppose he does feed
22059 them, they do not grow strong, for they cannot
22060 digest it, because they take no exercise. They
22061 become spiritual dyspeptics. Now the great object
22062 for which Christians are converted and left in this
22063 world, is to pull sinners out of the fire. If they do
22064 not effect this, they had better be dead. And young
22065 converts should be taught this as soon as they are
22066 born into the kingdom. The first thing they do
22067 should be to go to work for this end, to save
22068 sinners.

22069
22070 II. I am to show how young converts should be
22071 treated by the church.

22072
22073 1. Old professors ought to be able to give young
22074 converts a great deal of instruction, and they ought
22075 to give it. The truth is, however, that the great body
22076 of professors in the churches do not know how to
22077 give good instruction to young converts, and if they

22078 attempt to give them instruction, give only that
22079 which is false. The church ought to be able to teach
22080 her children; and when she receives them, she
22081 ought to be as busy in training them to act, as
22082 mothers are in teaching their little children such
22083 things as they will need to know and do hereafter.
22084 But this is far enough from being the case
22085 generally. And we can never expect to see young
22086 converts habitually taking right hold of duty, and
22087 going straight forward without declension and
22088 backsliding, until young converts shall be
22089 intelligently trained by the church.

22090
22091 2. Young converts should not be kept back behind
22092 the rest of the church. How often is it found that the
22093 old professor will keep the young converts back
22094 behind the rest of the church, and prevent them
22095 from taking any active part in religion, for fear they
22096 should become spiritually proud. Young converts
22097 in such churches are rarely or never called on to
22098 take a part in meetings, or set to any active duty, or
22099 the like, for fear they should become lifted up with
22100 spiritual pride. Thus the church become the modest
22101 keepers of their humility, and teach them to file in
22102 behind the old, stiff, dry, cold members and elders,
22103 for fear that if they are allowed to do anything for
22104 Christ, it will make them proud. Whereas, the very
22105 way to make young converts humble and keep

22106 them so, is to put them to their work and keep them
22107 there. That is the way to keep God with them, and
22108 as long as God is with them, He will take care of
22109 their humility. Keep them constantly engaged in
22110 religion, and then the Spirit of God will dwell with
22111 them, and then they will be kept humble by the
22112 most effectual process. But if young converts are
22113 left to fall in behind the old professors, where they
22114 never can do anything, they will never know what
22115 spirit they are of, and this is the very way to run
22116 them into danger of the worst species of spiritual
22117 pride.

22118

22119 3. They should be watched over by the church, and
22120 warned of their dangers, just as a tender mother
22121 watches over her young children. Young converts
22122 do not know at all the dangers by which they are
22123 surrounded. The devices of the devil, the
22124 temptations of the world, the power of their own
22125 passions and habits, and the thousand forms of
22126 danger they do not know; and if not properly
22127 watched and warned, they will run right into
22128 danger. See that mother watching her little child.
22129 Does she let it put its little hand in the candle, or
22130 allow it to creep where it will fall, because its own
22131 blindness and ignorance does not prevent it from
22132 desiring to do so? The church should watch over
22133 and care for her young children, just as mothers

22134 watch their little children in this great city, for fear
22135 the carts may run over them, or they may stray
22136 away and be lost; or as they watch them while
22137 growing up, for fear they may be drawn into the
22138 whirlpools of iniquity. The church should watch
22139 over all the interests of her young members, know
22140 where they are, and what are their habits,
22141 temptations, dangers, privileges, state of religion in
22142 their hearts, spirit of prayer. Look at that anxious
22143 mother, when she sees paleness gather round the
22144 little brow of her child. "What is the matter with
22145 you, my child? Have you eaten something
22146 improper? Have you taken cold? What ails you?"
22147 Oh, how different it is with the children of the
22148 church, the lambs that the Saviour has committed
22149 to the care of his churches. Alas! Instead of
22150 restraining her children, and taking care of them,
22151 the church lets them go anywhere, and look out for
22152 themselves. What should we say of a mother who
22153 should knowingly let her little child totter along to
22154 the edge of a precipice? Should we not say she was
22155 horribly guilty for doing so, and that if the child
22156 should fall and be killed, its blood would rest on
22157 the mother's head? What then is the guilt of the
22158 church, in knowingly neglecting her young
22159 converts? I have known churches where young
22160 converts were first totally neglected, and regarded
22161 with suspicion and jealousy; nobody went near

22162 them to strengthen or encourage or counsel them;
22163 nothing was done to lead them to usefulness, to
22164 teach them what to do, or how to do it, or open to
22165 them a field of labor. And then—what then? Why,
22166 when they find that young converts cannot stand
22167 everything, and find them growing cold and
22168 backward under their own treatment, they just turn
22169 round and abuse them because they did not hold
22170 out.

22171

22172 4. Be tender in reproofing them. When Christians
22173 find it necessary to reprove young converts, they
22174 should be exceedingly careful of their manner in
22175 doing it. Young converts should be faithfully
22176 watched over by the elder members of the church,
22177 and when they begin to lose ground, or to turn
22178 aside, they should be promptly admonished, and if
22179 necessary, reproofed. But to do it in a wrong
22180 manner is worse than not to do it. It is sometimes
22181 done in a manner that is abrupt, harsh, coarse, and
22182 apparently censorious, more like scolding than like
22183 brotherly admonition. Such a manner, instead of
22184 inspiring confidence, or leading to reformation, is
22185 just calculated to harden the heart of the young
22186 convert, and confirm him in his wrong courses,
22187 while at the same time it closes his mind against
22188 the influence of such censorious guardians. The
22189 heart of a young convert is tender, and easily

22190 grieved, and sometimes a single unkind look will
22191 set them into such a state of mind as will fasten his
22192 errors upon him and make him grow worse and
22193 worse.

22194

22195 You who are parents know how important it is
22196 when you reprove your children, that they should
22197 see that you do it from the best of motives, for their
22198 benefit, because you wish them to be good, and not
22199 because you are angry. Otherwise they will soon
22200 come to regard you as a tyrant, rather than a friend.
22201 just so with young converts. Kindness and
22202 tenderness, even in reproof, will win their
22203 confidence, and attach them to you, and give an
22204 influence to your brotherly instructions and
22205 counsels, so that you can mould them into finished
22206 Christians. Instead of this, if you are severe and
22207 critical in your manner, that is the way to make
22208 them think you wish to lord it over them. Many
22209 persons, under pretence of being faithful, as they
22210 call it, often hurt young converts in such a severe
22211 and overbearing manner as to drive them away, or
22212 perhaps crush them into despondency and apathy.
22213 Young converts have but little experience, and are
22214 easily thrown down. They are just like a little child
22215 when it first begins to walk. You see it tottering
22216 along, and there it stumbles over a straw. You see
22217 the mother take up everything from the floor, when

22218 her little one is going to try to walk. just so with
22219 young converts. The church ought to take up every
22220 stumbling block, and treat them in such a way as to
22221 make them see that if they are reprov'd, Christ is in
22222 it, and then they will receive it as it is meant, and it
22223 will do them good.

22224

22225 5. Kindly point out things that are faulty in the
22226 young convert which he does not see. He is but a
22227 child, and knows but little about religion, and will
22228 of course have a great many things that he needs to
22229 learn, and a great many that he ought to mend.

22230 Whatever there is that is wrong in spirit, or
22231 unlovely in his deportment, or uncultivated in
22232 manner, that will impede his usefulness or impair
22233 his influence as a Christian, ought to be kindly
22234 pointed out and corrected. To do this in the right
22235 way, however, requires great wisdom. Christians
22236 ought to make it a subject of much prayer and
22237 reflection, that they may do it right, so as not to do
22238 more hurt than good. If you rebuke him merely for
22239 the things that he did not see, or did not know to be
22240 improper, it will grieve and disgust him. Such
22241 instruction should be carefully timed; often it is
22242 well to take the opportunity after you have been
22243 praying together, or after a kind conversation of
22244 religious subjects, calculated to make him feel that
22245 you love him, and seek his good, and earnestly

22246 desire to promote his sanctification, his usefulness,
22247 and his happiness. Then a mere hint will often do
22248 the work. Just suggest that “Such a thing in your
22249 prayer” or “your conduct so and so, did not strike
22250 me pleasantly. Had you not better think of it, and
22251 perhaps you will judge better to avoid the same
22252 thing again.” Do it right, and you will help and do
22253 him good. Do it wrong and you will do ten times
22254 more hurt than good. Often young converts will err,
22255 through ignorance; their judgment is unripe, and
22256 they need time to think and make up an enlightened
22257 judgment, on some point that at first appears to
22258 them doubtful. In such cases the church should
22259 treat them with great kindness and forbearance.
22260 Should kindly instruct them and not denounce them
22261 at once for not seeing, at first, what perhaps they
22262 did not themselves understand, for years after they
22263 were converted.

22264
22265 6. Do not speak of the faults of young converts,
22266 behind their backs. This is quite too common
22267 among old professors, and by and by they hear of
22268 it; and what an influence it must have to destroy the
22269 confidence of young converts in their elder
22270 brethren, to grieve their hearts and discourage
22271 them, and perhaps drive them away from the good
22272 influence of the church.
22273

22274 III. I am to mention some of the evils of defective
22275 instruction to young converts.

22276

22277 1. If not fully instructed, they never will be fully
22278 grounded in right principles. If they have right
22279 fundamental principles, this will lead them to adopt
22280 a right course of conduct in all particular cases. In
22281 forming a Christian character, a great deal depends
22282 on establishing those fundamental principles which
22283 are correct on all subjects. If you look at the Bible
22284 you will see there, that God teaches right principles
22285 which we can carry out in detail in right conduct. If
22286 the education of young converts is defective, either
22287 in kind or degree, you will see it in their character
22288 all their lives. This is the philosophical result, just
22289 what might be expected, and must be always so. It
22290 could be shown, if I had time, that almost all the
22291 practical errors that have prevailed in the church,
22292 are the natural results of certain false dogmas,
22293 which have been taught to young converts, and
22294 which they have been made to swallow as the truth
22295 of God, at a time when they were so ignorant as not
22296 to know any better.

22297

22298 2. If the instruction given to young converts is not
22299 correct and full, they will not grow in grace, but
22300 their religion will dwindle away and decay. Their
22301 course instead of being like the path of the just,

22302 growing brighter and brighter to the perfect day,
22303 will grow dimmer and dimmer, and decay and
22304 finally perhaps go out in darkness. Wherever you
22305 see young converts let their religion taper off till it
22306 comes to nothing, you may understand that it is the
22307 proper result of defective instruction. The
22308 philosophical result of teaching young converts the
22309 truth, and the whole truth, is that they grow
22310 stronger and stronger. Truth is the food for the
22311 mind—it is what gives the mind strength. And
22312 where religious character grows feeble, rely upon
22313 it, in nine cases out of ten it is owing to their being
22314 neglected, or falsely instructed, when they were
22315 young converts.

22316
22317 3. They will be left justly in doubt whether they are
22318 Christians. If their early instruction is false, or
22319 defective, there will be so much inconsistency in
22320 their lives, and so little real evidence of real piety,
22321 that they themselves will finally doubt whether
22322 they have any. Probably they will live and die in
22323 doubt. You cannot make a little evidence go a great
22324 way. If they do not see clearly they will not live
22325 consistently, if they do not live consistently they
22326 can have but little evidence, and if they have not
22327 evidence they must doubt, or live in presumption.
22328

22329 4. If young converts are rightly instructed and
22330 trained, it will generally be seen that they will take
22331 the right side on all great subjects that come before
22332 the church. Subjects are continually coming up
22333 before the churches, on which they have to take
22334 ground, and on many of them there is often no little
22335 difficulty to make all the church take right ground.
22336 Take the subject of Tracts, or Missions, or Sabbath
22337 schools, or Temperance, for instance, and what
22338 cavils and objections, and resistance, and
22339 opposition, have been encountered from members
22340 of the church in different places. Go through the
22341 churches, and where you find young converts have
22342 been well taught, you never find them making
22343 difficulty, or raising objections, or putting forth
22344 cavils. I do not hesitate to charge it upon pastors
22345 and older members of churches, that there are so
22346 many who have to be dragged up to the right
22347 ground on all such subjects. If they had grounded
22348 them well in the principles of the Gospel at the
22349 outset, when they were first converted, they would
22350 have seen the application of their principles to all
22351 these things. It is curious to see, and I have had
22352 great opportunity to see, how ready young converts
22353 are to take right ground on any subject that may be
22354 proposed. See what they are willing to do for the
22355 education of ministers, for missions, for moral
22356 reform, for the slaves. If the great body of young

22357 converts from the late revivals had been well
22358 grounded in Gospel principles, you would have
22359 found in them, throughout the church, but one heart
22360 and one soul in regard to every question of duty
22361 that occurs. Let their early education be right, and
22362 you have got a body of Christians that you can
22363 depend on. If it had been general in the church, Oh,
22364 how much more strength there would have been in
22365 all her great movements for the salvation of the
22366 world.

