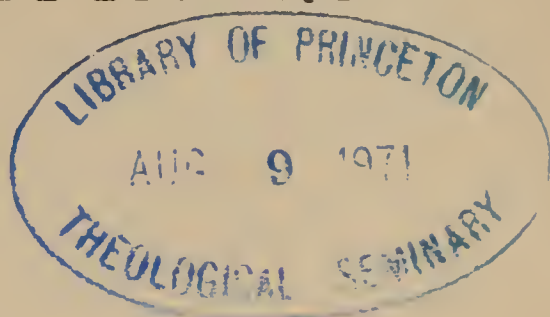


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CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCH SHOULD SEEK MORE EMINENT PIETY IN THE MINISTRY.

(ABSTRACT.)

PRESIDENT CHARLES G. FINNEY.

And if such are the essential qualifications on the part of the ministry in order to great success in winning souls to Christ, we may infer that *there is need of a great reformation on the part of the churches in seeking, as of the first importance, deeply spiritual and effective ministers.*

Now we have reason to believe that eminent piety and a reputation for marked success in promoting the prayerful activity and holiness of professing Christians, and the conversion of sinners is to a great extent made entirely subordinate to merely pleasing manners, and a popular and attractive style of preaching, which shall specially interest the young people and increase the size of the congregation.

But if the edification and sanctification of Christians that they may be fitted for admission to heaven, and the awakening and salvation of perishing sinners is of transcendent importance, while an acceptable delivery and

style are to be prized, *deep piety and effectiveness* in preaching, are vastly more indispensable to a good minister of Jesus Christ, and a useful pastor to a Christian church.

Therefore, whatever other qualifications ministers may have to recommend them, if their record does not show that they are "endued with power from on high" so as to render them truly effective in promoting the piety of the church and the conversion of sinners, they should be considered disqualified in a fundamental point.

It used to be the custom of churches, and I believe in some places is so still, in presenting a call to the pastorate, to certify, that having witnessed the spiritual fruits of his labors, they deem him qualified and called of God to the work of the ministry. And now if the churches desire to be restored to their former "refreshing from the presence of the Lord," they must reform their present practice, and prayerfully seek for, and sustain a ministry possessing spiritual unction, and which is successful in saving men, rather than a ministry which may excel *merely* in an attractive and pleasing essay-style of preaching, with but little adaptation to the promotion of true revivals of pure and undefiled religion.

And in order to secure such a pre-eminently desirable ministry, without which the churches must be doomed to perpetual barrenness, they must hold the Theological Seminaries to a strict account in fulfilling their duty in this matter. They should be impressed by the imperative demands of the churches, that it is necessary for them to make more special and direct efforts in striving to develop a much higher type of piety on the part of their students.

Some years since one branch of the Scotch Church was so tried with the want of unction and power in the ministers furnished them by their Theological Seminary, that they passed a resolution, that until the Seminary reformed in this respect, they would not employ the ministers educated there.

Hence we believe that if the excellent and learned Professors of the Seminaries should perceive that the churches were earnestly seeking a ministry of truly earnest piety and effectiveness, as well as fair gifts and scholarship, they would give more attention to cultivating devotional and fervid piety among their students.

They would be more deeply impressed with the importance of making the Seminaries, schools for developing Christian experience and true holiness, and skill in soul saving, as well as sound learning in the doctrines and precepts of the sacred scriptures. And then the Seminaries should avoid as far as practicable, recommending candidates for settlement over the churches who are not "endued with power from on high," and are striving for very high attainments in personal holiness. For however learned and eloquent their students may be, without these higher qualifications they cannot be "good ministers of Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER VII.

TAKE HEED TO THYSELF.

BY PRES. CHARLES G. FINNEY.

“Take heed to thyself, and to the doctrine; continue in them: for, in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.” 1 TIMOTHY, iv, 16.

I am not going to preach to preachers, but to suggest certain conditions upon which the salvation promised in this text may be secured by them.

1st. See that you are constrained by love to preach the Gospel, as Christ was to provide a Gospel.

2d. See that you have the special enduement of power from on high, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

3d. See that you have a heart, and not merely a head-call to undertake the preaching of the Gospel. By this I mean, be heartily and most intensely inclined to seek the salvation of souls as the great work of life, and do not undertake what you have no heart to.

4th. Constantly maintain a close walk with God.

5th. Make the Bible your book of books. Study it much, upon your knees, waiting for divine light.

6th. Beware of leaning on commentaries. Consult

them when convenient; but judge for yourself, in the light of the Holy Ghost.

