

Alarm to the Unconverted

Directions to the Unconverted

By [Joseph Alleine](#)

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Before you read these directions, I advise you, yes, I charge you before God and His holy angels, that you resolve to follow them, as far as conscience shall be convinced of their agreeableness to God's Word and your state; and call in His assistance and blessing that they may succeed. And as I have sought the Lord and consulted His oracles as to what advice to give you, so must you entertain it with that awe, reverence, and purpose of obedience, which the word of the living God requires.

Now, then, attend. 'Set your heart unto all that I shall testify unto you this day; for it is not a vain thing—it is your life' (Deut 32:46). This is the aim of all that has been spoken hitherto, to bring you to set your heart upon turning to God. I would not trouble you, nor torment you before the time with the thoughts of your eternal misery—but in order that you may make your escape. Were you shut up under your present misery without remedy, it were but mercy to let you alone, that you might take in that little poor comfort which you are capable of in this world; but you may yet be happy, if you do not willfully refuse the means of your recovery. Behold, I hold open the door to you; arise, take your flight. I set the way of life before you; walk in it, and you shall live, and not die. *It grieves me that you should be your own murderers, and throw yourselves headlong, when God and man cry out to you, as Peter in another case to his Master, 'Spare yourself.'*

The destruction of ungodly men is willful. God has made his people out to them, as Paul to the jailer when about to murder himself, 'Do yourself no harm.' [Acts 16:28] The ministers of Christ forewarn them, and follow them, and would gladly have them back; but *alas! no exhortations or entreaties will prevail—but men will hurl themselves into perdition, while pity itself looks on.*

What shall I say? Would it not grieve a person of any humanity, if, in the time of a raging plague, he should have a remedy that would infallibly cure all the country and recover the most hopeless patients, and yet his friends and neighbors should die by hundreds around him, because they would not use it? Men and brethren, though you carry the certain symptoms of death on your faces—yet I have a prescription that will cure you all infallibly. Follow these directions, and if you do not then win heaven, I will be content to lose it.

Hear, then, O sinner, and as ever you would be converted and saved, take the following counsel.

1. Set it down with yourself as an undoubted truth, that it is impossible for you ever to get to heaven in this your unconverted state.

Can any other but Christ save you? and He tells you He will never do it except you are regenerated and converted. Does He not keep the keys of heaven, and can you go in without His permission? as you must, if ever you go in your natural condition, without a sound and thorough conversion.

2. Labor to get a thorough sight and lively sense and feeling of your sins.

Until men are weary and heavy laden, and pricked at the heart, and quite sick of sin, they will not come to Christ for cure, nor sincerely enquire, 'What shall we do?' [Acts 2:37] They must see themselves as dead men, before they will come unto Christ that they may live. Labor, therefore, to set all your sins in order before you; do not be afraid to look upon them—but let your spirit make diligent search. Enquire into your heart, and into your life; enter into a thorough examination of yourself and all your ways, that you may make a full discovery; and call in the help of God's Spirit, out of a sense of your own inability to do this by yourself, for it is His proper work to convince of sin. Spread all before your conscience, until your heart and eyes are set weeping. Do not leave striving with God and your own soul, until it cry out under the sense of your sins, as the enlightened jailer, 'What must I do to be saved?' [Acts 16:30] To this purpose,

Meditate on the NUMBER of your sins. David's heart failed when he thought of this, and considered that he had more sins than the hairs of his head. This made him cry out for the multitude of God's tender mercies. *The loathsome carcass does not more hatefully swarm with crawling maggots, than an unsanctified soul with filthy lusts.* They fill his head, his heart, his eyes and his mouth. Look backward; where was ever the place, what was ever the time, in which you did not sin? Look inward; what part or power can you find in soul or body which is not poisoned with sin; what duty do you ever perform, into which this poison is not shed? Oh how great is the sum of your debts, who ha been all your life running into debt, and never did or can pay off one penny! Look over the sin of your nature, and all its cursed brood, the sins of your life. Call to mind your omissions and commissions; the sins of your thoughts, words, and actions; the sins of your youth, and the sins of your riper years. Do not be like a desperate bankrupt who is afraid to look over his books. Read the records of conscience carefully. These books must be opened sooner or later.

Meditate upon the AGGRAVATIONS of your sins, as they are the grand enemies

of the God of your life, and of the life of your soul; in a word, they are the public enemies of all mankind. How do David, Ezra, Daniel, and the good Levites, aggravate their sins, from the consideration of their opposition to God and His good and righteous laws, and of the mercies and warnings against which they were committed! Oh the work that sin has done in the world! This is the enemy that has brought in death; that has robbed and enslaved man, that has turned the world upside down, and sown the dissensions between man and the creatures, between man and man, yes, between man and himself, setting the animal part against the rational, the will against the judgment, lust against conscience; yes, worst of all, between God and man, making the sinner both hateful to God and the hater of God. O man, how can you make so light of sin?

Sin is the traitor that thirsted for the blood of the Son of God, that sold Him, that mocked Him, that scourged Him, that spat in His face, that tore His hands, that pierced His side, that pressed His soul, that mangled His body, that never left Him until he had bound Him, condemned Him, nailed Him, crucified Him, and put Him to an open shame! Sin is that deadly poison, so powerful of operation that one drop of it, shed on the root of mankind, has corrupted, spoiled, poisoned, and ruined the whole race. Sin is the bloody executioner that has killed the prophets, burned the martyrs, murdered all the apostles, all the patriarchs, all the kings and potentates. Sin has destroyed cities, swallowed empires, and devoured whole nations. Whatever weapon it was done by, it was sin that caused the execution. Do you yet think sin only a small thing?

If Adam and all his children could be dug out of their graves, and their bodies piled up to heaven, and an inquiry were made as to what heinous murderer were guilty of all this blood, it would be all found in sin!

Study the nature of sin, until your heart incline to fear and loathe it; and meditate on the aggravations of your particular sins, how you have sinned against all God's warnings, against your own prayers, against mercies, against corrections, against clearest light, against freest love, against your own resolutions, against promises, vows, and covenants of better obedience. Charge your heart with these things until it blush for shame, and be brought out of all good opinion of itself.