22367
22368 5. If young converts are not well instructed they
22369 will inevitably backslide. If their instruction is
22370 defective, they will probably live in such a way as
22371 to disgrace religion. The truth, kept steadily before
22372 the mind of a young convert, in proper proportions,
22373 has a natural tendency to make him grow up into
22374 the fulness of the stature of a perfect man in Christ
22375 Jesus. If any one point is made too prominent in the
22376 instruction given, there will probably be just that
22377 disproportion in his character. If he is fully
22378 instructed on some points and not in others, you
22379 will find a corresponding defect in his life and
22380 character.

22381
22382 If the instruction of young converts is greatly
22383 defective, they will press on in religion no further
22384 than they are strongly propelled by the emotions of

22385 their first conversion. As soon as that is spent they
22386 will come to a stand, and then they will decline and
22387 backslide. And ever after you will find that they
22388 will go forward only when aroused by some
22389 powerful excitement. These are your periodical
22390 Christians, that are so apt to wake up in a time of
22391 revival, and bluster about as if they had the zeal of
22392 an angel, a few days, and then die away as dead
22393 and cold as a northern winter. Oh how desirable,
22394 how infinitely important it is, that young converts
22395 should be so taught, that their religion will not
22396 depend on impulses and excitements, but that they
22397 will go steadily onward in the Christian course,
22398 advancing from strength to strength, giving forth a
22399 clear and safe and steady light all around.

22400

22401 REMARKS.

22402

22403 1. The church is verily guilty for her past neglect,
22404 in regard to the instruction of young converts.

22405

22406 Instead of bringing up their young converts to be
22407 working Christians, the churches have generally
22408 acted as if they did not know how to employ young
22409 converts, or what use to make of them. They have
22410 acted like a mother, who has a great family of
22411 daughters, and knows nothing how to set them to
22412 work, and so suffers them to grow up idle and

22413 untaught, useless and despised, and to be the easy
22414 prey of every designing villain.
22415
22416 If the church had only done her duty in training up
22417 young converts to work, and labor for Christ, the
22418 world would have been converted long ago. But
22419 instead of this, how many churches even oppose
22420 young converts, when they attempt to set
22421 themselves at work for Christ. Multitudes of old
22422 professors look with suspicion upon every
22423 movement of young converts, and talk against
22424 them, and say, “They are too forward, they ought
22425 not to put themselves forward, but wait for those
22426 who are older.” There is waiting again. Instead of
22427 bidding young converts “God speed,” and cheering
22428 them on when they take hold with warm hearts and
22429 strong hands, very often they hinder them and
22430 perhaps put them down. How often have young
22431 converts been stopped from going forward, and
22432 turned in behind a formal, lazy, inefficient church.
22433 till their spirit is crushed, and their zeal
22434 extinguished, and after a few ineffectual struggles
22435 to throw off the cords, they conclude to sit down
22436 with the rest and WAIT. In many places, young
22437 converts cannot even attempt to hold a prayer
22438 meeting by themselves, but what the pastor, or
22439 some of the deacons, rebukes them for being so
22440 forward, and charge them with spiritual pride. “Oh,

22441 ho! you are young converts, are you? and so you
22442 want to get together and call all the neighbors
22443 together to look at you, because you are young
22444 converts.” You had better turn preachers at once. A
22445 celebrated Doctor of Divinity in New England
22446 boasted at a public table of his success in keeping
22447 all his converts still. He had great difficulty, he
22448 said, for they were in a terrible fever to do
22449 something, to talk, or pray, or get up meetings, but
22450 by the greatest vigilance he had kept it all down,
22451 and now his church was just as quiet as it was
22452 before the revival. Wonderful achievement for a
22453 minister of Jesus Christ! Was that what the blessed
22454 Saviour meant when he told Peter, “Feed my
22455 lambs?”

22456

22457 2. Young converts should be trained to labor, just
22458 as carefully as young recruits in an army are trained
22459 for war.

22460

22461 Suppose a captain in the army should get his
22462 company enlisted, and then take no more pains to
22463 teach and train and discipline them, than is taken
22464 by many pastors to train and lead forward their
22465 young converts. Why, the enemy would laugh at
22466 such an army. Call them soldiers! Why, as to any
22467 effective service, they are in a mere state of
22468 babyhood, they know nothing what to do or how to

22469 do it, and if you bring them up to the CHARGE,
22470 where are they? Such an army would resemble the
22471 church that does not train her young converts.
22472 Instead of being trained to stand shoulder to
22473 shoulder in the onset, they feel no practical
22474 confidence in their leaders, no confidence in their
22475 neighbors, no confidence in themselves, and they
22476 scatter at the first shock of battle. Look at the
22477 church now. Ministers are not agreed as to what
22478 shall be done, and many of them will turn and fight
22479 back against their brethren, quarreling about New
22480 Measures, or the Act and Testimony, or something.
22481 And as to the members, they cannot feel confidence
22482 when they see their leaders so divided. And then if
22483 they attempt to do anything—Alas! alas! what
22484 ignorance, what awkwardness, what discord, what
22485 weakness, what miserable work they make of it.
22486 And so it must continue, until the church shall train
22487 up young converts to be intelligent, single-hearted,
22488 self-denying, working Christians. Here is an
22489 enterprise now going on in this city, which I rejoice
22490 to see. I mean the Tract enterprise—a blessed
22491 work. And the plan is to train up a body of devoted
22492 Christians to do—what?—why to do what all the
22493 church ought to have been trained to do long ago,
22494 to know how to pray, and how to converse with
22495 people about their soul's salvation, and how to

22496 attend anxious meetings, and how to deal with
22497 inquirers, and how to SAVE SOULS.

22498
22499 3. The church has entirely mistaken the manner in
22500 which she is to be sanctified.

22501
22502 The experiment has been carried on long enough,
22503 of trying to sanctify the church, without finding
22504 anything for them to do. But holiness consists in
22505 obeying God. And sanctification, as a process,
22506 means obeying him more and more perfectly. And
22507 the way to promote it in the church, is to give every
22508 one something to do. Look at these great churches,
22509 where they have 500 or 700 members, and get a
22510 minister to feed them from Sabbath to Sabbath,
22511 while there are so many of them together that the
22512 great part have nothing at all to do, are never
22513 trained to make any direct efforts for the salvation
22514 of souls. And in that way they are expecting to be
22515 sanctified and prepared for heaven. They never will
22516 be sanctified so. That is not the way God has
22517 appointed. Jesus Christ has made his people co-
22518 workers with him in saving sinners, for this very
22519 reason, because sanctification consists in doing
22520 those things which are required to promote this
22521 work. This is one reason why he has not employed
22522 angels in the work, or carried it on by direct
22523 revelation of truth to the minds of men. It is

22524 because it is necessary as a means of sanctification,
22525 that the church should sympathize with Christ in
22526 his feelings and his labors for the conversion of
22527 sinners. And in this way the entire church must
22528 move, before the world will be converted. When
22529 the day comes, that the whole church shall realize
22530 that they are here on earth as a body of
22531 missionaries, and shall live and labor accordingly,
22532 then will the day of man's redemption draw nigh.

22533

22534 Christian! if you cannot go abroad to labor why are
22535 you not a missionary in your own family? If you
22536 are too feeble even to leave your room, be a
22537 missionary there in your bed-chamber. How many
22538 unconverted servants have you in your house? Call
22539 in your unconverted servants, and your
22540 unconverted children, and be a missionary to them.
22541 Think of your physician, perhaps, who is laying
22542 himself out to save your body, while he is losing
22543 his own soul, and you receive his kindness and
22544 never make him the greatest return in your power.

22545

22546 It is necessary that the church should take hold of
22547 her young converts at the outset, and set them to
22548 work, and set them to work right. The hope of the
22549 church is in the young converts.

22550

22551 4. We see what a responsibility rests on ministers,
22552 and elders, and all who have opportunity to assist
22553 in training young converts. How distressing is the
22554 picture which often forces itself upon the mind,
22555 where multitudes are converted, and yet so little
22556 pains taken with the young converts, that in a
22557 single year you cannot tell the young converts from
22558 the rest of the church. And then to see the old
22559 church members turn round and complain of these
22560 young converts, and perhaps slander them, when in
22561 truth these old professors themselves are most to
22562 blame. Oh, it is too bad. This reaction that people
22563 talk so much about after a revival, (as if reaction
22564 was the necessary effect of a revival,) would never
22565 come, young converts never would backslide as
22566 they do, if the church were prompt and faithful in
22567 attending to their instruction. If they are truly
22568 converted, they can be made thorough and
22569 energetic Christians. And if they are not such, Jesus
22570 Christ will require it at the hands of the church.

22571

22572

22573

22574 LECTURE XXI.

22575

22576 THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART.

22577

22578 Text.—The backslider in heart shall be filled with
22579 his own ways.—Prov. xiv. 14.

22580

22581 I CANNOT conclude this course of lectures,
22582 without warning converts against backsliding. In
22583 discussing this subject, I will state,

22584

22585 I. What backsliding in heart is not.

22586

22587 II. What backsliding in heart is.

22588

22589 III. What are evidences of backsliding in heart.

22590

22591 IV. Show what are consequences of backsliding in
22592 heart.

22593

22594 V. How to recover from this state.

22595

22596 I. What backsliding in heart is not.

22597

22598 1. It does not consist in the subsidence of highly
22599 excited religious emotions. The subsidence of
22600 religious feeling may be an evidence of a
22601 backslidden heart, but it does not consist in the
22602 cooling off of religious feeling.

22603

22604 II. What backsliding in heart is.

22605

- 22606 1. It consists in taking back that consecration to
22607 God and his service, that constitutes true
22608 conversion.
- 22609
- 22610 2. It is the leaving, by a Christian, of his first love.
22611
- 22612 3. It consists in the Christian's withdrawing himself
22613 from that state of entire and universal devotion to
22614 God, which constitutes true religion, and coming
22615 again under the control of a self-pleasing spirit.
22616
- 22617 4. The text implies that there may be a backslidden
22618 heart, when the form of religion and obedience to
22619 God are maintained. As we know from
22620 consciousness that men perform the same, or
22621 similar acts from widely different, and often from
22622 opposite motives, we are certain that men may keep
22623 up all the outward forms and appearances of
22624 religion, when in fact, they are backslidden in
22625 heart. There is no doubt, that the most intense
22626 selfishness often takes on a religious type, and
22627 there are many considerations, that might lead a
22628 backslider in heart, to keep up the forms, while he
22629 had lost the power of godliness in his soul
22630
- 22631 III. What are evidences of a backslidden heart.
22632

22633 1. Manifest formality in religious exercises. A
22634 stereotyped formal way of saying and doing things,
22635 that is clearly the result of habit, rather than the
22636 outgushing of the religious life. This formality will
22637 be emotionless and cold as an iceberg, and will
22638 evince a total want of earnestness in the
22639 performance of religious duty. In prayer and in
22640 religious exercises the backslider in heart will pray
22641 or praise, or confess, or give thanks with his lips,
22642 so that all can hear him, perhaps, but in such a way
22643 that no one can feel him. Such a formality would
22644 be impossible where there existed a present, living
22645 faith and love, and religious zeal.

22646
22647 2. A want of religious enjoyment is evidence of a
22648 backslidden heart. We always enjoy the saying and
22649 doing of those things that please those whom we
22650 most love; furthermore, when the heart is not
22651 backslidden, communion with God is kept up, and
22652 therefore all religious duties are not only performed
22653 with pleasure, but the communion with God
22654 involved in them, is a source of rich and continual
22655 enjoyment. If we do not enjoy the service of God, it
22656 is because we do not truly serve him. If we love
22657 Him supremely, it is impossible that we should not
22658 enjoy His service at every step. Always remember
22659 then, whenever you lose your religious enjoyment,

22660 or the enjoyment of serving God, you may know
22661 that you are not serving Him right.

22662
22663 3. Religious bondage is another evidence of a
22664 backslidden heart. God has no slaves. He does not
22665 accept the service of bondmen, who serve him
22666 because they must. He accepts none but a love
22667 service. A backslider in heart, finds his religious
22668 duties a burden to him. He has promised to serve
22669 the Lord. He dare not wholly break off from the
22670 form of service, and he tries to be dutiful, while he
22671 has no heart in prayer, in praise, in worship, in
22672 closet duties, or in any of those exercises which are
22673 so spontaneous and delightful, where there is true
22674 love to God. The backslider in heart is often like a
22675 dutiful, but unloving wife. She tries to do her duty
22676 to her husband, but fails utterly because she does
22677 not love him Her painstaking to please her husband
22678 is constrained, not the spontaneous outburst of a
22679 loving heart, and her relation, and her duties,
22680 become the burden of her life. She goes about
22681 complaining of the weight of care that is upon her,
22682 and will not be likely to advise young ladies to
22683 marry. She is committed for life, and must
22684 therefore perform the duties of married life, but oh,
22685 it is such a bondage! Just so with religious
22686 bondage. The professor must perform his duty. He

22687 drags painfully about it, and you will hear him
22688 naturally sing backslider's hymns.