7th. Keep yourself pure—in will, in thought, in feeling, in word and action.

8th. Contemplate much the guilt and danger of sinners, that your zeal for their salvation may be intensified.

9th. Also deeply ponder and dwell much upon the boundless love and compassion of Christ for them.

10th. So love them yourself as to be willing to die for them.

11th. Give your most intense thought to the study of ways and means by which you may save them. Make this the great and intense study of your life.

12th. Refuse to be diverted from this work. Guard against every temptation that would abate your interest in it.

13th. Believe the assertion of Christ that he is with you in this work always and everywhere, to give you all the help you need.

14th. "He that winneth souls is wise"; and, "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and he shall receive." "But let him ask in faith." Remember, therefore, that you are bound to have the wisdom that shall win souls to Christ.

15th. Being called of God to the work, make your calling your constant argument with God for all that you need for the accomplishment of the work.

16th. Be diligent and laborious, "in season and out of season."

17th. Converse much with all classes of your hearers on the question of their salvation, that you may un-

derstand their opinions, errors, and wants. Ascertain their prejudices, ignorance, temper, habits, and whatever you need to know to adapt your instruction to their necessities.

18th. See that your own habits are in all respects correct; that you are temperate in all things—free from the stain or smell of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or anything of which you have reason to be ashamed and which may stumble others.

19th. Be not “light-minded,” but “set the Lord always before you.”

20th. Bridle your tongue, and be not given to idle and unprofitable conversation.

21st. Always let your people see that you are in solemn earnest with them, both in the pulpit and out of it; and let not your daily intercourse with them nullify your serious teaching on the Sabbath.

22d. Resolve to “know nothing among your people” “save Jesus Christ and him crucified”; and let them understand that, as an ambassador of Christ, your business with them relates wholly to the salvation of their souls.

23d. Be sure to teach them as well by example as by precept. Practice yourself what you preach.

24th. Be especially guarded in your intercourse with women, to raise no thought or suspicion of the least impurity in yourself.

25th. Guard your weak points. If naturally tending to gayety and trifling, watch against occasions of failure in this direction.

26th. If naturally somber and unsocial, guard against moroseness and unsociability.

27th. Avoid all affectation and sham in all things. Be what you profess to be, and you will have no temptation to "make believe."

28th. Let simplicity, sincerity, and Christian propriety stamp your whole life.

29th. Spend much time every day and night in prayer and direct communion with God. This will make you a power for salvation. No amount of learning and study can compensate for the loss of this communion. If you fail to maintain communion with God, you are "weak as another man."

30th. Beware of the error that there are no means of regeneration; and, consequently, no connection of means and ends in the regeneration of souls.

31st. Understand that regeneration is a moral and, therefore, a voluntary change.

32d. Understand that the Gospel is adapted to change the hearts of men, and in a wise presentation of it, you may expect the efficient co-operation of the Holy Spirit.

33d. In the selection and treatment of your texts always secure the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit.

34th. Let all your sermons be heart and not merely head sermons.

35th. Preach from experience, and not from hearsay, or mere reading and study.

36th. Always present the subject which the Holy Spirit lays upon your heart for the occasion. Seize the points presented by the Holy Spirit to your own mind, and present them with the greatest possible directness to your congregation.

37th. Be full of prayer whenever you attempt to preach, and go from your closet to your pulpit with the

inward groanings of the Spirit pressing for utterance at your lips.

38th. Get your mind fully imbued with your subject, so that it will press for utterance ; then open your mouth, and let it forth like a torrent.

39th. See that "the fear of man that bringeth a snare" is not upon you. Let your people understand that you fear God too much to be afraid of them.

40th. Never let the question of your popularity with your people influence your preaching.

41st. Never let the question of salary deter you from "declaring the whole counsel of God, whether men will bear or forbear."

42d. Do not temporize, lest you lose the confidence of your people, and thus fail to save them. They cannot thoroughly respect you as an ambassador of Christ if they see that you dare not do your duty.

43d. Be sure to "commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

44th. Be "not a lover of filthy lucre."

45th. Avoid every appearance of vanity.

46th. Compel your people to respect your sincerity and your spiritual wisdom.

47th. Let them not for a moment suppose that you can be influenced in your preaching by any considerations of salary, more or less, or none at all.

48th. Do not make the impression that you are fond of good dinners, and like to be invited out to dine ; for this will be a snare to you, and a stumbling block to them.

