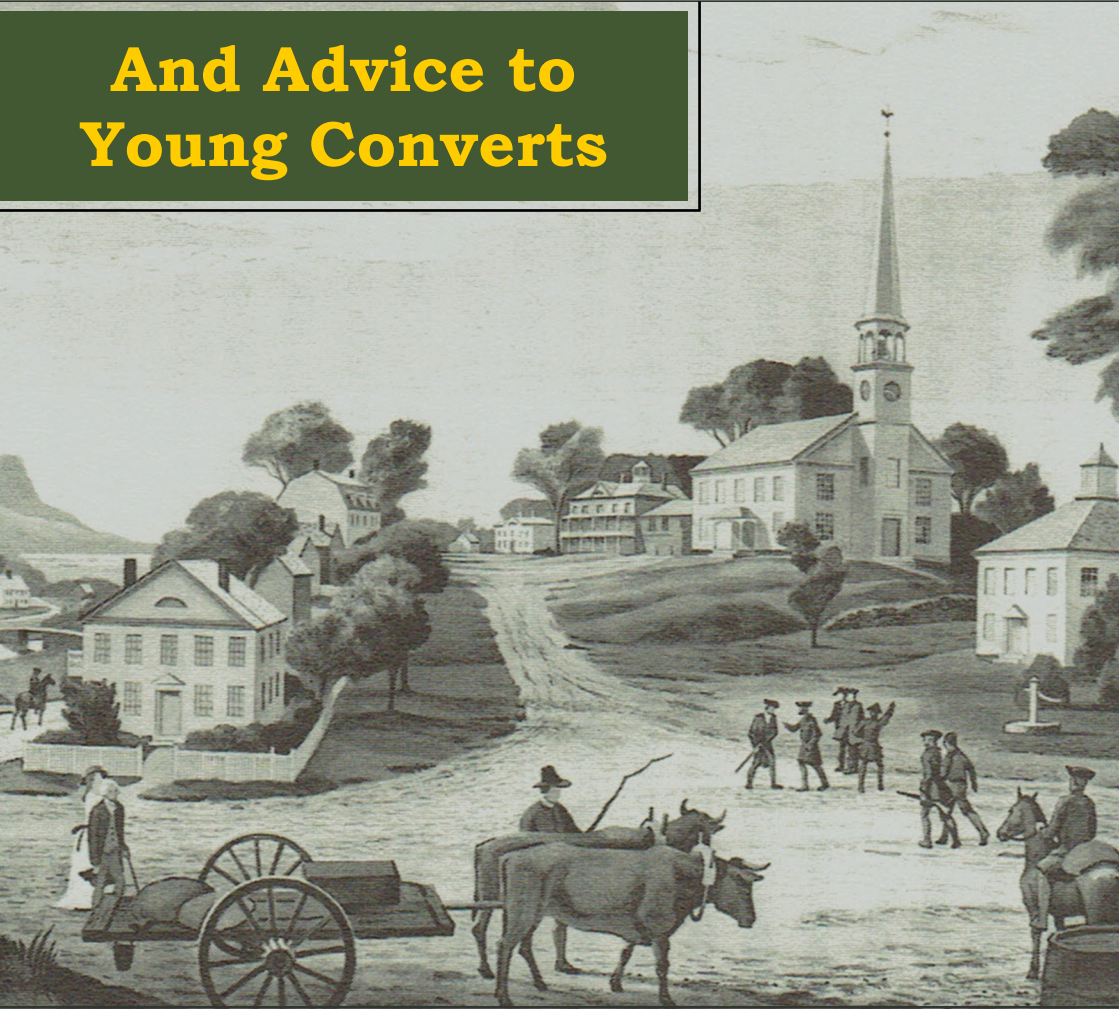


Jonathan Edwards' Resolutions

And Advice to Young Converts



Jonathan Edwards' Church in Northampton Ma

Jonathan Edwards' Resolutions and Advice to Young Converts

Jonathan Edwards' Seventy Resolutions

The subheadings and categorization are suggested by Matt Perman to increase the readability.