22689

22690

22691 "Reason I hear, her counsels weigh,

22692

22693 And all her words approve;

22694

22695 And yet I find it hard to obey,

22696

22697 And harder still, to love."

22698

22699 4. An ungoverned temper.

22700

22701 While the heart is full of love, the temper will
22702 naturally be chastened and sweet, or at any rate, the
22703 will will keep it under, and not suffer it to break out
22704 in outrageous abuse, or if at any time, it should so
22705 far escape from the control of the will as to break
22706 loose in hateful words, it will soon be brought
22707 under, and by no means suffered to take the control
22708 and manifest itself to the annoyance of others.

22709 Especially will a loving heart confess and break
22710 down, if at any time bad temper gets the control.

22711 Wherever, therefore, there is an irritable,
22712 uncontrolled temper allowed to manifest itself to
22713 those around one, you may know there is a
22714 backslidden heart.

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5. A spirit of uncharitableness is evidence of a backslidden heart. By this, I mean a want of that disposition that puts the best construction upon every one's conduct that can be reasonable—a want of confidence in the good intentions and professions of others. We naturally credit the good professions of those whom we love. We naturally attribute to them right motives, and put the best allowable construction upon their words and deeds. Where there is a want of this there is evidence conclusive of a backslidden or unloving heart.

6. A censorious spirit is conclusive evidence of a backslidden heart. This is a spirit of fault-finding, of impugning the motives of others, when their conduct admits of a charitable construction. It is a disposition to fasten blame upon others, and judge them harshly. It is a spirit of distrust of Christian character and professions. It is a state of mind that reveals itself in harsh judgments, harsh sayings, and the manifestation of uncomfortable feelings toward individuals. This state of mind is entirely incompatible with a loving heart, and wherever a censorious spirit is manifested by a professor of religion, you may know there is a backslidden heart.

22743 7. A want of interest in God's word, is also an
22744 evidence of a backslidden heart. Perhaps nothing
22745 more conclusively proves that a professor has a
22746 backslidden heart, than his losing his interest in the
22747 Bible. While the heart is full of love, no book in the
22748 world is so precious as the Bible. But when the
22749 love is gone, the Bible becomes not only
22750 uninteresting but often repulsive. There is no faith
22751 to accept its promises, but conviction enough left to
22752 dread its threatenings. But in general the backslider
22753 in heart is apathetic as to the Bible. He does not
22754 read it much, and when he does read it, he has not
22755 interest enough to understand it. Its pages become
22756 dark and uninteresting, and therefore it is
22757 neglected.

22758
22759 8. A want of interest in secret prayer is also an
22760 evidence of a backslidden heart.

22761
22762 Young Christian! If you find yourself losing your
22763 interest in the Bible and in secret prayer, stop short,
22764 return to God, and give yourself no rest, till you
22765 enjoy the light of his countenance. If you feel
22766 disinclined to pray, or read your Bible, if when you
22767 pray and read your Bible, you have no heart in it,
22768 no enjoyment, if you are inclined to make your
22769 secret devotions short, or, are easily induced to
22770 neglect them, if your thoughts, affections and

22771 emotions wander, and your closet duties become a
22772 burden, you may know that you are a backslider in
22773 heart, and your first business is, to break down, and
22774 see that your love and zeal are renewed.

22775

22776 9. A want of interest in the conversion of souls and
22777 in efforts to promote revivals of religion. This of
22778 course reveals a backslidden heart. There is nothing
22779 in which a loving heart takes more interest than in
22780 the conversion of souls in revivals of religion, and
22781 in efforts to promote them.

22782

22783 10. A want of interest in published accounts or
22784 narratives of revivals of religion, is also an
22785 evidence of a backslidden heart. While one retains
22786 his interest in the conversion of souls, and in
22787 revivals of religion he will, of course, be interested
22788 in all accounts of revivals of religion anywhere. If
22789 you find yourself, therefore, disinclined to read
22790 such accounts, or find yourself not interested in
22791 them, take it for granted that you are backslidden in
22792 heart

22793

22794 11. The same is true of missions, and missionary
22795 work and operations. If you lose your interest in the
22796 work, and in the conversion of the heathen, and do
22797 not delight to read and hear of the success of

22798 missions, you may know that you are backslidden in
22799 heart.

22800

22801 12. The loss of interest in benevolent enterprises
22802 generally is an evidence of a backslidden heart. I
22803 say the loss of interest, for surely, if you were ever
22804 converted to Christ, you have had an interest in all
22805 benevolent enterprises that came within your
22806 knowledge. Religion consists in disinterested
22807 benevolence. Of course, a converted soul takes the
22808 deepest interest in all benevolent efforts to reform
22809 and save mankind. In good government, in
22810 Christian education, in the cause of temperance, in
22811 the abolition of slavery, in provisions for the poor,
22812 and in short, in every good word and work, just in
22813 proportion as you have lost your interest in these,
22814 you have evidence that you are backslidden in
22815 heart.

22816

22817 13. The loss of interest in truly spiritual
22818 conversation is another evidence of a backslidden
22819 heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth
22820 speaketh." This our Lord Jesus Christ announced as
22821 a law of our nature. No conversation is so sweet to
22822 a truly loving heart, as that which relates to Christ,
22823 and to our living Christian experience. If you find
22824 yourself losing interest in conversing of heart
22825 religion, and of the various and wonderful

22826 experiences of Christians, if you ever knew what
22827 the true love of God is, you have fallen from it, and
22828 are a backslider in heart.

22829

22830 14. A loss of interest in the conversation and
22831 society of highly spiritual people, is an evidence of
22832 a backslidden heart. We take the greatest delight in
22833 the society of those who are most interested in the
22834 things that are most dear to us. Hence, a loving
22835 Christian heart will always seek the society of
22836 those who are most spiritually-minded, and whose
22837 conversation is most evangelical and spiritual. If
22838 you find yourself wanting in this respect, know for
22839 certain that you are backslidden in heart.

22840

22841 15. The loss of interest in the question of
22842 sanctification is an evidence of a backslidden heart.
22843 I say again, the loss of interest, for, if you ever
22844 truly knew the love of God, you must have had a
22845 great interest in the question of entire consecration
22846 to God, or of entire sanctification. If you are a
22847 Christian, you have felt that sin was an
22848 abomination to your soul. You have had
22849 inexpressible longings to be rid of it forever, and
22850 everything that could throw light upon that
22851 question of agonizing importance, was most
22852 intensely interesting to you. If this question has

22853 been dismissed, and you no longer take an interest
22854 in it, it is because you are backslidden in heart.

22855

22856 16. The loss of interest in those newly converted, is
22857 also an evidence of a backslidden heart. The
22858 Psalmist says, “All who fear thee will be glad when
22859 they see me, because I have hoped in thy word.”

22860 This he puts into the mouth of a convert, and who
22861 does not know that this is true? Why, there is joy in
22862 the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner
22863 that repenteth, and is there not joy among the saints
22864 on earth, over those that come to Christ, and are as
22865 babes newly born into the kingdom of heaven.

22866 Show me a professor of religion, who does not
22867 manifest an absorbing interest in converts to Christ,
22868 and I will show you a backslider in heart, and a
22869 hypocrite; he professes religion, and has none.

22870

22871 17. An uncharitable state of mind in regard to
22872 professed converts, is also an evidence of a
22873 backslidden heart. Charity or love, hopeth all
22874 things, and believeth all things, and is very ready to
22875 judge kindly and favorably of those who profess to
22876 be converted to Christ, will naturally watch over
22877 them with interest, pray for them, instruct them,
22878 and have as much confidence in them as it is
22879 reasonable to have. A disposition therefore, to pick

22880 at, criticise, and censure them, is an evidence of a
22881 backslidden heart.

22882

22883 18. The want of the spirit of prayer is evidence of a
22884 backslidden heart. While the love of Christ remains
22885 fresh in the soul, the indwelling spirit of Christ will
22886 reveal himself as the spirit of grace and
22887 supplication. He will beget strong desires in the
22888 soul for the salvation of sinners and the
22889 sanctification of saints. He will often make
22890 intercessions in them, with great longings, strong
22891 crying and tears, and with groanings that cannot be
22892 uttered in words, for those things that are according
22893 to the will of God, or to express it in Scripture
22894 language, according to Paul, Romans viii. 26 and
22895 27, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our
22896 infirmities, for we know not what we should pray
22897 for as we ought, but the Spirit itself, maketh
22898 intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be
22899 uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth
22900 the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh
22901 intercession for the saints, according to the will of
22902 God.” If the spirit of prayer departs, it is a sure
22903 indication of a backslidden heart, for while the first
22904 love of a Christian continues he is sure to be drawn
22905 by the Holy Spirit to wrestle much in prayer.

22906

22907 19. A backslidden heart often reveals itself by the
22908 manner in which people pray. For example,
22909 praying as if one was in a state of self-
22910 condemnation, or very much like a convicted
22911 sinner, is an evidence of a backslidden heart. Such
22912 an one will reveal the fact, that he is not at peace
22913 with God. His confessions and self-accusations will
22914 show to others what perhaps he does not well
22915 understand himself. His manner of praying will
22916 reveal the fact, that he has not communion with
22917 God; that instead of being filled with faith and love,
22918 he is more or less convicted of sin, and conscious
22919 that he is not in a state of acceptance with God. He
22920 will naturally pray more like a convicted sinner,
22921 than like a Christian. It will be seen by his prayer
22922 that he is not in a state of Christian liberty—that he
22923 is having a 7th of Romans experience, instead of
22924 that which is described in the 8th of Romans.

22925

22926 20. A backslidden heart will further reveal itself in
22927 praying almost exclusively for self, and for those
22928 friends that are regarded as parts of self. It is often
22929 very striking and even shocking to attend a
22930 backslider's prayer meeting, and I am very sorry to
22931 say that many prayer meetings of the church are
22932 little else. Their prayers are timid and hesitating,
22933 and reveal the fact that they have little or no faith.
22934 Instead of surrounding the throne of grace and

22935 pouring their hearts out for a blessing on those
22936 around them, they have to be urged up to duty, to
22937 take up their cross. Their hearts do not, will not,
22938 spontaneously gush out to God in prayer. They
22939 have very little concern for others, and when they
22940 do, as they say, take up their cross and do their
22941 duty, and pretend to lead in prayer, it will be
22942 observed that they pray just like a company of
22943 convicted sinners, almost altogether for
22944 themselves. They will pray for that, which, should
22945 they obtain it, would be religion, just as a convicted
22946 sinner would pray for a new heart, and praying for
22947 religion as they do, manifests that they have none,
22948 in their present state of mind. Ask them to pray for
22949 the conversion of sinners, and they will either
22950 wholly forget it, or just mention them in such a
22951 way as will show that they have no heart to pray
22952 for them. I have known professed Christian parents
22953 to get into such a state that they had no heart to
22954 pray for the conversion of their own children, even
22955 when those children were under conviction. They
22956 would keep up family prayer, and attend a weekly
22957 prayer meeting, and never get out of the old rut, of
22958 praying round and round for themselves. A few
22959 years since, I was laboring in a revival in a
22960 Presbyterian church. At the close of the evening
22961 sermon, I found that the daughter of one of the
22962 elders of the church, was in great distress of mind. I

22963 observed her convictions were very deep. We had
22964 been holding a meeting with inquirers in the vestry,
22965 and I had just dismissed the inquirers, when this
22966 young lady, came to me in great agitation, and
22967 begged me to pray for her. The people had mostly
22968 gone, except a few that were waiting in the body of
22969 the church for those friends to be dismissed that
22970 had attended the meeting of inquiry. I called the
22971 father of this young lady into the vestry that he
22972 might see the very anxious state of his daughter's
22973 mind. After a short personal conversation with her
22974 in the presence of her father, I called on him to
22975 pray for her, and said that I would follow him, and
22976 urged her to give her heart to Christ. We all knelt,
22977 and he went through with his prayer, kneeling by
22978 the side of his sobbing daughter, without ever
22979 mentioning her case. His prayer revealed that he
22980 had no more religion than she had, and that he was
22981 very much in her state of mind—under an awful
22982 sense of condemnation. He had kept up the
22983 appearance of religion. As an elder of the church,
22984 he was obliged to keep up appearances. He had
22985 gone round and round upon the tread-mill of his
22986 duties, while his heart was utterly backslidden. It is
22987 often almost nauseating to attend a prayer meeting
22988 of the backslidden in heart. They will go round,
22989 round, one after the other, in reality praying for
22990 their own conversion. They do not so express it,

22991 but that is the real import of the prayer. They could
22992 not render it more evident that they are backsliders
22993 in heart, if they were every one to take his oath of
22994 it.

