

MEMOIRS OF  
JONATHAN EDWARDS  
(1815)



SAMUEL HOPKINS  
JOHN HAWKSLEY

KESSINGER LEGACY REPRINTS

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

First published 1834

CHAPTER 1

BIRTH—PARENTAGE—EARLY RELIGIOUS ADVANTAGES—  
SERIOUS IMPRESSIONS AND ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPERIENCE.

FEW individuals ever appeared in the church of God who have merited, and actually received, higher tributes of respect than Jonathan Edwards. His intellectual powers were of no common order, and his industry in the cultivation of those powers is strongly marked in that wide extent of most important knowledge which he possessed. If we consider him as ranking with Hartley, Locke, and Bacon, in the scale of intellect, we shall have little apprehension of his title to such distinction being disputed. His mighty mind grasped with ease those subjects at which others faltered. He saw truth almost intuitively, and was equally keen in the detection of error in all its varied shades.—This distinguished man claims admiration, not merely on the ground of uncommon strength of intellectual powers, and intense application of mind, rewarded by proportionate acquirements, but also as a most humble and devoted servant of Christ; bringing all he had received into his service, and living only to him. His soul was indeed a temple of the Holy Spirit, and his life uniformly manifested all the simplicity, purity, disinterestedness, and elevated character of the gospel of Christ. The glory of God was his supreme object, whether engaged in his devotional exercises, his studies, his social intercourse, the discharge of his public ministry, or in the publication of his writings. All inferior motives seem to have been without any discernible influence upon him. He entered fully into the expressive language of Paul—"The love of Christ constraineth me." "For me to live is Christ." His personal example will long instruct, excite, and encourage, and his writings will necessarily be most highly esteemed so long as the love of truth prevails.

It has been justly observed, "The number of those men, who have produced great and permanent changes in the character and condition of mankind, and stamped their own image on the minds of succeeding generations, is comparatively small; and, even of this small number, the great body have been indebted for their superior efficiency, at least in part, to extraneous circum-



stances, while very few can ascribe it to the simple strength of their own intellect. Yet here and there an individual can be found, who, by his mere mental energy, has changed the course of human thought and feeling, and led mankind onward in that new and better path which he had opened to their view. Such an individual was Jonathan Edwards. Born in an obscure colony, in the midst of a wilderness, and educated at a seminary just commencing its existence; passing the better part of his life as the pastor of a frontier village, and the residue as an Indian missionary in a still humbler hamlet; he discovered, and unfolded, a system of the divine moral government, so new, so clear, so full, that while at its first disclosure it needed no aid from its friends and feared no opposition from its enemies, it has at length constrained a reluctant world to bow in homage to its truth.”

Jonathan Edwards was born on the 5th of October, 1703, at Windsor, on the banks of the Connecticut. His father, the Rev. Timothy Edwards, was minister of that place about 60 years. He died in January, 1758, in the 89th year of his age, not two months before this his only son. He was a man of great piety and usefulness. On November 6th, 1694, he married Esther Stoddard, daughter of the reverend and celebrated Solomon Stoddard, of Northampton, in the 23rd year of her age. They lived together in the married state above sixty-three years. Mrs. Edwards, our author’s mother, was born June 2nd, 1672, and lived to about ninety years of age, (some years after her son,) a remarkable instance of the small decay of mental powers at so advanced an age. This venerable couple had eleven children; one son, the subject of these memoirs, and ten daughters, four of whom were older, and six younger, than himself.

From the highly spiritual character and intellectual attainments of his parents, it might naturally be expected that his early education would be attended with no common advantages; this was the fact. Many were the prayers presented by parental affection that this only and beloved son might be filled with the Holy Spirit; from a child know the Holy Scriptures; and be great in the sight of the Lord. They who thus fervently and constantly commended him to God, manifested equal diligence in training him up for God. Prayer excited to exertion, and exertion again was encouraged by prayer. The domestic circle was a scene of supplication, and it was a scene of instruction. In the abode of such exemplary servants of God, instruction abounded; that which the eye saw, as well as that which the ear heard, formed a lesson. There was nothing in the example of those who taught to diminish the force of instruction; there was nothing in social habits which counteracted the lessons of wisdom, and infused those principles which in after-years produced the fruit of folly and sin. On the contrary, there was every thing to enlarge, to purify, and to elevate the heart, and at the same time to train the mind, to those exercises of thought from which alone eminent attainments can be expected.

The faithful religious instructions of his parents “rendered him when a child familiarly conversant with God and Christ, with his own character and duty, with the way of salvation, and with the nature of that eternal life which, begun on earth, is perfected in heaven.” Their prayers were not forgotten, and their efforts did not remain without effect. In the progress of childhood he was in several instances the subject of strong religious impressions. “This was particularly true some years before he went to college, during a powerful revival of religion in his father’s congregation. He, and two other lads of his own age, who had the same feelings with himself, erected a booth in a very retired spot

in a swamp, for an oratory, and resorted to it regularly for social prayer. This continued for a long period; but the impressions ultimately disappeared, and in his own view, were followed by no permanent effects of a salutary nature.” The precise period when he regarded himself as entering on a religious life he nowhere mentions, nor has any record been found of the time when he made a publick profession of religion. Even the church with which he became connected would not certainly be known, were it not that on one occasion he alludes to himself as a member of the church in East Windsor. From various circumstances, it seems that the time of his uniting himself to it was not far from the time of his leaving college. Of the views and feelings of his mind, on this most important subject, both before and after this event, there is a most satisfactory and instructive account which was found among his papers in his own hand-writing, and which was written near twenty years afterwards for his own private benefit. It is as follows:

“I had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but I had two more remarkable seasons of awakening, before I met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy some years before I went to college,<sup>1</sup> at a time of remarkable awakening in my father’s congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul’s salvation; and was abundant in religious duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious conversation with other boys; and used to meet with them to pray together. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure, and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I, with some of my school-mates, joined together and built a booth in a swamp, in a very retired spot, for a place of prayer.<sup>2</sup> And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and was from time to time much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element when I engaged in religious duties. And I am ready to think, many are deceived with such affections, and such a kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace.

“But, in progress of time, my convictions and affections wore off, and I entirely lost all those affections and delights, and left off secret prayer, at least as to any constant preference of it; and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin. Indeed, I was at times very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of my time at college, when it pleased God to seize me with a pleurisy; in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell. And yet it was not long after my recovery, before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But God would not suffer me to go on with any quietness; I had great and violent inward struggles, till after many conflicts with wicked inclinations, repeated resolutions, and bonds that I laid myself under by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin; and to apply myself to seek salvation, and practise many religious duties, but without that kind of affection and delight which I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflection. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life. But yet, it seems to me, I sought it after a miserable manner which has made me sometimes since to question, whether ever it is-



sued in that which was saving; being ready to doubt whether such miserable seeking ever succeeded. I was indeed brought to seek salvation, in a manner that I never was before; I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world, for an interest in Christ. My concern continued, and prevailed, with many exercising thoughts and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed to be proper, to express that concern by the name of terror.

“From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God’s sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life; and rejecting whom he pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure. But never could give an account how, or by what means, I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God’s Spirit in it; but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to the doctrine of God’s sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against it, in the most absolute sense, in God showing mercy to whom he will show mercy, and hardening whom he will. God’s absolute sovereignty and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of, as much as of any thing that I see with my eyes; at least it is so at times. But I have often, since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God’s sovereignty than I had then. I have often since had not only a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceedingly pleasant, bright, and sweet. Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not so.

“The first instance, that I remember, of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, 1 Tim. i. 17. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself, how excellent a Being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to him in heaven; and be as it were swallowed up in him for ever! I kept saying, and as it were singing, over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him; and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do, with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was any thing spiritual, or of a saving nature, in this.

“From about that time I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. I found no books so delightful to me, as those that

treated of these subjects. Those words Cant. ii. 1 used to be abundantly with me, I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. The words seemed to me sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. The whole book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it, about that time; and found from time to time an inward sweetness, that would carry me away in my contemplations. This I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapt and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things, would often of a sudden kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning my heart, an ardour of soul, that I know not how to express.

“Not long after I first began to experience these things, I gave an account to my father of some things that had passed in my mind. I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together; and when the discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father’s pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there, and looking upon the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, as I know not how to express.—I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness joined together: it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness; a high, and great, and holy gentleness.

“After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing. God’s excellency, his wisdom, his purity, and love, seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for a long time; and in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things: in the meantime singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce any thing, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning: formerly nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder-storm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, if I may so speak, at the first appearance of a thunderstorm; and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God’s thunders, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural for me to sing or chant forth my meditations; or, to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice.

“I felt then great satisfaction as to my good estate; but that did not content me. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness, wherewith my heart seemed to be full, and ready to break; which often brought to my mind the words of the psalmist, Ps. cxix. 28. My soul breaketh for the longing it hath. I often felt a mourning and lamenting in my heart, that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; almost perpetually in the

contemplation of them. I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year; often walking alone in the woods, and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy, and prayer, and converse with God; and it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights which I now felt in the things of religion, were of an exceedingly different kind from those before mentioned, that I had when a boy; and what then I had no more notion of, than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colours. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating, and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached the heart; and did not arise from any sight of the divine excellency of the things of God; or any taste of the soul-satisfying and life-giving good there was in them.

“My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase, till I went to preach at New York; which was about a year and a half after they began: and while I was there I felt them very sensibly, in a much higher degree than I had done before. My longings after God and holiness were much increased. Pure and humble, holy and heavenly, Christianity appeared exceedingly amiable to me. I felt a burning desire to be, in every thing, a complete Christian; and conformed to the blessed image of Christ; and that I might live, in all things, according to the pure, sweet, and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things; which put me upon pursuing and pressing after them. It was my continual strife, day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should be more holy, and live more holily, and more becoming a child of God, and a disciple of Christ. I now sought an increase of grace and holiness, and a holy life, with much more earnestness than ever I sought grace before I had it. I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means how I should live holily, with far greater diligence and earnestness than ever I pursued any thing in my life; but yet with too great a dependence on my own strength; which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way; and the bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ.

“The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations on heaven, and the enjoyments there; and living there in perfect holiness, humility, and love; and it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. It appeared to me a great clog and burden, that what I felt within I could not express as I desired. The inward ardour of my soul seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think, how in heaven this principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared exceedingly delightful, as a world of love; and that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love.

“I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness; and said sometimes to myself, ‘I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes.’ It appeared to me, that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely; the highest beauty and amiableness—a divine beauty; far purer



than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else was like mire and defilement in comparison of it.

“Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, and ravishment to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; enjoying a sweet calm, and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun’s glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrant; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms to drink in the light of the sun. There was no part of creature-holiness that I had so great a sense of its loveliness, as humility, brokenness of heart, and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this—to lie low before God, as in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be all, that I might become as a little child.

“While at New York, I sometimes was much affected with reflections on my past life, considering how late it was before I began to be truly religious; and how wickedly I had lived till then: and once so as to weep abundantly, and for a considerable time together.

“On January 12, 1723, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had, to God; to be for the future in no respect my own; to act as one that had no right to himself, in any respect. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity, looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as it were; and his law for the constant rule of my obedience; engaging to fight with all my might against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life. But I have reason to be infinitely humbled, when I consider how much I have failed of answering my obligation.

“I had, then, abundance of sweet religious conversation, in the family where I lived, with Mr. John Smith, and his pious mother. My heart was knit in affection to those in whom were appearances of true piety; and I could bear the thoughts of no other companions, but such as were holy, and the disciples of the blessed Jesus. I had great longings for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the world; and my secret prayers used to be, in great part, taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened in any part of the world, that appeared, in some respect or other, to have a favourable aspect on the interests of Christ’s kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it, and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be eager to read public newsletters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favourable to the interest of religion in the world.

“I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place on the banks of Hudson’s river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things and secret converse with God; and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr. Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God; and our conversation used to turn much on the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days. I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the



Holy Scriptures of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart, and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading; often dwelling long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.

“I came away from New York in the month of April, 1723, and had a most bitter parting with Madam Smith and her son. My heart seemed to sink within me, at leaving the family and city, where I had enjoyed so many sweet and pleasant days. I went from New York to Wethersfield by water; and as I sailed away, I kept sight of the city as long as I could. However, that night, after this sorrowful parting, I was greatly comforted in God at West Chester, where we went ashore to lodge: and had a pleasant time of it all the voyage to Saybrook. It was sweet to me to think of meeting dear Christians in heaven, where we should never part more. At Saybrook we went ashore to lodge on Saturday, and there kept the sabbath; where I had a sweet and refreshing season walking alone in the fields.

“After I came home to Windsor, I remained much in a like frame of mind as when at New York; only sometimes I felt my heart ready to sink with the thoughts of my friends at New York. My support was in contemplations on the heavenly state; as I find in my diary of May 1, 1723. It was a comfort to think of that state, where there is fulness of joy; where reigns heavenly, calm and delightful love, without alloy; where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love; where is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting; where those persons who appear so lovely in this world will really be inexpressibly more lovely, and full of love to us. And how secretly will the mutual lovers join together, to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How will it fill us with joy to think, that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises, will never cease, but will last to all eternity!”

Thus deep, decided, and powerful were the operations of divine grace upon the mind of this eminent servant of Christ. That his understanding was much enlightened in the things of God, and his heart deeply affected by them, are circumstances which will immediately strike the attention of every serious observer. There was in him a holy anxiety to obtain the most satisfactory testimony to a change of heart: for this purpose he closely and diligently examined himself; he had no inclination to shun this self-inquiry. Personal examination seems to have been considered by him as a pleasing as well as a momentous exercise. Many professors revolt at the thought of such inward survey; they content themselves with looking (and that hastily) at external matters, but they will not look within, though this neglect be at the peril of eternal good. The feelings with which men regard the duty of personal examination, may justly be viewed as an accurate criterion of their spiritual state, for in proportion to their concern for eternity, will be their disposition to try themselves; or in other words, in the same measure in which grace exists, will there be a desire of fully ascertaining its existence and progress. Upon a review of the statement given by Mr. Edwards as to his early religious experience, it is evident that he was not one who could satisfy himself upon any insufficient grounds: not a symptom of carelessness or of presumption can be discerned; he looked upon himself with a holy jealousy; he thought, he read, he conversed, and above all

he prayed, that he might be enabled more accurately to search his own heart, and thus escape the danger of self-deception, and be convinced by proofs which would stand the test of the judgment of God, that he was a child of light, a subject of holiness, and an heir of glory. And thus studying himself under the penetrating light of the word, and the gracious influences of the Spirit of God, he acquired that exact knowledge of the various inward exercises and outward displays of the christian character, which enabled him in after-years, with such skill, to separate delusive appearances from those which are solid, and to mark the strong difference between the mere professor of the name of Christ, and the actual partaker of the power of the gospel. It was in these early years of his life that those correct views were formed which afterwards expanded in his admirable treatise on Religious Affections.

## FOOTNOTES

1 As he entered college at twelve years of age, this was probably when he was seven or eight.

2 The place where the booth was built is known at East Windsor.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

First published 1834

CHAPTER II.

INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS—EARLIEST PRODUCTIONS—  
ENTRANCE AT COLLEGE—MENTAL HABITS.

A STATEMENT has been given principally from the pen of Mr. Edwards himself of his religious views in youth, and it will be proper before that subject be resumed, to advert to his intellectual progress at the same period. It is delightful to contemplate the simultaneous advancement of knowledge in the mind and of piety in the heart. None can reasonably imagine that there is an opposition between these things; and all whose minds are open to conviction will be persuaded, that the growth of piety is most conducive to the increase of the best treasures of earthly wisdom. Religion strengthens the powers of man; it never enfeebles them. It at once cuts off those guilty pleasures, and those unworthy pursuits, which not merely impede the progress of the understanding, but in many cases are absolutely fatal to its energies; and it forms those mental habits, as well as produces that outward propriety of conduct, which are most favourable to the cultivation of man's noblest faculties. It would be easy to record a lengthened list of names enrolled with never-fading honour, both in the schools of science, and in the church of God. The gospel of Christ has uniformly been the friend of solid learning, nor are those persons the judicious friends of the gospel, who are disposed to disparage the exertions and acquirements of intellect. The christian church dreads the veil of darkness, but it rejoices in the light.

The same parental kindness and wisdom, which, under God, guided the mind of Jonathan Edwards to the knowledge and love of things eternal, were also much discovered in the direction of his powers to useful objects of earthly science. When only six years of age, the study of the Latin language engaged his attention under the care of his father, and occasionally that of his elder sisters. No account is preserved of his progress in his studies at that early period, but his high standing as a scholar on his admission to college, as well as afterwards, and his thorough knowledge of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, prove at once his own diligence as a student at this time, and the accuracy and fidelity of his father's instructions.

"From his remaining manuscripts, it is evident that his father's family were fond of the use of the pen, and that he and his sisters were early encouraged by their parents to make attempts, not only in letter writing, but in other species

of composition. This course, though rarely pursued with children, is eminently advantageous; and in the case before us, was obviously followed by the best results. While it increased the mutual affection of the brother and the sisters, it also served to strengthen their minds, and to impart exactness both of thought and expression. The earliest effort of his pen appears to have been written on the following occasion. Some one in the vicinity, probably an older boy than himself, had advanced the opinion, *that the soul was material, and remained with the body till the resurrection*; and had endeavoured to convince him of its correctness. Struck with the absurdity of the notion, he sat down and wrote the following reply; which, as a specimen both of wit and reasoning in a child of about ten years of age, may fairly claim to be preserved. It is without date, and without pointing, or any division into sentences; and has every appearance of having been written by a boy just after he had learned to write.

“I am informed that you have advanced a notion, that the soul is material, and attends the body till the resurrection; as I am a professed lover of novelty, you must imagine I am very much entertained by this discovery; (which, however old in some parts of the world, is new to us;) but suffer my curiosity a little further. I would know the manner of the kingdom before I swear allegiance: 1st, I would know whether this material soul keeps with (the body) in the coffin, and *if* so, whether it might not be convenient to build a repository for it; in order to which I would know what shape it is of, whether round, triangular, or four-square; or whether it is a number of long fine strings reaching from the head to the foot; and whether it does not live a very discontented life. I am afraid when the coffin gives way, the earth will fall in and crush it; but if it should choose to live above-ground, and hover about the grave, how big is it?—whether it covers all the body; what it does when another body is laid upon it: whether the first gives way; and if so where is the place of retreat. But suppose that souls are not so big but that ten or a dozen of them may be about one body; whether they will not quarrel for the highest place; and, as I insist much upon my honour and property, I would know whether I must quit my dear head, if a superior soul comes in the way: but above all, I am concerned to know what they do, where a burying-place has been filled twenty, thirty, or an hundred times. If they are a-top of one another, the uppermost will be so far off, that it can take no care of the body. I strongly suspect they must march off every time there comes a new set. I hope there is some other place provided for them but dust. The undergoing so much hardship, and being deprived of the body at last, will make them ill-tempered. I leave it with your physical genius to determine, whether some medicinal applications might not be proper in such cases, and subscribe your proselyte, when I can have solution of these matters.”

The following letter to one of his sisters, written at twelve years of age, is the earliest *dated* effort of his pen which has been discovered.

“To Miss Mary Edwards, at Hadley.

“*Windsor, May 10, 1716.*

“DEAR SISTER,

“Through the wonderful goodness and mercy of God, there has been in this place a very remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God. It still continues, but I

think I have reason to think is in some measure diminished, yet I hope not much. Three have joined the church since you last heard; five now stand propounded for admission; and I think above thirty persons come commonly on Mondays to converse with father about the condition of their souls. It is a time of general health here. Abigail, Hannah, and Lucy have had the chicken pox and are recovered. Jerusha is almost well. Except her, the whole family is well.

“Sister, I am glad to hear of your welfare so often as I do, I should be glad to hear from you by letter, and therein how it is with you as to your crookedness

“Your loving brother,  
“JONATHAN E.”.

He was educated, until he entered college, at home, and under his father’s personal instruction; while his older sisters were daily pursuing their respective branches of study in his immediate presence. Their father having been distinguished as a scholar, was able to give them, and actually gave them, a superior education. In all their various pursuits, the mind of their brother, as it opened, would of course be more and more interested; and thus at length he would easily and insensibly acquire a mass of information far beyond his years. The course of his education may in this way have been less systematic, indeed, and less conformed to rule, than that ordinarily given in the school. At the same time it was more safe; forming him to softer manners, gentler feelings, and purer affections. In his circumstances, also, it was obviously more comprehensive and universal; and while it brought him acquainted with many things which are not usually communicated until a later period, it also served to unfold the original traits of his mind, and to give it that expansion, which is the result of information alone. One characteristic, of which he has not generally been suspected, but which he possessed in an unusual degree, was a fondness minutely and critically to investigate the works of nature. This propensity was not only discovered in youth and manhood, but was fully developed in childhood, and at that early period was encouraged and cherished by the fostering hand of parental care.

He entered Yale college in New-Haven, in September, 1716, before he was thirteen years of age. The college was then in its infancy, and various untoward circumstances had greatly impeded its growth. It was first planted at Saybrook, and then partially removed to Kenilworth, to the house of its first rector, until his death in 1707. From that time the Rev. Mr. Andrews, of Milford, one of the trustees, was rector *pro tempore*, upwards of twelve years; and the location of the college was a constant theme of contention between the towns of New-Haven, Saybrook, Wethersfield, and Hartford, until 1716; when the vote of the trustees, the donation of Mr. Yale, and the vote of the legislature of the colony, fixed it permanently at New-Haven. In the collegiate year 1716-1717, thirteen of the students resided at New-Haven, fourteen at Wethersfield, and four at Saybrook. The temporary presidency of Mr. Andrews continued until 1719; and as he was the acting minister of Milford, his oversight of the college, and his influence over the students, must of course have been exceedingly imperfect. The government of the institution, virtually and necessarily, was chiefly in the hands of the tutors: who, as young men without experience and a knowledge of mankind, could not usually be found qualified

for so difficult a trust. Some time in the year 1717, the extreme unpopularity of one of the tutors occasioned a general insurrection of the students, who were at New-Haven, against the government of the college: and in one body they withdrew from New-Haven, and joined their companions at Wethersfield. At the commencement in that year, eight of the senior class returned to New-Haven, to receive their degrees of the regular college government; while five received theirs irregularly at Wethersfield. There is no evidence that Jonathan Edwards took part in these disturbances. He went however with his companions to Wethersfield, and continued there until 1719. While there, he gained a high character and standing in his class. His father, writing to one of his daughters, under date of Jan. 27, 1718, says, "I have not heard but that your brother Jonathan is also well. He has a very good name at Wethersfield, both as to his carriage and his learning." While at Wethersfield, he wrote to one of his sisters the following letter; which, as it is a document relating to an interesting event in the history of the college, may not improperly be preserved.