Being sensible that I am unable to do any thing without God's help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ's sake.

Remember to read over these resolutions once a week.

Overall Life Mission

1. *Resolved*, that *I will do whatsoever* I think to be most to God's glory and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now or never so many myriad's of ages hence. *Resolved* to do whatever I think to be my *duty* and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. *Resolved* to do this, whatever *difficulties* I meet with, how many and how great soever.

2. *Resolved*, to be continually endeavouring to find out some new invention and contrivance to promote the aforementioned things.

3. *Resolved*, if ever I shall fall and grow dull, so as to neglect to keep any part of these resolutions, to repent of all I can remember, when I come to myself again.

4. *Resolved*, never *to do* any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God; nor *be*, nor *suffer* it, if I can possibly avoid it.

6. *Resolved*, to live with all my might, while I do live.

22. *Resolved*, to endeavour to obtain for myself as much happiness in the other world as I possibly can, with all the power; might, vigour, and vehemence, yea violence, I am capable of, or

can bring myself to exert, in any way that can be thought of.

62. *Resolved*, never to do any thing but duty; and then according to Eph. 6:6-8, do it willingly and cheerfully as unto the Lord, and not to man; “knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.” *June 25 and July 13, 1723.*

Good Works

11. *Resolved*, when I think of any theorem in divinity to be solved, immediately to do what I can towards solving it, if circumstances don't hinder.

13. *Resolved*, to be endeavouring to find out fit objects of charity and liberality.

69. *Resolved*, always to do that which I shall wish I had done when I see others do it. *Aug. 11, 1723.*

Time Management

5. *Resolved*, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.

7. *Resolved*, never to do any thing which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.

17. *Resolved*, that I will live so as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.

18. *Resolved*, to live so at all times as I think is best in my devout frames, and when I have clearest notions of things of the gospel and another world.

19. *Resolved*, never to do any thing which I should be afraid to do if I expected it would not be above an hour before I should hear the last trump.

37. *Resolved*, to inquire every night, as I am going to bed, wherein I have been negligent, what sin I have committed, and wherein I have denied myself; also at the end of every week, month and year. *Dec. 22 and 26, 1722.*

40. *Resolved*, to inquire every night, before I go to bed, whether I have acted in the best way I possibly could, with respect to eating and drinking. *Jan. 7, 1723.*

41. *Resolved*, to ask myself at the end of every day, week, month and year, wherein I could possibly in any respect have done better. *Jan. 11, 1723.*

50. *Resolved*, I will act so as I think I shall judge would have been best and most prudent when I come into the future world. *July 5, 1723.*

51. *Resolved*, that I will act so, in every respect, as I think I shall wish I had done if I should at last be damned. *July 8, 1723.*

52. I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live if they were to live their lives over again. *Resolved*, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age. *July 8, 1723.*

55. *Resolved*, to endeavour to my utmost to act as I can think I should do if I had already seen the happiness of heaven and hell torments. *July 8, 1723.*

61. *Resolved*, that I will not give way to that listlessness which I find unbends and relaxes my mind from being fully and fixedly set on religion, whatever excuse I may have for it—that what my listlessness inclines me to do is best to be done, etc. *May 21, and July 13, 1723.*

Relationships

14. *Resolved*, never to do any thing out of revenge.

15. *Resolved*, never to suffer the least motions of anger to irrational beings.

16. *Resolved*, never to speak evil of any one, so that it shall tend to his dishonour, more or less, upon no account except for some real good.

31. *Resolved*, never to say any thing at all against any body, but

when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honour and of love to mankind, agreeable to the lowest humility and sense of my own faults and failings, and agreeable to the golden rule; often, when I have said any thing against any one, to bring it to, and try it strictly by the test of this resolution.

33. *Resolved*, always to do what I can towards making, maintaining, establishing and preserving peace, when it can be without over-balancing detriment in other respects. *Dec. 26, 1722.*

34. *Resolved*, in narration's never to speak any thing but the pure and simple verity.