22995
22996 21. Absence from stated prayer meetings for slight
22997 reasons is a sure indication of a backslidden heart.
22998 No meeting is more interesting to a wakeful
22999 Christian than the prayer meeting, and while they
23000 have any heart to pray, they will not be absent from
23001 prayer meeting unless prevented from attending by
23002 the providence of God. If a call from a friend at the
23003 hour of meeting, can prevent their attendance,
23004 unless the call be made under very peculiar
23005 circumstances, it is strong evidence that they do not
23006 wish to attend, and hence, that they are backsliders
23007 in heart. A call at such a time would not prevent
23008 their attending a wedding, a party, a pic-nic, or an
23009 amusing lecture. The fact is, it is hypocrisy for
23010 them to pretend that they really want to go, while
23011 they can be kept away for slight reasons. If it were
23012 any place where they much desired to go, they
23013 would excuse themselves, and say, "I was just
23014 going to ride," or, "I was just going to such a
23015 place," and away they would go.

23016
23017 22. The same is true of the neglect of family
23018 prayer, for slight reasons.

23019

23020 While the heart is engaged in religion, Christians
23021 will not readily omit family devotions, and
23022 whenever they are ready to find an excuse for the
23023 omission, it is a sure evidence that they are
23024 backslidden in heart.

23025

23026 23. When secret prayer is regarded more as a duty
23027 than as a privilege, it is because the heart is
23028 backslidden. It has always appeared to me almost
23029 ridiculous, to hear Christians speak of prayer as a
23030 duty. It is one of the greatest of earthly privileges.
23031 What should we think of a child's coming to its
23032 parent for its dinner, not because it was hungry, but
23033 as a duty. How would it strike us to hear a beggar
23034 speak of the duty of asking alms of us. It is an
23035 infinite privilege to be allowed to come to God, and
23036 ask for the supply of all our wants. But to pray
23037 because we must, rather than because we may,
23038 seems unnatural. To ask for what we want, and
23039 because we want it, and because God has
23040 encouraged us to ask, and has promised to answer
23041 our request, is natural and reasonable. But to pray
23042 as a duty and as if we were obliging God by our
23043 prayer, is quite ridiculous, and is a certain
23044 indication of a backslidden heart.

23045

23046 24. Pleading for worldly amusements, is also an
23047 indication of a backslidden heart. The most grateful
23048 amusements possible, to a truly spiritual mind, are
23049 those engagements that bring the soul into the most
23050 direct communion with God. While the heart is full
23051 of love and faith, an hour, or an evening spent
23052 alone, in communion with God, is more delightful
23053 than all the amusements which the world can offer.
23054 A loving heart is jealous of everything that will
23055 break up or interfere with its communion with God.
23056 For mere worldly amusements it has no relish.
23057 When the soul does not find more delight in God
23058 than in all worldly things, the heart is sadly
23059 backslidden.

23060
23061 25. Spiritual blindness is another evidence of a
23062 backslidden heart. While the eye is single the
23063 whole body will be full of spiritual light, but if the
23064 eye be evil, (which is a backslidden heart) the
23065 whole body will be full of darkness.

23066
23067 Spiritual blindness reveals itself in a want of
23068 interest in God's word, and in religious truth
23069 generally. It will also manifest a want of spiritual
23070 discrimination, and will be easily imposed upon by
23071 the insinuations of Satan. A backslidden heart will
23072 lead to the adoption of lax principles of morality. It
23073 does not discern the spirituality of God's law, and

23074 of His requirements generally. When this spiritual
23075 blindness is manifest it is a sure indication that the
23076 heart is backslidden.

23077

23078 26. Religious apathy, with worldly wakefulness
23079 and sensibility, is a sure indication of a backslidden
23080 heart. We sometimes see persons who feel deeply
23081 and quickly on worldly subjects, but who cannot be
23082 made to feel deeply on religious subjects. This
23083 clearly indicates a backslidden state of mind.

23084

23085 27. A self-indulgent spirit is a sure indication of a
23086 backslidden heart. By self-indulgence, I mean a
23087 disposition to gratify the appetites, passions and
23088 propensities, “to fulfill the desires of the flesh and
23089 of the mind.”

23090

23091 This, in the Bible, is represented as a state of
23092 spiritual death. I am satisfied that the most common
23093 occasion of backsliding in heart, is to be found in
23094 the clamor for indulgence of the various appetites
23095 and propensities. The appetite for food is
23096 frequently, and perhaps more frequently than any
23097 other, the occasion of backsliding. Few Christians,
23098 I fear, apprehend any danger in this direction.
23099 God’s injunction is, “Whether ye eat or drink, or
23100 whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”
23101 Christians forget this, and eat and drink to please

23102 themselves—consult their appetites, instead of the
23103 laws of life and health. More persons are ensnared
23104 by their tables than the church is aware of. The
23105 table is a snare of death to multitudes that no man
23106 can number. A great many people who avoid
23107 alcoholic drinks altogether, will indulge in tea and
23108 coffee, and even tobacco, and in food, both in
23109 quantity and quality that violates every law of
23110 health. They seem to have no other law, than that
23111 of appetite, and this they so deprave by abuse that,
23112 to indulge it, is to ruin body and soul together.
23113 Show me a gluttonous professor, and I will show
23114 you a backslider.

23115
23116 28. A seared conscience is also an evidence of a
23117 backslidden heart. While the soul is wakeful and
23118 loving, the conscience is as tender as the apple of
23119 the eye. But when the heart is backslidden, the
23120 conscience is silent and seared, on many subjects.
23121 Such an one will tell you that he is not violating his
23122 conscience, in eating or drinking, or in self-
23123 indulgence of any kind. You will find a backslider
23124 has but little conscience. The same will be true in
23125 regard to sins of omission very generally.
23126 Multitudes of duties may be neglected and a seared
23127 conscience will remain silent. Where conscience is
23128 not awake, the heart is surely backslidden.
23129

23130 29. Loose moral principles are a sure indication of
23131 a backslidden heart, A backslider in heart, will
23132 write letters on the Sabbath, engage in secular
23133 reading, and in much worldly conversation. In
23134 business, such an one will take little advantages,
23135 and play off business tricks, conform to the habits
23136 of worldly business men, in the transaction of
23137 business, will be guilty of deception and
23138 misrepresentation in making bargains, will demand
23139 exorbitant interest, and take advantage of the
23140 necessities of his fellow men.

23141
23142 30. Prevalence of the fear of man, is an evidence of
23143 a backslidden heart. While the heart is full of the
23144 love of God, God is feared, and not man. A desire
23145 for the applause of men is kept down, and it is
23146 enough for such an one to please God, whether
23147 men are pleased or displeased. But when the love
23148 of God is abated, “the fear of man, that bringeth a
23149 snare,” gets possession of man. To please man
23150 rather than God, is then his aim. In such a state he
23151 will sooner offend God than man.

23152
23153 31. A sticklishness about forms, ceremonies, and
23154 non-essentials, is evidence of a backslidden heart.
23155 A loving heart, is particular only about the
23156 substance and power of religion, and will not
23157 stickle about its forms.

23158

23159 32. A captiousness about measures in promoting
23160 revivals of religion, is a sure evidence of a
23161 backslidden heart. Where the heart is fully set upon
23162 the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification of
23163 believers, it will naturally approach the subject in
23164 the most direct manner, and by means in the
23165 highest degree calculated to accomplish the end. It
23166 will not object to, and stumble at, measures that are
23167 evidently blessed of God, but will exert its utmost
23168 sagacity in devising the most suitable means to
23169 accomplish the great end on which the heart is set.

23170

23171 IV. Show what are consequences of backsliding in
23172 heart. The text says, that the backslider in heart
23173 shall be filled with his own ways.

23174

23175 1. He shall be filled with his own works. But these
23176 are dead works, they are not works of faith and
23177 love, which are acceptable to God, but are the filthy
23178 rags of his own righteousness. If they are
23179 performed as religious services, they are but
23180 loathsome hypocrisy, and an abomination to God,
23181 there is no heart in them, and to such a one, God
23182 says, "Who hath required this at our hands?" "Ye
23183 are they that justify yourselves before men, but
23184 God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly
23185 esteemed among men, is an abomination in the

23186 sight of God.” “I know you, that you have not the
23187 love of God in you.”

23188

23189 2. He shall be filled with his own feelings. Instead
23190 of that sweet peace and rest, and joy in the Holy
23191 Ghost, that he once experienced, he will find
23192 himself in a state of unrest, dissatisfied with
23193 himself and everybody else, his feelings often
23194 painful, humiliating, and as unpleasant and
23195 unlovely, as can be well conceived. It is often very
23196 trying to live with a backslider. They are often
23197 peevish, censorious, and irritating, in all their ways.
23198 They have forsaken God, and in their feelings is
23199 more of hell than heaven.

23200

23201 3. They will be filled with their own prejudices.
23202 Their willingness to know and do the truth has
23203 gone. They will very naturally commit themselves
23204 against any truth that bears hard upon their self-
23205 indulgent spirit. They will endeavor to justify
23206 themselves, will neither read nor hear that which
23207 will rebuke their backslidden state, and they will
23208 become deeply prejudiced against everyone that
23209 shall cross their path. If anyone reproves them, they
23210 account him as an enemy. They hedge themselves
23211 in, and shut their eyes against the light, stand on the
23212 defensive, and criticise everything that would
23213 search them out.

23214

23215

4. A backslider in heart will be filled with his own

23216

enmities. Such an one will almost surely lay up

23217

things against those with whom he has any

23218

business or other relations. He will chafe in almost

23219

every relation of life, will allow him. self to be

23220

vexed and angry, and get into such relations with

23221

some, and perhaps many persons, that he cannot

23222

pray for them honestly, and can hardly treat them

23223

with common civility. This is an almost certain

23224

result of a backslidden heart.

23225

23226

5. The backslider in heart will be fall of his own

23227

mistakes. He is not walking with God. He has

23228

fallen out of the Divine order. He is not led by the

23229

Spirit, but is walking in spiritual darkness. In this

23230

state he is sure to fall into many and grievous

23231

mistakes, and may get entangled in such a way as

23232

to mar his happiness, and, perhaps, destroy his

23233

usefulness for life. Mistakes in business, mistakes

23234

in forming new relations in life, mistakes in using

23235

his time, his tongue, his money, his influence—all

23236

will go wrong with him as long as he remains in a

23237

backslidden state.

23238

23239

6. The backslider in heart will be filled with his

23240

own lustings. His appetites and passions, which

23241

had been kept under, have now resumed their

23242 control, and having been so long suppressed, they
23243 will seem to avenge themselves by becoming more
23244 clamorous and despotic than ever. The animal
23245 appetites and passions will burst forth, to the
23246 astonishment of the backslider, and ten to one, if he
23247 does not find himself more under their influence,
23248 and more enslaved by them than ever before.

23249
23250 7. The backslider in heart will he filled with his
23251 own words. While in that state, he will not, and
23252 cannot, control his tongue. It will prove itself to be
23253 an unruly member, full of deadly poison, will set
23254 on fire the course of nature, and is itself set on fire
23255 of hell. By his words he will involve himself in
23256 many difficulties and perplexities, from which he
23257 can never extricate himself, until he comes back to
23258 God.

23259
23260 8. He will be full of his own trials. Instead of
23261 keeping out of temptation, he will run right into
23262 temptation. He will bring upon himself multitudes
23263 of trials that he never would have had, had he not
23264 departed from God. He will complain of his trials,
23265 and yet constantly multiply them. A backslider
23266 feels his trials keenly, and, while he complains of
23267 being so tried by everything around him, he is
23268 constantly aggravating them, and being the author

23269 of them, he seems industrious to bring them upon
23270 himself like an avalanche.

23271

23272 9. The backslider in heart shall be full of his own
23273 follies. Having rejected the Divine guidance, he
23274 will evidently fall into the depths of his own
23275 foolishness. He will inevitably say and do
23276 multitudes of foolish and ridiculous things. Being a
23277 professor of religion, these things will be all the
23278 more noticed, and of course bring him all the more
23279 into ridicule and contempt. A backslider is, indeed,
23280 the greatest fool in the world. Having experimental
23281 knowledge of the true way of life, he has the
23282 infinite folly to abandon it. Knowing the fountain
23283 of living water, he has forsaken it, and hewed out
23284 to himself cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold
23285 no water. Having been guilty of this infinite folly,
23286 the whole course of his backslidden life must be
23287 that of a fool, in the Bible sense of the term.