"To Miss Mary Edwards at Northampton.

*"Wethersfield, March 26, 1719*

"DEAR SISTER,

"Of all the many sisters I have, I think I never had one so long out of my hearing as yourself; inasmuch as I cannot remember, that I ever heard one tittle from you, from the time you last went up the country, until the last week, by Mr. B. who then came from Northampton. When he came in, I truly rejoiced to see him, because I fully expected to receive a letter from you by him. But being disappointed, and that not a little, I was willing to make that, which I hoped would be an opportunity of receiving, the same of sending. For I thought it was a pity, that there should not be the least correspondence between us, or communication from one to another, when at no farther distance. I hope also that this may be a means of exciting the same in yourself; and so, having more charity for you than to believe that I am quite out of your mind, or that you are not at all concerned for me, I think it fit that I should give you some account of my condition, relative to the school. I suppose you are fully acquainted with our coming away from New-Haven, and the circumstances of it. Since then we have been in a more prosperous condition, as I think, than ever. But the council and trustees, having lately had a meeting at New-Haven concerning it, have removed that which was the cause of our coming away, viz. Mr. Johnson, from the place of a tutor, and have put in Mr. Cutler, pastor of Canterbury, president; who, as we hear, intends very speedily to be resident at Yale college, so that all the scholars belonging to our school expect to return there, as soon as our vacancy after the election is over.

"I am your loving brother in good health,

"JONATHAN EDWARDS."

While a member of college, he was distinguished for the uniform sobriety and correctness of his behaviour, for diligent application to his studies, and for rapid and thorough attainments in learning. In the second year of his collegiate course, while at Wethersfield, he read Locke on the Human Understanding, with peculiar pleasure. The uncommon strength and penetration of his mind,

which admirably qualified him for profound thought and metaphysical investigation, began to be discovered and exerted even at this early age. From his own account of the subject, he was inexpressibly entertained and delighted with that profound work, when he read it at the age of fourteen, enjoying a far higher pleasure in the perusal of its pages, “than the most greedy miser finds, when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold, from some newly discovered treasure.” To studies of this class he from that time devoted himself, as to those in which he felt the most intense interest. Still, however, he applied himself, with so much diligence and success, to the performance of his assigned duties, as to sustain the first standing in his class, and to secure the highest approbation of his instructors.

Mr. Cutler went to New-Haven early in June 1719, at the opening of the summer term, to enter on the duties of his office as rector; and the students, among whom was Jonathan Edwards, returned to the college. The following letter from the rector to his father, will show the character which he had acquired while at Wethersfield, and the trying circumstances of the college.

*“New-Haven, June 30, 1719.*

“REV. SIR,

“Your letter came to my hands by your son. I congratulate you upon his promising abilities and advances in learning. He is now under my care, and probably may continue so, and doubtless will so do if he should remain here, and I be settled in the business I am now in. I can assure, Rev. Sir, that your good affection to me in this affair, and that of the ministers around you, is no small inducement to me; and if I am prevailed on thereby, it shall be a strong motive to me to improve my poor abilities, in the service of such hopeful youths as are with us. They may suffer much from my weakness, but they shall not from my neglect. I am no party man, but shall carry it, with an equal hand and affection, to the whole college; and I doubt not, but the difficulty and importance of the business will secure me your prayers, and those of all good men, which I do much value and desire.

I remain, under the earnest hope and expectation of your prayers,

“Your humble servant

“T. CUTLER.”

The following characteristic letter, written to his father in his third collegiate year, will not be uninteresting to the reader.

“To the Rev. Timothy Edwards, Pastor of the Church at East Windsor.

*“New-Haven, July 21, 1719.*

“EVER HONOURED SIR,

“I received, with two books, a letter from yourself, bearing the date of July 7th; and therein I received, with the greatest gratitude, your wholesome advice and counsel; and I hope I shall, God helping of me, use my utmost endeavours to put the same in practice. I am sensible of the preciousness of my time, and am resolved it shall not be through any neglect of mine, if it slips without the greatest advantage. I take very great content under my present tuition, as all

the rest of the scholars seem to do under theirs. Mr. Cutler is extraordinarily courteous to us, has a very good spirit of government, keeps the school in excellent order, seems to increase in learning, is loved and respected by all who are under him; and when he is spoken of in the school or town, he generally has the title of President. The scholars all live in very good peace with the people of the town, and there is not a word said about our former carryings on, except now and then by aunt Mather. I have diligently searched into the circumstances of Stiles's examination, which was very short, and as far as I can understand, was to no other disadvantage than that he was examined in Tully's Orations; in which, though he had never construed before he came to New-Haven, yet he committed no error in that or any other book, whether Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, except in Virgil, wherein he could not tell the preteritum of requiesco. He is very well treated among the scholars, and accepted in the college as a member of it by every body, and also as a freshman; neither, as I think, is he inferior, as to learning, to any of his classmates. I have inquired of Mr. Cutler what books we shall have need of the next year. He answered, he would have me to get against that time, Alstead's Geometry and Gassendus's Astronomy; with which I would entreat you to get a pair of dividers, or mathematician's compasses, and a scale, which are absolutely necessary in order to learning mathematics; and also the Art of Thinking, which, I am persuaded, would be no less profitable, than the other necessary, to me who am

Your most dutiful son,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS.

P. S. What we give a week for our board is £0 5s. 0d.

"The habits of study, which Edwards formed in very early youth, were not only strict and severe, and this in every branch of literature, but in one respect peculiar. Even while a boy, he began to study *with his pen in his hand*; not for the purpose of copying off the thoughts of others, but for the purpose of writing down, and preserving, the thought suggested to his own mind, from the course of study which he was pursuing. This most useful practice he commenced in several branches of study very early; and he steadily pursued it in all his studies through life. His pen appears to have been in a sense always in his hand. From this practice steadily persevered in, he derived the very great advantages of thinking continually during each period of study; of thinking accurately; of thinking connectedly; of thinking habitually at all times; of banishing from his mind every subject, which was not worthy of continued and systematic thought; of pursuing each given subject of thought as far as he was able, at the happy moment when it opened spontaneously on his mind; of pursuing every such subject afterwards, in regular sequence, starting anew from the point where he had previously left off, when again it opened upon him in some new and interesting light; of preserving his best thoughts, associations, and images, and then arranging them under their proper heads, ready for subsequent use; of regularly strengthening the faculty of thinking and reasoning, by constant and powerful exercise; and above all, of gradually moulding himself into a thinking being—a being, who instead of regarding thinking and reasoning as labour, could find no high enjoyment but in intense, systematic, and certain thought. In this view of the subject, when we remember how few stu-



dents comparatively, from want of this mental discipline, think at all; how few of those who think at all, think habitually; how few of those who think habitually, think to purpose; and how few of those who think to purpose, attain to the fulness of the measure of the stature, to which, as thinking beings, they might have attained; it will not I think be doubted, that the practice in question was the principal means of the ultimate development of his mental superiority.”

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected

by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

**CHAPTER III.**

EARLY RELIGIOUS PRODUCTIONS—"MISCELLANIES"—NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURES—COMMENCEMENT OF HIS PREACHING—RESOLUTIONS.

A CONSCIENTIOUS regard to duty appeared greatly in the early as well as in the latter days of Jonathan Edwards. As a child, the spirit of love and obedience uniformly guided him; and as a pupil, he discovered every disposition honourable to himself, encouraging to those who anxiously watched over his progress, and which was justly considered as the earnest of uncommon attainments. The child, the youth, the man, all presented to view the same superior mind, in different degrees of advancement, but still alike indicative of the same general excellencies.

While at college, he paid a most assiduous and successful attention to his assigned duties, and particularly to the study of mental and physical philosophy; yet he still found time for pursuits of a more elevated and spiritual character. His whole education from early infancy, and the counsels of his parents, as well as his own feelings, prompted him to these pursuits. "To read the Bible daily, and to read it in connexion with other religious books, diligently and attentively, on the sabbath, was made, in the earlier days of New England, the habitual duty of every child; and his father's family, though not inattentive to the due cultivation of mind and manners, had lost none of the strictness, or conscientiousness, which characterized the pilgrims. The books which he found in his father's house, the conversation of ministers often resorting to the house, the custom of the times, as well as the more immediate influence of parental instruction and example, naturally prompted a mind like his to the early contemplation and investigation of many of the truths and principles of theology. He had also witnessed in his father's congregation, before his admission to college, several extensive revivals of religion; and in two of them the impressions made on his own mind had been unusually deep and solemn. The name familiarly given by the plain people of New England to these events—"A religious *attention*," and "A *general attention* to religion"—indicates their nature; and those personally acquainted with them need not be informed, that

during their progress, the great truths of religion, as taught in the Scriptures, and as explained in the writings of theologians, become the objects of general and intense interest, and of close practical study; or that the knowledge, acquired by a whole people at such a time, in a comparatively little period, often exceeds the acquisitions of many previous years. With all these things in view, it is not surprising, that, to these two kinds of reading, he devoted himself early, with great diligence and with great success."

Two of his early "Resolutions" relate to this subject, in which he proposes "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." He never lost sight of this resolution. On the 8th of June, 1723, he also proposes, whenever he finds himself in a dull, listless frame, to read over his own "Remarks and Reflections of a Religious Nature," in order to quicken him in his duty. These "Remarks and Reflections" were very numerous. The first manuscript of his "Miscellanies" is in folio, and consists of forty-four sheets of foolscap, written separately, and stitched together. When he began the work, he had obviously no suspicion of the size to which it was to grow, nor had he formed his ultimate plan of arrangement. He headed his first article, "Of Holiness;" and having finished it, and drawn a line of separation across the page, he commenced the second, "Of Christ's mediation and satisfaction." The same is done with the third and fourth. The fifth he writes, without a line of separation, in larger letters, "*Spiritual Happiness*." After that the subject of each new article is printed, or written, in larger letters. His first article was written on the second page of a loose sheet of paper; and having written over the second, third, and fourth pages, he went back to the first. He began to number his articles by the letters of the alphabet, a, b, c, and having gone through, he commenced with a double alphabet, aa, bb, cc; when this was finished, finding his work enlarge, he took the regular numbers, 1, 2, 3, &c. and this plan, both as to subjects and numbers, is afterwards continued.

The beginning of the work is written in a remarkably small round hand, nearly the same with that in which his earliest productions are written. This extends through about the first 150 articles, and is soon after perceptibly changed, into a hand somewhat more formed and flowing. These appear obviously to have been written during the last years of his college life, and the two years of his residence at college as Bachelor of Arts. Large extracts from this work will be found in the present edition of his Works, and a number of them from the earlier articles. Such are the Miscellaneous Observations, and the Miscellaneous Remarks, vol. ii. page 459. and the Miscellanies, page 525. In these will be found many of his most original and most profound thoughts and discussions on theological subjects.

"His regular and diligent study of the sacred Scriptures, led him early to discover, that they opened before him an almost boundless field of investigation and inquiry. Some passages he found to be incorrectly rendered; many were very obscure, and difficult in explanation; in many there were apparent inconsistencies and contradictions; many had been long employed, as proofs of doctrines and principles, to which they had no possible reference; the words and phrases, as well as the sentiments and narratives, on one part, he saw illustrated, and interpreted those of another. The Old Testament, in its language, history, doctrines, and worship, in its allusions to manners and customs, in its prophecies, types, and images, he perceived to be introductory and explana-

tory of the New; while the New, by presenting the full completion of the whole plan and design of their common Author, unfolded the real drift and bearing of every part of the Old. Regarding the sacred volume with the highest veneration, he appears to have resolved, while a member of college, that he would, as far as possible, possess himself, in every part of it which he read, of the true meaning of its Author. With this view he commenced his "*Notes on the Scriptures*;" obviously making it his standing rule to study every passage which he read, which presented the least difficulty to his own mind, or which he had known to be regarded as difficult by others, until such difficulty was satisfactorily removed. The result of his investigations he regularly, and at the time, committed to writing; at first in separate half-sheets, folded in 4to; but having found the inconvenience of this in his other juvenile writings, he soon formed small pamphlets of sheets, which were ultimately made into volumes. A few of the articles, to the number of about fifty, appear to have been written while he was in college; the rest, while preparing for the ministry, and during his subsequent life. That he had no suspicion when he began of the size to which the work would grow, is plain, and whether he afterwards formed the design of publishing it, as an illustration of the more difficult and obscure passages of the Bible, perhaps cannot be determined with certainty. A few of the articles of an historical or mythological nature, are marked as quotations from the writings of others, and are omitted in the present edition of his Works. The reader, after perusing the work, will be satisfied that they are the fruit of his own investigations; and that his mode of removing difficulties was,—not as it too often is, by disguising or misstating them, but by giving them their full force, and meeting them with fair argument. Perhaps no collection of notes on the Scriptures so entirely original can be found. From the number prefixed to each article, it will be found easy to select those which were the result of his early labours. Such a plan of investigating and explaining the difficulties of the sacred volume, at so early a period of life, was probably never formed in any other instance, and evinces a maturity of intellectual and moral attainments, not often paralleled. Among the most interesting and able of these investigations, will be found the discussion of the *sacrifice of the daughter of Jephtha*, Judg. xi. 29-40.; and that on the principle advanced by Paul, in Romans viii. 28. *That all things work together for good to them that love God*; which as being contained in his letter to Mr. Gillespie, of Sept. 4, 1747, is omitted in the notes on the Scriptures."

The class of which Edwards was a member, finished their regular collegiate course, in Sept. 1720, before he was seventeen years of age. At that period, and for a long time afterwards, the only exercise, except the Latin Theses, given at the public commencement, to the class of Bachelors, was the Salutatory, which was also a Valedictory, Oration in Latin. This exercise was awarded to Edwards, as sustaining the highest rank as a scholar among the members of the class.

He resided at college nearly two years after he took his first degree, preparing himself for the work of the ministry; after which, having passed the customary trials, he received a licence to preach: this was in the nineteenth year of his age. In consequence of an application from a number of ministers in New England, who were intrusted to act in behalf of the presbyterians in New York, he went to that city in the beginning of August, 1722, and preached there with great acceptance, about eight months. While there he found a most

happy residence in the house of a Mrs. Smith; whom, as well as her son Mr. John Smith, he regarded as persons of uncommon piety and purity of life, and with whom he formed an intimate christian friendship. There also he found a considerable number of persons, among the members of that church, exhibiting the same character; with whom he enjoyed, in a high degree, all the pleasures and advantages of christian intercourse. His personal attachment to them became strong; and their interest in him as a man and a preacher was such, that they warmly solicited him to remain with them for life. To decline their candid invitation was most distressing to his feelings; but on account of the smallness of that congregation, and some peculiar difficulties which attended it, he did not think there was a rational prospect of usefulness and comfort. After a most painful parting with the kind friends, under whose hospitable roof he had so long and happily resided, he left the city on Friday, the 26th of April, by water, and reached his father's house on Wednesday, the 1st of May. Here he spent the summer in close study, during which he was again earnestly requested, by the congregation in New York, to return to that city, and settle among them; but his former views were not altered; and therefore, though strongly inclined from his own feelings to gratify them, he could not comply with their wishes. Probably in no part of his life had he higher advantage for spiritual contemplation and enjoyment, than in the period first mentioned. He went to New York in a delightful frame of mind. He found there a little flock of Christ, constrained from a sense of their own weakness to "dwell together in unity," and to feel a practical sense of their dependence on God. He was in the midst of a family, whose daily influence served only to refresh and to sanctify. He had also much leisure for religious reading, meditation, and prayer. In these circumstances the presence of the Comforter appears to have been a daily reality; the evidence of which he found in that purity of heart which enables its possessor to see God, in the peace which passeth all understanding, and the joy with which a stranger intermeddleth not.

During his preparation for the ministry, his residence in New York, and his subsequent residence in his father's house, he formed a series of *resolutions*, to the number of seventy, intended obviously for himself alone, to regulate his own heart and life, but fitted also, from their christian simplicity and spiritual-mindedness, to be eminently useful to others. Of these the first thirty-four<sup>1</sup> were written before Dec. 18, 1722, the time in which his Diary, as it now exists, commences. The particular time and occasion of making many of the rest, will be found in that most interesting narrative, in which also are many other rules and resolutions, intended for the regulation of his own affections, of perhaps equal excellence. It should be remembered they were all written before he was twenty years of age. As he was wholly averse to all profession and ostentation; and as these resolutions themselves were plainly intended for no other eye than his own, except the eye that is omniscient; they may be justly considered as the basis of his conduct and character, the plan by which he governed the secret as well as the publick actions of his life. As such they will deeply interest the reader, not only as they unfold the inmost mind of their author, but as they also show, in a manner most striking and convincing to the conscience, what is the true foundation of great and distinguished excellence.

He was too well acquainted with human weakness and frailty, even where the intentions are most sincere, to enter on any resolutions rashly, or from a reliance on his own strength. He therefore in the outset looked to God for aid,

who alone can afford success in the use of the best means, and in the intended accomplishment of the best purposes. This he places at the head of all his other important rules, that his whole dependence was on the grace of God, while he still proposes to recur to a frequent and serious perusal of them, in order that they might become the habitual directory of his life.

## 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.

*Remember to read over these Resolutions once a week.*

1. *Resolved*, That *I will do whatsoever* I think to be most to the glory of God, 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 myriads 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*, so to do, whatever *difficulties* I meet with, how many soever, and how great soever.

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

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

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

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

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. *Vid.* July 30.

9. *Resolved*, To think much, on all occasions, of my 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.

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

12. *Resolved*, If I take delight in it as a gratification of pride, or vanity, or on any such account, immediately to throw it by.

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

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

15. *Resolved*, Never to suffer the least motions of anger towards 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.

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 most devout frames, and when I have the clearest notions of the 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.

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

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.

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.

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 fourth 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.

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.

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

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.

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.

30. *Resolved*, To strive every week to be brought higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace, than I was the week before.

31. *Resolved*, Never to say any thing at all against anybody, 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 anything against any one, to bring it to, and try it strictly by, the test of this Resolution.

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

33. *Resolved*, To do always what I can towards making, maintaining, and preserving peace, when it can be done without an overbalancing detriment in other respects. Dec. 26, 1722.

34. *Resolved*, In narrations, never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity.

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.

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

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.

38. *Resolved*, Never to utter anything that is sportive, or matter of laughter, on a Lord's day. Sabbath evening, Dec. 23, 1722.

39. *Resolved*, Never to do any thing, of which I so much question the lawfulness, as that I intend, at the same time, to consider and examine afterwards, whether it be lawful or not; unless I as much question the lawfulness of the omission.

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.

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 12th 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; agreeably to what is to be found in Saturday, Jan. 12th. Jan. 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.

46. *Resolved*, Never to allow the least measure of any fretting or 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.

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, 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; and to examine strictly, at the end of every week, whether I have so done. Sabbath morning, May 5, 1723.

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 not; 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.

50. *Resolved*, That 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.

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.

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

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

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

57. *Resolved*, When I fear misfortunes and adversity, to examine whether I have done my duty, and resolve to do it and let the event 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.

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.

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.

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, &c. May 21, and July 13, 1723.

62. *Resolved*, Never to do any thing but my duty, and then, according to Eph. vi. 6-8. to do it willingly and cheerfully, as unto the Lord, and not to man: knowing that whatever good thing any man doth, the same shall be receive of the Lord. June 25, and July 13, 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 do, if I strove with all my might to be that one, who should live in my time. Jan. 14, and July 13, 1723.

64. *Resolved*, When I find those “groanings which cannot be uttered,” of which the apostle speaks, and those “breathings of soul for the longing it

hath," of which the psalmist speaks, Psalm cxix. 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 Aug. 10, 1723.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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

Such were the excellent Resolutions formed by Jonathan Edwards at an early period of life, and which in succeeding years were regarded by him, not as unimportant records, but as containing the great principles of the spiritual life. A deep and extensive knowledge of the heart is manifest in these Resolutions, a conviction of its defects, a lively apprehension of its dangers, and an intense concern that all its tendencies should be towards God, and towards everything required by his holy will. There is a remarkable tenderness of conscience discovered in every particular which has been stated. The man who could thus write, was not one who could easily trifle with sin, or who could enter any of its paths without the immediate reproofs of an offended conscience. This holy man trembled even at the distant view of sin; he could not willingly come near and survey its enticements. Accustomed to breathe in a holy atmosphere, the least taint of corruption immediately affected his spiritual frame. He knew no happiness except that connected with a conscience void of offence. All these rules were the suggestions of a conscience of a highly enlightened character.

They also indicate a constant sense of the presence and exact observations of the Searcher of all hearts. The writer lived as seeing him who is invisible; he set the Lord always before him; encouraging upon all occasions an earnest concern for the glory of God, the grand object for which he desired to live both upon earth and in heaven, an object compared with which all other things seemed in his view but trifles. If this were attained, all his desires were satisfied; but if this were lost or imperfectly gained, his soul was filled with anguish. These Resolutions afford ample testimony how much the author had entered into the spirit of 1 Cor. x. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* They also illustrate his views of the importance of consistency of character. He was not content with accurate views of truth, or any kind of outward profession, apart from holy consistency of character. He studied, he admired, and he exhibited the influence of the

gospel; a walk “worthy of the vocation wherewith he was called” was the elevated object at which he ardently aimed. He well knew that the followers of Christ are required “to hold forth the word of life,” to shine as lights in the world, to instruct by their examples as well as by their words; and he desired to honour God by presenting to the view of the members of the spiritual kingdom, and also of the world, an example which might declare the reality and the beauty of religion. It is further manifest from these Resolutions, that his mind was most anxious for daily advancement in every branch of holiness. An active spiritual principle existed in him, which caused him to press forward, whatever might be the obstacles in his way. He could not be contented while one sin remained in him, while one grace was defective, or a single duty engaged in but imperfectly. He longed for the holy perfection of the heavenly world, and anticipated with joy that day when he should awake with the Divine likeness. It cannot be a matter of surprise, that with these sentiments and feelings he attained an exaltation of character seldom equalled and perhaps never surpassed.