Meditate on the DESERT of sin. It cries to Heaven; it calls for vengeance. Its due wages are death and damnation; it brings the curse of God upon the soul and body. The least sinful word or thought lays you under the infinite wrath of God. O what a load of wrath, what a weight of curses, what treasures of vengeance, have all the millions of your sins deserved! Oh judge yourself that the Lord may not judge you.

Meditate on the deformity and DEFILEMENT of sin. It is black as hell, the very image and likeness of the devil drawn upon the soul. It would terrify you to see yourself in the hateful deformity of your nature. There is no mire so unclean, no

plague or leprosy so detestable as sin, in which you are plunged and rendered more displeasing to the pure and holy nature of the glorious God than the vilest object can be to you. Could you take up a toad into your bosom; could you cherish it, and take delight in it? But you are as contrary to the pure and perfect holiness of the divine nature, until you are purified by the blood of Jesus and the power of renewing grace.

Above all other sins, consider these two.

[1] The sin of your heart.

It is to little purpose to lop off the branches while the root of corruption remains untouched. In vain do men stop up the streams, when the fountain is running which fills up all again. Let the axe of your repentance, with David's go to the root of sin. Study how deep, how permanent is your natural pollution, how universal it is, until you cry out, with Paul, against your body of death. The heart is never soundly broken until thoroughly convinced of the heinousness of its original and deep-rooted depravity. Here fix your thoughts; Sin is that which makes you backward to all good, and prone to all evil; that sheds blindness, pride, prejudice, and unbelief into your mind; enmity, inconstancy, and obstinacy into your will; inordinate heats and colds into your affections; insensibleness and unfaithfulness into your conscience; slipperiness into your memory. In a word, sin has put every wheel of the soul out of order, and made it, from a habitation of holiness, to become a very hell of iniquity. This is what has defiled and perverted all your members, and turned them into weapons of unrighteousness, and servants of sin; that has filled the head with carnal and corrupt designs, the hand with sinful practices, the eyes with wandering and wantonness, the tongue with deadly poison. This is what has opened the ears to tales, flattery and filthy talk, and shut them against the instructions of life; and has rendered your heart the cursed source of all deadly imaginations, so that it pours out its wickedness without ceasing even as naturally as a fountain pours forth its waters—or the raging sea casts forth mire and dirt.

And will you yet be in love with yourself, and tell us any longer of your good heart? Oh never leave meditating on the desperate contagion, the original corruption of your heart, until, with Ephraim, you bemoan yourself; and with the deepest shame and sorrow smite on your bosom, as the publican; and, with Job, abhor yourself and repent in dust and ashes.

[2] The particular evil that you are most addicted to.

Find out all its aggravations; set home upon your heart all God's threats against it. Repentance drives before it the whole herd—but especially sticks the arrow in the beloved sin, and singles this out, above the rest, to run it down. Oh labor to make this sin odious to your soul, and double your guard and resolutions against it, realize that this is most dishonoring to God and dangerous to you.

3. Strive to affect your heart with a deep sense of your present misery.

Read over the previous chapter again and again, and get it out of the book into your heart. *Remember when you lie down, that for all you know, you may awake in flames; and when you rise up, that by the next night you may make your bed in hell.* Is it nothing to you to live in such a fearful state, to stand tottering on the brink of the bottomless pit; and to live at the mercy of every disease that, if it but fall upon you, will send you forthwith into the burnings? Suppose you saw a condemned wretch hanging over Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace by nothing but a thread which was ready to break every moment, would not your heart tremble for such a one? You are the man! This is your very case, O man, woman, who reads this, if you are yet unconverted. What if the thread of your life should break—and you know not but it may be the next night, yes, the next moment—where would you be then? Where would you drop? Truly, upon the breaking of this thread, *you would fall into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, where you must lie while God has a being,* if you die in your present state. And does not your soul tremble as you read? Do not your tears wet the paper, and your heart throb in your bosom? Do you not yet begin to smite on your bosom, and think with yourself what need you have of a change? Oh what is your heart made of? Have you not only lost all regard to God—but all love and pity to yourself?

O study your misery until your heart cry out for Christ as earnestly as ever a drowning man did for a boat—or the wounded man for a surgeon. Men must come to see the danger and feel the smart of their deadly sores and sickness—or Christ will be to them a physician of no value. The manslayer hastens to the city of refuge, when pursued by the avenger of blood; but men must be even forced and driven out of themselves—or they will not come to Christ. It was distress and extremity that made the prodigal think of returning. While Laodicea thinks herself rich, increased in goods, in need of nothing, there is little hope. She must be deeply convinced of her wretchedness, blindness, poverty, and nakedness, before she will come to Christ for His gold, raiment, and eye salve. Therefore hold the eyes of conscience open, amplify your misery as much as possible, do not flee the sight of it for fear it should fill you with terror. The sense of your misery is but as it were the festering of the wound, which is necessary to the cure. Better now to *fear* the torments that await you—than to *feel* them hereafter.

4. Settle it in your heart that you must look outside of yourself and away from your own doings for help.

Do not think your praying, reading, hearing, confessing or amending, will effect the cure. These must be attended to—but you are undone if you rest in them.

You are a lost man if you hope to escape drowning on any other plank but Jesus Christ!

You must renounce your own wisdom, your own righteousness, your own strength, and throw yourself wholly upon Christ—or you cannot escape. While men trust in themselves, and establish their own righteousness, and have confidence in the flesh, they will not come savingly to Christ. You must know your gain to be but loss, your strength but weakness, your righteousness to be but rags and rottenness, before there will be an effectual closure between Christ and you. Can the lifeless body shake off its grave-clothes, and unloose the cords of death? Then may you recover yourself, who are dead in trespasses and sins, and under an impossibility of serving your Maker acceptably in this condition.

Therefore, when you go to pray or meditate—or to do any of the duties to which you are here directed, go out of yourself, and call in the help of the Spirit, as despairing to do anything pleasing to God in your own strength. Yet do not neglect duty. While the eunuch was reading, then the Holy Spirit did send Philip to him. When the disciples were praying, when Cornelius and his friends were hearing, then the Holy Spirit fell upon and filled them all.