49th. "Keep under your body, lest, after having preached to others, yourself should be a castaway."

50th. " Watch for souls as one who must give an account to God."

51st. Be a diligent student, and thoroughly instruct your people in all that is essential to their salvation.

52d. Never flatter the rich.

53d. Be especially attentive to the wants and instruction of the poor.

54th. Suffer not yourself to be bribed into a compromise with sin by donation parties.

55th. Suffer not yourself to be publicly treated as a mendicant, or you will come to be despised by a large class of your hearers.

56th. Repel every attempt to close your mouth against whatever is extravagant, wrong, or injurious amongst your people.

57th. Maintain your pastoral integrity and independence, lest you sear your conscience, quench the Holy Spirit, forfeit the confidence of your people, and lose the favor of God.

58th. Be an example to the flock, and let your life illustrate your teaching. Remember that your actions and spirit will teach even more impressively than your sermons.

59th. If you preach that men should offer to God and their neighbor a love service, see that you do this yourself, and avoid all that tends to the belief that you are working for pay.

60th. Give to your people a love service, and encourage them to render to you, not a money equivalent for your labor, but a love reward that will refresh both you and them.

61st. Repel every proposal to get money for you or

for church purposes that will naturally disgust and excite the contempt of worldly but thoughtful men.

62d. Resist the introduction of tea parties, amusing lectures, and dissipating sociables, especially at those seasons most favorable for united efforts to convert souls to Christ. Be sure the Devil will try to head you off in this direction. When you are praying and planning for a revival of God's work, some of your worldly church-members will invite you to a party. Go not, or you are in for a circle of them, that will defeat your prayers.

63d. Do not be deceived. Your spiritual power with your people will never be increased by accepting such invitations at such times. If it is a good time to have parties, because the people have leisure, it is also a good time for religious meetings, and your influence should be used to draw the people to the house of God.

64th. See that you personally know and daily live upon Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW TO WIN SOULS.

BY PRESIDENT CHARLES G. FINNEY.

“Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.”—I Tim., iv, 16.

I beg leave in this article to suggest to my younger brethren in the ministry some thoughts on the philosophy of so preaching the Gospel as to secure the salvation of souls. They are the result of much study, much prayer for Divine teaching, and a practical experience of many years.

I understand the admonition at the head of this article to relate to the *matter, order, and manner* of preaching.

The problem is, how shall we win souls wholly to Christ. Certainly we must win them away from *themselves*.

1st. They are free moral agents, of course—rational, accountable.

2d. They are in *rebellion against God*, wholly *alienated*, intensely *prejudiced*, and *committed* against Him.

3d. They are committed to *self-gratification* as the end of their being.

4th. This committed *state* is moral depravity, the fountain of sin within them, from which flow, by a natural law, all their sinful ways. This committed voluntary state is their "wicked heart." This it is that needs a *radical change*.

5th. God is infinitely benevolent, and unconverted sinners are supremely selfish; so that they are *radically opposed* to God. Their committal to the gratification of their appetites and propensities is known in Bible language as the "carnal mind;" or, as in the margin, "the minding of the flesh," which is enmity against God.

6th. This enmity is voluntary, and must be overcome, if at all, by the Word of God, made effectual by the *teaching* of the Holy Spirit.

7th. The Gospel is adapted to this end, and when wisely presented we may confidently expect the effectual co-operation of the Holy Spirit. This is implied in our commission, "Go and disciple all nations, and lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

8th. If we are unwise, illogical, unphilosophical, and out of all natural order, in presenting the Gospel, we have no warrant for expecting Divine co-operation.

9th. In winning souls, as in everything else, God works through and in accordance with natural laws. Hence, if we would win souls, we must wisely adapt means to this end. We must present those truths and in that order adapted to the natural laws of mind, of thought, and mental action. A false mental philosophy will greatly mislead us, and we shall often be found

ignorantly working against the agency of the Holy Spirit.

10th. Sinners must be convicted of their enmity. They do not know God, and consequently are often ignorant of the opposition of their hearts to Him. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," because by the law the sinner gets his first true idea of God. By the law he first learns that God is perfectly benevolent, and infinitely opposed to all selfishness. This law, then, should be arrayed in all its majesty against the selfishness and enmity of the sinner.

11th. This law carries irresistible conviction of its righteousness, and no moral agent can doubt it.

12th. All men know that they have sinned, but all are not *convicted* of the *guilt* and *ill desert* of sin. The many are careless, and do not feel the burden of sin, the horrors and terrors of remorse, and have not a sense of condemnation and of being lost.