23288

23289 10. The backslider in heart will be fall of his own
23290 troubles. God is against him, and he is against
23291 himself. He is not at peace with God, with himself,
23292 with the church, or with the world. He has no
23293 inward rest. Conscience condemns him. God
23294 condemns him. All that know his state condemn
23295 him. “There is no peace to the wicked, saith my

23296 God.” There is no position in time or space in
23297 which he can be at rest.

23298

23299 11. The backslider in heart will be full of his own
23300 cares. He has turned back to selfishness. He counts
23301 himself and his possessions as his own. He has
23302 everything to care for. He will not hold himself and
23303 his possessions as belonging to God, and lay aside
23304 the responsibility of taking care of himself and all
23305 that he possesses. He does not, will not, cast his
23306 care upon the Lord, but undertakes to manage
23307 everything for himself, and in his own wisdom, and
23308 for his own ends. Consequently, his cares will be
23309 multiplied, and come upon him like a deluge.

23310

23311 12. The backslider in heart will be full of his own
23312 perplexities. Having forsaken God, having fallen
23313 out of his order, and into the darkness of his own
23314 folly, he will be filled with perplexities and doubts
23315 in regard to what course he shall pursue to
23316 accomplish his selfish ends. He is not walking with,
23317 but contrary to God. Hence, the providence of God
23318 will constantly cross his path, and baffle all his
23319 schemes. God will frown darkness upon his path,
23320 and take pains to confound his projects, and blow
23321 his schemes to the winds.

23322

23323 13. The backslider in heart will be filled with his
23324 own anxieties. He will be anxious about himself,
23325 about his business, about his reputation, about
23326 everything. He has taken all these things out of the
23327 hands of God, and claims them and treats them as
23328 his own, and having faith in God no longer, and
23329 being unable to control events, he must of necessity
23330 be filled with anxiety with regard to the future.
23331 These anxieties are the inevitable result of his
23332 madness and folly in forsaking God.

23333
23334 14. The backslider in heart will be filled with his
23335 own disappointments. Having forsaken God, and
23336 taken the attitude of self-will before him, God will
23337 inevitably disappoint him in pursuing his selfish
23338 ends. He will frame his ways to please himself,
23339 without consulting God. Of course God will frame
23340 his ways so as to disappoint him. Determined to
23341 have his own way, he will be greatly disappointed
23342 if his plans are frustrated, and the certain course of
23343 events under the government of God must of
23344 course bring a series of disappointments upon
23345 subjects that have rebelled against him.

23346
23347 15. The backslider in heart must be full of his own
23348 losses. He regards his possessions as his own, his
23349 time as his own, his influence as his own, his
23350 reputation as his own. The loss of any of these he

23351 accounts as his own loss. Having forsaken God,
23352 and being unable to control the events upon which
23353 the continuance of those things is conditioned, he
23354 will find himself suffering losses on every side. He
23355 loses his peace. He loses his property. He loses
23356 much of his time. He loses his Christian reputation.
23357 He loses his Christian influence, and if he persists
23358 he loses his soul.

23359

23360 16. The backslider in heart shall be full of his own
23361 crosses. All religious duty will be irksome, and,
23362 therefore, a cross to him. His state of mind will
23363 make multitudes of things crosses that in a
23364 Christian state of mind would have been pleasant in
23365 a high degree. Having lost all heart in religion, the
23366 performance of all religious duties are crossing to
23367 his feelings. There in no help for him, unless he
23368 returns to God. The whole course of Divine
23369 providence will run across his path, and his whole
23370 life will be a series of crosses and trials. He cannot
23371 have his own way. He cannot gratify himself by
23372 accomplishing his own wishes and desires. He may
23373 beat and dash himself against the everlasting rocks
23374 of God's will and God's way, but break through
23375 and carry all before him he cannot. He must be
23376 crossed and recrossed, and crossed again, until he
23377 will fall into the Divine order, and sink into the will
23378 of God.

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17. The backslider in heart will be filled with his own tempers. Having forsaken God, he will be sure to have much to irritate him. In a backslidden state, he cannot possess his soul in patience. The vexations of his backslidden life will make him nervous and irritable; his temper will become explosive and uncontrollable.

18. The backslider in heart shall be full of his own disgraces. He is a professor of religion. The eyes of the world are upon him, and all his inconsistencies, worldly-mindedness, follies, bad tempers, and hateful words and deeds, disgrace him in the estimation of all men who know him.

19. The backslider in heart will be full of his own delusions. Having an evil eye, his whole body will be full of darkness. He will almost certainly fall into delusions in regard to doctrines, and in regard to practices. Wandering on in darkness, as he does, he will, very likely, swallow the grossest delusions. Spiritism, Mormonism, Universalism, and every other ism that is wide from the truth, will be very likely to gain possession of him. Who has not observed this of backsliders in heart.

23406 20. The backslider in heart will be filled with his
23407 own bondage. His profession of religion brings him
23408 into bondage to the church. He has no heart to
23409 consult the interests of the church, or to labor for
23410 its up-building, and yet he is under covenant
23411 obligation to do so, and his reputation is at stake.
23412 He must do something to sustain religious
23413 institutions, but to do so, is a bondage. If he does it,
23414 it is because he must and not because he may.
23415 Again, he is in bondage to God. If he performs any,
23416 that he calls religious duty, it is rather as a slave
23417 than as a freeman. He serves from fear or hope, just
23418 like a slave, and not from love. Again, he is in
23419 bondage to his own conscience. To avoid
23420 conviction and remorse, he will do or omit many
23421 things, but it is all with reluctance, and not at all of
23422 his own cordial good will.

23423
23424 21. The backslider in heart is full of his own self-
23425 condemnation. Having enjoyed the love of God,
23426 and forsaken him, he feels condemned for
23427 everything. If he attempts religious duty, he knows
23428 there is no heart in it, and hence condemns himself.
23429 If he neglects religious duty, he of course
23430 condemns himself. If he reads his Bible, it
23431 condemns him. If he does not read it, he feels
23432 condemned. If he goes to meeting, the services
23433 condemn him, and if he stays away, he is

23434 condemned. If he prays in secret, in his family, or
23435 in public, he knows he is not sincere, and feels
23436 condemned. If he neglects or refuses to pray, he
23437 feels condemned. Everything condemns him. His
23438 conscience is up in arms against him, and the
23439 thunders and lightnings of condemnation follow
23440 him, whithersoever he goes.

23441

23442 V. How to recover from a state of backsliding.

23443

23444 1. Remember whence you are fallen. Take up the
23445 question at once, and deliberately contrast your
23446 present state with that in which you walked with
23447 God.

23448

23449 2. Take home the conviction of your true position.
23450 No longer delay to understand the exact situation
23451 between God and your soul.

23452

23453 3. Repent at once, and do your first work over
23454 again.

23455

23456 4. Do not attempt to get back, by reforming your
23457 mere outside conduct. Begin with your heart, and at
23458 once set yourself right with God.

23459

23460 5. Do not act like a mere convicted sinner, and
23461 attempt to recommend yourself to God, by any

23462 impenitent works or prayers. Do not think that you
23463 must reform, and make yourself better before you
23464 can come to Christ, but understand distinctly, that
23465 coming to Christ, alone, can make you better.
23466 However much distressed you may feel, know for a
23467 certainty that until you repent and accept his will,
23468 unconditionally, you are no better, but are
23469 constantly growing worse. Until you throw
23470 yourself upon his sovereign mercy, and thus return
23471 to God, he will accept nothing at your hands.

23472
23473 6. Do not imagine yourself to be in a justified state,
23474 for you know you are not. Your conscience
23475 condemns you, and you know that God ought to
23476 condemn you, and if he justified you in your
23477 present state, your conscience could not justify
23478 him. Come, then, to Christ at once, like a guilty,
23479 condemned sinner, as you are, own up, and take all
23480 the shame and blame to yourself and believe that
23481 notwithstanding all your wanderings from God, he
23482 loves you still—that he has loved you with an
23483 everlasting love, and, therefore, with loving
23484 kindness is drawing you.

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23486
23487
23488
23489

LECTURE XXII.

23490 GROWTH IN GRACE.

23491

23492 Text—But grow in grace and in the knowledge of
23493 our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 Pet. iii. 18.

23494

23495 I MUST conclude this Course of Lectures by
23496 giving converts instructions on the subject of
23497 growth in grace. I shall pursue the following
23498 method:

23499

23500 I. What is grace, as the term is here used?

23501

23502 II. What the injunction “to grow in grace” does not
23503 mean.

23504

23505 III. What it does mean.

23506

23507 IV. Conditions of growth in grace.

23508

23509 V. What is not proof of growth in grace.

23510

23511 VI. What is proof of growth in grace.

23512

23513 VII How to grow in grace.

23514

23515 I. What is grace, as the term is here used?

23516

23517 1. Grace is favor. It is often used in the Bible to
23518 signify a free gift. The grace of God is the favor of
23519 God, His free gifts.

23520

23521 II. What the injunction “to grow in grace” does not
23522 mean.

23523

23524 1. It does not enjoin the gradual giving up of sin.
23525 Strange to tell, it would seem that some have so
23526 understood it; but we are nowhere in the Bible
23527 commanded to give up sin gradually, we are
23528 everywhere commanded to give it up instantly and
23529 wholly.

23530

23531 III. What it does mean.

23532

23533 1. It enjoins upon us the duty of growing in the
23534 favor of God, of growing in his esteem, in a
23535 worthiness of his favor, and in his love of
23536 complacency in us.

23537

23538 IV. Conditions of growth in grace.

23539

23540 1. Growth or increase in anything implies a
23541 beginning. Growth in the favor of God implies that
23542 we have already found favor in his sight, and that
23543 we are already indebted for grace received, and that

23544 we are already in grace, in the sense of having a
23545 place among his favored ones.

23546

23547 2. Consequently, growth in grace implies that we
23548 have already repented of our sin, have actually and
23549 practically abandoned all known sin. It cannot be
23550 that we are in favor with God if we are still
23551 indulging in known sin against him. Being in favor
23552 with God implies, of course, that we are pardoned
23553 and favored by him, for the sake of our Lord and
23554 Saviour Jesus Christ. Pardon is favor, and implies
23555 the renunciation of rebellion against God. The
23556 conditions of the Divine favor, as revealed in the
23557 Bible, are repentance and abandonment of all
23558 known sin, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. I
23559 said, as a condition of growth in grace, we must
23560 have the commencement of grace; in other words,
23561 we must be already Christians, must be in a state of
23562 acceptance with God, must have accepted Christ,
23563 so far as he is understood, must be in a state of
23564 obedience to all the recognized will of God.
23565 Without this, we cannot be in a state of grace, or in
23566 the favor of God. But being in this state, there is
23567 room for everlasting growth. As we know more of
23568 God, we shall be capable of loving him more, of
23569 having a more universal and implicit confidence in
23570 him. And there can be no end to this while we have
23571 any being, either in this or any other world. Our

23572 love and confidence in him may be complete, so far
23573 as we know him. This love and confidence will
23574 secure his favor; but there will be no end to our
23575 growth in knowledge of him, and, consequently,
23576 there is room for eternal growth in grace. The more
23577 we love, the more we believe, the more we know of
23578 God, if we conform to all this knowledge, the more
23579 God must be pleased with us, the higher shall we
23580 stand in his favor, and more and greater gifts he
23581 will continue to bestow upon us.

23582
23583 3. Of course, growth in the knowledge of God is a
23584 condition of growth in his favor. We might grow in
23585 knowledge, without growing in his favor, because
23586 we might not love and trust him in accordance with
23587 this increased knowledge. But we cannot love and
23588 trust him more perfectly, unless we become more
23589 perfectly acquainted with him. If our love and faith
23590 keep pace with our growing knowledge, we must
23591 grow in his favor. But growth in knowledge must
23592 be a condition of growth in love and faith.

23593
23594 4. Growth in the knowledge of God, as revealed in
23595 Christ Jesus, must be a condition of growth in his
23596 favor. It is in and through Christ Jesus that God
23597 reveals himself to man. It is in Christ Jesus that we
23598 got the true idea of the personality of the infinite
23599 God. Hence, the text says, "Grow in grace, and in

23600 the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
23601 Christ.”

23602

23603 5. Growth in grace is conditioned on increased
23604 knowledge of what is involved in entire
23605 consecration to God.

23606

23607 True conversion to God involves the consecration
23608 of our, selves and of all that we have to him, so far
23609 as we understand what is implied in this. But, at
23610 first, converts are by no means aware of all that is
23611 involved in the highest forms of consecration. They
23612 will soon learn that there are certain things that
23613 they did not think of, and that they did not give up
23614 to God. At first, perhaps, all that was in their
23615 thought was, to lay their naked soul upon the altar,
23616 and give up their whole heart to God. But soon
23617 they may learn that they did not think of all their
23618 possessions and everything that was dear to them,
23619 they did not surrender all, and leave not a hoof
23620 behind. They surrendered all of which they thought
23621 at the time, but they were not fully enlightened,
23622 they did not think, nor could they think, at the time,
23623 of every appetite, passion, propensity, of every
23624 desire and affection, of everything they call their
23625 own, and which is dear to them, in the whole
23626 creation, to make a thorough surrender and delivery
23627 of them all to God. To gain such knowledge is a

23628 work of time; and growth in the favor of God is
23629 conditioned on making a full surrender and
23630 consecration to God of everything we are, and
23631 have, and desire, and love, as fast as these objects
23632 are presented to thought. As long as we exist, and
23633 knowledge increases, there is no doubt that we
23634 shall be called upon to grow in grace, by
23635 consecrating to God every new object of
23636 knowledge, of desire, and of affection, that we may
23637 come to know, and desire, and love, to all eternity.
23638 As you get new light, you must enlarge your
23639 consecration from day to day, and from hour to
23640 hour, or you will cease to grow in grace. Whenever
23641 you stop short, and do not lay and leave everything
23642 that you are, that you possess, or that you love,
23643 upon the altar of consecration, that moment you
23644 cease to grow in grace. I pray you let this saying
23645 sink deep into your hearts.