The Resolutions which have given rise to these reflections are probably, “to persons of every age, but especially to the young, the best uninspired summary of christian duty, the best directory to high attainment in evangelical virtue, which the mind of man has hitherto been able to form.” They disclose the writer’s own character, and they are admirably calculated to improve the character of every reader who fears to sin, and rejoices in the purity of the Divine will.

## FOOTNOTE

1 The first twenty-one were written at once; as were the next ten, at a subsequent sitting. The rest were written occasionally. They are all on two detached pieces of paper.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

**CHAPTER IV.**

**HIS DIARY.**

THE views and practices of men of equal excellence have differed considerably in regard to the keeping of a diary. Many have never attempted it; some who at one period of life commenced it have afterwards from various causes declined it; and others have steadily adhered to a custom which certainly has the sanction of some of the most eminent names in the church of God. It is at once admitted that many diaries have been kept in the most injudicious manner, and it is still more an object of deep regret that these records have in some instances been published, not merely to the grief of serious and intelligent minds, but to the injury of religion itself, and the exciting a prejudice against all similar records. There are, however, some published journals of excellent men which evince so much solid judgment as well as fervent piety, and have been the sources of so much usefulness, that a more than equal balance is presented against works in part of an opposite description. No one is disposed to lament the publication of parts of the Diaries of Philip and Matthew Henry, Brainerd, Doddridge, or Joseph Williams and some others; writings which illustrate the inward and outward power of godliness, reflect honour upon the individuals themselves, and yield a powerful and holy stimulus to the minds of other Christians. The Diary of Jonathan Edwards corresponds in its excellencies with those to which reference is thus made, and will be perused with the same feelings, and lead it is hoped to the like beneficial effects.—This Diary begins Dec. 18, 1722, when he was nineteen years of age. As far as to Jan. 15th, at night, it is written on two detached slips of paper; and the remainder in a book.<sup>1</sup> As it commences abruptly, and as near as possible to the top of that paper, the beginning of it is undoubtedly lost; and it is not improbable, that, as he originally wrote it, it may have reached back, at least to the period of his preparation for the ministry. It was intended, as will at once be perceived, for his own private use exclusively; and had it been with him at the close of life, it is not unlikely it might have been destroyed. “Still, whatever is calculated to do good, and is perfectly consistent with an author’s real reputation, may be published with honour, whatever his design might be while writing. The best of men, indeed, have thoughts, and opinions, and feelings, which are perfectly proper and right in themselves, which yet it would be wholly improper for them to disclose to others. But a man of sound discretion will take care that

nothing of this nature is placed within the reach of accident. What Mr. Edwards wished to have concealed from every eye but his own, he wrote in *short hand*; and on one occasion, after having written to a considerable extent in that character, he adds this remark in his customary hand, 'Remember to act according to Prov. xii. 23. A prudent man concealeth knowledge.'

<sup>2</sup>"The reader, while perusing the Diary in its various parts, will be struck with it as possessing the following characteristics. It consists of facts; and of solid thought, dictated by deep religious feeling; and not of the mere expressions of feeling, or of common-place moral reflections or exhortations. It was intended for his own eyes exclusively; and not chiefly for those of his friends and of the public. It is an exhibition of the simple thinking, feeling, and acting of a man, who is unconscious how he appears, except to himself and to God; and not the remarks of one, who is desirous of being thought humble, respecting his own humility. If we suppose a man of christian simplicity and godly sincerity to bring all the secret movements of his own soul under the clear, strong light of heaven, and there to survey them with a piercing and an honest eye, and a contrite heart, in order to humble himself, and make himself better; it is just the account which such a man would write."

DIARY.—*December, 1722*

"*Dec. 18.* This day made the 35th Resolution. The reason why I in the least question my interest in God's love and favour, is,—1. Because I cannot speak so fully to my experience of that preparatory work, of which divines speak:—2. I do not remember that I experienced regeneration, exactly in those steps, in which divines say it is generally wrought:—3. I do not feel the christian graces sensibly enough, particularly faith. I fear they are only such hypocritical outside affections, which wicked men may feel as well as others. They do not seem to be sufficiently inward, full, sincere, entire, and hearty. They do not seem so substantial, and so wrought into my very nature, as I could wish.—4. Because I am sometimes guilty of sins of omission and commission. Lately I have doubted, whether I do not transgress in evil speaking. This day, resolved, No.

*Dec. 19.* This day made the 36th Resolution. Lately I have been very much perplexed, by seeing the doctrine of different degrees in glory questioned; but now have almost got over the difficulty.

*Dec. 20.* This day somewhat questioned, whether I had not been guilty of negligence yesterday, and this morning; but resolved, No.

*Dec. 21, Friday.* This day and yesterday, I was exceedingly dull, dry, and dead.

*Dec. 22, Saturday.* This day, revived by God's Holy Spirit; affected with the sense of the excellency of holiness; felt more exercise of love to Christ, than usual. Have, also, felt sensible repentance for sin, because it was committed against so merciful and good a God. This night made the 37th Resolution.

*Sabbath night, Dec. 23.* Made the 38th Resolution.

*Monday, Dec. 24.* Higher thoughts than usual of the excellency of Christ and his kingdom.—Concluded to observe, at the end of every month, the number of breaches of resolutions, to see whether they increase or diminish, to begin from this day, and to compute from that the weekly account my monthly

increase, and out of the whole, my yearly increase, beginning from new-year days.

*Wednesday, Dec. 26.* Early in the morning yesterday, was hindered by the head-ache all day; though I hope I did not lose much. Made an addition to the 37th Resolution, concerning weeks, months, and years.—*At night.* Made the 33d Resolution.

*Saturday, Dec. 29.* About sunset this day, dull and lifeless.

1722-23, *Tuesday, Jan. 1.* Have been dull for several days. Examined whether I have not been guilty of negligence to-day; and resolved, No.

*Wednesday, Jan. 2.* Dull. I find, by experience, that, let me make resolutions, and do what I will, with never so many inventions, it is all nothing, and to no purpose at all, without the motions of the Spirit of God; for if the Spirit of God should be as much withdrawn from me always, as for the week past, notwithstanding all I do, I should not grow, but should languish, and miserably fade away. I perceive, if God should withdraw his Spirit a little more, I should not hesitate to break my resolutions, and should soon arrive at my old state. There is no dependence on myself. Our resolutions may be at the highest one day, and yet, the next day, we may be in a miserable dead condition, not at all like the same person who resolved. So that it is to no purpose to resolve, except we depend on the grace of God. For, if it were not for his mere grace, one might be a very good man one day, and a very wicked one the next. I find also by experience, that there is no guessing out the ends of Providence, in particular dispensations towards me—any otherwise than as afflictions come as corrections for sin, and God intends when we meet with them, to desire us to look back on our ways, and see wherein we have done amiss, and lament that particular sin, and all our sins, before him:—knowing this, also, that all things shall work together for our good; not knowing in what way, indeed, but trusting in God.

*Saturday evening, Jan. 5.* A little redeemed from a long dreadful dulness, about reading the Scriptures. This week, have been unhappily low in the weekly account:—and what are the reasons of it?—abundance of listlessness and sloth; and if this should continue much longer, I perceive that other sins will begin to discover themselves. It used to appear to me, that I had not much sin remaining; but now, I perceive that there are great remainders of sin. Where may it not bring me to, if God should leave me? Sin is not enough mortified. Without the influences of the Spirit of God, the old serpent would begin to rouse up himself from his frozen state, and would come to life again. *Resolved*, that I have been negligent in two things:—in not striving enough in duty; and in not forcing myself upon religious thoughts.

*Sabbath, Jan. 6. At night.* Much concerned about the improvement of precious time. Intend to live in continual mortification, without ceasing, and even to weary myself thereby as long as I am in this world, and never to expect or desire any worldly ease or pleasure.

*Monday, Jan. 7.* At night, made the 40th Resolution.

*Tuesday, Jan. 8.* In the morning, had higher thoughts than usual of the excellency of Christ, and felt an unusual repentance of sin therefrom.

*Wednesday, Jan. 9. At night.* Decayed. I am sometimes apt to think, that I have a great deal more of holiness than I really have. I find now and then that abominable corruption, which is directly contrary to what I read of eminent Christians. I do not seem to be half so careful to improve time, to do every

thing quick, and in as short a time as I possibly can, nor to be perpetually engaged to think about religion, as I was yesterday and the day before, nor indeed as I have been at certain times, perhaps a twelvemonth ago. If my resolutions of that nature, from that time, had always been kept alive and awake, how much better might I have been than I now am! How deceitful is my heart! I take up a strong resolution, but how soon doth it weaken!

*Thursday, Jan. 10. About noon.* Recovering. It is a great dishonour to Christ, in whom I hope I have an interest, to be uneasy at my worldly state and condition; or when I see the prosperity of others, and that all things go easy with them, the world is smooth to them, and they are very happy in many respects, and very prosperous, or are advanced to much honour; to grudge them their prosperity, or envy them on account of it, or to be in the least uneasy at it, to wish and long for the same prosperity, and to desire that it should ever be so with me. Wherefore, concluded always to rejoice in every one's prosperity, and not to pretend to expect or desire it for myself; and to expect no happiness of that nature, as long as I live; but to depend on afflictions, and to betake myself entirely to another happiness.—I think I find myself much more sprightly and healthy, both in body and mind, for my self-denial in eating, drinking, and sleeping. I think it would be advantageous, every morning to consider my business and temptations, and the sins to which I shall be exposed on that day, and to make a resolution how to improve the day, and avoid those sins; and so at the beginning of every week, month, and year. I never knew before what was meant, by not setting our hearts on those things. It is, not to care about them, nor to depend upon them, nor to afflict ourselves with the fear of losing them, nor to please ourselves with the expectation of obtaining them, or with the hopes of their continuance.—*At night.* Made the 41st Resolution.

*Saturday, Jan. 12. In the morning.* I have, this day, solemnly renewed my baptismal covenant and self-dedication, which I renewed when I was taken into the communion of the church. I have been before God, and have given myself, all that I am and have, to God; so that I am not, in any respect, my own. I can challenge no right in this understanding, this will, these affections, which are in me. Neither have I any right to this body, or any of its members—no right to this tongue, these hands, these feet; no right to these senses, these eyes, these ears, this smell, or this taste. I have given myself clear away, and have not retained any thing as my own. I gave myself to God in my baptism, and I have been this morning to him, and told him, that I gave myself *wholly* to him. I have given every power to him; so that, for the future, I'll challenge no right in myself, in no respect whatever. I have expressly promised him, and I do now promise Almighty God, that by his grace I will not. I have this morning told him that I did take him for my whole portion and felicity, looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and his law, for the constant rule of my obedience; and would fight with all my might against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life; and that I did believe in Jesus Christ, and did receive him as a Prince and Saviour; and that I would adhere to the faith and obedience of the gospel, however hazardous and difficult the confession and practice of it may be; and that I did receive the blessed Spirit as my Teacher, Sanctifier, and only Comforter, and cherish all his motions to enlighten, purify, confirm, comfort, and assist me. This, I have done; and I pray God, for the sake of Christ, to look upon it as a self-dedication, and to receive me now as entirely his own, and to deal with

me, in all respects, as such, whether he afflicts me or prospers me, or whatever he pleases to do with me, who am his. Now, henceforth, I am not to act, in any respect, as my own.—I shall act as my own, if I ever make use of any of my powers to any thing that is not to the glory of God, and do not make the glorifying of him my whole and entire business:—if I murmur in the least at affliction; if I grieve at the prosperity of others; if I am in any way uncharitable; if I am angry because of injuries; if I revenge them; if I do any thing purely to please myself, or if I avoid any thing for the sake of my own ease; if I omit any thing because it is great self-denial; if I trust to myself; if I take any of the praise of the good that I do, or that God doth by me; or if I am in any way proud. This day, made the 42nd and 43rd Resolutions.—Whether or no, any other end ought to have any influence at all on any of my actions; or whether any action ought to be any otherwise, in any respect, than it would be, if nothing else but religion had the least influence on my mind. Wherefore I make the 44th Resolution.

Query: Whether any delight or satisfaction ought to be allowed, because any other end is obtained beside a religious one.—*In the afternoon.* I answer, Yes, because, if we should never suffer ourselves to rejoice, but because we have obtained a religious end, we should never rejoice at the sight of friends, we should not allow ourselves any pleasure in our food, whereby the animal spirits would be withdrawn, and good digestion hindered. But the query is to be answered thus:—We never ought to allow any joy or sorrow, but what helps religion. Wherefore, I make the 45th Resolution.

The reason why I so soon grow lifeless, and unfit for the business I am about, I have found out, is only because I have been used to suffer myself to leave off, for the sake of ease, and so I have acquired a habit of expecting ease; and therefore, when I think I have exercised myself a great while, I cannot keep myself to it any longer, because I expect to be released, as my due and right. And then I am deceived, as if I were really tired and weary, whereas, if I did not expect ease, and was resolved to occupy myself by business as much as I could, I should continue with the same vigour at my business, without vacation time to rest. Thus I have found it in reading the Scriptures; and thus I have found it in prayer; and thus I believe it to be in getting sermons by heart, and in other things.

*At night.* This week, the weekly account rose higher than ordinary. It is suggested to me, that too constant a mortification, and too vigorous application to religion, may be prejudicial to health; but nevertheless, I will plainly feel it and experience it, before I cease on this account. It is no matter how much tired and weary I am, if my health is not impaired.

*Sabbath day, Jan. 13.* I plainly feel, that if I should continue to go on, as from the beginning of the last week hitherto, I should continually grow and increase in grace. After the afternoon meeting, made an addition to the 45th Resolution.—*At noon.* I remember I thought that I loved to be a member of Christ, and not any thing distinct, but only a part, so as to have no separate interest or pleasure of my own.—*At night.* Resolved to endeavour fully to understand 1 Cor. vii. 29-32. and to act according to it.

*Monday, Jan. 14.* About 10 o'clock in the morning made this book, and put these papers in it.<sup>3</sup> The dedication, which I made of myself to God on Saturday last, has been exceedingly useful to me. I thought I had a more spiritual insight into the Scriptures, when reading the 8th of Romans, than ever be-



fore.—*At night.* Great instances of mortification are deep wounds given to the body of sin; hard blows, which make him stagger and reel. We thereby get strong ground and footing against him, he is the weaker ever after, and we have easier work with him the next time. He grows cowardly; and we can easily cause him to give way, until at length we find it easy work with him, and can kill him at pleasure. While we live without great instances of mortification and self-denial, the old man keeps about where he was; for he is sturdy and obstinate, and will not stir for small blows. This, without doubt, is one great reason why many Christians do not sensibly increase in grace. After the greatest mortifications, I always find the greatest comfort. Wrote the 63rd Resolution. Such little things as Christians commonly do, will not evince much increase of grace. We must do great things for God.—It will be best, when I find that I have lost any former ancient good motions or actions, to take notice of it, if I can remember them.

*Tuesday, Jan. 15. About two or three o'clock.* I have been all this time decaying. It seemed yesterday, the day before, and Saturday, that I should always retain the same resolutions to the same height. But alas! how soon do I decay! O how weak, how infirm, how unable to do any thing of myself! What a poor inconsistent being! What a miserable wretch, without the assistance of the Spirit of God! While I stand, I am ready to think that I stand by my own strength, and upon my own legs; and I am ready to triumph over my spiritual enemies, as if it were I myself that caused them to flee:—when alas! I am but a poor infant, upheld by Jesus Christ; who holds me up, and gives me liberty to smile to see my enemies flee, when he drives them before me. And so I laugh, as though I myself did it, when it is only Jesus Christ leads me along, and fights himself against my enemies. And now the Lord has a little left me, how weak do I find myself! O let it teach me to depend less on myself, to be more humble, and to give more of the praise of my ability to Jesus Christ! The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?—The occasion of my decaying, is a little melancholy. My spirits are depressed, because I fear that I lost some friendship the last night; and, my spirits being depressed, my resolutions have lost their strength. I differ to-day from yesterday in these things: I do not resolve anything to-day half so strongly. I am not so perpetually thinking of renewing my resolutions as I was then. I am not half so vigorous as I was then; nor am I half so careful to do every thing with vigour. Then, I kept continually acting; but now, I do things slowly, and satisfy myself by thinking of religion in the mean time. I am not so careful to go from one business to another.—I felt humiliation about sunset. What shall I do, in order that I may, with a good grace, fall into christian discourse and conversation?—*At night.* The next time I am in such a lifeless frame, I will force myself to go rapidly from one thing to another, and to do those things with vigour, in which vigour would ever be useful. The things which take off my mind, when bent on religion, are commonly some remarkable change or alteration—journeys, change of place, change of business, change of studies, and change of other circumstances; or something that makes me melancholy; or some sin.

*Thursday, Jan. 17. About three o'clock,* overwhelmed with melancholy.

*Friday, Jan. 18. At night.* Beginning to endeavour to recover out of the death I have been in for these several days.

*Sabbath day, Jan. 20. At night.* The last week I was sunk so low, that I fear it will be a long time before I am recovered. I fell exceedingly low in the weekly account. I find my heart so deceitful, that I am almost discouraged from making any more resolutions.—Wherein have I been negligent in the week past; and how could I have done better, to help the dreadful low estate in which I am sunk?

*Monday, Jan. 21* Before sunrise, answered the preceding questions thus: I ought to have spent my time in bewailing my sins, and in singing psalms—especially psalms or hymns of penitence; these duties being most suited to the frame I was in. I do not spend time enough in endeavouring to affect myself with the glories of Christianity.—Fell short in the monthly account. It seems to me, that I am fallen from my former sense of the pleasantness of religion.

*Tuesday, Feb. 5. At night.* I have thought that this being so exceedingly careful, and so particularly anxious, to force myself to think of religion at all times, has exceedingly distracted my mind, and made me altogether unfit for that and every thing else. I have thought that this caused the dreadful low condition I was in on the 15th of January. I think that I stretched myself further than I could bear, and so broke.—But now it seems to me, though I know not why, that I do not do enough to prepare for another world. I do not seem to press forward, to fight and wrestle, as the apostles used to speak. I do not seem so greatly and constantly to mortify and deny myself, as the mortification of which they speak represents. Therefore, wherein ought I to do more in this way?—I answer: I am again grown too careless about eating, drinking, and sleeping—not careful enough about evil-speaking.

*Saturday, Feb. 16.* I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes.—*At night.* For the time past of my life, I have been negligent, in that I have not sufficiently kept up that part of divine worship, singing the praise of God in secret and with company.—I have been negligent this month past, in these three things: I have not been watchful enough over my appetites, in eating and drinking; in rising too late in the morning; and in not applying myself with sufficient application to the duty of secret prayer.

*Sabbath day, Feb. 17. Near sunset.* Renewedly promised, that I will accept of God for my whole portion, and that I will be contented, whatever else I am denied. I will not murmur, nor be grieved, whatever prosperity upon any account I see others enjoy and I am denied. To this I have lately acted contrary.

*Thursday, Feb. 21.* I perceive that I never yet have adequately known what was meant by being weaned from the world, by not laying up treasure on earth, but in heaven, by not having our portion in this life, by making the concerns of another life our whole business, by taking God for our whole portion. I find my heart in great part yet adheres to the earth. O that it might be quite separated from thence. I find when I have power and reputation as others, I am uneasy, and it does not satisfy me to tell me, that I have chosen God for my whole portion, and that I have promised to rest entirely contented with him.

*Saturday, Feb. 23.* I find myself miserably negligent, and that I might do twice the business that I do, if I were set upon it. See how soon my thoughts of this matter will be differing from what they are now. I have been indulging a horrid laziness a good while, and did not know it. I can do seven times as much in the same time now, as I can at other times, not because my faculties are in better tune; but because of the fire of diligence that I feel burning within me. If I could but always continue so, I should not meet with one quarter of

the trouble. I should run the christian race much better, and should go out of the world a much better man.

*Saturday, March 2.* O how much more base and vile am I, when I feel pride working in me, than when I am in a more humble disposition of mind! How much, how exceedingly much, more lovely is an humble than a proud disposition! I now plainly perceive it, and am really sensible of it. How immensely more pleasant is an humble delight, than a high thought of myself! How much better do I feel, when I am truly humbling myself, than when I am pleasing myself with my own perfections! O how much pleasanter is humility than pride! O that God would fill me with exceeding great humility, and that he would evermore keep me from all pride! The pleasures of humility are really the most refined, inward, and exquisite delights in the world. How hateful is a proud man! How hateful is a worm, that lifts up itself with pride! What a foolish, silly, miserable, blind, deceived poor worm am I, when pride works.—*At night.* I have lately been negligent as to reading the Scriptures. Notwithstanding my resolutions on Saturday was se'night, I have not been sedulous and diligent enough.

*Wednesday, March 6. Near sunset.* Regarded the doctrines of election, free grace, our inability to do any thing without the grace of God, and that holiness is entirely, throughout, the work of the Spirit of God, with greater pleasure than ever before.

*Thursday, March 7.* I think I now suffer from not forcing myself enough on religious thoughts.

*Saturday night, March 24.* I intend, if I am ever settled, to concert measures, and study methods, of doing good in the world, and to draw up rules of acting in this matter, in writing, of all the methods I can possibly devise, by which I can in any respect do good.

*Saturday night, March 31.* This week I have been too careless about eating.