13th. But without this they cannot understand or appreciate the Gospel method of salvation. One cannot *intelligently* and *heartily* ask or accept a pardon until he sees and feels the *fact* and *justice* of his condemnation.

14th. It is absurd to suppose that a careless, unconvicted sinner can *intelligently* and *thankfully* accept the Gospel offer of pardon, until he accepts the righteousness of God in his condemnation. Conversion to Christ is an intelligent change. Hence the conviction of ill desert must precede the acceptance of mercy; for without this conviction the soul does not understand its need of mercy. Of course, the offer is rejected. The Gospel is no glad tidings to the careless, unconvicted sinner.

15th. The spirituality of the law should be unsparingly applied to the conscience until the sinner's self-righteousness is annihilated, and he stands speechless and self-condemned before a holy God.

16th. In some men this conviction is already ripe, and the preacher may at once present Christ, with the hope of his being accepted; but at ordinary times such cases are exceptional. The great mass of sinners are careless, unconvicted, and to assume their conviction and preparedness to receive Christ, and, hence, to urge sinners immediately to accept him, is to begin at the wrong end of our work—to render our teaching unintelligible. And such a course will be found to have been a mistaken one, whatever present appearances and professions may indicate. The sinner may obtain a hope under such teaching; but unless the Holy Spirit supplies something which the preacher has failed to do, it will be found to be a false one. All the essential links of truth must be supplied.

17th. When the law has done its work, annihilated self-righteousness, and shut the sinner up to the acceptance of mercy, he should be made to understand the delicacy and danger of dispensing with the execution of the penalty when the precept of law has been violated.

18th. Right here the sinner should be made to understand that from the benevolence of God he cannot justly infer that God can consistently forgive him. For unless public justice can be satisfied the law of universal benevolence forbids the forgiveness of sin. If public justice is not regarded in the exercise of mercy, the good of the *public* is sacrificed to that of the *individual*. God will never do this.

19th. This teaching will shut the sinner up to look for some offering to *public* justice.

20th. Now give him the atonement as a *revealed fact*, and shut him up to Christ as his own sin offering. Press the *revealed fact* that God has accepted the death of Christ as a substitute for the sinner's death, and that this is to be received upon the *testimony* of God.

21st. Being already crushed into contrition by the convicting power of the law, the revelation of the love of God manifested in the death of Christ, will naturally beget self-loathing, and that godly sorrow that needeth not to be repented of. Under this showing the sinner can never forgive himself. God is holy and glorious; and he a sinner, saved by sovereign grace. This teaching may be more or less formal as the souls you address are more or less thoughtful, intelligent, and careful to understand.

22d. It was not by accident that the dispensation of law preceded the dispensation of grace; but it is in the natural order of things, in accordance with established mental laws, and evermore the law must prepare the way for the Gospel. To overlook this in instructing souls is almost certain to result in false hope, the introduction of a false standard of Christian experience, and to fill the church with spurious converts. Time will make this plain.

23d. The truth should be preached to the persons present, and so personally applied as to compel every one to feel that you mean *him* or *her*. As has been often said of a certain preacher: "He does not preach, but explains what other people preach, and seems to be talking directly to *me*."

24th. This course will rivet attention, and cause your hearers to lose sight of the length of your sermon. They will tire if they feel no *personal* interest in what you say. To secure their individual interest in what you are saying is an indispensable condition of their being converted. And, while their individual interest is thus awakend, and held fast to your subject, they will seldom complain of the length of your sermon. In nearly all cases, if the people complain of the length of our sermons, it is because we fail to interest them *personally* in what we say.

25th. If we fail to interest them personally, it is either because we do not address them personally, or because we lack unction and earnestness, or because we lack clearness and force, or certainly because we lack something that we ought to possess. To make them feel that we and God means *them* is indispensable.

26th. Do not think that earnest piety alone can make you successful in winning souls. This is only one condition of success. There must be common sense, there must be spiritual wisdom in adapting means to the end. Matter and manner and order and time and place all need to be wisely adjusted to the end we have in view.

27th. God may sometimes convert souls by men who are not spiritually minded, when they possess that natural sagacity which enables them to adapt means to that end, but the Bible warrants us in affirming that these are exceptional cases. Without this sagacity and adaptation of means to this end a *spiritual* mind will fail to win souls to Christ.