5. Henceforth renounce all your sins.

If you yield yourself to the practice of any sin, you are undone. In vain do you hope for life by Christ, except you depart from iniquity. Forsake your sins—or you cannot find mercy. *You cannot be married to Christ except you be divorced from sin.* Give up the traitor—or you can have no peace with heaven. Keep not Delilah in your lap. You must part with your sins—or with your soul: spare but one sin and God will not spare you. Your sins must die—or you must die for them. If you allow one sin, though but a little, a secret one, though you may plead necessity, and have a hundred shifts and excuses for it, the life of your soul must go for the life of that sin. And will it not be dearly bought?

O sinner, hear and consider. If you will part with your sins, God will give you His Christ. Is not this a fair exchange? I testify unto you this day, that if you perish, it is not because there was never a Savior provided, nor life tendered—but because, with the Jews, you prefer the murderer before the Savior, sin before Christ, and love darkness rather than light. Search your heart therefore with candles, as the Jews did their houses for leaven before the Passover. Labor to find out your sins; enter into your closet, and consider ... What evil have I lived in? ... What duty have I neglected towards God? ... what sin have I lived in against my brother? And now *strike the darts through the heart of your sin*, as Joab did through Absalom's. Do not stand looking at your sins, nor rolling the morsel under your tongue—but cast it out as poison, with fear and detestation.

Alas, what will your sins do for you that you should hesitate to part with them?

They will flatter you—but they will undo you and poison you while they please you, and arm the justice and wrath of the infinite God against you. They will open hell for you, and pile up fuel to burn you. Behold the gibbet that they have prepared for you. O treat them like Haman, and do upon them the execution they would else have done upon you. Away with them, crucify them and let Christ only be Lord over you.

6. Make a solemn choice of God for your portion and blessedness.

With all possible devotion and veneration, take the Lord for your God. Set the world, with all its glory, and paint, and gallantry, with all its pleasures and promotions, on the one hand; and set God, with all His infinite excellencies and perfections, on the other; and see that you do deliberately make your choice. Take up your rest in God. Sit down under His shadow. Let His promises and perfections turn the scale against all the world. Settle it in your heart, that the Lord is an all-sufficient portion, that you cannot be miserable while you have God to live upon. Take Him for your shield and exceeding great reward. God alone is more than all the world; content yourself with Him. Let others possess the preferments and glory of the world; but you must place your happiness in the favor of God, and in the light of His countenance.

Poor sinner, you have fallen off from God, and have engaged His power and wrath against you; yet know, that of His abundant grace He offers to be your God again in Christ. What do you say? Will you have the Lord for your God? Take this counsel, and you shall have Him. Come to Him by Christ, renounce the idols of your pleasures, gain, reputation. Let these be pulled from their throne, and set God's interest uppermost in your heart. Take Him as God, to be chief in your affections and purposes; for He will not endure to have any set above Him. In a word, you must take Him in all His personal relations and in all His essential perfections.

[1] In all His personal relations.

God the FATHER must be taken for your Father. O come to Him with the prodigal: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight, and am not worthy to be called your son' [Luke 15:21]; but since of Your wonderful mercy You are pleased to take me, that am of myself most vile, even a beast and no man before You—to be Your child, I solemnly take You for my Father, commend myself to Your care, and trust to Your providence, and cast my burden on You. I depend on Your provision, and submit to Your corrections, and trust under the shadow of Your wings, and hide in Your chambers, and fly to Your name. I renounce all confidence in myself; I repose my confidence in You. I declare my engagement with You; I will be for You, and not for another.'

God the SON must be taken for your Savior, your Redeemer, and your

Righteousness. He must be accepted, as the only way to the Father, and the only means of life. O then put off the raiment of your captivity, put on the wedding garment, and go and marry yourself to Christ. 'Lord, I am Yours, and all I have, my body, soul, and estate. I give my heart to You; I will be Yours undividedly, Yours everlastingly. I will set Your name on all I have, and use it only as Your goods, during Your absence, resigning all to You. I will have no king but You to reign over me. Other lords have had dominion over me; but now I will make mention of Your name only, and do here take an oath of fidelity to You, promising to serve and fear You above all competitors. I reject my own righteousness, and despair of ever being pardoned and saved for my own duties or graces, and lean solely on Your all-sufficient sacrifice and intercession for pardon, life, and acceptance before God. I take You for my only Guide and Instructor, resolving to be directed by You, and to wait for Your counsel.'

Lastly, God the SPIRIT must be taken for your Sanctifier, for your Advocate, your Counselor, your Comforter, the Teacher of your ignorance, the Pledge of your inheritance. 'Awake, you North wind, and come, you South wind—and blow upon my garden' (Song 4:16). 'Come, Spirit of the Most High; here is a temple for You; do You rest here forever; dwell here. Lo, I give possession to You, full possession; I send You the keys of my heart, that all may be Yours. I give up the use of all to You, that every faculty and every member may be Your instrument to work righteousness and do the will of my Father who is in heaven.'

[2] In all His essential perfections.

Consider how the Lord has revealed Himself to you in His Word. Will you take Him as such a God? O sinner, here is the most blessed news that ever came to the sons of men: The Lord will be your God, if you will but close with Him in His excellencies. Will you have the merciful, the gracious, the sin-pardoning God to be your God? 'O yes,' says the sinner, 'otherwise I am undone.' But He further tells you, 'I am the holy and sin-hating God; if you will be owned as one of My people, you must be holy—holy in heart, holy in life. You must put away all your iniquities, be they ever so dear, ever so natural, ever so necessary to the maintaining of your worldly interest. Unless you will be at enmity with sin, I cannot be your God. Cast out the leaven. Put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Bring forth My enemies—or there is no peace to be had with Me.' What does your heart answer?

'Lord, I desire to be holy as You are holy, and to be made partaker of Your holiness. I love You, not only for Your goodness and mercy—but for Your holiness and purity. I take Your holiness for my happiness. O be to me a fountain of holiness. Set on me the stamp and impress of Your holiness. I will thankfully part with all my sins at Your command. My wilful sins I do henceforth forsake; and for my infirmities that cleave unto me, though I would be rid of them, I will strive against them continually. I detest them, and will pray against them, and never let them have rest in my soul.' Beloved, whoever of you will thus accept the

Lord, He shall be your God.

