

# Letters on Revivals--No. 31.

by Charles Finney

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*Pastors and evangelists must be aware of Satan's tactics to create discouragement, division, and discord in the church, and work together to promote revivals of religion.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 3:4

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Unity in Ministry"

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## Description

Charles Finney addresses the challenges faced by pastors when evangelists experience success, warning that Satan often seeks to undermine the pastor's confidence and create discord within the church. He emphasizes the need for pastors and evangelists to remain united against these temptations, which can lead to jealousy and division among church members. Finney calls for a collective effort among evangelists and pastors to support one another and strategize for the advancement of revivals. He highlights the importance of recognizing and guarding against the subtle influences of Satan that can disrupt the work of God. Ultimately, he encourages a collaborative spirit to foster a thriving revival atmosphere.

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## Transcript

### THE SUCCESS OF EVANGELISTS AS RELATED TO PASTORS

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

Another thing that should be noticed in this connection is the great temptation to which pastors and their particular and warm friends are exposed. If the Lord manifestly blesses the labors of the evangelist, Satan will not unfrequently make powerful efforts to disturb and unsettle the confidence of the pastor, perhaps urging that he was never called to preach the gospel, that the Lord does not bless his labors and that he may as well retire from the ministry. Especially is he in danger of being attacked in this way if he has labored hard and long with little apparent success. If the blessing of God very manifestly attends the labors of the evangelist, it is very natural for Satan to take the advantage of him and of his particular friends, suggesting to them that his ministry is barren, that he is either not a Christian at all, or if he be a Christian that Christ has never called him to preach the gospel. Very much the same impression may be lodged in the minds of many of his particular friends.

Temptations of this kind often work great mischief in discouraging the pastor, in disheartening the church, begetting unbelief in both the pastor and his flock in respect to the progress of the work under the labors of the pastor. These discouraging suggestions are doubtless often intended by the adversary to prepare the way to bring on the church disastrous reaction whenever the evangelist leaves the ground.

Now this is a devise of Satan much more frequently practiced I apprehended than is generally supposed. Should inquiry be made it would, I have no doubt, be very frequently found to be true that the minds of both the pastor and the leading members of the church have received these impressions and suggestions from time to time during the progress of the work under the labors of the evangelist. And these impressions have been so often repeated on different minds that have had no communication with each other with respect to the subject, that a deep impression of discouragement has been lodged in their minds; so much so that the pastor has really very little courage and faith in attempting to carry on the work when the evangelist has gone; and the church have very little courage and faith to lay hold and sustain him.

In other circumstances it may be expected that Satan will take a different tack and ply both the pastor and the people, especially his particular friends, with another view of the subject. He will endeavor to stimulate a spirit of ambition and envy and jealousy in the mind of the pastor, and endeavor to make him unwilling to have the labors of the evangelist blessed in promoting religion in his congregation. And if there be any constitutional tendency in the pastor's mind to ambition, or in the mind of his wife, an hundred to one if Satan does not exert himself to overthrow them by attacking them in this particular manner. He will endeavor to excite in them the spirit of envy and jealousy in view of the fact that the people are becoming so much attached to the evangelist and so much under his influence. And right here he will often, if I am not mistaken excite the members of the church to speak in the presence of the pastor and of his wife, in terms of great admiration of the evangelist, of his wisdom, talents and piety, and oftentimes put them up inconsiderately to say things that have a strong tendency to produce in the mind of the pastor and his wife just that state of mind at which he is aiming. His object is to destroy the spirituality, the piety and the usefulness of the pastor and his wife, to excite in them a spirit of ambition and jealousy so as to ruin their influence among the people. On the one hand he will make direct suggestions to them and on the other press the members of the church to make such remarks and to conduct themselves towards both the pastor and the evangelist in a manner that is calculated to accomplish his infernal design. What he aims to accomplish in the minds of the pastor and his wife, he will aim at bringing to pass in the minds of his particular friends in the church and congregation, exciting them to envy and jealousy and to resist the evangelist, because, as Satan makes them believe, through his influence their pastor is thrown into the back ground and his influence crippled.

It is sometimes very wonderful to see in how many ways Satan will endeavor to bring about divisions and discord, to injure the influence both of the evangelist and of the pastor, if possible to create distrust and alienation between them; and if he cannot effect this, to create divisions in the church, so that one shall say, "I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos." The devices of Satan in these respects must be strongly and sedulously guarded against, or he will greatly embarrass the movements of an evangelist and greatly distract the church.

The more I have seen of the policy of Satan in this respect, the more I have appreciated the importance of the labors of evangelists, and also the great necessity of evangelists and pastors and churches being on their guard against an influence, which they do not suspect to be from Satan, being exerted not only to overthrow individual revivals, but to bring about a state of things that will cripple the general usefulness of

evangelists and unite pastors and churches in resisting them.

Were it proper to enter into detail on such a subject as this, I think I might relate a great many facts that have come to my knowledge that would throw much light on this subject. Those who have labored much as evangelists must have had considerable experience in respect to the policy and movements of Satan in these matters.

I have thought for several years of inviting all the evangelists in this country to meet in a general conference and compare views, look over the field, pray and converse together with respect to what is to be done for the further extension of revivals of religion; and also of inviting to meet with them all those pastors who take an interest in the labors of evangelists, and who are anxious to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good, especially in respect to the promotion of revivals of religion.

Brethren, can we not have such a convention? Is it not time that evangelists and revival pastors have a protracted meeting among themselves, compare views, sympathize with each other, freely unbosom ourselves to one another, and devise ways and means of promoting and extending a revival influence throughout the world?

Your brother,

C.G. FINNEY

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