*Monday morning, April 2.* I think it best not to allow myself to laugh at the faults, follies, and infirmities of others.

*Saturday night, April 7.* This week I found myself so far gone, that it seemed to me I should never recover more. Let God of his mercy return unto me, and no more leave me thus to sink and decay! I know, O Lord, that without thy help I shall fall, innumerable times, notwithstanding all my resolutions, how often soever repeated.

*Saturday night, April 14.* I could pray more heartily this night for the forgiveness of my enemies, than ever before.—I am somewhat apt, after having asked one petition over many times, to be weary of it; but I am now resolved not to give way to such a disposition.

*Wednesday forenoon, May 1.* Last night I came home, after my melancholy parting from New York.

I have always in every different state of life I have hitherto been in, thought that the troubles and difficulties of that state were greater than those of any other state that I proposed to be in; and when I have altered, with assurance of mending myself, I have still thought the same, yea that the difficulties of that state are greater than those of that I left last. Lord, grant that from hence I may learn to withdraw thoughts, affections, desires, and expectations entirely from the world, and may fix them upon the heavenly state, where there is fulness of joy; where reigns heavenly, sweet, calm, and delightful love

without alloy; where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love; where there is the enjoyment of this love without ever parting; and where those persons, who appear so lovely in this world, will be inexpressibly more lovely, and full of love to us. How sweetly will those, who thus mutually love, join together in singing the praises of God and the Lamb. How full will it fill us with joy, to think that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises, will never cease or come to an end, but will last to all eternity. Remember after journeys, removals, overturnings, and alterations in the state of my life, to reflect and consider, whether therein I have managed the best way possible respecting my soul; and before such alterations, if foreseen, to resolve how to act.

*Thursday, May 2. Afternoon.* I observe this, that when I was at New York, when I meditated on things of a religious nature, I used to conceive of myself as walking in the fields at home; but now I am at home, I conceive of myself as walking in the fields which I used to frequent at New York. I think it a very good way, to examine dreams every morning when I awake; what are the nature, circumstance, principles, and ends of my imaginary actions and passions in them; in order to discern what are my prevailing inclinations, &c.

*Saturday night, May 4.* Although I have, in some measure, subdued a disposition to chide and fret, yet I find a certain inclination, which is not agreeable to christian sweetness of temper and conversation: either too much dogmatism or too much egotism; a disposition to manifest my own dislike and scorn, and my own freedom from those which are innocent, sinless, yea common infirmities of men, and many other such like things. O that God would help me to discover all the flaws and defects of my temper and conversation, and help me in the difficult work of amending them; and that he would grant me so full a measure of vital Christianity, that the foundation of all those disagreeable irregularities may be destroyed, and the contrary sweetnesses and beauties may of themselves naturally follow.

*Sabbath morning, May 5.* Made the 47th Resolution.

*Monday morning, May 6.* I think it best commonly to come before God three times in a day, except I find a great inaptitude to that duty.

*Saturday night, May 11.* I have been to blame, the month past, in not laying violence enough to my inclination, to force myself to a better improvement of time. Have been tardy with respect to the 47th Resolution. Have also been negligent about keeping my thoughts, when joining with others in prayer.

*Sabbath-day morning, May 12.* I have lost that relish of the Scriptures, and other good books, which I had five or six months ago. *Resolved,* When I find in myself the least disposition to exercise good nature, that I will then strive most to feel good-naturedly.—*At noon.* Observe to remember the meditations which I had at West Chester, as I was coming from New York; and those which I had in the orchard; and those under the oak-tree. This day, and the last night, I read over and reviewed those reflections and remarks, which I find to be a very beneficial thing to me.—*After the afternoon meeting.* I think I find in my heart to be glad from the hopes I have, that my eternity is to be spent in spiritual and holy joys, arising from the manifestation of God's love, and the exercise of holiness, and burning love to him.

*Saturday night, May 18.* This week past, spent in journeying to Norwich, and the towns thereabouts. This day returned, and received a letter from my dear friend, Mr. John Smith.—The last Wednesday, took up a resolution to refrain from all manner of evil speaking, for one week to try it, and see the ef-

fect of it: hoping, if that evil speaking, which I used to allow myself in, and to account lawful, agreeably to the resolutions I have formed concerning it, were not lawful, or best, I should hereby discover it, and get the advantage of temptations to it, and so deceive myself into a strict adherence to my duty, respecting that matter;—that that corruption, which I cannot conquer by main strength, I may get the victory of by stratagem. I find the effect of it already to be, to make me apt to take it for granted, that what I have resolved on this week, is a duty to be observed for ever.

I now plainly perceive, what great obligations I am under to love and honour my parents. I have great reason to believe, that their counsel and education have been my making: though, in the time of it, it seemed to do me so little good. I have good reason to hope, that their prayers for me have been, in many things, very powerful and prevalent, that God has, in many things, taken me under his care and guidance, provision and direction, in answer to their prayers for me. I was never made so sensible of it as now.

I think it the best way, in general, not to seek for honour, in any other way, than by seeking to be good and to do good. I may pursue knowledge, religion, the glory of God, and the good of mankind with the utmost vigour; but am to leave the honour of it entirely at God's disposal, as a thing with which I have no immediate concern; no, not although, by possessing that honour, I have the greater opportunity to do good.

*Mem.* To be particularly careful, lest I should be tardy in any point wherein I have been negligent, or have erred, in days, weeks, months, or years past.

*Sabbath-day morning, May 19.* With respect to my journey last week, I was not careful enough to watch opportunities of solemnly approaching to God three times a day. The last week, when I was about to take up the Wednesday Resolution, it was proposed to me, in my thought, to omit it till I got home again, because there would be a more convenient opportunity. Thus am I ready to look at any thing as an excuse, to grow slack in my christian course.—*At night.* Concluded to add to my inquiries, as to the spending of time.—*At the beginning of the day, or the period,* What can I do for the good of men?—and at the end, What have I done for their good?

*Tuesday morning, May 21.* My conscience is, undoubtedly, more calm, since my last Wednesday Resolution, than it was before.

*Wednesday morning, May 22. Memorandum.* To take special care of the following things: evil speaking, fretting, eating, drinking, and sleeping, speaking simple verity, joining in prayer, slightness in secret prayer, listlessness and negligence, and thoughts that cherish sin.

*Saturday morning, May 25.* As I was this morning reading the 17th Resolution, it was suggested to me, that if I were now to die, I should wish that I had prayed more that God would make me know my state, whether it be good or bad, and that I had taken more pains and care, to see and narrowly search into that matter. Wherefore, *Mem,* for the future, most nicely and diligently to look into the opinions of our old divines, concerning conversion. This morning made the 48th Resolution.

*Monday afternoon, May 27. Memorandum.* Not only to keep from an air of dislike, anger, and fretfulness, in discourse or conversation; but, let me also have as much of an appearance of love, cheerfulness, and benignity, as may be, with a good grace. These following things especially to beware of, in order to the better observation of the 47th Resolution: distrust, discontent, uneasi-

ness and a complaining temper, self-opinion, self-confidence, melancholy, moroseness, slight antipathy, privacy, indolence, and want of resolution—to beware of any thing in discourse or conversation that savours of these.

*Saturday night, June 8. At Boston.* When I find myself listless and dull, and not easily affected by reading religious books, then to read my resolutions, remarks, reflections, &c.—One thing that would be of great advantage to me, in reading to my profit, would be, the endeavouring, with all my might, *to keep the image and picture of the thing in my mind*, and be careful that I do not lose it in the chain of the discourse.

*Sabbath day, June 9, after the afternoon meeting. Mem.* When I fear misfortune, to examine whether I have done my duty; and at the same time, to resolve to do it, and let it go, and be concerned about nothing, but my duty and my sin.

*Saturday morning, June 15. At Windsor.* Have been to blame, this journey, with respect to strict temperance, in eating, drinking, and sleeping, and in suffering too small matters to give interruption to my wonted chain of religious exercises.—Concluded to protract the Wednesday Resolution to the end of my life.

*Tuesday morning, June 18. Mem.* To do that part, which I conveniently can, of my stated exercise, while about other business, such as self-examination, resolutions, &c. that I may do the remainder in less time.

*Friday afternoon, June 21.* I have abundant cause, O my merciful Father, to love thee ardently, and greatly, to bless and praise thee, that thou hast heard me, in my earnest request, and so hast answered my prayer, for mercy, to keep me from decay and sinking. O, graciously of thy mere goodness, still continue to pity my misery, by reason of my sinfulness. O, my dear Redeemer, I commit myself, together with my prayer and thanksgiving, into thine hand.

*Saturday morning, June 22.* Altered the 36th Resolution, to make it the same with the Wednesday Resolution. If I should take special care, every day, to rise above, or not to fall below, or to fall as little as I possibly could below, what I was the day before, it would be of great advantage to me.—I take notice that most of these determinations, when I first resolve them, seem as if they would be much more beneficial than I find them.

*Tuesday morning, June 25.* Last sabbath, at Boston, reading the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of the 6th to the Ephesians, concluded that it would be much to my advantage, to take the greatest care, never to do any thing but my duty, and then to do it willingly, cheerfully, and gladly, whatever danger or unpleasant circumstances it may be attended with; with good-will doing it, as to the Lord, not as pleasing man, or myself; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.

*Saturday morning, June 29.* It is best to be careful in prayer, not to put up those petitions, of which I do not feel a sincere desire: thereby my prayer is rendered less sincere, less acceptable to God, and less useful to myself.

*Monday noon, July 1.* I find I am not careful enough, to keep out all thoughts but religious ones on the sabbath. When I find the least uneasiness in doing my duty, to fly to the 43rd Resolution.

*Wednesday night, July 3.* I am too negligent, with respect to improving petty opportunities of doing good; thinking, that the good will be very small and unextended, and not worth the pains. *Resolved*, to regulate this, as that which is wrong, and what ought not to be.—Again confirmed by experience,

of the happy effects of a strict temperance, with respect both to body and mind.

*Thursday morning, July 4.* The last night, in bed, when thinking of death, I thought if I was then to die, that which would make me die in the least degree fearfully, would be the want of a trusting and relying on Jesus Christ, so distinctly and plainly, as has been described by divines; my not having experienced so particular a venturing, and entirely trusting my soul on Christ, after the fears of hell, and terrors of the Lord, encouraged by the mercy, faithfulness, and promises of God, and the gracious invitations of Christ. Then I thought I could go out of the world, as much assured of my salvation, as I was of Christ's faithfulness, knowing that if Christ did not fail me, he would save me who had trusted in him on his word.—*At night.* Whenever things begin to seem to be in the least out of order, when things begin to feel uneasy within, or irregular without, then to examine myself by the strictest examination.—*Resolved,* for the future to observe rather more of meekness, moderation, and temper in disputes.

*Friday morning, July 5.* Last night, when thinking what I should wish I had done, that I had not done, if I was then to die; I thought I should wish, that I had been more importunate with God to fit me for death, and lead me into all truth, and that I might not be deceived about the state of my soul.—In the forenoon made the 50th Resolution.

*Thursday night, July 11.* This day, too impatient at the church meeting. Snares and briers have been in my way this afternoon. It is good at such times for one to manifest good nature, even to one's disadvantage, and so as would be imprudent at other times.

*Saturday morning, July 13.* Transferred the conclusion of June 9, to the Resolution, No. 57; and the conclusion of May 27, to No. 58; and May 12, and July 11, to No. 59; and of July 4, *at night*, to No. 60; and of May 24, to No. 61; and of June 25, to No. 62; and about noon, the Resolution of January 14, to No. 63.—In times past, I have been too free in judging of the hearts of men from their actions.

*Thursday, July 18. Near sunset.* Resolved, to make sure of that sign, which the apostle James gives of a perfect man: James iii. 2. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able, also, to bridle the whole body."

*Friday afternoon, July 19.* 1 Peter ii. 18. "Servants, be subject to your masters, with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward:" how then ought children to honour their parents!—This verse, together with the two following, *viz.* "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

*Saturday noon, July 20.* Dr. Manton's Sermon, on the 119th Psalm. pp. 140, 141. Of Evil-speaking, Use 2d. To them that either devise or receive reproaches. Both are very sinful. Hypocrites, and men that put themselves into a garb of religion, are all for censuring, take a mighty freedom that way: these men betray the rottenness of their hearts.—Alas, in our own sight, we should be the worst of men. The children of God do ever thus speak of themselves, as the least of saints, the greatest of sinners—"more brutish than any man"—"of sinners, whereof I am the chief." You rob them of the most precious treasure. He that robs thee of thy name, is the worst kind of thief. Prov. xxii. 1. "A good

name is rather to be chosen than great riches.”—Object. But must we, in no case, speak evil of another; or may we not speak of another’s sin in any case?—Solution 1. It is a very hard matter to speak evil of another without sin.—In one way or another, we shall dash upon the command: better let it alone.—If you speak of the failings of another, it should be with tenderness and grief; as, when they are incorrigible, and likely to infect others; or when it is for the manifest glory of God.—To them that receive the slander, he is a slanderer, who wrongs his neighbour’s credit, by upholding an ill report against him.

*Monday afternoon, July 22.* I find it would be desirable, on many accounts, always to endeavour to wear a benign aspect and air of acting and speaking, in all companies, except it should so happen, that duty requires it otherwise.—I am afraid I am now defective, in not doing whatever my hand finds to do, with my might, with respect to my particular affairs. Remember to watch, see, and know how it is. *Vid.* Aug. 31.—I see there is danger, of my being drawn into transgression, by the power of such temptations, as the fear of seeming uncivil, and of offending friends. Watch against it.—I might still help myself, and yet not hurt myself, by going with greater expedition from one thing to another, without being quite so nice.

*Tuesday afternoon, July 23.* When I find those *groanings which cannot be uttered*, of which the apostle speaks, and those soul-breakings for the longing it hath, of which the psalmist speaks, (Ps. cxix. 20.) *Resolved*, to favour and promote them, to the utmost of my power, and not to be weary of earnestly endeavouring to vent my desires, and not to be weary of the repetitions of such earnestness.

To count it all joy, when I have occasions of great self-denial; because, then, I have a glorious opportunity of giving deadly wounds to the body of sin, and of greatly confirming and establishing the new creature. I seek to mortify sin, and increase in holiness. These are the best opportunities, according to Jan. 14.

To improve afflictions, of all kinds, as blessed opportunities of forcibly bearing on, in my christian course, notwithstanding that which is so very apt to discourage me, and to damp the vigour of my mind, and to make me lifeless; also, as opportunities of trusting and confiding in God, and getting a habit of so doing, according to the 57th Resolution; and as an opportunity of rending my heart off from the world, and setting it on heaven alone, according to Jan. 10. and the 43d and 45th Resolutions; and according to Jan. 12 Feb. 17 and 21. and May 1.—To improve them, also, as opportunities to repent of and bewail my sin, and abhor myself; and as a blessed opportunity to exercise patience, to trust in God, and divest my mind from the affliction, by fixing myself in religious exercises. Also, let me comfort myself, that it is the very nature of afflictions, to make the heart better; and, if I am made better by them, what need I be concerned, however grievous they seem for the present.

*Wednesday night, July 24.* I begin to find the success of my striving, in joining with others, in the worship of God; insomuch that there is a prospect of making it easy and delightful, and very profitable, in time. Wherefore, *Resolved* not to cease striving, but to continue it, and redouble it.

*Thursday morning, July 25.* Altered, and anew established, the 8th Resolution; also established my determination of April 1.—*Memorandum.* At a convenient time, to make an alphabet of these Resolutions and Remarks, that I



may be able to educe them on proper occasions, suitable to the condition I am in, and the duty I am engaged in.

*Friday afternoon, July 26.* To be particularly careful, to keep up, inviolably, a trust and reliance, ease and entire rest in God, in all conditions, according to the 57th Resolution; for this I have found to be wonderfully advantageous to me.—*At night. Resolved,* very much to exercise myself in this, all my life long: *viz.* with the greatest openness, of which I am capable, 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 the 119th Psalm.

*Saturday forenoon, July 27.* When I am violently beset with temptation, or cannot rid myself of evil thoughts, to do something in arithmetic, or geometry, or some other study, which necessarily engages all my thoughts, and unavoidably keeps them from wandering.

*Monday afternoon, July 29.* When I am concerned how I shall prepare any thing to public acceptance, to be very careful that I have it very clear to me, to do what is duty and prudence in the matter.—I sometimes find myself able to trust God, and to be pretty easy when the event is uncertain, but I find it difficult when I am convinced beforehand, that the event will be adverse. I find that this arises, 1. From my want of faith, to believe that that particular advantage will be more to my advantage than disadvantage: 2. From the want of a due sense of the real preferableness of that good, which will be obtained to that which is lost: 3. From the want of a spirit of adoption.

*Tuesday night, July 30.* Have concluded to endeavour to work myself into duties by searching and tracing back all the real reasons why I do them not, and narrowly searching out all the subtle subterfuges of my thoughts, and answering them to the utmost of my power, that I may know what are the very first originals of my defect, as with respect to want of repentance, love to God, loathing of myself,—to do this sometimes in sermons.—*Vid.* Resolution 8. Especially, to take occasion therefrom, to bewail those sins of which I have been guilty, that are akin to them; as for instance, from pride in others, to take occasion to bewail my pride; from their malice, to take occasion to bewail my evil speaking: and so of other sins. *Mem.* To receive slanders and reproaches, as glorious opportunities of doing this.

*Wednesday afternoon, July 31.* 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.—Never in the least to seek to hear sarcastical relations of others' faults. Never to give credit to any thing said against others, except there is very plain reason for it; nor to behave in any respect otherwise for it.

*Sabbath morning, Aug. 4.* Concluded at last, at those times when I am in the best frames, to set down the aspirations of my heart, as soon as I can get time.

*Tuesday afternoon, Aug. 6.* Very much convinced of the extraordinary deceitfulness of the heart, and how exceedingly affection or appetite blinds the mind, and brings it into entire subjection. There are many things which I should really think to be my duty, if I had the same affections, as when I first came from New York; which now I think not to be so. How doth appetite stretch the reason, to bring both ends together.

*Wednesday forenoon, Aug. 7.* To esteem it as some advantage, that the duties of religion are difficult, and that many difficulties are sometimes to be

gone through, in the way of duty. Religion is the sweeter, and what is gained by labour is abundantly more precious, as a woman loves her child the more for having brought it forth with travail; and even to Christ Jesus himself his mediatorial glory, his victory and triumph, the kingdom which he hath obtained, how much more glorious is it, how much more excellent and precious, for his having wrought it out with such agonies.

*Friday afternoon, Aug. 9.* With respect to the important business which I have now in hand<sup>4</sup>, *Resolved*, To do whatever I think to be duty, prudence, and diligence in the matter, and to avoid ostentation; and if I succeed not, and how many disappointments soever I meet with, to be entirely easy; only to take occasion to acknowledge my unworthiness; and if it should actually not succeed, and should not find acceptance, as I expected, yet not to afflict myself about it, according to the 57th Resolution.—*At night.* One thing that may be a good help towards thinking profitably in times of vacation, is, when I find a profitable thought that I can fix my mind on, to follow it as far as I possibly can to advantage.—I missed it when a graduate at college, both in point of duty and prudence, in going against a universal benevolence and good nature.

*Saturday morning, Aug. 10.* Transferred my determination of July 23, to the 64th Resolution, and that of July 26, to the 65th.—*About sunset.* As a help against that inward shameful hypocrisy, to confess frankly to myself all that which I find in myself, either infirmity or sin; also to confess to God, and open the whole case to him, when it is what concerns religion, and humbly and earnestly implore of him the help that is needed; not in the least to endeavour to smother what is in my heart, but to bring it all out to God and my conscience. By this means, I may arrive at a greater knowledge of my own heart.—When I find difficulty in finding a subject of religious meditation, in vacancies, to pitch at random on what alights to my thoughts, and to go from that to other things which that shall bring into my mind, and follow this progression as a clue, till I come to what I can meditate on with profit and attention, and then to follow that, according to last Thursday's determination.

*Sabbath afternoon, Aug. 11.* Resolved always to do that, which I shall wish I had done when I see others do it; as for instance, sometimes I argue with myself, that such an act of good nature, kindness, forbearance, or forgiveness, &c. is not my duty, because it will have such and such consequences: yet when I see others do it, then it appears amiable to me, and I wish I had done it, and see that none of these feared inconveniences follow.

*Monday morning, Aug. 12.* The chief thing, that now makes me in any measure to question my good estate, is my not having experienced conversion in those particular steps, wherein the people of New England, and anciently the dissenters of Old England, used to experience it. Wherefore, now resolved, never to leave searching, till I have satisfyingly found out the very bottom and foundation, the real reason, why they used to be converted in those steps.

*Tuesday morning, Aug. 13.* Have sinned, in not being careful enough to please my parents.—*Afternoon.* I find it would be very much to my advantage, to be thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures. When I am reading doctrinal books, or books of controversy, I can proceed with abundantly more confidence; can see on what footing and foundation I stand.

*Saturday noon, Aug. 17.* Let there, in the general, be something of benevolence in all that I speak.

*Tuesday night, Aug. 20.* Not careful enough in watching opportunities of bringing in christian discourse with a good grace. Do not exercise myself half enough in this holy art; neither have I courage enough to carry it on with a good grace. *Vid* Sept. 2.

*Saturday morning, Aug. 24.* Have not practised quite right about revenge; though I have not done any thing directly out of revenge, yet I have perhaps omitted some things that I should otherwise have done; or have altered the circumstances and manner of my actions, hoping for a secret sort of revenge thereby. I have felt a little sort of satisfaction, when I thought that such an evil would happen to them by my actions, as would make them repent what they have done. To be satisfied for their repenting, when they repent from a sense of their error, is right. But a satisfaction in their repentance, because of the evil that is brought upon them, is revenge. This is in some measure a taking the matter out of God's hands when he was about to manage it, who is better able to plead it for me. Well, therefore, may he leave me to boggle at it.—*Near sunset.* I yet find a want of dependence on God, to look unto him for success, and to have my eyes unto him for his gracious disposal of the matter; for want of a sense of God's particular influence, in ordering and directing all affairs and businesses, of whatever nature, however naturally, or fortuitously, they may seem to succeed; and for want of a sense of those great advantages, that would follow therefrom: not considering that God will grant success, or make the contrary more to my advantage; or will make the advantage accruing from the unsuccessfulness more sensible and apparent; or will make it of less present and outward disadvantage; or will some way so order the circumstances, as to make the unsuccessfulness more easy to bear: or several, or all of these. This want of dependence, is likewise for want of the things mentioned, July 29.—Remember to examine all narrations I can call to mind; whether they are exactly according to verity.