Again, He tells you, 'I am the all-sufficient God. Will you lay all at My feet, give up all to My disposal, and take Me for your only portion? Will you own and honor my all-sufficiency? Will you take Me as your happiness and treasure, your hope and bliss? I am a sun and a shield all in one; will you have Me for your all?' Now what do you say to this? Does your soul long for the onions and fleshpots of Egypt? Are you loath to change your earthly happiness for a portion in God; and though you would be glad to have God and the world too—yet can you not think of having Him, and nothing but Him; but had rather take up with the earth below, if God would but let you keep it as long as you would? This is a fearful sign. But now, if you are willing to sell all for the Pearl of great price; if your heart answers, 'Lord, I desire no other portion but You. Take the grain and the wine and the oil who will—just so that I may have the light of Your countenance. I fix upon You for my happiness; I gladly venture myself on You, and trust myself with You. I set my hope in You; I take up my rest with You. Let me hear You say, "I am your God, your salvation," and I have enough, all I wish for. I will make no terms with You but for Yourself. Let me have You for sure, let me be able to make my claim and see my title to Yourself; and for other things, I leave them to You. Give me more or less, anything or nothing; I will be satisfied in my God.' Take Him thus, and He is your own.

Again, He tells you, 'I am the sovereign Lord; if you will have Me for your God you must give Me the supremacy. You must not make Me second to sin or any worldly interest. If you will be My people I must have the rule over you; you must not live at your pleasure. Will you come under My yoke? Will you bow to My government? Will you submit to My discipline, to My Word, to My rod?' Sinner, what do you say to this? 'Lord, I had rather be at Your command than live at my own will. I had rather have Your will to be done than mine. I approve of and consent to Your laws, and account it my privilege to be under them. And though the flesh rebels, and often break its bounds, I have resolved to take no other Lord but You. I willingly take the oath of Your supremacy, and acknowledge You for my Sovereign, and resolve all my days to pay the tribute of worship, obedience, love, and service to You, and to live to You to the end of my life.' This is a right acceptance of God.

To be short, He tells you, 'I am the true and faithful God. If you will have Me for your God you must be content to trust Me. Will you venture yourselves upon My Word, and depend on My faithfulness, and take My bond for your security? Will you be content to follow Me in poverty, and reproach, and affliction here; and to tarry until the next world for your preferment? Will you be content to labor and suffer, and to tarry for your returns until the resurrection of the just? My promise will not always be instantly fulfilled; will you have the patience to wait?'

Now, beloved, what do you say to this? Will you have this God for your God? Will you be content to live by faith, and trust Him for an unseen happiness, an unseen

heaven, an unseen glory? Do your hearts answer, 'Lord, we will venture ourselves upon You. We commit ourselves to You, we cast ourselves upon You. We know whom we have trusted. We are willing to take Your word; we prefer Your promises before our own possessions, and the hopes of heaven before all the enjoyments of earth. We will do Your pleasure—what You will here, so that we may have but Your faithful promise for heaven hereafter.' If you can in trust, and upon deliberation, thus accept of God, He will be yours. Thus there must be, in a right conversion to God, a closing with Him suitable to His excellencies. But when men close with His mercy—but yet love sin, hating holiness and purity; or will take Him for their Benefactor—but not for their Sovereign; or for their Patron, and not for their Portion; this is no thorough and sound conversion.

7. Accept the Lord Jesus in all His offices as yours.

Upon these terms Christ may be had. Sinner, you have undone yourself, and are plunged into the ditch of most deplorable misery, out of which you are never able to escape; but Jesus Christ is able and ready to help you, and He freely offers Himself to you. Be your sins ever so many, ever so great—or of ever so long continuance—yet you shall be most certainly pardoned and saved, if you do not wretchedly neglect the offer that in the name of God is here made to you. The Lord Jesus calls you to look to Him and be saved. Come unto Him, and He will never cast you out. Yes, He beseeches you to be reconciled. He cries in the streets; He knocks at your door. He invites you to accept Him, and live with Him. If you die, it is because you would not come to Him for life (Isa 45:22; John 6:37; 2 Cor 5:20; Prov 1:20; Rev 3:20; John 5:40).

Accept an offered Christ now, and you are made forever. Give your consent to Him now, and the match is made; all the world cannot hinder it. Do not stand off because of your unworthiness. I tell you, nothing can undo you but your own unwillingness. Speak, man; will you give your consent? Will you have Christ in all His relations to be yours—your King, your Priest, your Prophet? Will you have Him and bear His cross? Do not take Christ without consideration—but sit down first and count the cost. Will you lay all at His feet? Will you be content to run all hazards with Him? Will you take your lot with Him, fall where it will? Will you deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him? Are you deliberately, understandingly, freely determined to cleave to Him in all times and conditions? If so, you shall never perish—but you have passed from death unto life. Here lies the main point of your salvation, that you are found in your covenant-closure with Jesus Christ; and therefore, if you love yourself, see that you be faithful to God and your soul here.

8. Resign all your powers and faculties, and your whole interest to be His.

'They gave their own selves unto the Lord' (2 Cor 8:5). 'Present your bodies a

living sacrifice' (Rom 12:1). The Lord seeks not yours—but you. Resign therefore your body with its members to Him, and your soul with all its powers, that He may be glorified in your body and in your spirit, which are His.

In a right closing with Christ all your faculties are given up to Him. Your judgment says, 'Lord, You are worthy of all acceptance, Chief of ten thousand: happy is the man who finds You. All the things that are to be desired are not to be compared with You' (Prov 3:13-15).

The understanding lays aside its corrupt reasonings and cavils, and its prejudices against Christ and His ways. It is now past questioning, and determines for Christ against all the world. It concludes it is good to be here, and sees such a treasure in this field, such a value in this pearl, as is worth all (Matt 13:44-46). 'O here is the richest prize that ever man was offered; here is the most sovereign remedy that ever mercy prepared. He is worthy of my esteem, worthy of my choice, worthy of my love, worthy to be embraced, adored, admired, for evermore (Rev 5:12). I approve of His articles: His terms are righteous and reasonable, full of equity and mercy.'