36. *Resolved*, never to speak evil of any, except I have some particular good call for it. *Dec. 19, 1722.*

46. *Resolved*, never to allow the least measure of any fretting uneasiness at my father or mother. *Resolved* to suffer no effects of it, so much as in the least alteration of speech, or motion of my eye: and to be especially careful of it with respect to any of our family.

58. *Resolved*, not only to refrain from an air of dislike, fretfulness, and anger in conversation, but to exhibit an air of love, cheerfulness and benignity. *May 27, and July 13, 1723.*

59. *Resolved*, when I am most conscious of provocations to ill-nature and anger, that I will strive most to feel and act good-naturedly; yea, at such times, to manifest good nature, though I think that in other respects it would be disadvantageous, and so as would be imprudent at other times. *May 12, July 11, and July 13.*

66. *Resolved*, that I will endeavour always to keep a benign aspect, and air of acting and speaking in all places and in all companies, except it should so happen that duty requires otherwise.

70. Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak. *Aug. 17, 1723*

Suffering

9. *Resolved*, to think much on all occasions of my own dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death.

10. *Resolved*, when I feel pain, to think of the pains of martyrdom and of hell.

67. *Resolved*, after afflictions to inquire what I am the better for them, what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.

57. *Resolved*, when I fear misfortunes and adversities, to examine whether I have done my duty, and resolve to do it; and let it be just as providence orders it. I will as far as I can, be concerned about nothing but my duty and my sin. *June 9, and July 13, 1723.*

Character

8. *Resolved*, to act, in all respects, both speaking and doing, as if nobody had been so vile as I, and as if I had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings as others; and that I will let the knowledge of their failings promote nothing but shame in myself, and prove only an occasion of my confessing my own sins and misery to God.

12. *Resolved*, if I take delight in it [this refers to the 11th resolution] as a gratification of pride, or vanity, or on any such account, immediately to throw it by.

21. *Resolved*, never to do any thing which if I should see in another, I should count a just occasion to despise him for, or to think any way the more meanly of him.

32. *Resolved*, to be strictly and firmly faithful to my trust, that that in Prov. 20:6, "A faithful man who can find?" may not be partly fulfilled in me.

47. *Resolved*, to endeavour to my utmost to deny whatever is not most agreeable to a good, and universally sweet and

benevolent, quiet, peaceable, contented and easy, compassionate and generous, humble and meek, modest, submissive and obliging, diligent and industrious, charitable and even, patient, moderate, forgiving and sincere temper; and to do at all times what such a temper would lead me to. *Sabbath morning. May 5, 1723.*

54. Whenever I hear any thing spoken in commendation of any person, if I think it would be praiseworthy in me, *Resolved* to endeavour to imitate it. *July 8, 1723.*

63. On the supposition, that there never was to be but one individual in the world at any one time who was properly a complete Christian, in all respects of a right stamp, having Christianity always shining in its true lustre, and appearing excellent and lovely from whatever part and under whatever character viewed: *Resolved*, to act just as I would if I strove with all my might to be that one who should live in my time. *Jan. 14 and July 13, 1723.*

27. *Resolved*, never wilfully to omit any thing, except the omission be for the glory of God; and frequently to examine my omissions.

39. *Resolved*, never to do any thing that I so much question the lawfulness of, as that I intend, at the same time, to consider and examine afterwards whether it be lawful or no; except I as much question the lawfulness of the omission.

20. *Resolved*, to maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.

Spiritual Life

Assurance

25. *Resolved*, to examine carefully and constantly what that one thing in me is, which causes me in the least to doubt of the love of God; and so direct all my forces against it.

26. *Resolved*, to cast away such things as I find do abate my assurance.

48. *Resolved*, constantly, with the utmost niceness and diligence and the strictest scrutiny, to be looking into the state of my soul, that I may know whether I have truly an interest in Christ or no; that when I come to die, I may not have any negligence respecting this to repent of. *May 26, 1723.*

49. *Resolved*, that this never shall be, if I can help it.

The Scriptures

28. *Resolved*, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.