*Wednesday night, Aug. 28.* When I want books to read; yea, when I have not very good books, not to spend time in reading them, but in reading the Scriptures, in perusing Resolutions, Reflections, &c. in writing on types of the Scripture, and other things, in studying the languages, and in spending more time in private duties. To do this, when there is a prospect of wanting time for the purpose. Remember, as soon as I can to get a piece of *slate*, or something, whereon I can make short memorandums while travelling.

*Thursday, Aug. 29.* Two great quærenda with me now are: How shall I make advantage of all the time I spend in journeys? and how shall I make a glorious improvement of afflictions?

*Saturday night, Aug. 31.* The objection which my corruptions make against doing whatever my hands find to do with my might, is, that it is a constant mortification. Let this objection by no means ever prevail.

*Sabbath morning, Sept. 1.* When I am violently beset with worldly thoughts, for a relief, to think of death, and the doleful circumstances of it.

*Monday afternoon, Sept. 2.* To help me to enter with a good grace into religious conversation; when I am conversing on morality, to turn it over by application, exemplification, or otherwise, to Christianity. *Vid.* Aug. 28, and Jan. 15.—*At night.* There is much folly, when I am quite sure I am in the right, and others are positive in contradicting me, in entering into a vehement or long debate upon it.

*Saturday, Sept. 7.* Concluded no more to suffer myself to be interrupted, or diverted from important business, by those things from which I expect, though some, yet but little, profit.

*Sabbath morning, Sept. 8.* I have been much to blame, for expressing so much impatience for delays in journeys, and the like.

*Sabbath evening, Sept. 22.* To praise God by singing psalms in prose, and by singing forth the meditations of my heart in prose.

*Monday, Sept. 23.* I observe that old men seldom have any advantage of new discoveries, because they are beside the way of thinking to which they have been so long used. *Resolved*, if ever I live to years, that I will be impartial to hear the reasons of all pretended discoveries, and receive them if rational, how long soever I have been used to another way of thinking. My time is so short, that I have not time to perfect myself in all studies; wherefore resolved, to omit and put off all but the most important and needful studies.”

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life,—was the maxim of the wisest of men, and it was founded upon the most solid reason. This maxim has ever been considered as most important by all the possessors of true wisdom and piety who have strenuously aimed at daily spiritual advancement. It has never been regarded without the greatest advantages, nor neglected without the most extensive injury. The views which were entertained of this lesson of spiritual wisdom by Jonathan Edwards are sufficiently apparent in all the extracts now presented from his Diary, and the advantages which he derived from its practice are equally manifest. He lived in the sight of God; he lived in the constant and faithful survey of his own heart and conduct, and he arose to the highest class of the followers of Christ, whose religion is eminently that of the heart. Let others pursue the same steps, and they will surely find the same precious results.

## FOOTNOTES

1 He mentions, Jan. 14, his making the book, and annexing the loose reports to it.

2 Dwight

3 He refers to slips of paper on which the first part of the Diary is written; as far as Jan. 15, *at night*.

4 Perhaps the preparation of a public exercise for the college commencement, when ye received his Master's degree.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER V.

HIS TUTORSHIP—SICKNESS—INVITATION TO NORTHAMPTON—  
PERSONAL NARRATIVE CONTINUED—DIARY CONCLUDED.

IN Sept. 1723, Mr. Edwards went to New-Haven, and received his degree of Master of Arts, when he was elected a tutor in the college. About this time, several congregations invited him to become their minister; but being fond of study, and conscious how much it would promote his usefulness, he declined their proposals. As there was no immediate vacancy in the office of tutor, he passed the ensuing winter and spring at New-Haven, in study, and in the occasional discharge of the active duties of his profession, and in the beginning of June, 1724, entered on the instruction of a class in the college.

The period of his tutorship was a period of great difficulty. For a long time before the election of Mr. Cutler to the office of rector, the college had been in a state of open revolt against the legal government, and had withdrawn from New-Haven. Two years after his election, in Jan. 1721, there was a universal insurrection of the students, which though, after considerable effort, apparently quieted, resulted in a state of extreme disorder and insubordination, beyond any thing that had been known before. In 1722, Mr. Cutler, one of the tutors, and two of the neighbouring ministers, renounced their connexion with the presbyterian church, and publicly declared themselves episcopalians. The shock, occasioned by this event, was very great in the college, in the town, and throughout the colony; and a series of controversies grew out of it, which lasted for many years. In consequence of this, the offices of these gentlemen were vacated, and the college was left for four years without a head; the trustees residing by turns at the college, and each in rotation acting as vice-rector for a month. Fortunately however for the institution, during this bereavement, it had three gentlemen in the office of tutor, of distinguished talents and scholarship, and of great resolution and firmness of character:—Mr. William Smith, of the class of 1719, and chosen tutor in 1722; Mr. Edwards; and Mr. Daniel Edwards, his uncle, class-mate and room-mate, who was chosen in Sept. 1724.

On these three gentlemen, all of whom were young men, devolved almost exclusively the government and instruction of the college; yet, by their union, energy, and faithfulness, they introduced among the students, in the room of their former negligence and misrule, habits of close study and exact subordination; and in no great length of time, rendered the institution flourishing and prosperous beyond what it had long been. The late President Stiles, who, though a member of college a considerable time after this period, was personally acquainted with the three gentlemen, and knew well the history of their administration, has left an eulogy on the three united, of the highest character. "The Honourable William Smith, the Honourable Daniel Edwards, and the Rev. President Edwards, were the pillar tutors, and the glory of the college, at the critical period between Rector Cutler and Rector Williams. Their tutorial renown was great and excellent. They filled and sustained their offices with great ability, dignity, and honour. For the honour of literature these things ought not to be forgotten."

Sept. 1725, immediately after the commencement, as he was preparing to set out for his father's house, he was taken suddenly ill, at New-Haven; but hoping that the illness was not severe, and anxious to be at home if he was to be sick, he set out for Windsor. The fatigue of travelling only increased his illness, and he was compelled to stop at North-Haven, at the house of the Rev. Mr. Stiles, where he was confined, by severe sickness, about three months: during the greater part of this time, his mother was constantly with him. Her husband, writing to her on the 20th of October, begs her to spare herself. "I am afraid you are taking too great a burden on yourself, in tending your son both day and night. I beg of you, therefore, not only to take care of him, but of yourself also. Accept, rather, of the kindness of neighbours, in watching over again, than outbid your own strength, which is but small, by overdoing." She could not leave him till about the middle of November; and it was some time in the winter before he could go to his father's house. In this sickness, he speaks of himself as having enjoyed new, and most refreshing, manifestations of the presence and grace of God.

After he had held the office of tutor upwards of two years, with the highest reputation, he received proposals from the people of Northampton to become their minister. Many circumstances conspired to prompt his acceptance. He was familiarly acquainted with the place and people. The Rev. Mr. Stoddard, his grandfather, a man of great dignity, and of singular weight and influence in the churches, in consequence of his advanced age, stood in need of his assistance, and wished him to be his colleague. His parents and his other friends all desired it. The situation was in itself respectable, and the town unusually pleasant. He therefore resigned his tutorship, in Sept. 1726, and accepted of the invitation.

"Those who are conversant with the instruction and government of a college, will readily be aware that the period, of which we have now been speaking, was a very busy portion of Mr. Edwards's life; and if they call to mind the circumstances of the institution, and the habits of the students, when he entered on his office, they will not need to be informed, that the discharge of his official duties must have been accompanied with painful anxiety. It is a rare event in Providence, that so heavy a responsibility is thrown on three individuals so young, so destitute of experience, and of the knowledge of man-

kind; and the business of instruction and government must have occupied their whole time, and exhausted their whole strength.”

“In such a state of things, it was not possible that he should find the same leisure for spiritual exercises as he had found at New York. There his business was chiefly to enjoy; here it was to act. There the persons with whom he continually associated were possessed of uncommon excellence; here their characters were very different. There his attention was drawn, by the objects around him, to heavenly things; here it was necessarily confined almost all the time to this world. There, when retiring for prayer and heavenly contemplation, his mind sought communion with God in all its energy and freshness; here, when it was worn out by toil and exhausted by perplexities. The change in the current of thought and feeling must, therefore, have been great; and (so much is the mind prone to measure its religious state by the amount of daily enjoyment, and so little by the readiness to encounter trials, and to perform laborious and self-denying duties) it is not surprising, that he should have regarded this change, as evidence of perceptible and lamentable declension in religion. Such he in fact regarded it; as we shall find, both from his Narrative and Diary; yet it is by no means certain, that his views of the subject were altogether correct.”

“The young Christian has usually a season of leisure, given him in the providence of God, in which to become acquainted with the members of that family into which he has lately been introduced, and with those objects with which as a spiritual being he is in future to be conversant. His time and his strength are given chiefly to the Scriptures, to prayer, to meditation, and to religious conversation; and he is delightfully conscious that his communion is with the Father, and the Son Jesus Christ, through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, as well as with ‘the whole family both on earth and in heaven.’ The design of this is to open to him his new state of existence, to enable him to understand its relations and duties, and to give him an earnest of better things in reversion. It is a most refreshing and happy period of his life, and, were he designed for contemplation merely, might well be protracted to its close. But, as we are taught most explicitly, in the word and Providence of God, his great worth lies in action—in imitating him whose rule it was—I must *do the work* of him that sent me while it is day;’ and whose practice it was that ‘he went about *doing* good.’ The Scriptures are given by the inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.—Wherefore? that the man of God may be perfected, being thoroughly furnished unto every good *work*. Probably no year in the life of Mr. Edwards was spent more usefully, than that in which he was occupied, with his associated, in laying the foundation of sober habits and sound morals, in the seminary now intrusted to their care. Probably in no equal period did he more effectually serve God and his generation. And if, in its progress, he found less of that enjoyment which grows out of spiritual contemplation; he must have had the more delightful consciousness, that in the midst of great difficulties and crosses, he had honestly endeavoured to serve God, and to perform his duty.”

There may therefore be reason for doubt, whether the change in his feelings, of which he speaks in the succeeding parts of his Narrative and Diary, was not a declension in this particular species of religious enjoyment, neces-

sarily growing out of the circumstances in which he was placed, rather than a declension in the life and power of religion.

“I continued,” he observes, “much in the same frame, in the general, as when at New York, till I went to New-Haven as tutor of the college; particularly once at Bolton, on a journey from Boston, while walking out alone in the fields. After I went to New-Haven, I sunk in religion, my mind being diverted from my eager pursuits after holiness, by some affairs that greatly perplexed and distracted my thoughts.

“In September, 1725, I was taken ill at New-Haven, and while endeavouring to go home to Windsor, was so ill at the North Village, that I could go no further; where I lay sick, for about a quarter of a year. In this sickness, God was pleased to visit me again with the sweet influences of his Spirit. My mind was greatly engaged there, on divine and pleasant contemplations, and longings of soul. I observed, that those who watched with me, would often be looking out wishfully for the morning; which brought to my mind those words of the psalmist, and which my soul with delight made its own language; ‘My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning;’ and when the light of day came in at the window, it refreshed my soul, from one morning to another. It seemed to be some image of the light of God’s glory.”

“I remember, about that time, I used greatly to long for the conversion of some that I was concerned with; I could gladly honour them, and with delight be a servant to them, and lie at their feet, if they were but truly holy. But some time after this, I was again greatly diverted with some temporal concerns, that exceedingly took up my thoughts, greatly to the wounding of my soul; and went on, through various exercises, that it would be tedious to relate, which gave me much more experience of my own heart than I ever had before.”

That the mind of Mr. Edwards was not injured as to its spirituality, by his official engagements and trials, is sufficiently evident from these extracts. He was still a holy man of God, whose heart was in heaven, and with whom converse with God was the highest delight.—The remainder of his Diary is chiefly confined to the period of his life which has now been reviewed, and is therefore inserted here. It is only to be regretted, that through the multiplicity of his affairs, he should have found it necessary to discontinue it.

### REMAINDER OF DIARY.

*“Thursday forenoon, Oct. 4, 1723. Have this day fixed and established it, that Christ Jesus has promised me faithfully, that, if I will do what is my duty, and according to the best of my prudence in the matter, that my condition in this world shall be better for me than any other condition whatever, and more to my welfare to all eternity. And, therefore, whatever my condition shall be, I will esteem it to be such: and if I find need of faith in the matter, that I will confess it as impiety before God. Vid. Resolution 57, and June 9.*

*Sabbath night, Oct. 7. Have lately erred, in not allowing time enough for conversation.*

*Friday night, Oct. 12. I see there are some things quite contrary to the soundness and perfection of Christianity, in which almost all good men do allow themselves, and where innate corruption has an unrestrained secret vent, which they never take notice of, or think to be no hurt, or cloak under the*



name of virtue; which things exceedingly darken the brightness, and hide the loveliness, of Christianity. Who can understand his errors? O that I might be kept from secret faults!

*Sabbath morning, Oct. 14.* Narrowly to observe after what manner I act when I am in a hurry, and to act as much so at other times as I can without prejudice to the business.

*Monday morning, Oct. 15.* I seem to be afraid, after errors and decays, to give myself the full exercise of spiritual meditation:—Not to give way to such fears.

*Thursday, Oct. 18.* To follow the example of Mr. B. who though he meets with great difficulties, yet undertakes them with a smiling countenance, as though he thought them but little; and speaks of them as if they were very small.

*Friday night, Nov. 1.* When I am unfit for other business to perfect myself in writing *characters*.\*

*Friday afternoon, Nov. 22.* For the time to come, when I am in a lifeless frame in secret prayer, to force myself to expatiate, as if I were praying before others, more than I used to do.

*Tuesday forenoon, Nov. 26.* It is a most evil and pernicious practice, in meditations on afflictions, to sit ruminating on the aggravations of the affliction, and reckoning up the evil, dark circumstances thereof, and dwelling long on the dark side: it doubles and trebles the affliction. And so when speaking of them to others, to make them as bad as we can, and use our eloquence to set forth our own troubles, is to be all the while making new trouble, and feeding and pampering the old; whereas the contrary practice would starve our affliction. If we dwelt on the bright side of things in our thoughts, and extenuated them all that we possibly could, when speaking of them, we should think little of them ourselves, and the affliction would really, in a great measure, vanish away.

*Friday night, Nov. 29.* As a help to attention in social prayer, to take special care to make a particular remark at the beginning of every petition, confession, &c.

*Monday morning, Dec. 9.* To observe, whether I express any kind of fretting emotion, for the next three weeks.

*Thursday night, Dec. 12.* If, at any time, I am forced to tell others wherein I think they are somewhat to blame; in order to avoid the important evil that would otherwise ensue, not to tell it to them so, that there shall be a probability of their taking it as the effect of little, fretting, angry emotions of mind.—*Vid.* Aug. 28. When I do want, or am likely to want, good books, to spend time in studying mathematics, and in reviewing other kinds of old learning; to spend more time in visiting friends, in the more private duties of a pastor, in taking care of worldly business, in going abroad, and other things that I may contrive.

*Friday morning, Dec. 27.* At the end of every month, to examine my behaviour strictly by some chapter in the New Testament, more especially made up of rules of life.—At the end of the year, to examine my behaviour by the rules of the New Testament in general, reading many chapters. It would also be convenient some time at the end of the year, to read for this purpose in the book of Proverbs.

*Tuesday night, Dec. 31.* Concluded never to suffer nor express any angry emotions of mind, more or less, except the honour of God calls for it in zeal for him, or to preserve myself from being trampled on.

1724. *Wednesday, Jan. 1.* Not to spend too much time in thinking, even of important and necessary worldly business, and to allow every thing its proportion of thought, according to its urgency and importance.

*Thursday night, Jan. 2.* These things established,—That time gained in things of lesser importance, is as much gained in things of greater; that a minute gained in times of confusion, conversation, or in a journey, is as good as minute gained in my study, at my most retired times; and so, in general, that a minute gained at one time is as good as at another.

*Friday night, Jan. 3.* The time and pains laid out in seeking the world, is to be proportioned to the necessity, usefulness, and importance of it, with respect to another world, together with the uncertainty of living, and of retaining; provided, that nothing that our duty enjoins, or that is amiable, be omitted, and nothing sinful or unbecoming be done for the sake of it.

*Friday, Jan. 10.* (After having written to a considerable extent in short hand, which he used, when he wished what he wrote to be effectually concealed from every one but himself, he adds the following.) Remember to act according to Prov. xii. 23. *A prudent man concealeth knowledge.*

*Monday, Jan. 20.* I have been very much to blame, in that I have not been as full, and plain, and downright, in my standing up for virtue and religion, when I have had fair occasion, before those who seemed to take no delight in such things. If such conversation would not be agreeable to them, I have in some degree minced the matter, that I might not displease, and might not speak against the grain, more than I should have loved to have done with others, to whom it would be agreeable to speak for religion. I ought to be exceedingly bold with such persons, not talking in a melancholy strain, but in one confident and fearless, assured of the truth and excellence of the cause.

*Monday, Feb. 3.* Let every thing have the value now which it will have upon a sick bed: and frequently, in my pursuits of whatever kind, let this question come into my mind. ‘How much shall I value this upon my death-bed?’

*Wednesday, Feb. 5.* I have not in times past, in my prayers, enough insisted on the glorifying of God in the world, on the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, the prosperity of the church, and the good of man. Determined that this objection is without weight, *viz.* that it is not likely that God will make great alterations in the whole world, and overturnings in kingdoms and nations, only for the prayers of one obscure person, seeing such things used to be done in answer to the united prayers of the whole church; and that if my prayers should have some influence, it would be but imperceptible and small.

*Thursday, Feb. 6.* More convinced than ever, of the usefulness of free religious conversation. I find by conversing on natural philosophy, that I gain knowledge abundantly faster, and see the reasons of things much more clearly, than in private study: wherefore, earnestly to seek at all times for religious conversation; for those with whom I can at all times, with profit and delight, and with freedom, so converse.

*Friday, Feb. 7. Resolved,* If God will assist me to it, that I will not care about things, when, upon any account, I have prospect of ill success or adversity; and that I will not think about it, any further than just to do what prudence directs to for prevention, according to Phil. iv. 6. Be careful for nothing;

to 1 Pet. v. 7. Cast all your care upon God, for he careth for you; and again, Take no thought for the morrow; and again, Take no thought, saying, What shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed: seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.

*Saturday night, Feb. 15.* I find that when eating, I cannot be convinced in the time of it, that if I should eat more, I should exceed the bounds of strict temperance, though I have had the experience of two years of the like; and yet as soon as I have done, in three minutes I am convinced of it. But yet when I eat again, and remember it, still while eating I am fully convinced that I have not eaten what is but for nature, nor can I be convinced, that my appetite and feeling is as it was before. It seems to me that I shall be somewhat faint if I leave off then; but when I have finished, I am convinced again, and so it is from time to time.—I have observed that more really seems to be truth, when it makes for my interest, or is in other respects according to my inclination, than it seems if it be otherwise; and it seems to me, that the words in which I express it are more than the thing will properly bear. But if the thing be against my interest, the words of different import seem as much as the thing will properly bear.—Though there is some little seeming indecorum, as if it looked like affectation, in religious conversation as there is also in acts of kindness, yet this is to be broke through.

*Tuesday, Feb. 18. Resolved,* to act with sweetness and benevolence, and according to the 47th Resolution, in all bodily dispositions,—sick or well, at ease or in pain, sleepy or watchful; and not to suffer discomposure of body to discompose my mind.

*Saturday, Feb. 22.* I observe that there are some evil habits, which do increase and grow stronger, even in some good people, as they grow older; habits that much obscure the beauty of Christianity: some things which are according to their natural tempers, which in some measure prevail when they are young in Christ, and the evil disposition having an unobserved control, the habit at last grows very strong, and commonly regulates the practice until death. By this means, old Christians are very commonly, in some respects, more unreasonable than those who are young. I am afraid of contracting such habits, particularly of grudging to give, and to do, and of procrastinating.

*Sabbath, Feb. 23.* I must be contented, where I have any thing strange or remarkable to tell, not to make it appear so remarkable as it is indeed; lest through fear of this, and the desire of making a thing appear very remarkable, I should exceed the bounds of simple verity. When I am at a feast, or a meal, that very well pleases my appetite, I must not merely take care to leave off with as much of an appetite as at ordinary meals; for when there is a great variety of dishes, I may do that, after I have eaten twice as much as at other meals is sufficient. If I act according to my resolution, I shall desire riches no otherwise, than as they are helpful to religion. But this I determine, as what is really evident from many parts of Scripture, that to fallen man, they have a greater tendency to hurt religion.

*Monday, March 16.* To practise this sort of self-denial, when, as sometimes on fair days, I find myself more particularly disposed to regard the glories of the world, than to betake myself to the study of serious religion.

*Saturday, May 23.* How it comes about I know not, but I have remarked it hitherto, that at those times when I have read the Scriptures most, I have evermore been most lively and in the best frame.

## AT YALE COLLEGE.

*Saturday night, June 6.* This week has been a very remarkable week with me, with respect to despondencies, fears, perplexities, multitudes of cares, and distraction of mind: it being the week I came hither to New-Haven, in order to entrance upon the office of tutor of the college. I have now abundant reason to be convinced of the troublesomeness and vexation of the world, and that it will never be another kind of world.

*Tuesday, July 7.* When I am giving the relation of a thing, remember to abstain from altering either in the matter or manner of speaking, so much, as that if every one, afterwards, should alter as much, it would at last come to be properly false.