28th. Souls need instruction in accordance with the

measure of their intelligence. A few simple truths, when wisely applied and illuminated by the Holy Ghost, will convert Children to Christ. I say *wisely* applied, for they too are sinners, and need the application of the law, as a schoolmaster, to bring them to Christ, that they may be justified by faith. It will sooner or later appear that supposed conversions to Christ are spurious where the preparatory law work has been omitted, and Christ has not been embraced as a Saviour from sin and condemnation.

29th. Sinners of education and culture, who are, after all, unconvicted and skeptical in their hearts, need a vastly more extended and thorough application of truth. Professional men need the Gospel net to be thrown quite around them, with no break through which they can escape; and, when thus dealt with, they are all the more sure to be converted in proportion to their real intelligence. I have found that a course of lectures addressed to lawyers, and adapted to their habits of thought and reasoning, is most *sure* to convert them.

30th. To be successful in winning souls, we need to be observing—to study individual character, to press the facts of experience, observation, and revelation upon the consciences of all classes.

31st. Be sure to explain the terms you use. Before I was converted, I failed to hear the terms repentance, faith, regeneration, and conversion intelligibly explained. Repentance was described as a feeling. Faith was represented as an intellectual *act* or *state*, and not as a *voluntary* act of *trust*. Regeneration was represented as some physical change in the *nature*, produced by the *direct power* of the Holy Ghost, instead of a *voluntary*

change of the *ultimate preference* of the soul, produced by the spiritual *illumination* of the Holy Ghost. Even conversion was represented as being the work of the Holy Ghost in such a sense as to cover up the fact that it is the sinner's own act, under the persuasions of the Holy Ghost.

32d. Urge the fact that repentance involves the voluntary and actual renunciation of all sin; that it is a radical change of mind toward God.

33d. Also the fact that saving faith is *heart trust* in Christ; that it works by love, it purifies the heart, and overcomes the world; that no faith is saving that has not these attributes.

34th. The sinner is required to put forth certain *mental acts*. What these are he needs to understand. Error in mental philosophy but embarrasses, and may fatally deceive the inquiring soul. Sinners are often put upon a wrong track. They are often put upon a strain to *feel* instead of putting forth the required acts of *will*. Before my conversion I never received from *man* any intelligible idea of the mental acts that God required of me.

35th. The deceitfulness of sin renders the inquiring soul exceedingly exposed to delusion; therefore it behooves teachers to beat about every bush, and to search out every nook and corner where a soul can find a false refuge. Be so thorough and discriminating as to render it as nearly impossible as the nature of the case will admit that the inquirer should entertain a false hope.

36th. Do not fear to be thorough. Do not through false pity put on a plaster where the probe is needed. Do not fear that you shall discourage the convicted sin-

ner, and turn him back, by searching him out to the bottom. If the Holy Spirit is dealing with him, the more you search and probe the more impossible it will be for the soul to turn back or rest in sin.

37th. If you would save the soul, do not spare a right hand, or right eye, or any darling idol ; but see to it that every form of sin is given up. Insist upon full confession of wrong, to all that have a right to confession. Insist upon full restitution, so far as is possible, to all injured parties. Do not fall short of the express teachings of Christ on this subject. Whoever the sinner may be, let him distinctly understand that unless he forsakes all that he has he cannot be the disciple of Christ. Insist upon entire and universal consecration of all the powers of body and mind, and of all property, possessions, character, and influence to God. Insist upon the total abandonment to God of all ownership of self, or anything else, as a condition of being accepted.

38th. Understand yourself, and, if possible, make the sinner understand that nothing short of this is involved in true faith or true repentance, and that true consecration involves them all.

39th. Keep constantly before the sinner's mind that it is the *personal* Christ with whom he is dealing, that *God in Christ* is seeking his reconciliation to himself, and that the condition of his reconciliation is that he gives up his will and his whole being to God—that he leave not a hoof behind.

40th. Assure him that "God has given to him eternal life, and this life is in his son"; that "Christ is made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and

redemption"; and that from first to last he is to find his whole salvation in Christ.

41st. When satisfied that the soul intelligently receives all this doctrine, and the Christ herein revealed, then remember that he must persevere unto the end, as the further condition of his salvation. Here you have before you the great work of preventing the soul from backsliding, of securing its permanent sanctification and sealing for eternal glory.

42d. Does not the very common backsliding in heart of converts indicate some grave defect in the teachings of the pulpit on this subject? What does it mean that so many hopeful converts, within a few months of their apparent conversion, lose their first love, lose all their fervency in religion, neglect their duty, and live on in name Christians, but in spirit and life worldlings?