Prayer

29. *Resolved*, never to count that a prayer, nor to let that pass as a prayer, nor that as a petition of a prayer, which is so made that I cannot hope that God will answer it; nor that as a confession, which I cannot hope God will accept.

64. *Resolved*, when I find those “*groanings which cannot be uttered*” (Rom. 8:26), of which the Apostle speaks and those *breakings of soul* “for the longing it hath,” of which the Psalmist speaks, Psalm 119:20, that I will promote them to the utmost of my power, and that I will not be weary of earnestly endeavouring to vent my desires, nor of the repetitions of such earnestness. *July 23, and August 10, 1723.*

The Lord’s Day

38. *Resolved*, never to speak any thing that is ridiculous, sportive or a matter of laughter on the Lord’s day. *Sabbath evening, Dec. 23, 1722.*

Vivification of Righteousness

30. *Resolved*, to strive to my utmost every week to be brought

higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace, than I was the week before.

42. *Resolved*, frequently to renew the dedication of myself to God, which was made at my baptism; which I solemnly renewed when I was received into the communion of the church; and which I have solemnly re-made this twelfth day of January, 1723.

43. *Resolved*, never henceforward, till I die, to act as if I were any way my own, but entirely and altogether God's, agreeable to what is to be found in *Saturday, January 12, 1723*.

44. *Resolved*, that no other end but religion shall have any influence at all on any of my actions; and that no action shall be, in the least circumstance, any otherwise than the religious end will carry it. *Jan. 12, 1723*.

45. *Resolved*, never to allow any pleasure or grief, joy or sorrow, nor any affection at all, nor any degree of affection, nor any circumstance relating to it, but what helps religion. *Jan. 12 and 13, 1723*.

Mortification of Sin and Self Examination

23. *Resolved*, frequently to take some deliberate action which seems most unlikely to be done, for the glory of God, and trace it back to the original intention, designs and ends of it; and if I find it not to be for God's glory, to repute it as a breach of the 4th resolution.

24. *Resolved*, whenever I do any conspicuously evil action, to trace it back till I come to the original cause; and then both carefully endeavour to do so no more, and to fight and pray with all my might against the original of it.

35. *Resolved*, whenever I so much question whether I have done my duty, as that my quiet and calm is thereby disturbed, to set it down, and also how the question was resolved. *Dec. 18, 1722*.

60. *Resolved*, whenever my feelings begin to appear in the least

out of order, when I am conscious of the least uneasiness within, or the least irregularity without, I will then subject myself to the strictest examination. *July 4 and 13, 1723.*

68. *Resolved*, to confess frankly to myself all that which I find in myself, either infirmity or sin; and, if it be what concerns religion, also to confess the whole case to God, and implore needed help. *July 23 and August 10, 1723.*

56. *Resolved*, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.

Communion with God

53. *Resolved*, to improve every opportunity, when I am in the best and happiest frame of mind, to cast and venture my soul on the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust and confide in him, and consecrate myself wholly to him; that from this I may have assurance of my safety, knowing that I confide in my Redeemer. *July 8, 1723.*

65. *Resolved*, very much to exercise myself in this [64th resolution] all my life long, viz. with the greatest openness I am capable of, to declare my ways to God, and lay open my soul to him: all my sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, fears, hopes, desires, and every thing, and every circumstance; according to Dr. Manton's 27th Sermon on Psalm 119:26. *July 26 and Aug. 10, 1723.*

Advice to Young Converts

In the year 1741, a young lady, Deborah Hatheway residing at Suffield, Connecticut, who had lately made a public profession of religion, requested Mr. Edwards to give her some advice, as to the best manner of maintaining a religious life. In reply, he addressed to her the following letter; which will be found eminently useful to all persons just entering on the Christian course.

Dear Child,

As you desired me to send to you in writing some directions

how to conduct yourself in your Christian course: I will now answer your request; the sweet remembrance of the great things I have lately seen at Suffield, and the dear affections for those persons I have conversed with there, give good evidences of a saving work of God upon their hearts and also incline me to do any thing that lies in my power to contribute to the spiritual joy and prosperity of God's people there. And what I write to you I would also say to other young women there who are your friends and companions and the children of God; and therefore desire you would communicate it to them as you have opportunity.