Again, the will resigns. It stands no longer wavering—but is peremptorily determined: 'Lord, Your love has overcome me, You have won me, and You shall have me. Come in, Lord; to You I freely open; I consent to be saved in Your own way. You shall have anything—nay, have all, let me have but You.

The memory gives up to Christ: 'Lord, here is a storehouse for You: out with the trash: lay in the treasures. Let me be a repository of Your truth, Your promises, Your providences.'

The conscience comes in: 'Lord, I will ever side with You: I will be Your faithful registrar. I will warn when the sinner is tempted, and smite when You are offended. I will witness for You, and judge for You, and guide into Your ways, and will never let sin have quiet in this soul.' The affections also come to Christ: 'O,' says Love, 'I am sick for You.'

'O,' says Desire, 'now I have what I sought for. Here is the Desire of nations; here is bread for me, and balm for me: all that I want.'

Fear bows the knee with awe and veneration: 'Welcome, Lord, to You will I pay my homage. Your Word and rod shall command my actions; You will I reverence and adore; before You will I fall down and worship.'

Grief likewise puts in: 'Lord, Your displeasure and Your dishonor, Your people's calamities and my own iniquities, shall be what shall set me a-weeping. I will mourn when You are offended; I will weep when Your cause is wounded.'

Anger likewise comes in for Christ: 'Lord, nothing so enrages me as my folly

against You, that I should be so besotted as to hearken to the flatteries of sin and the temptations of Satan against You.'

Hatred, too, will side with Christ: 'I protest mortal enmity to Your enemies, that I will never be a friend to Your foes. I vow an eternal quarrel with every sin. I will give no quarter, I will make no peace.' Thus let all your powers yield to Jesus Christ.

Again, you must give up your whole interest to Him. If there is anything that you keep back from Christ, it will be your undoing (Luke 14:33). Unless you will forsake all, in preparation and resolution of your heart, you cannot be His disciple. You must hate father and mother, yes, and your own life also, in comparison with Him, and as far as it stands in competition with Him. In a word, you must give Him yourself, and all that you have without reservation—or else you can have no part in Him.

9. Choose the laws of Christ as the rule of your words, thoughts and actions.

This is the true convert's choice. But here remember these three rules.

1. You must choose them all, there is no getting to heaven by a partial obedience.

It is not enough to take up the cheap and easy part of religion, and let alone the duties that are costly and self-denying, and oppose the interests of the flesh; you must take all or none. A sincere convert, though he makes conscience of the greatest sins and weightiest duties—yet he makes true conscience of little sins and of all duties.

2. You must choose Christ's laws for all times, for prosperity and adversity.

A true convert is resolved in his course; he will stand to his choice, and will not set his back to the wind, and be of the religion of the times. 'I have stuck to your testimonies; I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes always, even to the end. Your testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever. I will have respect to your statutes continually' (Psalm 119:31,112,117).

3. This must be done deliberately and understandingly.

The disobedient son said, 'I go, sir,' but he went not. How fairly did they promise, 'All that the Lord our God shall speak unto you we will do it!' And it is likely they meant what they said. But when it came to the trial it was found that there was not such a heart in them as to do what they had promised (Deut 5:27,29).

If you would be sincere in closing with the laws and the ways of Christ, study the meaning, and breadth, and extent of them. Remember that they are spiritual; they reach the very thoughts and inclinations of the heart; so that, if you will walk by this rule, your very thoughts and inward motions must be under government. Again, they are very strict and self-denying, quite contrary to your natural inclinations. You must take the strait gate, the narrow way, and be content to have the flesh curbed from the liberty it desires. In a word, they are very large, for 'your commandment is exceeding broad' (Psalm 119:96).

Do not rest in general commands, for there is much deceit in them—but bring down your heart to the particular commands of Christ. Those Jews, in the prophet, seemed as well resolved as any in the world, and called God to witness that they meant as they said. But they rested in generals. When God's command crosses their inclination, they will not obey (Jer 42:1-6; Jer 43:2). Take the Westminster Assembly's Larger Catechism, and see their excellent and most comprehensive exposition of the commandments, and put your heart to it. Are you resolved, in the strength of Christ, to set upon the conscientious practice of every duty that you find to be required of you, and to set against every sin that you find to be forbidden? This is the way to be sound in God's statutes, that you may never be ashamed (Psalm 119:80).

Observe the special duties that your heart is most against, and the special sins that it is most inclined to, and see whether it be truly resolved to perform the one and forgo the other. What do you say to your bosom sin, your profitable sin? What do you say to costly, hazardous, and flesh-displeasing duties? If you halt here, and do not resolve, by the grace of God, to cross the flesh and be in earnest, you are unsound.

10. Let all this be completed in a solemn covenant between God and your soul.

Set apart some time, more than once, to be spent in secret before the Lord—in seeking earnestly His special assistance and gracious acceptance of you—in searching your heart, whether you are sincerely willing to forsake all your sins, and to resign yourself, body and soul, unto God and His service; to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of your life.

Compose your spirit into the most serious frame possible, suitable to a transaction of so high importance. Lay hold on the covenant of God, and rely on His promise of giving grace and strength, by which you may be enabled to perform your promise. Do not trust to your own strength, to the strength of your own resolutions; but take hold on His strength.

Being thus prepared, on some convenient time set apart for the purpose, enter upon the work, and solemnly, as in the presence of the Lord, fall down on your

knees and spreading forth your hands towards heaven open your heart to the Lord in these—or the like words:

'O most holy God, for the passion of Your Son, I beseech You accept Your poor prodigal now prostrating himself at Your door. I have fallen from You by my iniquity, and am by nature a son of death, and a thousand-fold more the child of hell by wicked practice. But of Your infinite grace You have promised mercy to me in Christ, if I will but turn to You with all my heart. Therefore, upon the call of Your gospel, I am now come in, and throwing down my weapons, submit myself to Your mercy. And because You require, as the condition of my peace with You, that I should put away my idols, and be at defiance with all Your enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with against You, I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all, firmly covenanting with You, not to allow myself in any known sin—but conscientiously to use all the means that I know You have prescribed for the death and utter destruction of all my corruptions.