43d. A truly successful preacher must not only win souls to Christ, but must keep them won. He must not only secure their conversion, but their permanent sanctification.

44th. Nothing in the Bible is more expressly promised in this life than *permanent sanctification*. I Thes., v. 23, 24: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." This is unquestionably a prayer of the apostle for permanent sanctification in this life, with an express promise that he who has called us will do it.

45th. We learn from the Scriptures that "*after* we believe" we are or may be *sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise, and that this sealing is the earnest of our

salvation. Eph., i, 13, 14: "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." His sealing this earnest of our inheritance is that which renders our salvation sure. Hence, in Eph., iv, 30, the apostle says: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And in II Cor., i, 21st and 22d verses, the apostle says: "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Thus we are *established* in Christ and *anointed* by the Spirit, and also *sealed* by the *earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts. And this, remember, is a blessing that we receive after that we believe, as Paul has informed us in his Epistle to the Ephesians, above quoted. Now it is of the last importance that converts should be taught not to rest short of this *permanent sanctification*, this sealing, this being established in Christ by the special anointing of the Holy Ghost.

46th. Now, brethren, unless we know what this means by our own experience, and lead converts to this experience, we fail most lamentably and essentially in our teaching. We leave out the very cream and fullness of the Gospel.

47th. It should be understood that while this experience is rare amongst ministers it will be discredited by the churches, and it will be next to impossible for an isolated preacher of this doctrine to overcome the un-

belief of his church. They will feel doubtful about it, because so few preach it or believe in it; and will account for their pastor's insisting upon it by saying that his experience is owing to his peculiar temperament, and thus they will fail to receive this anointing because of their unbelief. Under such circumstances it is all the more necessary to insist much upon the importance and privilege of permanent sanctification.

48th. Sin consists in carnal mindedness, in "obeying the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Permanent sanctification consists in entire and permanent consecration to God. It implies the refusal to obey the desire of the flesh or of the mind. The baptism or sealing of the Holy Spirit subdues the power of the desires and strengthens and confirms the will in resisting the impulse of desire, and in abiding permanently in a state of making the whole being an offering to God.

49th. If we are silent upon this subject, the natural inference will be that we do not believe in it, and, of course, that we know nothing about it in experience. This will inevitably be a stumbling-block to the church.

50th. Since this is undeniably an important doctrine, and plainly taught in the Gospel, and is, indeed, the marrow and fatness of the Gospel, to fail in teaching this is to rob the church of its richest inheritance.

51st. The testimony of the church, and to a great extent of the ministry, on the subject has been lamentably defective. This legacy has been withheld from the church, and is it any wonder that she so disgracefully backslides? The testimony of the comparatively few, here and there, that insist upon this doctrine is

almost nullified by the counter testimony or culpable silence of the great mass of Christ's witnesses.

52d. My dear brethren, my convictions are so ripe and my feelings so deep upon this subject that I must not conceal from you my fears that lack of personal experience, in many cases, is the reason of this great defect in preaching the Gospel. I do not say this to reproach you; it is not in my heart to do so. It is not wonderful that many of you, at least, have not this experience. Your religious training has been defective. You have been led to take a different view of this subject. Various causes have operated to prejudice you against this blessed doctrine of the glorious Gospel. You have not intellectually believed it; and, of course, have not received Christ in his fullness into your hearts. Perhaps this doctrine to you has been a stumbling-block and a rock of offense; but I pray you let not prejudice prevail, but venture upon Christ by a present acceptance of him as your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and see if he will not do for you exceeding abundantly, above all that you asked or thought.

53d. No man, saint or sinner, should be left by us to rest or be quiet in the indulgence of *any sin*. No one should be allowed to entertain the hope of Heaven, if we can prevent it, who lives in the indulgence of known sin in any form. Our constant demand and persuasion should be, "Be ye holy, for God is holy." "Be ye perfect, even as your father in Heaven is perfect." Let us remember the manner in which Christ concludes his memorable Sermon on the Mount. After spreading out those awfully searching truths before his hearers, and demanding that they should be perfect, as their

Father in Heaven was perfect, he concludes by assuring them that no one could be saved who did not receive and obey his teachings. Instead of attempting to please our people in their sins, we should continually endeavor to hunt and persuade them *out* of their sins. Brethren, let us do it, as we would not have our skirts defiled with their blood. If we pursue this course, and constantly preach with unction and power, and abide in the fullness of the doctrine of Christ, and we may joyfully expect to save ourselves and them that hear us.