23646
23647 6. Another condition of growth in grace is intense
23648 earnestness and constancy in seeking increased
23649 religious light, by the illumination of the Holy
23650 Spirit. You will gain no effectual religious light
23651 except by the inward showing and teaching of the
23652 Holy Spirit, This you will not obtain unless you
23653 continue in the true attitude of a disciple of Christ.
23654 Remember, he says, "Except a man forsake all that
23655 he hath, he cannot be my disciple." He will not, by

23656 his Holy Spirit, be your Divine teacher unless you
23657 renounce self, and live in a state of continual
23658 consecration to him. To obtain and preserve the
23659 teachings of Christ, by his Holy Spirit, you must
23660 continually and earnestly pray for his Divine
23661 teaching, and watch against resisting and grieving
23662 him.

23663
23664 7. Another condition of growth in grace is a
23665 constant conformity to all the teachings of the Holy
23666 Spirit, keeping up with our convictions of duty, and
23667 with our growing knowledge of the will of God.

23668
23669 8. A more and more implicit faith in God is a
23670 condition of growth in grace. By implicit, I mean
23671 an unreasoning faith, a confidence in God's
23672 character so profound that we trust him in the dark
23673 as well as in the light, as well when we do not
23674 understand the reasons of His dealings with us, or
23675 of His requirements, as when we do. A faith like
23676 that of Abraham, that staggered not at a promise,
23677 through unbelief, though the thing promised
23678 seemed most irrational and impossible. An implicit
23679 faith is an unwavering, unquestioning faith, a state
23680 of mind that will rest in God, in his promises, in his
23681 faithfulness, in his love, whatever appearances may
23682 be, and however trying and apparently
23683 unreasonable his commands or providential

23684 dealings may be. Abraham's faith is often
23685 commended in the Bible. God had promised him a
23686 son, but did not give him the promised seed until
23687 he was a hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety.
23688 But notwithstanding Sarah was past age, and he as
23689 good as dead, he believed that God was able to
23690 fulfill his promise, and when he had received his
23691 beloved son, with the assurance that this was to be
23692 his heir, and that through him the promise was to
23693 be fulfilled through all generations, God tried his
23694 faith severely, by commanding him to offer his
23695 Isaac as a burnt sacrifice. He without the least
23696 hesitation obeyed, believing that God was able to
23697 raise him from the dead. He made all his
23698 arrangements to obey this trying command, with
23699 such calmness that neither Sarah nor Isaac
23700 suspected that any such thing was in
23701 contemplation. This was an instance of the exercise
23702 of implicit faith. Growth in grace, or in the favor of
23703 God, is conditioned upon growth in implicit
23704 confidence in Him.

23705
23706 9. A more thoroughly sanctified sensibility is a
23707 condition of growth in the favor of God. By the
23708 sensibility, I mean that department of our nature
23709 that feels, desires, and to which belongs all that we
23710 call desire, affection, emotion, feeling, appetite,
23711 passion, propensity, lust. The sensibility is an

23712 involuntary power, and moral actions and qualities
23713 cannot, with strict propriety, be predicated of it.
23714 The states of the sensibility have moral character
23715 only as they derive it directly or indirectly from the
23716 action of the will. The nature of man, as a whole, in
23717 his depraved condition, is in a very unlovely state,
23718 and although the will maybe given up to God, the
23719 sensibility may be in such a state as to be very
23720 unlovely in the sight of one that looks directly upon
23721 it, and knows perfectly every excited desire,
23722 passion, propensity, lust. It is through the
23723 sensibility, mainly, that we are assailed with
23724 temptations. It is through this that the Christian
23725 warfare is kept up. The Christian warfare consists
23726 in the battle of the will with these various appetites,
23727 passions, propensities and lusts, to keep them in
23728 subjection to the will of God. If the will maintains
23729 its integrity, and cleaves to the will of God, the soul
23730 does not sin in its battle with the excited states of
23731 the sensibility. But these rebellious propensities
23732 embarrass the will in the service it renders to God.
23733 To keep them under, occupies much time, and
23734 thought, and strength. Hence the soul cannot render
23735 to God so complete a service, while exerting the
23736 full strength of the will to subjugate these
23737 propensities, as it otherwise might and would
23738 render. These appetites, passions, and propensities,
23739 although not sinful in themselves, have been

23740 regarded and spoken of as indwelling sin. Strictly,
23741 they cannot be sin, because they are involuntary.
23742 But they are often a great hindrance to our growth
23743 in the favor of God. “For the flesh lusteth against
23744 the Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh,
23745 and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that
23746 ye cannot do the things that ye would.” This means
23747 that we cannot do for God what we otherwise
23748 would, because we have to battle so much with the
23749 states of the sensibility, to keep them under. As the
23750 sensibility becomes more and more subdued and in
23751 harmony with the will’s devotion to God, we are
23752 left free to render to God a more unembarrassed
23753 service. Therefore, the more thorough the
23754 sanctification of the sensibility, the more
23755 thoroughly we are in favor with God.

23756
23757 10. A growing thoroughness and universality of
23758 consecration, of spirit, soul, and body, is the
23759 condition of more and more growth in the favor of
23760 God. It is common, at first, for the steadfastness of
23761 the will’s devotion to God to be overcome by the
23762 clamor of the excited appetites, passions, and
23763 propensities, or by the various states of the
23764 sensibility. Whenever the will yields to these
23765 excited states, you sin. But, in such cases, the sin is
23766 not willful, in the sense of being deliberate and
23767 intentional; it is rather a slip, an inadvertency, a

23768 momentary yielding under the pressure of highly
23769 excited feeling. Nevertheless, this yielding is sin.
23770 However excited the states of the sensibility may
23771 be, if the will does not yield, there is strictly no sin.
23772 Still, while the will is steadfast, maintains its
23773 consecration, its obedience to God, the appetites
23774 originating in the body, and the various
23775 propensities of the soul, which inhere in the
23776 sensibility, may be so ajar, in such confusion, and
23777 in such a state of morbid development, that the soul
23778 may be unfitted for the employments and
23779 enjoyments of heaven.

23780
23781 11. Hence, the taking on of a greater fullness of the
23782 Divine nature is a condition of growth in the favor
23783 of God. Both the will and the sensibility of God
23784 must be in a state of utmost perfection and accord.
23785 All of his desires and feelings must be in perfect
23786 harmony with his intelligence and his will. Not so
23787 with us, in our state of physical depravity. The
23788 depravity of sensibility must be physical, because it
23789 is involuntary. Still, it is depravity, it is a lapsed or
23790 fallen state of the sensibility. This lapsed
23791 department of our nature must be recovered,
23792 sanctified, or completely restored to harmony with
23793 a consecrated will, and an enlightened intelligence,
23794 or we are never fitted for heaven. As we become
23795 more and more the partakers of the Divine nature,

23796 and of the Divine holiness, we are more fully
23797 sanctified in spirit, soul, and body, and of course
23798 grow more and more in the favor of God.
23799

23800 12. A greater and more all-pervading fullness of
23801 the Holy Spirit's residence is another condition of
23802 growth in the favor of God. You cannot have it too
23803 thoroughly impressed upon you that every step in
23804 the Christian life is to be taken under the influence
23805 of the Holy Spirit. The thing to be attained is the
23806 universal teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit,
23807 so that in all things you shall be led by the Spirit of
23808 God. "If ye are led by the Spirit, ye shall not fulfill
23809 the lusts of the flesh," "If through the Spirit ye do
23810 mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "To
23811 be spiritually minded is life and peace, but to be
23812 carnally minded is death." Always remember,
23813 therefore, that to grow in grace, you must grow in
23814 the possession of the fullness of the Holy Ghost in
23815 your heart.
23816

23817 13. A deeper personal acquaintance with the Lord
23818 Jesus Christ, in all his official work and relations, is
23819 a condition of growth in grace. His nature, work,
23820 and relations are the theme of the Bible. The Bible
23821 presents him to us in a great variety of relations. In
23822 my Systematic Theology I have considered some
23823 sixty or more of these official relations of Christ to

23824 the human race, and these are presented rather as
23825 specimens and illustrations than as covering the
23826 whole ground of his relations to us. Now, it is one
23827 thing to know Christ simply on paper, and as
23828 spoken of in the Bible, by reading or hearing of
23829 Christ, and quite another thing to know him
23830 personally, in these relations. The Bible is the
23831 medium of introduction to him personally. What is
23832 there said of him is designed to lead us to seek after
23833 a personal acquaintance with him. It is by this
23834 personal acquaintance with him that we are made
23835 like him. It is by direct, personal, individual
23836 intercourse with his Divine mind that we take on
23837 his image. "All we, beholding as in a glass the
23838 glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image,
23839 from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the
23840 Lord." "Faith comes by hearing," and faith secures
23841 for us a personal acquaintance with Christ. Christ
23842 has promised to manifest himself personally to
23843 those who love and obey him. Do not, my dear
23844 children, stop short of securing this personal
23845 manifestation of Christ to your souls. Your growth
23846 in grace will depend upon this. Think not of
23847 stopping short of personally knowing Christ, not
23848 only in all these relations, but in the fullness of
23849 these relations. Do not overlook the fact that the
23850 appropriation of Christ, in each of these relations,
23851 is a personal act of faith. It is a putting on of the

23852 Lord Jesus Christ, a taking of him as yours, in each
23853 of these relations, as your wisdom, righteousness,
23854 sanctification, and redemption; your prophet, to
23855 teach you, your king, to govern you, your high
23856 priest, to atone for you, your mediator, your
23857 advocate, your strength, your Saviour, your hiding-
23858 place, your high tower, your captain and leader,
23859 your shield, your defence, your exceeding great
23860 reward. In each of these relations, and in all other
23861 of his official relations, you need to appropriate
23862 him by faith so as to secure to you personal
23863 intercourse with him in these relations. Growing in
23864 a personal acquaintance with him, in these
23865 relations, remember, is an indispensable condition
23866 of growth in his favor.

23867
23868 V. I am to notice some things that are not proof of
23869 growth in grace.

23870
23871 1. Growth in knowledge is not conclusive evidence
23872 of growth in grace. Some degree of knowledge is
23873 indispensable to our being in favor with God; and
23874 growth in knowledge, as I have shown, is a
23875 condition of growth in grace, but knowledge is not
23876 grace, and growth in knowledge does not constitute
23877 growth in grace. A person may grow ever so much
23878 in knowledge, and have no grace at all. In hell, they
23879 cannot but grow in knowledge, as they grow in

23880 experience, and in the knowledge of God's justice.
23881 But there, their growth in knowledge but
23882 aggravates the guilt and misery of hell. They know
23883 more and more of God and his law, and their own
23884 guilt, and the more they know, the more wretched
23885 they are. From their increased knowledge they
23886 never learn piety.

23887

23888 2. It is not certain evidence that an individual
23889 grows in grace, because he grows in gifts.

23890

23891 A professor of religion may increase in gifts, that
23892 is, he may become more fluent in prayer, and more
23893 eloquent in preaching, or more pathetic in
23894 exhortation without being any more holy. We
23895 naturally increase in that in which we exercise
23896 ourselves. And if any person often exercises
23897 himself in exhortation, he will naturally, if he
23898 makes any effort or lays himself out, increase in
23899 fluency and pungency. But he may do all this, and
23900 yet have no grace at all. He may pray ever so
23901 engagedly, and increase in fluency and apparent
23902 pathos, and yet have no grace. People who have no
23903 grace often do so. It is true, if he has grace, and
23904 exercises himself in these things, as he grows in
23905 grace, he will grow in gifts. No person can exercise
23906 himself in obeying God, without improving in
23907 those exercises. If he does not improve in gifts, it is

23908 a true sign he does not grow in grace. But, on the
23909 other hand, it is not sure evidence that he grows in
23910 grace because he improves in certain exercises, for
23911 he will naturally improve by practice, whether he is
23912 a Christian or a hypocrite.