'And whereas formerly I have inordinately and idolatrously set my affections upon the world, I do here resign my heart to You who made it, humbly declaring before Your glorious Majesty, that it is the firm resolution of my heart, and that I do sincerely desire grace from You, that when You shall call me hereunto, I may practice this my resolution through Your assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this world, rather than to turn from You to the ways of sin; and that I will watch against all its temptations, whether of prosperity or adversity, lest they should withdraw my heart from You. I beseech You also to help me against the temptations of Satan, to whose wicked suggestions I resolve by Your grace never to yield myself a servant. And because my own righteousness is but as filthy rags, I renounce all my confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of myself a hopeless, helpless, undone creature, without righteousness or strength.

'And forasmuch as You have of Your bottomless mercy offered most graciously to me, a wretched sinner, to be again my God through Christ, if I would accept You; I call upon heaven and earth to record this day, that I do here solemnly avouch You for the Lord my God, and with all possible veneration, bowing the neck of my soul under the feet of Your most sacred Majesty, I do here take You the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion and chief good, and do give myself, body and soul, to be Your servant, promising and vowing to serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

'And since You have appointed the Lord Jesus Christ the only means of coming unto You, I do here solemnly join myself in a marriage covenant to Him.

'O Blessed Jesus, I come to You hungry and thirsty, poor and wretched, miserable, blind and naked, a most loathsome polluted wretch, a guilty condemned criminal, unworthy to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, much more to be solemnly married to the King of Glory. But such is Your unparalleled love, I do here with all my power accept You, and do take You for my Head and

Husband, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, for all times and conditions, to love, honor and obey You before all others, and this to the death. I embrace You in all Your offices. I renounce my own worthiness, and do here avow You to be the Lord my Righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom, and do here take You for my only Guide. I renounce my own will, and take Your will for my law.

'And since You have told me that I must suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with You to take my lot, as it falls, with You, and by Your grace assisting to run all hazards with You, truly supposing that neither life nor death shall part between You and me.

'And because You have been pleased to give me Your holy laws, as the rule of my life, and the way in which I should walk to Your kingdom, I do here willingly put my neck under Your yoke, and set my shoulder to Your burden; and subscribing to all Your laws as holy, just, and good, I solemnly take them as the rule of my words, thoughts, and actions; promising that though my flesh contradict and rebel—yet I will endeavor to order and govern my whole life to Your direction, and will not allow myself to neglect anything that I know to be my duty.

'Only because through the frailty of my flesh, I am subject to many failings, I am bold humbly to request, that unintentional shortcomings, contrary to the settled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this covenant, for so You have said.

'Now, Almighty God, Searcher of hearts, You know that I make this covenant with You this day, without any known guile or reservation, beseeching You, that if You espy any flaw or falsehood therein, You would reveal it to me, and help me to do it aright.

'And now, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward to look upon as my God and Father, glory be to You for finding out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners. Glory be to You, O God the Son, who have loved me and washed me from my sins in Your own blood, and are now become my Savior and Redeemer. Glory be to You, O God the Holy Spirit, who by the finger of Your almighty power, has turned about my heart from sin to God.

'O high and holy Jehovah, the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You are now become my covenant Friend, and I through Your infinite grace am become Your covenant servant. Amen, so be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'

This covenant I advise you to make, not only in heart—but in word; not only in word—but in writing; and that you would with all possible reverence spread the writing before the Lord, as if you would present it to Him as your Act and Deed. And when you have done this, set your hand to it and sign it. Keep it as a

memorial of the solemn transactions that have passed between God and you, that you may have recourse to it in doubts and temptations.

11. Take heed of delaying your conversion—but make a speedy, an immediate surrender of your heart to God.

'I made haste, and delayed not' (Psalm 119:60). Remember and tremble at the sad instance of the foolish virgins who did not come until the door of mercy was shut, and of a convinced Felix who put off Paul to another season—but we do not find that he had another season. O come in while it is called today, lest you should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; lest the day of grace should be over, and the things which belong to your peace should be hid from your eyes. Now mercy is wooing you; now Christ is waiting to be gracious to you, and the Spirit of God is striving with you. Now ministers are calling; now conscience is stirring; now the market is open, and oil may be had, you have opportunity for the buying. Now Christ is to be had for the taking. Oh! strike in with the offers of grace. Oh! now—or never. If you make light of this offer, God may swear in His wrath that you shall never taste of His supper (Luke 14:24).

12. Attend conscientiously upon the Word, as the means appointed for your conversion.

Attend, I say, not customarily—but conscientiously, with this desire, design, hope, and expectation, that you may be converted by it. Come to every sermon you hear with this thought: 'O I hope God will now come in; I hope this day may be the time, this may be the man by whom God will bring me home.' When you are coming to the privileges of God's house, lift up your heart to God thus: 'Lord, let this be the Sabbath, let this be the season in which I may receive renewing grace. O let it be said that this day such a one was born unto You.'

Objection. You will say, I have been a hearer of the Word a long time—yet it has not been effectual to my conversion.

Answer. Yes; but you have not attended upon it in this manner, as a means of your conversion, nor with this design, nor praying for and expecting the happy effect from it.

13. Strike in with the Spirit when He begins to work upon your heart.

When He works convictions, O do not stifle them—but join in with Him, and beg the Lord to give you saving conversion. 'Quench not the Spirit.' [1 Thess 5:19] Do not reject Him, do not resist Him. Beware of stifling convictions with evil company or worldly business. When you are in anguish on account of sin and fears about

your eternal state, beg of God that you may have peace only in thoroughly renouncing all sin, loathing it in your inmost soul, and giving your whole heart, without reserve, to Christ. Say to Him, 'Strike home, Lord; do not leave the work half-done. Go to the bottom of my corruption, and let out the lifeblood of my sins.' Thus yield yourself to the working of the Spirit, and hoist your sails to His gusts.