CHAPTER IX.

PREACHING SO AS TO CONVERT NOBODY.

BY PRESIDENT CHAS. G. FINNEY.

The design of this article is to propound several rules by a steady conformity to any one of which a man may preach so as not to convert anybody. It is generally conceded at the present day that the Holy Spirit converts souls to Christ by means of truth *adapted to that end*. It follows that a selfish preacher will not skillfully adapt means to convert souls to Christ, for this is not his end.

Rule 1st. Let your supreme motive be to secure your own popularity; then, of course, your preaching will be adapted to that end, and not to convert souls to Christ.

2d. Aim at pleasing, rather than at converting your hearers.

3d. Aim at securing for yourself the reputation of a beautiful writer.

4th. Let your sermons be written with a high degree of literary finish.

5th. Let them be short, occupying in the reading not to exceed from twenty to twenty-five minutes.

6th. Let your style be flowery, ornate, and quite above the comprehension of the common people.

7th. Be sparing of thought, lest your sermon contain truth enough to convert a soul.

8th. Lest your sermon should make a saving impression, announce no distinct propositions or heads, that will be remembered, to disturb the consciences of your hearers.

9th. Make no distinct points, and take no disturbing *issues* with the consciences of your hearers, lest they remember these issues, and become alarmed about their souls.

10th. Avoid a logical division and sub-division of your subject, lest you should too thoroughly instruct your people.

11th. Give your sermon the form and substance of a flowing, beautifully written, but never-to-be remembered essay; so that your hearers will say "it was a beautiful sermon," but can give no further account of it.

12th. Avoid preaching doctrines that are offensive to the carnal mind, lest they should say of you, as they did of Christ, "This is a hard saying. Who can hear it?" and that you are injuring your influence.

13th. Denounce sin in the abstract, but make no allusion to the sins of your present audience.

14th. Keep the spirituality of God's holy law, by which is the knowledge of sin, out of sight, lest the sinner should see his lost condition, and flee from the wrath to come.

15th. Preach the Gospel as a remedy, but conceal or ignore the fatal disease of the sinner.

16th. Preach salvation by grace; but ignore the

condemned and lost condition of the sinner, lest he should understand what you mean by grace, and feel his need of it.

17th. Preach Christ as an infinitely amiable and good-natured being; but ignore those scathing rebukes of sinners and hypocrites which so often made his hearers tremble.

18th. Avoid especially preaching to those who are present. Preach about sinners, and not to them. Say *they*, and not *you*, lest any one should make a personal and saving application of your subject.

19th. Aim to make your hearers pleased with themselves and pleased with you, and be careful not to wound the feelings of any one.

20th. Preach no searching sermons, lest you convict and convert the worldly members of your church.

21st. Avoid awakening uncomfortable memories by reminding your hearers of their past sins.

22d. Do not make the impression that God commands your hearers now and here to obey the truth.

23d. Do not make the impression that you expect your hearers to commit themselves upon the spot and give their hearts to God.

24th. Leave the impression that they are expected to go away in their sins, and to consider the matter at their convenience.

25th. Dwell much upon their inability to obey, and leave the impression that they must wait for God to change their *natures*.

26th. Make no appeals to the fears of sinners; but leave the impression that they have no reason to fear.

27th. Say so little of Hell that your people will infer that you do not believe in its existence.

28th. Make the impression that, if God is as good as you are, He will send no one to Hell.

29th. Preach the love of God, but ignore the holiness of His love, that will by no means clear the impenitent sinner.

30th. Often present God in his parental love and relations; but ignore His governmental and legal relations to His subjects, lest the sinner should find himself condemned already, and the wrath of God abiding on him.

31st. Preach God as all mercy, lest a fuller representation of His character should alarm the consciences of your hearers.

32d. Try to convert sinners to Christ without producing any uncomfortable convictions of sin.

33d. Flatter the rich, so as to repel the poor, and you will convert none of either class.

34th. Make no disagreeable allusions to the doctrines of self-denial, cross-bearing, and crucifixion to the world, lest you should convict and convert some of your church members.

35th. Admit, either expressly or impliedly, that all men have some moral goodness in them; lest sinners should understand that they need a radical change of heart, from sin to holiness.

36th. Avoid pressing the doctrine of total moral depravity; lest you should offend, or even convict and convert, the moralist.

37th. Do not rebuke the worldly tendencies of the

church, lest you should hurt their feelings, and finally convert some of them.