1. I would advise you to keep up as great a strife and earnestness in religion in all parts of it, as if you knew yourself to be in a state of nature and were seeking conversion. We advise persons under convictions to be earnest and violent for the kingdom of heaven: but when they have attained to conversion, they ought not to be the less watchful, laborious, and earnest in the whole work of religion but the more: for they are under infinitely greater obligations: for want of this many persons in a few months after their conversion have begun to lose their sweet and lively sense of spiritual things, and to grow cold and flat and dark and have "pierced themselves through with many sorrows:" whereas if they had done as the apostle did (Phil. 3:12-14): their path would have been "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," (Phil. 3:12-14).

2. Don't leave off seeking, striving, and praying for the very same things that we exhort unconverted persons to strive for, and

a degree of which you have had already in conversion: thus pray that your eyes may be opened that you may receive your sight that you may know yourself and be brought to God's foot, and that you may see the glory of God and Christ, and may be raised from the dead: and have the love of Christ shed abroad in your heart: for those who have most of these things, had still need still to pray for them: for there is so much blindness and hardness and pride and death remaining that they still need to have that work of God wrought upon them further to enlighten and enliven them that shall be a bringing out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and a kind of new conversion and resurrection from the dead. There are very few requests that are proper for a natural person, but that in some sense are proper also for the godly.

3. When you hear sermons hear them for yourself: though what is spoken in them may be more especially directed to the unconverted, or to those that in other respects are in different circumstances from yourself: yet let the chief intent of your mind be to consider with yourself, 'in what respects is this that I hear spoken applicable to me, and what improvement ought I to make of this for my own soul's good?'

4. Though God has forgiven and forgotten your past sins, yet don't forget them yourself: often remember, what a wretched bond-slave you were in the land of Egypt. Often bring to mind your particular acts of sin before conversion: as the blessed apostle Paul is often mentioning his old blaspheming, persecuting, and injuriousness to the renewed; humbling of his heart and acknowledging that he was "the least of the apostles," and not worthy "to be called an apostle," and the "least of all saints," and the "chief of sinners." And be often confessing your old sins to God, and let that text be often in your mind, (Ezek. 16:63),

"That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou has done, saith the

Lord God” (Ezek. 16:63).

5. Remember that you have more cause on some accounts, a thousand times to lament and humble yourself for sins that have been committed since conversion, than before; because of the infinitely greater obligations that are upon you to live to God. And look upon the faithfulness of Christ, in unchangeably continuing his loving favour and the unspeakable and saving fruits of his everlasting love notwithstanding all your great unworthiness since your conversion, to be as wonderful as his grace in converting you.

6. Be always greatly abased for your remaining sin, and never think that you lie low enough for it; but yet don't be at all discouraged or disheartened by it: for though we are exceeding sinful, yet “we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,” the preciousness of whose blood, and the merit of whose righteousness, and the greatness of whose love and faithfulness, do infinitely overtop the highest mountains of our sins.

7. When you engage in the duty of prayer, or come to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or attend any other duty of divine worship, come to Christ as Mary Magdalene [See footnote].

“And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment” (Luke 7:37, 38).

Come and cast yourself down at his feet and kiss them and pour forth upon him the sweet perfumed ointment of divine love, out of a pure and broken heart, as she poured the precious ointment out of her pure broken alabaster box.

8. Remember that pride is the worst that is in the heart, the

greatest disturber of the soul's peace, and sweet communion with Christ; [it] was the first sin that ever was, and lies lowest in the foundation of Satan's whole building, and is most difficultly rooted out, and is the most hidden, secret, and deceitful of all lusts, and often creeps insensibly into the midst of religion, and sometimes under the disguise of humility.

9. That you may pass a good judgement of the frames you are in always look upon those the best discoveries, and the best comforts that have most of these two effects: [first,] on those that make you least and lowest and most like a little child. And secondly those that do most engage and fix your heart in a full and firm disposition to deny yourself for God and to spend and be spent for him.