*Tuesday, Sept. 2.* By a sparingness in diet, and eating as much as may be what is light and easy of digestion, I shall doubtless be able to think more clearly, and shall gain time; 1. By lengthening out my life; 2. Shall need less time for digestion, after meals; 3. Shall be able to study more closely, without injury to my health; 4. Shall need less time for sleep; 5. Shall more seldom be troubled with the headache.

*Saturday night, Sept. 12.* Crosses of the nature of that, which I met with this week, thrust me quite below all comforts in religion. They appear no more than vanity and stubble, especially when I meet with them so unprepared for them. I shall not be fit to encounter them, except I have a far stronger and more permanent faith, hope, and love.

*Wednesday, Sept. 30.* It has been a prevailing thought with me, to which I have given place in practice, that it is best sometimes to eat or drink, when it will do me no good, because the hurt that it will do me, will not be equal to the trouble of denying myself. But I have determined to suffer that thought to prevail no longer. The hurries of commencement and diversion of the vacancy, has been the occasion of my sinking so exceedingly, as in the last three weeks.

*Monday, Oct. 5.* I believe it is a good way, when prone to unprofitable thoughts, to deny myself and break off my thoughts by keeping diligently to my study, that they may not have time to operate to work me to such a listless frame. I am apt to think it a good way when I am indisposed to reading and study, to read of my own remarks, the fruit of my study in divinity, &c. to set me a going again.

*Friday, Nov. 6.* Felt sensibly somewhat of that trust and affiance in Christ, and with delight committing of my soul to him, of which our divines used to speak, and about which I have been somewhat in doubt.

*Tuesday, Nov. 10.* To mark all that I say in conversation merely to beget in others a good opinion of myself, and examine it.

*Sabbath, Nov. 15.* Determined, when I am indisposed to prayer, always to premeditate what to pray for; and that it is better, that the prayer should be of almost any shortness, than that my mind should be almost continually off from what I say.

*Sabbath, Nov. 22.* Considering that by-standers always copy some faults, which we do not see ourselves, or of which at least we are not so fully sensible; and that there are many secret workings of corruption, which escape our sight, and of which others only are sensible: *Resolved*, therefore, that I will if I

can by any convenient means, learn what faults others find in me, or what things they see in me, that appear any way blameworthy, unlovely, or unbecoming.

*Friday, Feb. 12, 1725.* The very thing I now want, to give me a clearer and more immediate view of the perfections and glory of God, is as clear a knowledge of the manner of God's exerting himself, with respect to spirits and mind, as I have of his operations concerning matter and bodies.

*Tuesday, Feb. 16.* A virtue which I need in a higher degree, to give a beauty and luster to my behaviour, is gentleness. If I had more of an air of gentleness, I should be much mended.

*Friday, May 21.* If ever I am inclined to turn to the opinion of any other sect: *Resolved*, beside the most deliberate consideration, earnest prayer, &c. privately to desire all the help that can possibly be afforded me, from some of the most judicious men in the country, together with the prayers of wise and holy men, however strongly persuaded I may seem to be that I am in the right.

*Saturday, May 22.* When I reprove for faults, whereby I am in any way injured, to defer till the thing is quite over and done with; for that is the way, both to reprove aright, and without the least mixture of spirit, or passion, and to have reproofs effectual, and not suspected.

*Friday, May 28.* It seems to me, that whether I am now converted or not, I am so settled in the state I am in, that I shall go on it all my life. But, however settled I may be, yet I will continue to pray to God, not to suffer me to be deceived about it, nor to sleep in an unsafe condition; and ever and anon, will call all into question and try myself, using for helps some of our old divines, that God may have opportunities to answer my prayers, and the Spirit of God to show me my error, if I am in one.

*Saturday night, June 6.* I am sometimes in a frame so listless, that there is no other way of profitably improving time, but conversation, visiting, or recreation, or some bodily exercise. However, it may be best in the first place, before resorting to either of these, to try the whole circle of my mental employments.

*Nov. 16.* When confined at Mr. Stiles's. I think it would be of special advantage to me, with respect to my truer interest, as near as I can in my studies, to observe this rule: To let half a day's, or at most a day's, study in other things, be succeeded by half a day's or a day's study in divinity.

One thing wherein I have erred, as I would be complete in all social duties, is, in neglecting to write letters to friends. And I would be forewarned of the danger of neglecting to visit my friends and relations when we are parted.

When one suppresses thoughts that tend to divert the run of the mind's operations from religion, whether they are melancholy, or anxious, or passionate, or any others; there is this good effect of it, that it keeps the mind in its freedom. Those thoughts are stopped in the beginning, that would have set the mind a going in that stream.

There are a great many exercises, that for the present seem not to help, but rather impede, religious meditation and affections, the fruit of which is reaped afterwards, and is of far greater worth than what is lost; for thereby the mind is only for the present diverted; but what is attained is, upon occasion, of use for the whole life-time.

*Sept. 26, 1726.* 'Tis just about three years, that I have been for the most part in a low sunk estate and condition, miserably senseless, to what I used to

be, about spiritual things. 'Twas three years ago, the week before commencement, just about the same time this year, I began to be somewhat as I used to be.

*Jan.* 1728. I think Christ has recommended rising early in the morning, by his rising from the grave very early.

*Jan.* 22, 1734. I judge that it is best, when I am in a good frame for divine contemplation, or engaged in reading the Scriptures, or any study of divine subjects, that, ordinarily, I will not be interrupted by going to dinner, but will forego my dinner, rather than be broke off.

*April* 4, 1735. When at any time I have a sense of any divine thing, then to turn it in my thoughts to a practical improvement. As for instance, when I am in my mind, on some argument for the truth of religion, the reality of a future state, and the like, then to think with myself, how safely I may venture to sell all, for a future good. So when at any time I have a more than ordinary sense of the glory of the saints in another world, to think how well it is worth my while to deny myself, and to sell all that I have, for this glory, &c.

*May* 18. My mind at present is, never to suffer my thoughts and meditations at all to ruminate.

*June* 11. To set apart days of meditation on particular subjects; as, sometimes to set apart a day for the consideration of the greatness of my sins; at another, to consider the dreadfulfulness and certainty of the future misery of ungodly men; at another, the truth and certainty of religion; and so, of the great future things promised and threatened in the Scriptures."

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight  
Revised & Corrected

by  
Edward Hickman  
FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

**CHAPTER VI.**

SETTLEMENT IN THE MINISTRY AT NORTHAMPTON—SITUATION OF THINGS AT THE TIME OF HIS SETTLEMENT—ATTENTION TO RELIGION IN THE PARISH—COURSE OF STUDY—HABITS OF LIFE—MARRIAGE—DEATH AND CHARACTER OF MR. STODDARD—SICKNESS OF MR. EDWARDS—DEATH AND CHARACTER OF HIS SISTER JERUSHA—HIS FIRST PUBLICATION.

ON the 15<sup>th</sup> of February, 1727, Mr. Edwards was ordained as a minister of the gospel, and placed over the church and congregation at Northampton, as the colleague of his grandfather, the Rev. Mr. Stoddard. He was now entering on the business of life, in a profession attended with many difficulties, and presenting a field sufficiently ample for the employment of the highest faculties ever conferred on man. It may not be improper, therefore, to stop a moment, and review the circumstances in which he was placed.

He was twenty-three years of age. His constitution was naturally so tender and feeble, as to be preserved, even in tolerable health, only with unceasing care. He had passed through the successive periods of childhood, youth, and early manhood, not only without reproach, but in such a manner, as to secure the high esteem and approbation of all who knew him. His filial piety, and fraternal affection, had been most exemplary, and had rendered him a centre for strong attraction to the united family. Originally of a grave and sober character, he had been the subject of early, frequent, and strong religious impressions; which, if they did not result in saving conversion in his childhood, yet rendered him conscientious, and solemnly and habitually mindful of eternal things. For a considerable period, he had not only felt the life and power of religion, but had appeared imbued with an unusually large measure of the grace of God. Few persons, of the same age, discover a piety so pure, so practical, or so pervading.

He had been devoted to books from his infancy, and appears of his own accord, from an early period, to have formed habits of severe and successful application. His mind, originally possessed of uncommon powers, and fraught

with an intense desire of knowledge, was qualified for eminence, as we have already seen, not in a single pursuit merely, but in every walk of literature and science. Though probably the youngest member of his class, he had been acknowledged as its first scholar, in the distribution of its honours. He had not been distinguished for his attainments in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew literature only, but still more in those studies which require the application of stronger powers—in mathematics and logic, in natural and mental philosophy, and the higher principles of theology. In these, he had not simply proved himself capable of comprehending the discoveries of others, but had ventured out, where there was no path nor guide, into new and unexplored regions of the spiritual<sup>1</sup> world, with a success, which might well have prompted him to bold and fearless enterprise. As officers of the college, the peculiar difficulties in which they were placed, had given him, and his associates, an opportunity to acquire uncommon reputation, not only as instructors and governors of youths, but as men of unshaken firmness, and unwavering integrity. His mind was now rich in its attainments; its views were already, for the period in which he lived, singularly expanded and comprehensive; and its powers were under thorough discipline, and yielded an exact and persevering obedience. His habits of study were completely formed, and were of the most severe and unbending character.

Theology had been, for years, his favourite study. For it he had deliberately relinquished, not only the varied pursuits of natural science, but in a measure, also, those investigations into the nature and operations of mind, by which, at an earlier period, his whole attention had been engrossed. He had already discovered, that much of what he found in systems and commentaries, was a mere mass of rubbish; and that many of the great principles, which constitute the foundation of the science, were yet to be established. He had studied theology, not chiefly in systems or commentaries, but in the Bible, and in the character and mutual relations of God and his creatures, from which all its principles are derived; and had already entered on a series of investigations, which, if ultimately found correct, would effectuate most important changes in the opinions of the christian world.

The ministry had long been the profession of his choice, and was doubtless the only profession which he had ever thought of pursuing. Few persons, probably, enter the sacred office with more just views of its elevation and importance. His work he appears to have regarded simply as the work of salvation;—the same work, on which HE, whose commission he bore, came down to this lower world;—and to the accomplishment of it, the surrender of himself appears to have been deliberate and entire. His reception as a preacher had certainly been flattering. Repeated and urgent proposals had been made to him for settlement; and, as far as he was known, he was obviously regarded as a young man of uncommon promise.

Northampton, the place of his settlement, is in its natural situation uncommonly pleasant, was then the shire town of a county, embracing nearly one half of the area of the colony, and embodied within its limits, more than the ordinary share of refinement and polish. The church was large, and, with the congregation, was united. Both were united in him, and earnestly desirous that he should become their minister. From his childhood he had familiarly known both the place and the people. His parents were the familiar friends of



many of the inhabitants; and they, with his connexions in the place, regarded his settlement there as a most pleasing event.

He was also the individual, whom probably, of all others, his grandfather desired, for his colleague and successor. That venerable man, then in his 84<sup>th</sup> year, had been the minister of Northampton 55 years; and by his piety, his great energy of character, and his knowledge of mankind, had early acquired, and maintained through a long life, a singular degree of weight among the ministers and churches of New England. Though a close student, and an able and faithful preacher, he was in character a man of business, and of action; and, in all the important ecclesiastical bodies of Massachusetts, he had for many years an influence, which usually was not contested, and almost always was paramount. In Northampton he had been a faithful and successful minister. Under his preaching, the place had repeatedly witnessed revivals of religion; particularly in 1679, 1683, 1690, 1712, and 1718. Those in 1683, 1690, and 1712, were distinguished for their extent, and for the accessions made to the number of communicants. While the existing members of the church, with scarcely an exception, regarded him as their spiritual father, all the acting inhabitants of the town had grown up under his ministry, and had been accustomed, from infancy, to pay a respect to his person and character, and a deference to his opinions, such as children pay to those of a loved and venerated parent.

One circumstance, relating to the actual condition of the church at Northampton, deserves to be mentioned here, as it had an ultimate bearing on some of the most important events recorded in these pages. That church, like the other early churches of New England, according to its original platform, admitted none to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, except those who, after due examination, were regarded in the judgment of christian charity as regenerate persons. Such was the uniform practice of the church, from the time of its formation, during the life of Mr. Mather, and for upwards of thirty years after the settlement of Mr. Stoddard. How early Mr. Stoddard changed his own views on this subject, cannot probably be ascertained; but he attempted, in 1704, and, though not without opposition, yet with ultimate success, to introduce a corresponding change in the practice of the church. Though no vote was then taken to alter the rules of admission, yet the point of practice was yielded. The sacrament, from that time, was viewed as a converting ordinance, and those who were not regarded, either by themselves or others, as possessed of piety, were encouraged to unite themselves to the church.

The attention to religion in 1718, was neither extensive, nor of long continuance, and appears not to have terminated happily. During the nine years which intervened between that event and the settlement of Mr. Edwards, Mr. Stoddard witnessed "a far more degenerate time among his people, particularly among the young, than ever before," in which the means of salvation were attended with little or no visible efficacy. The young became addicted to habits of dissipation and licentiousness; family government too generally failed; the sabbath was extensively profaned; and the decorum of the sanctuary was not infrequently disturbed. There had also long prevailed in the town a spirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided, which kept alive a mutual jealousy, and prepared them to oppose one another in all public affairs.

Such were the circumstances in which Mr. Edwards entered on his ministry at Northampton.

At this time, Mr. Stoddard, though so much advanced in years, had a good degree of strength, both of body and mind; and, for a considerable period after the settlement of his grandson, he was able to officiate in the desk the half of every sabbath. Almost immediately after that event, he was permitted to witness a work of divine grace among some of his people; in the course of which about twenty were believed to be savingly converted. This was to him a most pleasing circumstance, as well as most useful to his colleague; who observes, "I have reason to bless God for the great advantage I had by it." No doubt it was intended to prepare him for more important and interesting scenes. The attention to religion, though at no time very extensive, continued for about two years, and was followed by several years of general inattention and indifference.

Immediately after his settlement, Mr. Edwards commenced the practice of preparing two discourses weekly; one of which was preached as a lecture, on an evening in the week. This he continued for several years. Though he regarded preaching the gospel as the great duty of a minister, and would on no account offer to God, or deliver to his people, that which was not the fruit of toil and labour; yet he resolved, from the commencement of his ministry, not to devote the time of each week exclusively to the preparation of his sermons, but to spend a large portion of it in the study of the Bible, and in the investigation of the more difficult and important subjects of theology. His mode of study with the pen has been described, and was now vigorously pursued, in the continuation of his "Miscellanies," and his "Notes on the Scriptures," as well as of a work, entitled, "The Types of the Messiah in the Old Testament," which he appears to have commenced while a candidate for the ministry. With an infirm constitution, and health ordinarily feeble, it was obviously impossible, however, to carry this resolution into practice, without the most strict attention to diet, exercise, and method; but in all these points, his habits had long been formed, and persevered in, with a direct reference to the best improvement of time, and the greatest efficiency of his intellectual powers. In eating and drinking, he was unusually abstemious, and constantly watchful. He carefully observed the effects of the different sorts of food, and selected those which best suited his constitution, and rendered him most fit for mental labour. Having also ascertained the quantity of food, which, while it sustained his bodily strength, left his mind most sprightly and active, he most scrupulously and exactly confined himself to the prescribed limits; regarding it as a shame and a sin, to waste his time, and his mental strength, by animal indulgence. In this respect, he lived *by rule*, and constantly practised great self-denial; as he did also, with regard to the time passed in sleep. He accustomed himself to rise at four, or between four and five, in the morning, and, in winter, spent several of those hours in study which are commonly wasted in slumber. In the evening, he usually allowed himself a season of relaxation, in the midst of his family.

His most usual diversion in summer, was riding on horseback, and walking; and in his solitary rides and walks, he appears to have decided, before leaving home, on what subjects to meditate. He would commonly, unless diverted by company, ride two or three miles after dinner, to some lonely grove, where he would dismount and walk awhile. At such times, he generally carried

his pen and ink with him, to note any thought that might be suggested, and which promised some light on any important subject. In winter, he was accustomed, almost daily, to take his axe, and cut wood moderately, for the space of half an hour or more. In solitary rides of considerable length, he adopted a kind of artificial memory. Having pursued a given subject of thought to its proper results, he would pin a small piece of paper on a given spot in his coat, and charge his mind to associate the subject and the piece of paper. He would then repeat the same process with a second subject of thought, fastening the token in a different place, and then a third, and a fourth, as the time might permit. From a ride of several days, he would usually bring home a considerable number of these remembrancers; and, on going to his study, would take them off, one by one, in regular order, and write down the train of thought of which each was intended to remind him.

“He did not,” observes Dr. Hopkins, “make it his custom to visit his people in their own houses, unless he was sent for by the sick, or he heard that they were under some special affliction. Instead of visiting from house to house, he used to preach frequently at private meetings, in particular neighbourhoods; and often call the young people and children to his own house, when he used to pray with them, and treat with them in a manner suited to their years and circumstance; and he catechized the children in public, every sabbath in the forenoon. And he used, sometimes, to propose questions to particular young persons, in writing, for them to answer, after a proper time given to them to prepare. In putting out these questions, he endeavoured to suit them to the age, genius, and ability of those, to whom they were given. His questions were generally such, as required but a short answer; and yet, could not be answered without a particular knowledge of some historical part of the Scriptures; and therefore led, and even obliged, persons to study the Bible.

“He did not neglect visiting his people from house to house, because he did not look upon it, in ordinary cases, to be one important part of the work of a gospel minister; but, because he supposed that ministers should, with respect to this, consult their own talents and circumstances, and visit more or less, according to the degree in which they could hope thereby to promote the great ends of the ministry. He observed, that some had a talent for entertaining and profiting by occasional visits among their people. They have words at command, and a facility at introducing profitable religious discourse, in a manner free, natural, and familiar, and apparently without design or contrivance. He supposed, that such had a call to spend a great deal of their time in visiting their people; but he looked on his own talents to be quite otherwise. He was not able to enter into a free conversation with every person he met, and, in an easy manner, turn it to whatever topic he pleased, without the help of others, and it may be, against their inclinations. He therefore found, that his visits of this kind must be, in a great degree, unprofitable. And as he was settled in a large parish, it would have taken up a great part of his time to visit from house to house, which he thought he could spend, in his study, to much more valuable purposes, and so better promote the great ends of his ministry. For it appeared to him, that he could do the greatest good to the souls of men, and most promote the cause of Christ, by preaching and writing, and conversing with persons under religious impressions, in his study; whither he encouraged all such to repair; where they might be sure, in ordinary cases, to find him, and to

be allowed easy access to him; and where they were treated with all desirable tenderness, kindness, and familiarity.”

Owing to his constant watchfulness and self-denial in food and sleep, and his regular attention to bodily exercise, notwithstanding the feebleness of his constitution, few students are capable of more close or more long-continued application than he was. He commonly spent thirteen hours every day in his study; and these hours were passed, not in perusing or treasuring up the thoughts of others, but in employments far more exhausting—in the investigation of difficult subjects, in the origination and arrangement of thoughts, in the invention of arguments, and in the discovery of truths and principles. Nor was his exact method, in the distribution of his time, of less essential service. In consequence of his uniform regularity and self-denial, and the force of habit, the powers of his mind were always at his command, and would do their prescribed task in the time appointed. This enabled him to assign the preparation of his sermons, each week, to given days, and specific subjects of investigation to other given days; and except in cases of sickness, or journeying, or some other extraordinary interruption, it was rare, indeed, that he failed of accomplishing every part of his weekly task, or that he was pressed for time in the accomplishment. So exact was the distribution of his time, and so perfect the command of his mental powers, that in addition to his preparation of two discourses in each week, his stated and occasional lectures, and his customary pastoral duties, he continued regularly his “Notes on the Scriptures,” his “Miscellanies,” his “Types of the Messiah,” and a work which he soon commenced, entitled, “Prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament, and their Fulfilment.”

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, 1727, Mr. Edwards was married, at New-haven, to Miss Sarah Pierrepont. Her paternal grandfather, John Pierrepont, Esq. who came from England and resided in Roxbury, Massachusetts, was a younger branch of a most distinguished family in his own country. Her father, the Rev. James Pierrepont, was “an eminent, pious, and useful minister, at New-Haven.” He married Mary, the daughter of the Rev. Samuel Hooker, of Farmington, who was the son of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, of Hartford, familiarly denominated “the father of the Connecticut churches,” and “well known, in the churches of England, for his distinguished talents and most ardent piety.” Mr. Pierrepont was one of the principal founders, and one of the trustees, of Yale college; and, to help forward the seminary, read lectures to the students, for some considerable time, as professor of Moral Philosophy. The Platform of the Connecticut Churches, established at Saybrook, in 1708, is ascribed to his pen. Miss Pierrepont was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January, 1710, and at the time of her marriage was in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of her age. She was a young lady of uncommon beauty. Not only is this the language of tradition; but Dr. Hopkins, who first saw her when the mother of seven children, says she was more than ordinarily beautiful; and her portrait, taken by a respectable English painter<sup>2</sup>, while it presents a form and features not often rivalled, exhibits also that peculiar loveliness of expression, which is the combined result of intelligence, cheerfulness, and benevolence. The native powers of her mind were of a superior order; and her parents being in easy circumstances, and of liberal views, provided for their children all the advantages of an enlightened and polished education. In her manners she was gentle and courteous, amiable in her behaviour, and the law of kindness appeared to govern all her conversation and conduct.