23913

23914 3. It is not proof that a person grows in grace,
23915 because he thinks he is doing so. One may be very
23916 favorably impressed with regard to his own
23917 progress in religion, when it is evident to others
23918 that he is not only making no progress, but is, in
23919 fact, declining. An individual who is growing
23920 worse and worse, is not ordinarily well aware of
23921 the fact. It is not uncommon for both impenitent
23922 sinners and Christians to think they are growing
23923 better, when they are growing no better This results
23924 from the very nature of the case. If any person is
23925 growing worse, his conscience will, for the time
23926 being, be come more and more seared, and his
23927 mind more and more dark, as he stifles conscience
23928 and resists the light. Then he may think he is
23929 growing better, just because he has less sense of
23930 sin, and while his conscience continues to sleep, he
23931 may continue under a fatal delusion. A man will
23932 judge of his own spiritual state as he compares
23933 himself with a high or low standard. If he keeps
23934 Christ before him, in his fullness, as his standard,
23935 he will doubtless always, at least in this state of

23936 existence, have but a low estimate of his own
23937 attainments. While at the same time, if he sets
23938 before himself the church, or any of the members
23939 of the church as a standard, he will be very likely to
23940 form a high estimate of his progress in religion, and
23941 be very well satisfied with himself. This is the
23942 reason why there is such a difference in people's
23943 views of their own state and of the state of the
23944 church. They compare themselves and the state of
23945 the church with different standards. Hence, one
23946 takes a very humbling view of his own state, and
23947 complains of that of the church; another thinks
23948 such complaints of the church censorious. To him
23949 the church appears to be doing very well. The
23950 reason why he does not think the church cold, and
23951 in a low state, is that Christ is not his standard of
23952 comparison. If a man shuts his eyes, he will not see
23953 the defilement on him, and may think he is clean,
23954 while to all around he appears loathsome.

23955
23956 VI. What is proof of growth in grace.

23957
23958 1. The manifestation of more implicit and universal
23959 trust in God is an evidence of growth in grace. The
23960 exercise of greater and more implicit confidence, as
23961 I have said, is the condition of growing in the favor
23962 of God. Here, I say, that the manifestation of this
23963 implicit and universal confidence is proof that this

23964 growing confidence exists, and is, therefore,
23965 satisfactory evidence of growth in the favor of
23966 God. If you are conscious in your own soul that
23967 you do exercise more implicit and universal
23968 confidence in God, this is conclusive proof to you
23969 that you are growing in grace, and as you manifest
23970 in your life, and temper, and spirit, this growing
23971 confidence, you prove to yourself and to others that
23972 you are growing in the favor of God. For as you
23973 grow in implicit confidence in him you must grow
23974 in his favor.

23975
23976 2. Another evidence of growth in grace, is an
23977 increasing weanedness from the world. The will
23978 may be in an attitude of devotion to God, while the
23979 world's seductive charms very much embarrass the
23980 healthy action of the Christian life. All the soul
23981 becomes crucified and dead to the world, it grows
23982 in the favor of God.

23983
23984 3. Less reluctance of feeling, when called to the
23985 exercise of self-denial, is an evidence of growth in
23986 grace. It shows that the feelings are becoming less
23987 and less despotic, that the will is getting more the
23988 mastery of them, that the sensibility is getting more
23989 into harmony with the devotion of the will, and the
23990 dictates of the intelligence.
23991

23992 4. Less temptation to sins of omission, is another
23993 evidence of growth in grace, e.g., less temptation to
23994 shun the cross, to neglect unpleasant duties, less
23995 temptation to indolence, less temptation to shirk
23996 responsibility, less temptation to neglect prayer,
23997 reading the Scriptures, private and family
23998 devotions, in short, less and less temptation to shun
23999 the performance of any duty, is evidence of growth
24000 in grace. These temptations consist in the excited
24001 states of the sensibility. As these become less in
24002 strength and frequency, we learn that our
24003 sensibility is becoming more completely
24004 subjugated to the law of the intelligence, and the
24005 decisions of the will, and consequently, that the
24006 work of the sanctification of the spirit, soul and
24007 body is progressing, and that therefore we are
24008 growing in the favor of God.

24009
24010 5. A growing intensity and steadiness of zeal in
24011 promoting the cause of God, is evidence of growth
24012 in the favor of God. Sometimes Christian zeal is
24013 comparatively cool, at other times deep and
24014 intense, sometimes it will be steady, at other times
24015 fitful and evanescent. As Christians grow in piety,
24016 their zeal becomes deep, intense and steady, and as
24017 you are conscious of this, and in your life and spirit
24018 give evidence of it to others, you have, and give
24019 proof, that you are growing in the favor of God.

24020

24021 6. Losing more and more the consciousness of self,
24022 and respect to self, in every action of life, is an
24023 evidence of growth in the favor of God. Some have
24024 so much consciousness of self in everything, and so
24025 much respect to self in everything they say and do,
24026 as to be embarrassed in all their Christian life,
24027 whenever they attempt to act or speak in the
24028 presence of others. As they lose this self-
24029 consciousness, and have less respect to self, their
24030 service of God becomes more free and
24031 unembarrassed, and they are all the better servants
24032 by how much less they think of self. Sometimes
24033 young converts cannot speak or pray, or perform
24034 any public duty, without being either proud or
24035 ashamed, as they think themselves to have
24036 performed those duties with more or low
24037 acceptance to those around them. While this is so,
24038 their piety is in a feeble state. They must lose sight
24039 of their own glory, and have a single eye to the
24040 glory of God, to find acceptance with him. But as
24041 they lose sight of self, and set God always before
24042 them, having an eye single to his glory, they grow
24043 more and more in his favor.

24044

24045 7. Consequently, a growing deadness to the flattery
24046 or the censure of men, is an evidence of growth in
24047 grace. Paul had grown in grace so much, that he

24048 counted it a light thing to be judged of man, he
24049 only sought to commend himself to God. As you
24050 find yourself growing in this state of deadness to
24051 the flatteries or censures of men, you have evidence
24052 that you grow in grace.

24053
24054 8. A growing cordiality in the acceptance of the
24055 whole will of God, is evidence of growth in his
24056 favor. Some rebel against his will as revealed in his
24057 word, and in his providence. Others, under trying
24058 circumstances will barely tolerate his will, as
24059 revealed in his word and in providence; but those
24060 who are growing in grace, find it more natural to
24061 them, to embrace his whole revealed will, with
24062 greater and greater cordiality.

24063
24064 9. Growing calmness and quietness under great
24065 afflictions, is an evidence of growth in the favor of
24066 God. This evinces a broader and more implicit
24067 faith. a fuller and more cordial acceptance of the
24068 will of God, as revealed in these afflictions, and
24069 shows that the soul is more steadily and firmly at
24070 anchor upon its rock, Christ.

24071
24072 10. A growing tranquility under sudden and
24073 crushing disasters and bereavements, is an evidence
24074 of growth in grace. The more tranquil the soul can
24075 remain, when sudden storms of providence come

24076 upon it, sweeping away its loved ones, and
24077 blighting its earthly hopes, the greater is its
24078 evidence of being under the particular favor of
24079 God. This tranquillity is both a result and an
24080 evidence of the favor of God.

24081
24082 11. Growing patience under much provocation, is
24083 an evidence of growth in the favor of God.

24084
24085 12. “Long suffering with joyfulness,” is an
24086 evidence of growing in favor with God. When you
24087 find that you cannot only tolerate, but accept the
24088 will of God, as revealed in calling you to suffer,
24089 and especially, when you can accept these
24090 sufferings, and endure them long and with
24091 joyfulness, you have evidence that you are growing
24092 in the favor of God.

24093
24094 13. A growing cordiality and joyfulness under
24095 crosses and disappointments, and severe pain, is
24096 evidence of growth in the favor of God.

24097
24098 14. An increasing deadness to all that the world has
24099 to offer, or to threaten, is an evidence of growth in
24100 the favor of God.

24101

24102 15. A growing repose in, and satisfaction with, all
24103 the allotments of providence, is an evidence of
24104 growth in grace.

24105

24106 16. Less temptation to murmur or repine at any
24107 allotment of providence, is evidence of growth in
24108 grace.

24109

24110 17. Lest temptation to fret, when we are crossed or
24111 disappointed in any respect, is an evidence of
24112 growth in grace.

24113

24114 18. Less and less temptation to resentment, and the
24115 spirit of retaliation, when we are in anywise
24116 insulted or abused, is evidence that the sensibility
24117 is becoming more and more thoroughly subdued,
24118 and consequently, that we are growing in favor
24119 with God.

24120

24121 19. Less temptation to dwell upon, and to magnify
24122 our trials and troubles, to think of them, and speak
24123 of them to others, is evidence that we think less and
24124 less of self, and accept our trials and troubles with
24125 more and more complacency in God. It is sad to
24126 hear some professedly good people, dwelling ever
24127 upon and magnifying their own troubles and trials.
24128 But, if they grow in grace, they will think less and
24129 less of these, be more inclined to think of them as

24130 “light afflictions.” The more we grow in grace, the
24131 less stress we lay upon the evils we meet with in
24132 the way. Said a good man to me once, who was
24133 really passing through what the world would call
24134 very severe trials and afflictions (he had lost a
24135 beloved wife, and his children had died one after
24136 another), “I have many mercies, and few
24137 afflictions.” When, under such circumstances, a
24138 man can say, “the lines have fallen unto me in
24139 pleasant places, I have a goodly heritage,” he has
24140 the most satisfactory evidence that he is growing in
24141 the favor of God. For this state of mind is both a
24142 result and an evidence of the favor of God.

24143

24144 20. A growing disposition to make light of our
24145 trials and to magnify our blessings, is an evidence
24146 that we are growing in the favor of God.

24147

24148 21. Less and less anxiety and carefulness about the
24149 events of providence, and especially about the
24150 things that nearly and deeply affect ourselves, is
24151 evidence of growth in grace. This is an evidence of
24152 a broader and more implicit faith, of a more
24153 submissive will, and of a diminishing tendency to
24154 self-seeking; and is, therefore, an evidence of
24155 growing favor with God.

24156

24157 22. Being less and less disturbed and troubled by
24158 the events of life, especially those that go counter
24159 to our own plans, and hopes, and expectations, and
24160 desires, and that thwart our most cherished aims, is
24161 an evidence of growth in grace.

24162
24163 23. A growing and realizing confidence in the
24164 wisdom, benevolence, and universality of the
24165 providence of God, a state of mind that sees God in
24166 everything, is evidence of growth in grace. Some
24167 minds become so spiritual that they hardly seem to
24168 reside in the body, and appear continually to
24169 perceive the presence of God in every event, almost
24170 as if they were disembodied, and beheld God, face
24171 to face. They seem to dwell, live, move, and have
24172 their being, rather in the spiritual, than in the
24173 natural world. They are continually under such a
24174 sense of the Divine presence, agency, and
24175 protection, as hardly to appear like inhabitants of
24176 earth. They are a living, walking mystery to those
24177 in the midst of whom they dwell. The springs of
24178 their activity are so divine, their life is so much
24179 hidden in God, they act under influences so far
24180 above the world, that they cannot be judged by the
24181 same standards as other men. Carnal minds cannot
24182 understand them. Their hidden life is so unknown,
24183 and so unknowable to those who are far below
24184 them in their spiritual life, that they are necessarily

24185 regarded as quite eccentric, as being mystics or
24186 monomaniacs, and as having very peculiar
24187 religious views, as being enthusiasts, and perhaps
24188 fanatics. These persons are in the world, but they
24189 live above the world. They have so far escaped
24190 from the pollutions that are in the world, that they
24191 can truly, and understandingly say with Paul, in
24192 Gal. vi.14, “But God forbid that I should glory,
24193 save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby
24194 the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the
24195 world.” Such persons are evidently growing in the
24196 grace of God.

24197
24198 24. Being less and less disposed to dwell upon the
24199 faults and foibles of others, is an evidence of
24200 growth in grace.

24201
24202 25. Being less and less disposed to speak
24203 sarcastically or severely, or to judge uncharitably
24204 of others. A growing delicacy, or tenderness in
24205 speaking of their real or supposed faults, behind
24206 their back, is an evidence of growth in grace.

24207
24208 26. An increasing reluctance to regard or treat
24209 anyone as an enemy, and an increasing ease and
24210 naturalness in treating them kindly, in praying for
24211 them heartily, and in efforts to do them good, is an
24212 evidence of growing in grace.

24213

24214 27. Less and less temptation to remember an injury,
24215 and the abatement of all desire to retaliate when
24216 injured, is an evidence of growth in grace.

24217

24218 28. A growing readiness and cordiality in forgiving
24219 and burying an injury out of sight, and a kind of
24220 moral inability to do otherwise than seek the
24221 highest good of those who have injured us most
24222 deeply, is an evidence of growth in grace.

24223

24224 29. When we find in our own experience, and
24225 manifest to others, that it is more and more natural
24226 to regard all men as our brethren, especially to drop
24227 out of view all sectarian discriminations, all ideas
24228 and prejudices of caste, and of color, of poverty,
24229 and of riches, of blood relation, and of natural,
24230 rather than of spiritual ties, and to make common
24231 cause with God, in aiming to do good to all men, to
24232 enemies and friends alike, we have then ourselves,
24233 and give to others, the highest evidence of our
24234 growing in the favor of God.