10. If at any time you fall into doubts about the state of your soul under dark and dull frames of mind, 'tis proper to look over past experiences: but yet don't consume too much of your time and strength in poring and puzzling thoughts about old experiences that in dull frames appear dim and are very much out of sight, at least as to that which is the cream and life and sweetness of them. But rather apply yourself with all your might to an earnest pursuit after renewed experience, new light, and new lively acts of faith and love: one new discovery of the glory of Christ's face, and the fountain of his sweet grace and love will do more towards scattering clouds of darkness and doubting in one minute than examining old experiences, by the best marks that can be given a whole year.

11. When the exercise of grace is at a low ebb, and corruption prevails, and by that means fear prevails, don't desire to have fear cast out any other way, than by the reviving and prevailing of love, for 'tis not agreeable to the method of God's wise dispensations that it should be cast out any other way: for when love is asleep the saints need fear to restrain them from sin, and therefore 'tis so ordered that at such times fear comes upon them, and that more or less as love sinks. But when love is in lively

exercise persons don't need fear: and the prevailing of love in the heart naturally tends to cast out fear; as darkness in a room vanishes away as you let more and more of the pleasant beams of the sun into it.

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18).

12. You ought to be much in exhorting and counselling and warning others, especially at such a day as this, *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”* (Heb. 10:25): and I would advise you especially to be much in exhorting children and young women your equals: and when you exhort others that are men, I would advise that you take opportunities for it chiefly when you are alone with them, or when only young persons are present.

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.” “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:9, 11, 12).

13. When you counsel and warn others do it earnestly and affectionately and thoroughly: and when you are speaking to your equals let your warnings be intermixed with expressions of your sense of your own unworthiness and of the sovereign grace that makes you differ: and if you can with a good conscience, [say] how that you in yourself are more unworthy than they.

14. If you would set up religious meetings of young women by yourselves to be attended once in a while besides the other meetings that you attend; I should think it would be very proper and profitable.

15. Under special difficulties, or when in great need of, or great

longings after any particular mercy, for yourself or others; set apart a day for secret fasting and prayer by yourself alone: and let the day be spent not only in petitions for the mercies you desire, but in searching your heart, and in looking over your past life and confessing your sins before God; not as is wont to be done in public prayer, but by a very particular rehearsal before God of the sins of your past life, from your childhood hitherto, before and after conversion with particular circumstances and aggravations, also very particularly and fully as possible spreading all the abominations of your heart before him.

16. Don't let the adversaries of religion have it to say that these converts don't carry themselves any better than others. "*What do ye more than others?*" (Matt. 5:47). How holy should the children of God and the redeemed and beloved of the Son of God behave themselves. Therefore walk as a child of the light and of the day, and "adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour:" and particularly be much in those things that may especially be called Christian virtues, and make you like the Lamb of God. Be meek and lowly of heart and full of a pure heavenly and humble love to all, and abound in deeds of love to others, and self-denial for others; and let there be in you a disposition to account others better than yourself.

17. Don't talk of things of religion and matters of experience with an air of lightness and laughter which is too much the manner in many places.

18. In all your course walk with God and follow Christ as a little poor helpless child, taking hold of Christ's hand, keeping your eye on the marks of the wounds in his hands and side whence came the blood that cleanses you from sin, and hiding your nakedness under the skirt of the white shining robe of his righteousness.

19. Pray much for the church of God and especially that he would carry on this glorious work that he hath now begun: and be

much in prayer for the ministers of Christ, and particularly I would beg a special interest in your prayers and the prayers of your Christian companions, both when you are alone and when you are together, for your affectionate friend that rejoices over you and desires to be your servant.

In Jesus Christ

Jonathan Edwards

[Footnote - This is a very common mistake. The woman here mentioned was not Mary Magdalene].

Jonathan Edwards' Seventy Resolutions



“Being sensible that I am unable to do any thing without God’s help, I do humbly entreat Him by His grace, to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ’s sake.”