14. Set upon the constant and diligent use of serious and fervent prayer.

He who neglects prayer is a profane and unsanctified sinner. He who is not constant in prayer is a hypocrite, unless the omission be contrary to his ordinary course, under the force of some instant temptation. One of the first things conversion appears in, is that it sets men a-praying. Therefore set to this duty. Let not one day pass in which you have not, morning and evening, set apart some time for solemn prayer in secret. Also, call your family together daily to worship God with you. Woe be unto you, if you be found among the families that call not upon God's name (Jer 10:25). But cold and lifeless devotions will not reach halfway to heaven. Be fervent and importunate. Importunity will carry it; without violence the kingdom of heaven will not be taken. You must strive to enter, and wrestle with tears and supplications as Jacob, if you would gain the blessing. You are undone forever without grace, and therefore you must set to it, and resolve to take no denial. That man who is fixed in this resolution says, 'Well, I must have grace—or I will never give over until I have grace; I will never cease earnestly pleading, and striving with God and my own heart, until He renews me by the power of His grace.'

15. Forsake your evil company, and forbear the occasions of sin.

You will never be turned from sin until you decline and forego the temptations of sin. I never expect your conversion from sin, unless you are brought to some self-denial, so as to flee the occasions. If you will be nibbling at the bait, and playing on the brink, and tampering with the snare—your soul will surely be taken. When God exposes men, in His providence, unavoidably to temptation, and the occasions are such as we cannot remove, we may expect special assistance in the use of His means; but when we tempt God by running into danger, He will not engage to support us when we are tempted. And, of all temptations, one of the most fatal and pernicious is evil companions. O what hopeful beginnings have these often stifled! O the souls, the estates, the families, the towns, that these have ruined! How many poor sinners have been enlightened and convinced, and been just ready to escape the snare of the devil, and have even escaped it: and yet wicked company has pulled them back at last, and made them sevenfold more the children of hell! In a word, I have no hopes for you, except you shake off your evil company. Your life depends upon it: forsake this—or you cannot live. Will you be worse than the donkey of Balaam, to run on when you see the Lord with a drawn sword in the way? Let this sentence

be written in capitals upon your conscience, 'A companion of fools shall be destroyed!' (Prov 13:20). The Lord has spoken it, and who shall reverse it?

And will you run upon destruction when God Himself forewarns you? If God ever changes your heart, it will appear in the change of your company. O fear and flee the gulf by which so many thousands have been swallowed up in perdition. It will be hard for you indeed to make your escape. Your companions will be mocking you out of your religion, and will study to fill you with prejudices against strictness, as ridiculous and comfortless. They will be flattering you and alluring you; but remember the warnings of the Holy Spirit: 'My son, if sinners entice you—do not consent. If they say, Come with us, cast in your lot among us; walk not in the way with them, refrain your foot from their path; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For the way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble. They lie in wait for their own blood, they lurk privily for their own lives' (Prov 1:10-19; Prov 4:15-19).

My soul is moved within me to see how many of my hearers and readers are likely to perish, both they and their houses, by this wretched mischief, even the frequenting of such places and company, by which they are drawn into sin. Once more I admonish you, as Moses did Israel, 'Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men' (Num 16:26). O flee from them as you would those that had the plague-sores running in their foreheads. These are the devil's pimps and decoys; and if you do not make your escape they will draw you into perdition, and will prove your eternal ruin.

16. Set apart a day to humble your soul in secret by fasting and prayer, to work a sense of your sins and miseries upon your heart.

Read over a thorough exposition of the Commandments, and write down the duties omitted, and sins committed by you against every commandment, and so make a catalogue of your sins, and with shame and sorrow spread them before the Lord. And if your heart be truly willing to the terms, join yourself solemnly to the Lord in that covenant set down in Direction 10 of this chapter, and the Lord grant you mercy in His sight.

Thus, I have told you what you must do to be saved. Will you now obey the voice of the Lord? Will you arise and set to the work? O man, what answer will you make, what excuse will you have, if you should perish at last through very wilfulness, when you have known the way of life? I do not fear your miscarrying, if your own idleness does not at last undo you, in neglecting the use of the means that are so plainly here prescribed. Rouse up, O sluggard, and ply your work. Be doing, and the Lord will be with you.

A Short Soliloquy for an Unregenerate Sinner

Ah! wretched man that I am! What a condition have I brought myself into by sin! Oh! I see my heart has deceived me all this while, in flattering me that my condition was good. I see, I see, I am but a lost and undone man, forever undone, unless the Lord help me out of this condition. My sins! My sins! Lord, what an unclean, polluted wretch I am! More loathsome and odious to You than the most hateful venom or repulsive carcass can be to me. Oh! what a hell of sin is in this heart of mine, which I have flattered myself to be a good heart! Lord, how universally am I corrupted, in all my parts, powers, performances! All the imaginations of my heart are only evil continually. I am under an inability to, and aversion from, and an enmity against anything that is good; and am prone to all that is evil. My heart is a very sink of sin: and oh the innumerable hosts and swarms of sinful thoughts, words and actions that have flowed from it! Oh the load of guilt that is on my soul! My head is full, and my heart is full; my mind and my members, they are all full of sin. Oh my sins! How do they stare upon me! Woe is me, my creditors are upon me: every commandment takes hold upon me, for more than ten thousand talents, yes, ten thousand times ten thousand. How endless then is the sum of all my debts! If this whole world were filled up from earth to heaven with paper, and all this paper written over within and without by arithmeticians—yet, when all were added up, it would come inconceivably short of what I owe to the least of God's commandments. Woe unto me, for my debts are infinite, and my sins are increased. They are wrongs to an infinite Majesty, and if he who commits treason against an earthly king is worthy to be racked, drawn and quartered; what have I deserved that have so often lifted up my hand against Heaven, and have struck at the crown and dignity of the Almighty?

Oh my sins! my sins! Behold, a troop comes! Multitudes! multitudes! there is numbering of their armies. Innumerable evils have compassed me about; my iniquities have taken hold upon me; they have set themselves against me. Oh! it were better to have all the regiments of hell come against me, than to have my sins fall upon me, to the spoiling of my soul. Lord, how am I surrounded! How many are they that rise up against me! They have beset me behind and before; they swarm within me and without me; they have possessed all my powers, and have fortified my unhappy soul as a garrison, which this brood of hell mans and maintains against the God who made me.