24235

24236 30. Especially is it true, when we find ourselves
24237 very cordial and full-hearted, in making great
24238 sacrifices for those that hate us, and having a
24239 willingness to lay down our lives, to promote their

24240 eternal salvation, that we have evidence of growth
24241 in grace.

24242
24243 31. Still more especially, when we find ourselves
24244 less and less inclined to account anything a
24245 sacrifice that we can do for God, or the souls of
24246 men; when we can account our lives not dear unto
24247 us, if called to lay them down to save the souls of
24248 enemies, when, for the “joy of saving them,” “we
24249 can endure the cross, and despise the shame,” or
24250 any sacrifice that we are called to make, we have
24251 evidence that we are growing in favor with God.

24252
24253 32. Again, when we find ourselves more and more
24254 inclined to “count it all joy, when we fall into
24255 divers temptations,” and when we are disposed to
24256 look upon our trials, vexations, losses, and crosses,
24257 in such a light as to lay less and less stress upon
24258 them, we have evidence that we are growing in
24259 patience, and therefore, in favor with God.

24260
24261 33. When we find less and less reluctance to
24262 making full confession to those whom we have
24263 injured, when with increasing readiness and
24264 cordiality we lay our hearts open to be searched,
24265 take home conviction of wrong-doing, and when in
24266 such cases, we cannot rest till we have made the
24267 fullest confession and reparation within our power,

24268 when to own up, and confess, and make the fullest
24269 satisfaction, is a luxury to us, rather than a trial and
24270 a cross, we have evidence that we are growing in
24271 the favor of God.

24272

24273 34. When we are more and more impressed and
24274 affected by the mercies of God, and by the
24275 kindnesses of our fellow-men and those around us,
24276 when we more deeply and thoroughly appreciate
24277 manifestations of kindness in God, or in any one
24278 else, when we are more and more humbled and
24279 affected by these kindnesses, and find it more and
24280 more natural to “walk humbly, love mercy, and do
24281 justly,” and live gratefully, we have evidence that
24282 we are growing in favor with God.

24283

24284 35. When we find ourselves drawn, with increasing
24285 earnestness to follow on to know more of the Lord,
24286 we have evidence of growth in grace.

24287

24288 36. When we find ourselves more and more readily
24289 impressed and affected, quickened and stimulated
24290 by religious truth, and when we find an increasing
24291 harmony in the action of all our powers,
24292 intellectual, voluntary, and sensitive, in accepting,
24293 and resting in, the whole will and providence of
24294 God, however afflictive they may at present be, we
24295 have evidence that we are growing in grace.

24296

24297 37. A growing jealousy for the honor of God, for
24298 the purity and honor of his church, for the rights of
24299 God, and for the rights of all men, is evidence of
24300 growing in conformity to God, and, of course, of
24301 growing in his favor.

24302

24303 VII. How to grow in grace.

24304

24305 1. Fulfill the conditions noticed under the fourth
24306 head of this lecture. I need not repeat them.

24307

24308 2. Remember that every stop of progress must be
24309 made by faith, and not by works. The mistake that
24310 some good men have made upon this subject, is
24311 truly amazing. Dr. Chalmers affirms, that the way
24312 to be sanctified is to work for it. A few years since,
24313 Dr. Pond published a pamphlet, in which he took
24314 ground on this subject, with Dr. Chalmers, and
24315 affirmed that the idea of being sanctified by faith
24316 was an absurdity. Indeed, the custom has been
24317 almost universal, to represent growth in grace as
24318 consisting in the formation of habits of obedience
24319 to God. Now, it is quite surprising that so many
24320 good men have fallen into this mistake. The fact is,
24321 that every step of progress in the Christian life, is
24322 taken by a fresh and fuller appropriation of Christ
24323 by faith, a fuller baptism of the Holy Spirit. As our

24324 weaknesses, infirmities, besetting sins, and
24325 necessities, are revealed to us, by the circumstances
24326 of temptation through which we pass, our only
24327 efficient help is found in Christ, and we grow only
24328 as we step by step more fully appropriate him, in
24329 one relation or another, and more fully “put him
24330 on.” As we are more and more emptied of self-
24331 dependence, as we more and more renounce and
24332 discard all expectation of forming holy habits by
24333 any obedience of ours, and as by faith we secure
24334 deeper and deeper baptisms of the Holy Ghost, and
24335 put on the Lord Jesus Christ, more and more
24336 thoroughly, and in more of his official relations, by
24337 just so much the faster do we grow in the favor of
24338 God. Nothing can be more erroneous and
24339 dangerous than the commonly received idea of
24340 growing in grace by the formation of holy habits.
24341 By acts of faith alone, we appropriate Christ, and
24342 we are as truly sanctified by faith as we are justified
24343 by faith. In my Systematic Theology, in pointing
24344 out the conditions of entire or permanent
24345 sanctification, I have noticed some sixty of the
24346 official relations of Christ, as I have before said,
24347 and have there insisted, as I here insist, that growth
24348 in holiness, and consequently, in the favor of God,
24349 is secured only by fresh, fuller, and more thorough
24350 appropriations of Christ, in all these official
24351 relations. If you would grow in grace you must do

24352 it through faith. You must pray in faith for the Holy
24353 Spirit. You must appropriate and put on Christ
24354 through the Holy Spirit. At every forward step in
24355 your progress, you must have a fresh anointing of
24356 the Holy Spirit through faith.

24357

24358 REMARKS

24359

24360 1. We see, from this subject, the vast importance of
24361 rightly instructing young converts. In many cases,
24362 they have very little instruction suited to their
24363 experience and degree of Christian intelligence. By
24364 some, such views are taken of the Perseverance of
24365 the Saints, that it is assumed that babes in Christ
24366 will grow without nursing, and without that sincere
24367 milk of the word, by means of which they must
24368 grow. Some, taking it for granted that they need
24369 instruction, unwittingly give them false instruction,
24370 set them to work outwardly and zealously, without
24371 paying much regard to the strengthening and
24372 developing of their inward life. They do not teach
24373 them how to appropriate and live on Christ as their
24374 life, but continually press them up, to do their duty,
24375 to labor for God, and labor for souls, not
24376 sufficiently impressing upon them the idea that
24377 their doing is of no account, unless it proceeds
24378 from the life of God in their own souls. The result
24379 of this is a bustling, outward activity, while the

24380 inward spiritual life is decaying. This must end in
24381 disgust at one's own want of heart, and a settling
24382 back into apathy and neglect.

24383

24384 2. Sometimes there is a mistake made in the
24385 opposite direction. They are taught to rest in Christ,
24386 in such a sense as to take on a type of quietism and
24387 antinomian inactivity. They are exhorted to
24388 exercise faith, but they are not earnestly impressed
24389 with the conviction that it must be a faith that
24390 works and works by love, that purifies the heart,
24391 and overcomes the world. The result is, they do
24392 nothing in religion. Sinners are allowed to sleep on,
24393 and go to hell, in their midst, and they make no
24394 effort to save them.

24395

24396 3. We see the importance of a Holy Ghost anointed
24397 ministry. The great want of the church is a ministry
24398 so thoroughly anointed by the Holy Ghost as to
24399 know how to lead the church onward and upward,
24400 to the fullest development of Christian piety. In
24401 order to instruct converts, and keep the church
24402 progressing in holiness, the minister must progress
24403 himself. He must be a truly living, growing
24404 Christian. I have good reason to know that the
24405 churches in many places are deeply pained by the
24406 want of living piety and growth in their ministers.
24407 Their ministers are intellectual, literary,

24408 philosophical, theological, in their teaching, but
24409 they are sadly deficient in unction. They have but
24410 little power with God or with man. They instruct
24411 the intellect to a certain extent, but they do not
24412 meet the wants of the heart. Converts starve under
24413 their preaching. They preach an intellectual, rather
24414 than a spiritual Gospel. They preach religion as a
24415 theory, a doctrine, a philosophy, and not as a real
24416 living experience. It is often exceedingly painful to
24417 hear ministers preach who manifestly do not know
24418 what they say, or whereof they affirm. They speak
24419 of religion as an inward sentiment, instead of heart
24420 devotion to God; as an emotion, a feeling, instead
24421 of an all-embracing and efficient love, a voluntary
24422 state and attitude of the mind, from which
24423 necessarily proceeds a holy life. They speak of
24424 faith as a mere intellectual state or conviction, and
24425 not as an act of trust, and of committal of the whole
24426 being, to do and suffer all the will of God. They
24427 speak of repentance as if it were a mere involuntary
24428 sorrow for sin. They do not teach that repentance is
24429 a change of mind towards God, a renunciation of
24430 the self-seeking spirit, and a turning of the whole
24431 mind to God. They speak of holiness, as if it were a
24432 state utterly unattainable in this life. Indeed, I say it
24433 with sorrow, but I must say it, the teachings, of a
24434 great many ministers is but a stumbling-block to
24435 the church. Under their instruction, converts do not,

24436 and cannot get so established in grace as to be
24437 greatly useful, or to live lives that are honorable to
24438 Christ. Just think in the Nineteenth Century,
24439 ministers preach to converts that they must grow in
24440 grace by works. Be heaven and earth amazed at
24441 this! Such teachers do not know how to grow in
24442 grace themselves. Shall I be accounted harsh if I
24443 say, “They be blind leaders of the blind.”
24444

24445 4. We see the reason of so much backsliding.
24446 Converts will of course backslide who are led by
24447 false instruction. It on the one hand, they are set to
24448 work out sanctification by works, their works will
24449 soon become dead works, and not be the result of
24450 that faith that works by love. If, on the other hand,
24451 they are crammed with abstract notions and
24452 doctrines, and taught to rest in an antinomian faith,
24453 they will sink into supineness and inactivity. I fully
24454 believe that in nearly all cases where there has been
24455 disastrous reaction after a revival, it has been
24456 owing to the want of timely and proper instruction.
24457 But to be timely and proper, it must be anointed
24458 instruction.

24459
24460 5. The Theological Seminaries need to pay vastly
24461 more attention to the growth in grace of their
24462 students. They need a professor of experimental
24463 religion, who has experience and power enough to

24464 press them along into those higher regions of
24465 Christian experience which are essential to their
24466 being able to lead the church on to victory. It is
24467 amazing to see how little effort is made to cultivate
24468 the heart of young men studying for the ministry.
24469 We must have a change in this respect. A much
24470 higher standard of Christian experience must be
24471 required as a condition of ordination. It is painful to
24472 see how carefully men will be examined in regard
24473 to their intellectual attainments, while the accounts
24474 they give of their Christian experience will barely
24475 allow us to hope that they have been converted.
24476 How sad it is to set such young men to feed the
24477 church of God. How do old Christians mourn,
24478 when they see the appointed leaders in the church
24479 of God but spiritual babes.

24480
24481 6. I have never been present at the examination of a
24482 candidate for ordination where anything more than
24483 simple evidence of conversion was required of him.
24484 I never heard them questioned touching their
24485 progress in Christian experience, and regarding
24486 their spiritual ability to lead the flock of God into
24487 green pastures and beside the still waters. I never
24488 heard them questioned in a manner that manifested
24489 the slightest conception of what are the
24490 indispensable spiritual qualifications of a man who
24491 is to stand forth as the leader and spiritual

24492 instructor of the church of God. More hours are
24493 spent in ascertaining the intellectual attainments of
24494 a candidate than minutes to ascertain his spiritual
24495 and experimental attainments. The whole
24496 examination will plainly indicate that the ordaining
24497 body lay very little stress on this part of a
24498 minister's education. Is it any wonder that the
24499 church of God is so feeble and inefficient, while its
24500 leaders and teachers are, many of them, mere
24501 children in spiritual knowledge, while a ripe
24502 Christian experience is made no part of the
24503 indispensable education of a minister. Why, this is
24504 infinitely more dangerous and ridiculous than to
24505 intrust men to lead an army in the field, while they
24506 merely understand mathematics, and never have
24507 had any training or experience in military matters.

24508
24509 In this respect, too, there must be a great change.
24510 Churches should refuse to ordain and receive
24511 pastors, unless they are fully satisfied of their
24512 having made much progress in Christian
24513 experience, so as to be able to lead on, and keep the
24514 church awake.

24515
24516 They should insist upon the education of his heart
24517 as well as his head; upon his ability to take young
24518 converts, and conduct them on to those deep
24519 experiences that will make them stable and efficient

24520 workers in the cause of God. Think of theological
24521 seminaries like those over which Dr. Chalmers and
24522 Dr. Pond have presided, where the leaders of the
24523 church of God are taught that sanctification or
24524 growth in grace is attained by works and not by
24525 faith. Tell it not in Gath. Alas for Zion, when her
24526 great and good men fall into such mistakes.

24527

24528 THE END.

24529

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24531 path2prayer.com.