38th. Should any express anxiety about their souls, do not probe them by any uncomfortable allusion to their sin and ill-desert; but encourage them to join the church at once, and exhort them to assume their perfect safety within the fold.

39th. Preach the love of Christ not as enlightened benevolence, that is holy, just, and sin-hating; but as a sentiment, an involuntary and indiscriminating fondness.

40th. Be sure not to represent religion as a state of loving self-sacrifice for God and souls; but rather as a free and easy state of self-indulgence. By thus doing, you will prevent sound conversions to Christ, and convert your hearers to yourself.

41st. So select your themes, and so present them, as to attract and flatter the wealthy, aristocratic, self-indulgent, extravagant, pleasure-seeking classes, and you will not convert any of them to the cross-bearing religion of Christ.

42d. Be time-serving, or you will endanger your salary; and, besides, if you speak out and are faithful, you may convert somebody.

43d. Do not preach with a divine unction, lest your preaching make a saving impression.

44th. To avoid this, do not maintain a close walk with God, but rely upon your learning and study.

45th. Lest you should pray too much, engage in light reading and worldly amusements.

46th. That your people may not think you in earnest to save their souls, and, as a consequence, heed your

preaching, encourage church-fairs, lotteries, and other gambling and worldly expedients to raise money for church purposes.

47th. If you do not yourself approve of such things, make no public mention of your disapprobation, lest your church should give them up, and turn their attention to saving souls and be saved themselves.

48th. Do not rebuke extravagance in dress, lest you should uncomfortably impress your vain and worldly church-members.

49th. Lest you should be troubled with revival scenes and labors, encourage parties, pic-nics, excursions, and worldly amusements, so as to divert attention from the serious work of saving souls.

50th. Ridicule solemn earnestness in pulling sinners out of the fire, and recommend, by precept and example, a jovial, fun-loving religion, and sinners will have little respect for your serious preaching.

51st. Cultivate a fastidious taste in your people, by avoiding all disagreeable allusions to the last judgment and final retribution.

52d. Treat such uncomfortable doctrines as obsolete and out of place in these days of Christian refinement.

53d. Do not commit yourself to much-needed reforms, lest you should compromise your popularity and injure your influence. Or you may make some branch of outward reform a hobby, and dwell so much upon it as to divert attention from the great work of converting souls to Christ.

54th. So exhibit religion as to encourage the selfish pursuit of it. Make the impression upon sinners that

their own safety and happiness is the supreme motive for being religious.

55th. Do not lay much stress upon the efficacy and necessity of prayer, lest the Holy Spirit should be poured out upon you and the congregation, and sinners should be converted.

56th. Make little or no impression upon your hearers, so that you can repeat your old sermons often without its being noticed.

57th. If your text suggest any alarming thought, pass lightly over it, and by no means dwell upon and enforce it.

58th. Avoid all illustrations, repetitions, and emphatic sentences, that may compel your people to remember what you say.

59th. Avoid all heat and earnestness in your delivery, lest you make the impression that you really believe what you say.

60th. Address the imagination, and not the conscience, of your hearers.

61st. Make it your great aim to be personally popular with all classes of your hearers.

62d. Be tame and timid in presenting the claims of God, as would become you in presenting your own claims.

63d. Be careful not to testify from your own personal experience of the power of the Gospel, lest you should produce the conviction upon your hearers that you have something which they need.

64th. See that you say nothing that will appear to any of your hearers to mean him or her, unless it be something flattering.

65th. Encourage church sociables, and attend them yourself, because they tend so strongly to levity as to compromise Christian dignity and sobriety, and thus paralyze the power of your preaching.

66th. Encourage the cultivation of the social in so many ways as to divert the attention of yourself and your church-members from the infinite guilt and danger of the unconverted among you.

67th. In those sociables talk a little about religion, but avoid any serious appeal to the heart and conscience of those who attend, lest you should discourage their attendance, always remembering that they do not go to socials to be earnestly dealt with in regard to their relations to God. In this way you will effectually so employ yourself and church-members as that your preaching will not convert anybody.

The experience of ministers who have steadily adhered to any of the above rules, will attest the soul-destroying efficacy of such a course, and churches whose ministers have steadily conformed to any of these rules, can testify that such preaching does not convert souls to Christ.

Note.—As President Finney's ministry, in the opinion of good judges of modern times, was probably blessed with more numerous, thorough, and permanent conversions, during fifty years, than almost any other minister of Christ, the above counsels are entitled to corresponding appreciation.—*Compiler.*