She was also a rare example of early piety; having exhibited the life and power of religion, and that in a remarkable manner, when only five years of age;<sup>3</sup> and having also confirmed the hopes which her friends then cherished, by the uniform and increasing excellence of her character, in childhood and youth. So warm and animated were her religious feelings, in every period of life, that they might perhaps have been regarded as enthusiastic, had they not been under the control of true delicacy and sound discretion. Mr. Edwards had known her several years before their marriage, and from the following passage, written on a blank leaf, in 1723, it is obvious, that even then her uncommon piety, at least, had arrested his attention. "They say there is a young lady in [New-Haven] who is loved of that Great Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight; and that she hardly cares for any thing, except to meditate on him—that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with him, and to be ravished with his love and delight for ever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do any thing wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this Great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness, and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this Great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her." After due allowance is made for animation of feeling, the reader will be convinced, that such a testimony, concerning a young lady of thirteen, could not have been given, by so competent a judge, had there not been something unusual in the purity and elevation of her mind and the excellence of her life. Few persons, we are convinced, no older than she was at the time of her marriage, have made equal progress in holiness; and rare, very rare, is the instance, in which such a connexion results in a purer or more uninterrupted happiness. It was a union founded on high personal esteem, and on a mutual affection, which continually grew, and ripened, and mellowed for the time of harvest. The station, which she was called to fill at this early age, is one of great delicacy, as well as responsibility, and is attended with many difficulties. She entered on the performance of the various duties to her family and the people, to which it summoned her, with a firm reliance on the guidance and support of God; and perhaps no stronger evidence can be given of her substantial worth, than that from the first she discharged them in such a manner, as to secure the high and increasing approbation of all who knew her.

The attention to religion, which has been mentioned as commencing about the period of Mr. Edwards's ordination, though at no time extensive, continued about two years, and was followed by several years of inattention and indifference. His public labours were continued with faithfulness, but with no

peculiar success; and he had reason to lament the too perceptible declension of his people, both in religion and morals.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, 1729, his venerable colleague was removed from the scene of his earthly labours. The event was sincerely and tenderly lamented by the people of Northampton, as well as extensively throughout the province. His funeral sermon was preached by his son-in-law, the Rev. William Williams, of Hatfield; and numerous ministers, in their own pulpits, paid a similar tribute of respect to his memory.

In the spring of the same year, the health of Mr. Edwards, in consequence of too close application, so far failed him, that he was obliged to be absent from his people several months. Early in May he was at New-Haven, in company with Mrs. Edwards and their infant child, a daughter born Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1728. In September, his father, in a letter to one of his daughters, expresses the hope that the health of his son is so far restored, as to enable him to resume his labours, and to preach twice on the sabbath. The summer was probably passed, partly at Northampton, and partly in travelling.

His visit to Windsor, in September, gave him his last opportunity of seeing his sister Jerusha, whom he tenderly loved; and who a little while before had passed a considerable time with her friends in Northampton. She was attacked with a malignant fever in December, and on the 22d of that month died at her father's house. The uncommon strength and excellence of her character, rendered her peculiarly dear to all her relatives and friends; and from the testimonials of her father, of four of her sisters, and of a friend of the family at a distance, written soon after her death,<sup>4</sup> I have ascertained the following particulars. She was born in June, 1710, and, on the testimony of that friend, was a young lady of great sweetness of temper, of a fine understanding, and of a beautiful countenance. She was devoted to reading from childhood, and though fond of books of taste and amusement, she customarily preferred those which require close thought, and are fitted to strengthen and inform the mind. Like her sisters, she had received a thorough education, both English and classical, and by her proficiency, had justified the views of her father, and sustained the honour and claims of her sex. In conversation, she was solid and instructive beyond her years, yet, at the same time, was sprightly and active, and had an uncommon share of native wit and humour. Her wit was always delicate and kind, and used merely for recreation. According to the rule she prescribed to another, it constituted "the sauce, and not the food, in the entertainment." Being fond of retirement and meditation from early life, she passed much of her leisure time in solitary walks in the groves behind her father's house; and the richness of her mind, in moral reflection and philosophical remark, proved that these hours were not wasted in reverie, but occupied by solid thought and profitable contemplation. Habitually serene and cheerful, she was contented and happy; not envious of others, not desirous of admiration, not ambitious nor aspiring; and while she valued highly the esteem of her friends and of the wise and good, she was firmly convinced that her happiness depended, chiefly and ultimately, on the state of her own mind. She appeared to have gained the entire government of her temper and her passions, discovered uncommon equanimity and firmness under trials, and while, in difficult cases, she sought the best advice, yet ultimately acted for herself. Her religious life began in childhood; and from that time, meditation, prayer, and reading the sacred Scriptures, were not a prescribed task, but a coveted enjoyment. Her

sisters, who knew how much of her time she daily passed alone, had the best reason to believe that no place was so pleasant to her as her own retirement, and no society so delightful as solitude with God. She read theology, as a science, with the deepest interest, and pursued the systematic study of the Scriptures, by the help of the best commentaries. Her observance of the sabbath was exemplary, in solemnly preparing for it, in allotting to it the prescribed hours, and in devoting it only to sacred employments; and in the solemn and entire devotion of her mind to the duties of the sanctuary, she appeared, habitually, to feel with David, "Holiness becometh thine house for ever." Few persons attend more closely to preaching, or judge more correctly concerning it, or have higher pleasure in that which is solid, pungent, and practical. She saw and conversed with God, in his works of creation and providence. Her religious joy was, at times, intense and elevated. After telling one of her sisters, on a particular occasion, that she could not describe it, she observed to her, that it seemed like a streak of light shining in a dark place; and reminded her of a line Watts's Lyrics,

*"And sudden, from the cleaving skies, a gleam of glory broke."*

Her conscience was truly enlightened, and her conduct appeared to be governed by principle. She approved of the best things; discovered great reverence for religion, and strong attachment to the truly pious and conscientious; was severe in her estimate of herself, and charitable in judging of others; was not easily provoked, and usually tried to excuse the provocation; was unapt to cherish prejudices, and lamented, and strove to conceal, the faults of Christians.

On the testimony of those who knew her best, "She was a remarkably loving, dutiful, obedient daughter, and a very kind and loving sister," "very helpful and serviceable in the family, and willingly labouring with her own hands," very "kind and friendly to her neighbours," attentive to the sick, charitable to the poor, prone to sympathize with the afflicted, and merciful to the brutes; and at the same time, respectful to superiors, obliging to equals, condescending and affable to inferiors, and manifesting sincere good will to all mankind. Courteous and easy in her manners, she was also modest, unostentatious, and retiring; and, while she uniformly respected herself, she commanded the respect of all who saw her. She was fond of all that was comely in dress, but averse to every thing gay and gaudy. She loved peace, and strove to reconcile those who were at variance; was delicately attentive to those of her sex, who were slighted by others; received reproofs with meekness, and told others of their faults with so much sweetness and faithfulness, as to increase their esteem and affection for herself. She detested all guile, and management, and deception, all flattery and falsehood, and wholly refused to associate with those who exhibited this character. She was most careful and select in her friendships, and most true and faithful to her friends—highly valuing their affection, and discovering the deepest interest in their welfare. Her conversation and conduct indicated uncommon innocence and purity of mind; and she avoided many things, which are thought correct by multitudes who are strictly virtuous. During her sickness she was not forsaken. A day or two before its termination, she manifested a remarkable admiration of the grace and mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, to sinners, and particularly to herself: saying, "It is wonderful, it surprises me." A part of the time she was in some degree delirious; but, when her mind wandered, it seemed to wander heavenward. Just be-

fore her death, she attempted to sing a hymn, entitled, "The Absence of Christ," and died, in the full possession of her rational powers, expressing her hope of eternal salvation through his blood. This first example of the ravages of death, in this numerous family, was a most trying event to all its members; and the tenderness with which they cherished the memory of her who was gone, probably terminated only with life.

The second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the following April, and named Jerusha, after their deceased sister.

In July, 1731, Mr. Edwards being in Boston, delivered a sermon at the public lecture, entitled, "God glorified in Man's Dependence," from 1 Cor. i. 29, 30. "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." It was published, at the request of several ministers, and others who heard it, and preceded by a preface by the Rev. Messrs. Prince and Cooper, of Boston. This was his first publication, and is scarcely known to the American reader of his works. The subject was at that time novel, as exhibited by the preacher, and made a deep impression on the audience, and on the reverend gentlemen who were particularly active in procuring its publication. "It was with no small difficulty," say they, "that the author's youth and modesty were prevailed on, to let him appear a preacher in our public lecture, and afterwards to give us a copy of his discourse, at the desire of divers ministers, and others who heard it. But, as we quickly found him to be a workman that need not be ashamed before his brethren, our satisfaction was the greater, to see him pitching upon so noble a subject, and treating it with so much strength and clearness, as the judicious will perceive in the following composure: a subject, which secures to God his great design, in the work of fallen man's redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ, which is evidently so laid out, as that the glory of the whole should return to him the blessed ordainer, purchaser, and applier; a subject, which enters deep into practical religion; without the belief of which, that must soon die in the hearts and lives of men."

The following is the testimony, borne by these excellent men, to the talents and piety of the author:

"We cannot, therefore, but express our joy and thankfulness, that the great Head of the church is pleased still to raise up, from among the children of his people, for the supply of his churches, those who assert and maintain these evangelical principles; and that our churches, notwithstanding all their degeneracies, have still a high value for just principles, and for those who publicly own and teach them. And, as we cannot but wish and pray, that the college in the neighbouring colony, as well as our own, may be a fruitful mother of many such sons as the author; so we heartily rejoice, in the special favour of Providence, in bestowing such a rich gift on the happy church of Northampton, which has, for so many lustres of years, flourished under the influence of such pious doctrines, taught them in the excellent ministry of their late venerable pastor, whose gift and spirit we hope will long live and shine in his grandson, to the end that they may abound in all the lovely fruits of evangelical humility and thankfulness, to the glory of God."

The discourse itself deserves this high commendation. It was the commencement of a series of efforts, on the part of the author, to illustrate the glory of God, as appearing in the greatest of all his works, the work of man's



redemption. Rare indeed is the instance, in which a first publication is equally rich in condensed thought, or in new and elevated conceptions.

The third child of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, also a daughter, was born February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1732, and received the name of Esther, after his mother and Mrs. Stoddard.

## FOOTNOTES

1 I use *spiritual* here in its original and most appropriate sense, as opposed to *material*.

2 The Rev. Dr. Erskine, the warm friend and the correspondent of Mr. Edwards, being desirous of procuring a correct portrait, both of him and his wife, and hearing that a respectable English painter was in Boston, forwarded to his agent in that town, the sum requisite, not only for the portraits, but for the expenses of the journey. They were taken in 1740; and after the death of Dr. Erskine, were very kindly transmitted by his executor to Dr. Edwards.

3 Hopkin's *Life of Edwards*. Dr. H resided in the family a considerable time.

4 This last was published.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Sereno E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

**CHAPTER VII.**

REMARKABLE REVIVAL OF RELIGION, IN 1734, AND 1735—ITS EXTENT AND POWER—MANNER OF TREATING AWAKENED SINNERS—CAUSES OF ITS DECLINE—RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY IN HAMPSHIRE—DEATH OF HIS SISTER LUCY—CHARACTERISTICS OF MRS. EDWARDS—REMAINDER OF PERSONAL NARRATIVE.

EARLY in 1732, the state of religion in Northampton, which had been for several years on the decline, began gradually, and perceptibly, to grow better; and an obvious check was given to the open prevalence of disorder and licentiousness. Immoral practices, which had long been customary, were regarded as disgraceful, and extensively renounced. The young, who had been the chief abettors of these disorders, and on whom the means of grace had exerted no salutary influence, discovered more of a disposition to hearken to the counsels of their parents, and the admonitions of the gospel, relinquished by degrees their more gross and public sins, and attended on the worship of the sabbath more generally, and with greater decorum and seriousness of mind; and, among the people as a body, there was a larger number than before, who manifested a personal interest in their own salvation. This desirable change in the congregation became more and more perceptible, throughout that and the following year. At the latter end of 1733, there appeared a very unusual flexibility, and a disposition to yield to advice, in the young of both sexes; on an occasion, too, and under circumstances, where it was wholly unexpected. It had long, and perhaps always, been the custom in Northampton to devote the sabbath evening, and the evening after the state public lecture, to visiting and diversion. On a sabbath preceding one of the public lectures, Mr. Edwards preached a sermon on the subject, explaining the mischievous consequences of this unhappy practice, exhorting the young to a reformation; and calling on parents and masters, universally, to come to an explicit agreement with one another, to govern their families in this respect, and on these evenings to keep their children and servants at home. The following evening, it so happened that, among a considerable number visiting at his house, there were individuals from every part of the town; and he took that occasion to propose to those who were present, that they should, in his name, request the heads of families in their respective neighbourhoods to assemble the next day, and converse upon the subject, and agree, every one, to restrain his own family. They did so. Such a meeting was accordingly held in each neighbourhood, and the proposal

was universally complied with. But, when they made known this agreement to their families, they found little or no restraint necessary; for the young people, almost without exception, declared that they were convinced, by what they had heard from the pulpit, of the impropriety of the practice, and were ready cheerfully to relinquish it. From that time forward, it was given up, and there was an immediate and thorough reformation of those disorders and immoralities, which it had occasioned. This unexpected occurrence tenderly affected the minds of the people, and happily prepared them for events of still deeper interest.

Just after this, there began to be an unusual concern on the subject of religion, at a little hamlet called Pascommuck, consisting of a few farm houses, about three miles from the principal settlement; and a number of persons, at that place, appeared to be savingly converted. In the ensuing spring, the sudden and awful death of a young man, who became immediately delirious, and continued so until he died; followed by that of a young married woman, who, after great mental suffering, appeared to find peace with God, and died full of comfort, in a most earnest and affecting manner warning and counselling others; contributed extensively, and powerfully, to impress the minds of the young, and to excite a deeper interest on the subject of religion, throughout the congregation.

The fourth child and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards was born April 7th, 1734, and baptized by the name of Mary.

In the autumn, Mr. Edwards recommended to the young people, on the day of each stated public lecture, to assemble in various parts of the town, and spend the evening in prayer, and the other duties of social religion. This they readily did, and their example was followed by those who were older.

The solemnity of mind, which now began to pervade the church and congregation, and which was constantly increasing, had a visible reaction on all the labours of Mr. Edwards, public as well as private; and it will not be easy to find discourses in any language, more solemn, spiritual, or powerful, than many of those which he now delivered. One of these, from Matt. xvi. 17. entitled, "A Divine and Supernatural Light immediately imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God, shown to be both a Scriptural and Rational Doctrine," excited uncommon interest in the hearers, and, at their request, was now published. As an exhibition of religion, as existing within the soul, in one of its peculiar forms or aspects, it will be found, in the perusal, remarkably adapted to enlighten, to refresh, and to sanctify; while the evidence of the reality of such a light, as derived both from the Scriptures and from reason, will convince every unprejudiced mind.

At this time, a violent controversy, respecting Arminianism, prevailed extensively over that part of New England, and the friends of vital piety in Northampton regarded it as likely to have a most unhappy bearing on the interests of religion in that place; but, contrary to their fears, it was powerfully overruled for its promotion. Mr. Edwards, well knowing that the points at issue had an immediate bearing on the great subject of salvation, and that mankind never can be so powerfully affected by any subject, as when their attention to it has been strongly excited, determined, in opposition to the fears and the counsels of many of his friends, to explain his own views to his people, from the pulpit. Accordingly, he preached a series of sermons, on the various points relating to the controversy, and among others, his well-known Dis-

courses on the great doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. For this he was sincerely censured by numbers on the spot, as well as ridiculed by many elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. The event, however, proved that he had judged wisely. In his discourses, he explained the scriptural conditions of salvation, and exposed the errors then prevalent with regard to them, with so much force of argument, and in a manner so solemn and practical, that it was attended with a signal blessing from heaven, on the people of his charge. Many, who had cherished these errors, were convinced that they could be justified only by the righteousness of Christ; while others, who had not, were brought to feel that they must be renewed by the Holy Spirit; and the minds of both were led the more earnestly to seek that they might be accepted of God. In the latter part of December, five or six individuals appeared to be very suddenly and savingly converted, one after another; and some of them in a manner so remarkable, as to awaken very great numbers, of all ages and conditions. The year 1735 opened on Northampton in a most auspicious manner. A deep and solemn interest in the great truths of religion had become universal in all parts of the town, and among all classes of people. This was the only subject of conversation in every company; and almost the only business of the people appeared to be, to secure their salvation. So extensive was the influence of the Spirit of God, that there was scarcely an individual in the town, either old or young, who was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. This was true of the gayest, of the most licentious, and of the most hostile to religion. And in the midst of this universal attention, the work of conversion was carried on in the most astonishing manner. Every day witnessed its triumphs; and so great was the alteration in the appearance of the town, that in the spring and summer following, it appeared to be full of the presence of God. There was scarcely a house which did not furnish the tokens of his presence, and scarcely a family which did not present the trophies of his grace. "The town," says Mr. Edwards, "was never so full of love, nor so full of joy, nor yet so full of distress, as it was then." Whenever he met the people in the sanctuary, he not only saw the house crowded, but every hearer earnest to receive the truth of God, and often the whole assembly dissolved in tears: some weeping for sorrow, others for joy, and others from compassion. In the months of March and April, when the work of God was carried on with the greatest power, he supposes the number, apparently of genuine conversions, to have been at least four a day, or nearly thirty a week, take one week with another, for five or six weeks together.

During the winter and spring, many persons from the neighbouring towns came to Northampton, to attend the stated lectures of Mr. Edwards; many others, on business, or on visits; and many others, from a distance, having heard contradictory reports of the state of things, came to see and examine for themselves. Of these, great numbers had their consciences awakened, were savingly wrought upon, and went home rejoicing in the forgiving love of God. This appeared to be the means of spreading the same influence in the adjacent towns, and in places more remote, so that no less than ten towns in the same county, and seventeen in the adjoining colony of Connecticut, within a short time, were favoured with revivals of religion.

This was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable events of the kind that has occurred since the canon of the New Testament was finished. It was so on account of its universality: no class, nor age, nor description, was exempt.

Upwards of fifty persons above forty years of age, and ten above ninety, near thirty between ten and fourteen, and one of four<sup>2</sup>, became, in the view of Mr. Edwards, the subjects of the renewing grace of God. It was so on account of the unusual numbers, who appeared to become Christians; amounting to more than three hundred persons, in half a year, and about as many of them males as females. Previous to one sacrament, about one hundred were received to the communion, and near sixty previous to another; and the whole number of communicants, at one time, was about six hundred and twenty, including almost all the adult population of the town. It was so in its rapid progress, in its amazing power, in the depth of the convictions felt, and in the degree of light, of love, and of joy communicated; as well as in its great extent, and in its swift propagation from place to place.

Early in the progress of this work of grace, Mr. Edwards seems to have decided for himself, the manner in which he was bound to treat awakened sinners:—to urge repentance on every such sinner, as his immediate duty; to insist that God is under no manner of obligation to any unrenewed man; and that a man can challenge nothing, either in absolute justice, or by free promise, on account of anything he does before he repents and believes. He was fully convinced that if he had taught those, who came to consult him in their spiritual troubles, any other doctrines, he should have taken the most direct course to have utterly undone them. The discourses, which, beyond measure more than any others which he preached, “had an immediate saving effect,” were several from Rom. iii. 19. “That every mouth may be stopped,”—in which he endeavoured to show that it would be just with God, for ever to reject, and cast off, mere natural men.

Though it had not been the custom, as we have already seen, for a long period at Northampton, to require of candidates for admission to the church, a credible relation of the evidences of their own conversion, because, if unconverted, they were supposed to have a right to the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, as a converting ordinance: yet Mr. Edwards supposed he had very “sufficient evidence” of the conversion of those who were now admitted. There can be but little doubt, however, that, if the rules of the church had required, in every case, a thorough examination of the candidate’s piety, the period of probation would have been longer, the danger of a false profession more solemnly realized, and the examination of each individual, by the pastor of the church, as well as by himself, far more strict; or that many, at first, regarded, both by themselves and others, as unquestionably Christians, would not, at that time, have made a profession of religion. But unfortunately he had never fully examined the scriptural ground for admission to the Lord’s supper, and, like many others, had taken it for granted that Mr. Stoddard’s views of the subject were just. Had he investigated it as thoroughly, at that important crisis, as he did afterwards, there can be but little doubt that, in the high state of religious feeling then prevalent, the church would readily have changed its practice, or that all the candidates for admission would have consented to a thorough examination. Had such indeed been the issue, Mr. Edwards himself would have been saved from many trials, and the church and people of Northampton from great and incalculable evils: still it may well be doubted, whether the actual result has not occasioned a far greater amount of good to the church at large.

In the latter part of May, 1735, this great work of the Spirit of God began obviously to decline, and the instances of conversion to be less numerous, both

at Northampton and in the neighbouring villages. One principal cause of this declension is undoubtedly to be found in the fact, that in all these places, both among ministers and private christians, the *physical excitement* had been greater than the human constitution can, for a long period, endure. Nothing, it should be remembered, exhausts the strength and the animal spirits, like *feeling*. One hour of intense joy, or of intense sorrow, will more entirely prostrate the frame, than weeks of close study. In revivals of religion, as they have hitherto appeared, the nerves of the whole man—of body, mind, and heart,—are kept continually on the stretch, from month to month; until at length they are relaxed, and become non-elastic; and then all feeling and energy, of every kind, is gone. Another reason is undoubtedly to be found in the fact, that those, who had so long witnessed this remarkable work of God, without renouncing their sins, had at length become hardened and hopeless in their impenitence. Mr. Edwards also attributes it, in part, to two striking events of Providence, at Northampton, and to two remarkable instances of enthusiastic delusion, in two of the neighbouring villages.

He mentions also a third cause, and one far more powerful, and more extensive in its influence, than either of the two last. This was an ecclesiastical controversy, growing out of the settlement of a minister at Springfield, in which he himself was ultimately compelled, though with great reluctance, to take a part; which agitated, not only the county of Hampshire, but the more remote churches of the province. Of this, a bare mention would alone be necessary, did we not find his connexion with it referred to, at a subsequent and most interesting period of his life.

