

PIOUS RESOLUTIONS

The following Resolutions were written by one who, there is reason to believe, had made great progress in the Christian life. They are recommended to the serious and repeated perusal of every reader.

I WILL regard the favour and everlasting enjoyment of God as the end of all my plans; and study to make the consideration of them influence, as much as possible, the minutest actions of my life.

I WILL regard the obedience, sacrifice, mediation and intercession of Christ as the only procuring cause of all those spiritual blessings which conduce to that end, as the pardon of sin, peace with God, and the sanctifying influence of his Spirit.

I WILL continually keep in mind my obligations to walk in Christ's steps and to be holy as he is holy, without which I shall in vain hope to enter heaven; and I will ever pray for the Spirit of God, in the belief that through his operation alone can this holy frame be produced.

I WILL cultivate an habitual sense of God's presence and of my accountableness to him; of the shortness of time and of my obligations to improve it.

I WILL study for the future to appear well, not so much in the sight of man, as in that of God; and to that end, will be particularly watchful against the love of human praise, or distinction and the fear of shame; desisting from my purpose when I feel these to be my only motives, and endeavouring by prayer to overcome them when I perceive them to mix with such as are more pure.

I WILL consider love to God and zeal for his glory as my highest duties, and study to improve daily in these divine affections; and I will judge of my progress in them, not by transient fervours of the mind, but by my habitual temper, by my punctual performance of the self-denying duties of Christianity, by my cheerful acquiescence in all God's dispensations, and by the love, the humility, and the meekness which I am enabled to exercise to those around me.

I WILL study to live a life of dependence on Christ and of faith in his word, making it the sole and exclusive measure of my belief and practice.

I WILL particularly study to restrain all wanderings of the mind in the public and private exercises of God's worship; to banish, as much as I can, vain and worldly conversation, and vain and worldly thoughts from my mind and lips on the Lord's day; and to give all my household the time requisite for hallowing it.

I WILL guard against formality and vanity, especially in family worship, and strive to fit myself, by previous reflection and prayer, for its due performance.

I WILL be particularly guarded against the intrusion of impure thoughts. I will turn away my eyes from beholding what might lead to them, shut my ears against polluting conversation, and restrain my tongue from every licentious word; and I will carefully avoid every circumstance which I know to have formerly excited improper feelings, and forbid my thoughts to dwell for a moment on past scenes of sensual pleasure.

I WILL watch against every rising of covetous desire, and while I carefully repress all tendency to improper expense or the careless profusion of any of God's gifts, I will seek out proper objects with whom to share those good things of which God has made me the steward, and of which he will require an account.

I WILL no longer put off or leave the business of the present day or hour to some future time, but will apply myself to it, deny myself to sloth and the love of ease, and exercise a constant and self-denying attention to what is my proper work.

I WILL keep truth inviolate in the smallest as well as in the greatest matters.

I WILL in no case affect knowledge which I have not.

I WILL read no book but with attention, and I will read none which tends to inflame the mind or to excite improper sentiments. I will be ready to communicate and also to receive knowledge; and I will be open to conviction, ever receiving correction and reproof meekly and thankfully, never questioning merely for the sake of dispute, nor ever retorting upon any reprover.

I WILL watch against all superciliousness in look or manner, all sourness of mind in dispute, all impatience of contradiction in my intercourse with

all, whether common acquaintance or the most intimate relative, as a wife, brother, etc. And I will listen with patience and kindness to the arguments and reasonings of others, however impertinent they may appear at the moment.

I WILL also watch against a selfish, exclusive attachment to my own comfort, and study to be equally solicitous for the comfort of others, and to repress every rising of impatience at the trouble which this may occasion me.

I WILL endeavour to cultivate a temper of more benignity towards all; and I will attend more to the outward expression of love and kindness, never allowing passion to dictate what I may say, but studying to act by others as I could reasonably wish to be dealt with.

I WILL watch particularly against all hastiness of spirit towards inferiors, and especially those who need my help; and will listen composedly to their representations, and render them all the justice and all the kindness in my power, consistently with my other duties.

I WILL not only not use railing words to any, but I will guard against every circumstance, in look and manner, which might tend unnecessarily to wound the feelings of others.

I WILL not allow the ill conduct of others towards me to lessen my kindness and good will to them.

I WILL not chide or correct my children in passion, nor use peevish language towards them; and previous to correcting them, I will use prayer to God; and I will not be turned aside by false pity, or by indolence, from duly correcting their faults, which I will ever remind them to be sins against God.

I WILL never use threatening language, but by way of prevention, and without any mixture of passion; and I will study not to allow my voice to be elevated above its ordinary tone in talking with any.

I WILL guard against all excess in eating or drinking, never allowing complaisance for any to mar for a moment the clear exercise of my reason, or discompose my quiet, by leading me beyond the bounds of strict moderation.

I WILL, from this time forward, when not hindered by unavoidable circumstances, regularly devote at least one half hour in the morning, and one half hour in the evening, exclusively to those concerns which lie between God and my soul.

I WILL read, every day in private, a portion of Scripture with meditation and prayer.

I WILL consider the study of my heart as one main business of my life, and I will enter every evening, if possible, into a serious review of the past day, and of the manner in which I have kept this engagement, and into a solemn consideration of the fitness of my soul for entering on the eternal world.

I WILL anxiously study to reform whatever I shall find amiss; and of whatever defect in the performance of my duty I may be sensible, whatever corrupt propensity I may discover, of whatever sinful thoughts, words or actions I may have been guilty; I will endeavour to improve them as an incitement more deeply to repent of sin, more highly to value the love of my crucified Redeemer, and more implicitly to rely on his atoning merits for pardon and acceptance, and on the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, for victory over sin and advancement in purity and holiness of heart and life.

MAY the Spirit of all grace fill my heart with heavenly wisdom and form me anew in my Saviour's image. May the bright example of Jesus Christ be ever before my eyes, and may his lessons be ever graven on my heart. Through his blood may my defiled and guilty conscience be cleansed from all sin. May he reign in my heart and ever continue the object of my ardent desires, of my undeviating reliance, of my cheerful homage, of my lively and active gratitude, and of my highest love. And may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of everlasting compassion, the God of grace and peace, sanctify me wholly; and through the blood of the everlasting covenant make me perfect in every good work to do his will, that I may be enabled ever to render to the Father, Son, and Spirit—one God, the praise and glory of all I have, am, or hope for. Amen.