And they are as mighty as they are many. The sands are many—but then they are not great: the mountains great but then they are not many. But woe is me, my sins are as *many* as the sands, and as *mighty* as the mountains! Their weight is greater than their number. It were better that the rocks and the mountains should fall upon me, than the crushing and unsupportable load of my own sins. Lord, I am heavy laden; let mercy help—or I am gone. Unload me of this heavy guilt, this sinking load—or I am crushed without hope, and must be pressed down to hell. If my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my sins laid in the balance together, they would be heavier than the sand of the sea; therefore my words are swallowed up: they would weigh down all the rocks and the hills, and turn the balance against

all the isles of the earth. O Lord, You know my manifold transgressions, and my mighty sins.

Ah, my soul! Alas, my glory! How are you humbled! Once the glory of the creation, and the image of God: now, a lump of filthiness, a coffin of rottenness, replenished with stench and loathsomeness. Oh what work has sin made with you! You shall be termed 'Forsaken' and all the rooms of your faculties 'Desolate', and the name that you shall be called by is 'Ichabod'—or, 'Where is the glory?' How are you come down mightily! My beauty is turned into deformity, and my glory into shame. Lord, what a loathsome leper am I! The ulcerous bodies of Job or Lazarus were not more offensive to the eyes and nostrils of men, than I must needs be to the most holy God, whose eyes cannot behold iniquity.

And what misery have my sins brought upon me! Lord, what a state I am in! Sold under sin, cast out of God's favor, accursed from the Lord, cursed in my body, cursed in my soul, cursed in my name, in my estate, my relations, and all that I have. My sins are unpardoned, and my soul within a step of death. Alas! what shall I do? Where shall I go? Which way shall I look? God is frowning on me from above, hell gaping for me beneath, conscience smiting me within, temptations and dangers surrounding me without. Oh, where shall I fly? What place can hide me from Omniscience? What power can secure me from Omnipotence?

What do you mean, O my soul, to go on thus? Are you in league with hell? Have you made a covenant with death? Are you in love with your misery? Is it good for you to be here? Alas, what shall I do? Shall I go on in my sinful ways? Why then, certain damnation will be my end; and shall I be so besotted and mad as to go and sell my soul to the flames, for a little ale—or a little ease, for a little pleasure or gain or comfort to my flesh? Shall I linger any longer in this wretched state? No: if I tarry here I shall die. What then, is there no help? No hope? None, except I turn. Why—but is there any remedy for such woeful misery? Any mercy after such provoking iniquity? Yes: as sure as God's oath is true, I shall have pardon and mercy yet, if I presently, sincerely, and unreservedly turn by Christ to Him.

Why then, I thank You upon the bended knees of my soul, O most merciful Jehovah, that Your patience has waited for me hitherto; for had You taken me away in this state, I had perished forever. And now I adore Your grace, and accept the offers of Your mercy, I renounce all my sins, and resolve by Your grace to set myself against them, and to follow You in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

Who am I, Lord, that I should make any claim to You—or have any part or portion in You, who am not worthy to lick up the dust of Your feet? Yet since You hold forth the golden scepter, I am bold to come and touch. To despair would be to disparage Your mercy; and to stand off when You bid me come, would be at once to undo myself and rebel against You under pretense of humility. Therefore

I bow my soul unto You, and with all possible thankfulness accept You as mine, and give up myself to You as Your. You shall be Sovereign over me, my King, and my God. You shall be on the throne, and all my powers shall bow to You, they shall come and worship before Your feet. You shall be my portion, O Lord, and I will rest in You.

You call for my heart. Oh that it were any way fit for Your acceptance! I am unworthy, O Lord, everlastingly unworthy to be Yours. But since You will have it so, I freely give my heart to You. Take it, it is Yours. Oh that it were better! But Lord, I put it into Your hands—who alone can mend it. Mold it after Your own heart; make it as You would have it, holy, humble, heavenly, soft, tender, flexible—and write Your law upon it.

Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Enter in triumphantly. Take me up for Yourself forever. I give myself to You, I come to You, as the only way to the Father, as the only Mediator, the means ordained to bring me to God. I have destroyed myself—but in You is my help. Save, Lord—or else I perish. I come to You, with the rope about my neck. I am worthy to die and to be damned. Never was the pay more due to the laborer; than death and hell, my just wages, are due to me for my sins. But I fly to Your merits; I trust alone to the value and virtue of Your sacrifice, and prevalence of Your intercession. I submit to Your teaching, I make choice of Your government. Stand open, O everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may enter in.

O You Spirit of the Most High, the Comforter and Sanctifier of Your chosen, come in with all Your glorious train, all Your courtly attendants—Your fruits and graces. Let me be Your habitation. I can give You but what is Your own already; but here with the widow I give my two mites, my soul and my body, into Your treasury, fully resigning them up to You, to be sanctified by You, to be servants to You. They shall be Your patients—cure their maladies. They shall be Your agents—govern Your actions. Too long have I served the world; too long have I hearkened to Satan; but now I renounce them all, and will be ruled by Your dictates and directions, and guided by Your counsel.

O blessed Trinity, O glorious Unity, I deliver myself up to You. Receive me: write Your name, O Lord, upon me, and upon all that I have, as Your proper goods. Set Your mark upon me, upon every member of my body, and every faculty of my soul. I have chosen Your precepts. Your law will I lay before me; this shall be the copy which I will keep in my eye, and study to write after. According to this rule do I resolve by Your grace to walk: after this law shall my whole man be governed. And though I cannot perfectly keep one of Your commandments—yet I will allow myself in the breach of none. I know my flesh will hang back: but I resolve, in the power of Your grace, to cleave to You and Your holy ways, whatever it cost me. I am sure I cannot come off a loser by You: and therefore I will be content with reproach, and difficulties and hardships here, and will deny myself, and take up Your cross, and follow You. Lord Jesus, Your yoke is easy,

Your cross is welcome, as it is the way to You. I lay aside all hopes of a worldly happiness. I will be content to tarry until I come to You. Let me be poor and low, little and despised here, so I may be but admitted to live and reign with You hereafter. Lord, You have my heart and hand to this agreement. Be it as the laws of the Medes and Persians, never to be reversed. To this I will stand: in this resolution, by Your grace, I will live and die. I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep Your righteous judgments. I have given my free consent, I have made my everlasting choice. Lord Jesus, confirm the contract. Amen.

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