In 1735, the first church in Springfield, having elected a pastor, invited the churches in the southern part of Hampshire, by their pastors and delegates in council, to proceed to his ordination. The council, when convened, after examining the qualifications of the candidate, refused to ordain him, and assigned two reasons for this refusal—youthful immorality, and anti-scriptural tenets. Mr. Edwards, though invited to this council, for some reason or other, was not present. The church, in August, called a second council, consisting chiefly of ministers and delegates from the churches in Boston, which, without delay, proceeded to the ordination. The first council, finding their own measures thus openly impeached, published a pamphlet entitled, “A Narrative and Defence of the Proceedings of the Ministers of Hampshire,” &c. justifying their own conduct, and censuring that of their brethren. The second council defended themselves in a pamphlet entitled, “An Answer to the Hampshire Narrative.” Mr. Edwards, at the request of the first council, and particularly of his uncle, the Rev. Mr. Williams, of Hatfield, who was its moderator, wrote a reply to this, entitled, “A Letter to the Author of the Pamphlet called, An Answer to the Hampshire Narrative.”—This reply, viewed either as an argument upon the law and the facts, or as an answer to his opponents, is an exhibition of logic, not often met with in similar discussions, and appears to have concluded the controversy. This series of events occurred during the revival of religion in the churches of that county, and was thought, by too powerfully engrossing the attention, both of ministers and people, in various places, to have hastened its conclusion. And there can be no doubt that this opinion was correct. A revival of religion is nothing but the *immediate result* of an uncommon *attention*, on the part of a church and congregation, to the truth of God;—particularly to the great truths, which disclose the worth of the soul, and the only way in which it

can be saved. Whenever, and wherever, the members of a church pay the due attention to these truths, by giving them their proper influence on their hearts, religion revives immediately in their affections and their conduct; and when the impenitent pay such attention, the kingdom of heaven immediately “suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” The only effectual way to put a stop to such a work of grace is, therefore, *to divert the attention* of Christians and sinners from those truths which bear immediately on the work of salvation.

In the latter part of the summer, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards were called to mourn the death of another of his sisters, named Lucy, the youngest but one of his father’s children; who was born in 1715, and died August 21, 1736<sup>3</sup>, at the age of 21. After her they named their fifth child, who was born August 31, of the same year.

It was a peculiarly favourable dispensation of Providence that, amid the multiplied cares and labours of this period, the health of Mr. Edwards was graciously preserved. A revival of religion to a minister, like the period of harvest to the husbandman, is the most busy and the most exhausting of all seasons; and during the progress of that, which he had just witnessed, not only was the whole time of Mr. Edwards fully occupied, but all the powers of his mind were laboriously employed, and all the feelings of his heart kept, from month to month, in high and powerful excitement. In addition to his ordinary duties as a teacher and pastor, his public lectures were now multiplied, private lectures were weekly appointed in different parts of the town, and his study was almost daily thronged by multitudes, looking to him as their spiritual guide. From the adjacent villages, also, great numbers resorted to him, for the same purpose, having the highest confidence in his wisdom and experience; and numerous ministers from various parts of the country, came to his house, to witness the triumphs of divine grace, and to gain, from his counsels and his measures, more just conceptions of the best manner of discharging the highest and most sacred duties of their office.

In the midst of these complicated labours, as well as at all times, he found at home one, who was in every sense a *help meet* for him; one who made their common dwelling the abode of order and neatness, of peace and comfort, of harmony and love, to all its inmates, and of kindness and hospitality to the friend, the visitant, and the stranger. “While she uniformly paid a becoming deference to her husband, and treated him with entire respect, she spared no pains in conforming to his inclinations, and rendering everything in the family agreeable and pleasant: accounting it her greatest glory, and that wherein she could best serve God and her generation, to be the means, in this way, of promoting his usefulness and happiness. As he was of a weakly, infirm constitution, and was necessarily peculiarly exact in his diet, she was tender nurse to him, cheerfully attending upon him at all times, and in all things ministering to his comfort. And no person of discernment could be conversant in the family, without observing, and admiring, the perfect harmony, and mutual love and esteem, that subsisted between them. At the same time, when she herself laboured under bodily disorders and pains, which was not infrequently the case, instead of troubling those around her with her complaints, and wearing a sour or dejected countenance, as if out of humour with everybody, and everything around her, because she was disregarded and neglected; she was accustomed

to bear up under them, not only with patience, but with cheerfulness and good humour.”

Devoted as Mr. Edwards was to study, and to the duties of his profession, it was necessary for him at all times, but especially in a season like this, of multiplied toils and anxieties, to be relieved from attention to all secular concerns; and it was a most happy circumstance, that he could trust everything of this nature to the care of Mrs. Edwards, with entire safety, and with undoubting confidence. “She was a most judicious and faithful mistress of a family, habitually industrious, a sound economist, managing her household affairs with diligence and discretion. She was conscientiously careful that nothing should be wasted and lost; and often when she herself took care to save any thing of *trifling value*, or directed her children or others to do so, or when she saw them *waste* any thing, she would repeat the words of our Saviour—‘that nothing be lost;’ which words she said she often thought of, as containing a maxim worth remembering, especially when considered as the reason alleged by Christ, why his disciples should gather up the fragments of that bread which he had just before *created with a word*. She took almost the whole direction of the temporal affairs of the family without doors and within, managing them with great wisdom and prudence as well as cheerfulness; and in this was particularly suited to the disposition as well as the habits and necessities of her husband, who chose to have no care, if possible, of any worldly business.”

But there are other duties, of a still more tender and difficult nature, which none but a parent can adequately perform; and it was an unspeakable privilege to Mr. Edwards, now surrounded by a young and growing family, that when his duties to his people, especially in seasons like this, necessarily occupied his whole attention, he could safely commit his children to the wisdom and piety, the love and faithfulness, of their mother. Her views of the responsibility of parents were large and comprehensive. “She thought that, as a parent, she had great and important duties to do towards her children, before they were capable of government and instruction. For them, she constantly and earnestly prayed, and bore them on her heart before God, in all her secret and most solemn addresses to him; and that, even before they were born. The prospect of her becoming the mother of a rational immortal creature, which came into existence in an undone and infinitely dreadful state, was sufficient to lead her to bow before God daily, for his blessing on it—even redemption and eternal life by Jesus Christ. So that, through all the pain, labour, and sorrow, which attended her being the mother of children, she was in travail for them, that they might be born of God.”

She regularly prayed with her children, from a very early period, and, as there is the best reason to believe, with great earnestness and importunity. Being thoroughly sensible that, in many respects, the chief care of forming children by government and instruction naturally lies on mothers, as they are most with their children at an age when they commonly receive impressions that are permanent, and have great influence in forming the character for life, she was very careful to do her part in this important business. When she foresaw or met with any special difficulty in this matter, she was wont to apply to her husband for advice and assistance; and on such occasions, they would both attend to it as a matter of the utmost importance. She had an excellent way of governing her children: she knew how to make them regard and obey her



cheerfully, without loud angry words, much less, heavy blows. She seldom punished them; and in speaking to them used gentle and pleasant words. If any correction was necessary, she did not administer it in a passion; and when she had occasion to reprove and rebuke, she would do it in few words, without warmth and noise, and with all calmness and gentleness of mind. In her directions and reproofs in matters of importance, she would address herself to the reason of her children, that they might not only know her inclination and will, but at the same time be convinced of the reasonableness of it. She had need to speak but once; she was cheerfully obeyed; murmuring and answering again were not known among them. In their manners, they were uncommonly respectful to their parents. When their parents came into the room, they all rose instinctively from their seats, and never resumed them until their parents were seated; and when either parent was speaking, no matter with whom they had been conversing, they were all immediately silent and attentive. The kind and gentle treatment they received from their mother, while she strictly and punctiliously maintained her parental authority, seem naturally to beget and promote a filial respect and affection, and to lead them to a mild, tender treatment of each other. Quarrelling and contention, which too frequently take place among children, were in her family wholly unknown. She carefully observed the first appearance of resentment and ill will in her young children, towards any person whatever, and did not connive at it, as many who have the care of children do, but was careful to show her displeasure, and suppress it to the utmost; yet not by angry, wrathful words, which often provoke children to wrath, and stir up their irascible passions, rather than abate them. Her system of discipline was begun at a very early age, and it was her rule to resist the first, as well as every subsequent, exhibition of temper or disobedience in the child, however young, until its will was brought into submission to the will of its parents; wisely reflecting, that until a child will obey his parents, he can never be brought to obey God.

Fond as Mr. Edwards was of welcoming the friend and the stranger, and much as his house was a favourite place of resort, to ministers and others; it was absolutely necessary at all times, and peculiarly so in seasons of religious attention like this, that some one, well knowing how to perform the rites of hospitality, and to pay all the civilities and charities of life, should relieve him from these attentions, during those hours which were consecrated to his professional duties; and here, also, he could most advantageously avail himself of the assistance of Mrs. Edwards. Educated in the midst of polished life, familiar from childhood with the rules of decorum and good breeding, affable and easy in her manners, and governed by the feelings of liberality and benevolence, she was remarkable for her kindness to her friends, and to the visitants who resorted to Mr. Edwards; sparing no pains to make them welcome, and to provide for their convenience and comfort. She was also peculiarly kind to strangers who came to her house. By her sweet and winning manners and ready conversation, she soon became acquainted with them, and brought them to feel acquainted with herself; and showed such concern for their comfort, and so kindly offered what she thought they needed, that while her friendly attentions discovered at once that she knew the feelings of a stranger, they also made their way directly to his heart, and gaining his confidence, led him immediately to feel as if he were at home, in the midst of near and affectionate friends.

“She made it her rule to speak well of all, so far as she could with truth and justice to herself and others. She was not wont to dwell with delight on the imperfections and failings of any; and when she heard persons speaking ill of others, she would say what she thought she could with truth and justice in their excuse, or divert the obloquy, by mentioning those things that were commendable in them. Thus she was tender of every one’s character, even of those who injured and spoke evil of her; and carefully guarded against the too common vice of evil speaking and backbiting. She could bear injuries and reproach with great calmness, without any disposition to render evil for evil; but, on the contrary, was ready to pity and forgive those who appeared to be her enemies.” This course of conduct, steadily pursued, secured, in an unusual degree, the affection and confidence of those who knew her.

She proved, also, an invaluable auxiliary to Mr. Edwards, in the duties of his profession, not only by her excellent example, but by her active efforts in doing good. “She was,” says Dr. Hopkins, “eminent for her piety, and for experimental religion. Religious conversation was her delight; and, as far as propriety permitted, she promoted it in all companies. Her religious conversation showed at once her clear comprehension of spiritual and divine things, and the deep impression which they had made upon her mind.” It was not merely conversation *about* religion—about its truths, or duties, or its actual state—its doctrines or triumphs—or the character and conduct of its friends and ministers: it was religion itself;—that supreme love to God, to his kingdom and his glory, which, abounding in the heart, flows forth spontaneously, in the daily conversation and the daily life.

The friends of vital Christianity, those who delighted in its great and essential truths, who showed its practical influence on their lives, and who were most engaged in promoting its prosperity, were her chosen friends and intimates. With such persons she would converse freely and confidentially, telling them of the exercises of her own heart, and the happiness she had experienced in a life of religion, for their encouragement in the christian course. Her mind appeared to attend to spiritual and divine things constantly, on all occasions, and in every condition and business of life. Secret prayer was her uniform practice, and appeared to be the source of daily enjoyment. She was a constant attendant on public worship, and always exhibited the deepest solemnity and reverence in the house of God. She always prized highly the privilege of social worship, not only in the family, but in the private meetings of christians. Such meetings, on the part of females *only*, for prayer and religious conversation, have at times been objected to, as, both in their nature and results, inconsistent with the true delicacy of the sex. Her own judgment, formed deliberately, and in coincidence with that of her husband, was in favour of these meetings; and accordingly, she regularly encouraged and promoted them, during the revival of religion of which we have been speaking, as well as at other times; attending on them herself, and not declining to take her proper share in the performance of their various duties. In this way, she exerted an important influence among her own sex, and over the young; an influence always salutary in promoting union, ardour, and spiritual-mindedness, but especially powerful in seasons of uncommon attention to religion.

One circumstance, which served essentially to extend and increase this influence, was the fact, that her religion had nothing gloomy or forbidding in its character. Unusual as it was in degree, it was eminently the religion of joy. On

the testimony of Mr. Edwards, it possessed this character, even when she was a little child of about five or six years of age, as well as customarily in after-life. At the commencement of this remarkable work of grace, she appears to have dedicated herself anew to God, with more entire devotion of heart to his service and glory, than she had ever been conscious of before; and during its progress, as well as afterwards, she experienced a degree of religious enjoyment, not previously known to herself, and not often vouchsafed to others. But on this subject, we may have occasion to speak more fully hereafter.

What, during this interesting work of grace, was the state of Mr. Edwards's own feelings on the subject of religion, must be gathered chiefly from his sermons written at the time, from the "Narrative of Surprising Conversions," and from that high character for moral excellence, which he enjoyed not only among his own people, but among the ministers. Yet the remainder of his Personal Narrative, extending from his settlement, until a date somewhat later than this, and of course including this period, presents a general view of the subject, in a high degree interesting, and most proper to be inserted here.

#### REMAINDER OF PERSONAL NARRATIVE.

"Since I came to Northampton, I have often had sweet complacency in God, in views of his glorious perfections, and of the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me a glorious and lovely Being, chiefly on account of his holiness. The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all his attributes. The doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty, and free grace, in showing mercy to whom he would show mercy; and man's absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me a great part of his glory. It has often been my delight to approach God, and adore him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of him.

"I have loved the doctrines of the gospel; they have been to my soul like green pastures. The gospel has seemed to me the richest treasure; the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ has appeared, in a general way, glorious and excellent, most pleasant and most beautiful. It has often seemed to me, that it would, in a great measure, spoil heaven, to receive it in any other way. That text has often been affecting and delightful to me, Isa. xxxii. 2. 'A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest,' &c.

"It has often appeared to me delightful, to be united to Christ; to have him for my Head, and to be a member of his body; also to have Christ for my Teacher and Prophet. I very often think with sweetness, and longings, and pantings of soul, of being a little child, taking hold of Christ, to be led by him through the wilderness of this world. That text, Matt. xviii. 3, has often been sweet to me, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children,' &c. I love to think of coming to Christ, to receive salvation of him, poor in spirit, and quite empty of self, humbly exalting him alone; cut off entirely from my own root, in order to grow into and out of Christ: to have God in Christ to be all in all; and to live, by faith on the Son of God, a life of humble, unfeigned confidence in him. That scripture has often been sweet to me, Ps. cxv. 1. 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and

for thy truth's sake.' And those words of Christ, Luke x. 21, 'In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' That sovereignty of God, which Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me worth of such joy; and that rejoicing seemed to show the excellency of Christ, and of what spirit he was.

"Sometimes, only mentioning a single word caused my heart to burn within me; or only seeing the name of Christ, or the name of some attribute of God. And God has appeared glorious to me, on account of the Trinity. It has made me have exalting thoughts of God, that he subsists in three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced have not been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good estate; but in a direct view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own estate; it seems, at such times, a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious, pleasant object I behold without me, to turn my eye in upon myself, and my own good estate.

"My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. The histories of the past advancement of Christ's kingdom have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing, in all my reading, has been, to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted. And when I have expected, in my reading, to come to any such thing, I have rejoiced in the prospect, all the way as I read. And my mind has been much entertained and delighted with the scripture promises and prophecies, which relate to the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

"I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fulness of Christ, and his meetness and suitableness as a Saviour; whereby he has appeared to me, far above all, the chief of ten thousands. His blood and atonement have appeared sweet, and his righteousness sweet; which was always accompanied with ardency of spirit; and inward strugglings and breathings, and groanings that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself, and swallowed up in Christ.

"Once, as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception—which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have several other times had views very much of the same nature, and which have had the same effects.

"I have, many times, had a sense of the glory of the Third Person in the Trinity, and his office as Sanctifier; in his holy operations, communicating di-

vine light and life to the soul. God in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full, and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul; pouring forth itself in sweet communications; like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life. And I have sometimes an affecting sense of the excellency of the word of God as a word of life; as the light of life; a sweet, excellent, life-giving word; accompanied with a thirsting after that word, that it might dwell richly in my heart.

“Often, since I lived in this town, I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently to such a degree, as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together; so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness, and the badness of my heart, than ever I had before my conversion<sup>3</sup>. It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind, of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time: and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell. When others, that have come to talk with me about their soul-concerns, have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, by saying, that it seemed to them, that they were as bad as the devil himself; I thought their expressions seemed exceeding faint and feeble, to represent my wickedness.

“My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often, for these many years, these expressions are in my mind, and in my mouth, ‘Infinite upon infinite—Infinite upon infinite!’ When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss, infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself; far beyond the sight of everything, but the eye of sovereign grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth. And yet, it seems to me that my conviction of sin is exceedingly small and faint; it is enough to amaze me, that I have no more sense of my sin. I know certainly, that I have very little sense of my sinfulness. When I have had turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I though I knew at the time, that my repentance was nothing to my sin.

“I have greatly longed of late for a broken heart, and to lie low before God; and, when I ask for humility, I cannot bear the thoughts of being no more humble than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them, yet it would be a vile self-exaltation in me, not to be the lowest in humility of all mankind. Others speak of their longing to be ‘humbled to the dust;’ that may be a proper expression for them, but I always think of myself, that I ought, and it is an expression that has long been natural for me to use in prayer, ‘to lie infinitely low before God.’ And it is affecting to think, how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit, left in my heart.

“I have a much greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God’s grace and strength, and mere good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The very thought of any joy arising in me, on any consideration of my own amiableness, performances, or experiences, or any goodness of heart or life, is nauseous and detestable to me. And yet, I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting forth its head continually, everywhere, all around me.

“Though it seems to me, that in some respects I was a far better Christian, for two or three years after my first conversion, than I am now; and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure; yet of late years, I have had a more full and constant sense of the absolute sovereignty of God, and a delight in that sovereignty; and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a Mediator revealed in the gospel. On one Saturday night, in particular, I had such a discovery of the excellency of the gospel above all other doctrines that I could not but say to myself, ‘This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine;’ and of Christ, ‘This is my chosen Prophet.’ It appeared sweet, beyond all expression, to follow Christ, and to be taught, and enlightened, and instructed by him; to learn of him, and live to him. Another Saturday night, (*Jan. 1739,*) I had such a sense, how sweet and blessed a thing it was to walk in the way of duty; to do that which was right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God; that it caused me to break forth into a kind of loud weeping, which held me some time, so that I was forced to shut myself up, and fasten the doors. I could not but, as it were, cry out, ‘How happy are they, who do that which is right in the sight of God! They are blessed indeed, *they* are the happy ones!’ I had, at the same time, a very affecting sense, how meet and suitable it was that God should govern the world, and order all things according to his own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigned, and that his will was done.”

## FOOTNOTES

1 Among those who opposed Mr. Edwards on this occasion, were several members of a family, in a neighbouring town, nearly connected with his own, and possessing, from its numbers, wealth, and respectability, a considerable share of influence. Their religious sentiments differed widely from his, and their opposition to him, in the course which he now pursued, became direct and violent. As his defence of his own opinions was regarded as triumphant, they appear to have felt, in some degree, the shame and mortification of a defeat; and their opposition to Mr. Edwards, though he resorted to every honourable method of conciliation, became, on their part, a settled personal hostility. It is probable, that their advice to Mr. Edwards, to refrain from the controversy, and particularly, not to publish his sentiments with regard to it, was given somewhat categorically, and with a full expectation that he, young as he was, would comply with it. His refusal so to do, was an offence not to be forgiven. We shall have occasion to recur to this subject again.

2 Of the conversion of this child, whose name was Phoebe Bartlett, a most minute and interesting account is given in the “Narrative of Surprising Conversions.” Dr. Edwards, under date of March 30, 1789, in a letter to Dr. Ryland, says, “In answer to your inquiry, in a former letter, concerning Phoebe Bartlett, I have to inform you that she is yet still living, and has uniformly maintained the character of a true convert.”

3 Our author does not say that he *had* more wickedness, and badness of heart, since his conversion, than he had before; but that he had a greater *sense* thereof. Thus a blind man may *have* his garden *full* of noxious weeds, and yet not *see* or *be sensible* of them. But should the garden be in great part cleared of these, and furnished with many beautiful and salutary plants; and supposing the owner now to have the power of discriminating objects of sight; in this case, he would *have less*, but he *see* and have a *sense* of more. And thus it was that St. Paul, though greatly freed from sin, yet *saw* and *felt* himself as “the chief of sinners.” To which may be added, that the better the organ, and clearer the light may be, the stronger will be the *sense* excited by sin or holiness.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected

by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

**CHAPTER VIII.**

“NARRATIVE OF SURPRISING CONVERSIONS”—HIS VIEWS OF REVIVALS OF RELIGION—REMARKABLE PROVIDENCE AT NORTHAMPTON—“FIVE DISCOURSES”—MR. BELLAMY A RESIDENT OF HIS FAMILY—HISTORY OF REDEMPTION—EXTRA-PAROCIAL LABOURS OF MR. EDWARDS—SERMON AT ENFIELD—FUNERAL SERMON ON THE REV. W. WILLIAMS.

ON the 30th of May, 1735, Mr. Edwards, in answer to a letter from the Rev. Dr. Colman, of Boston, wrote a succinct account of the work of Divine grace at Northampton; which, being published by him, and forwarded to the Rev. Dr. Watts and the Rev. Dr. Guyse, in London, those gentlemen discovered so much interest in the facts recited, detailing them on several occasions before large assemblies, that the author, at the request of his correspondent, was induced to prepare a much fuller statement, in a letter to the same gentleman, bearing date, Nov. 6, 1736. This was published in London, under the title of “Narrative of Surprising Conversions,” with an Introduction by Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse; and was read very extensively, and with very lively emotions, by Christians in England. There, this mark of Divine grace was regarded, not only with very deep interest, but with surprise and wonder: nothing like it, for its extent and power, having been witnessed in that country, for many previous years. Those excellent men observe, “We are abundantly satisfied of the truth of this narrative, not only from the character of the writer, but from the concurrent testimony of many other persons in New England; *for this thing was not done in a corner*. There is a spot of ground, as we are informed, wherein there are twelve or fourteen towns and villages, chiefly situate in the county of Hampshire, near the banks of the river Connecticut, within the compass of thirty miles, wherein it pleased God, two years ago, to display his sovereign mercy, in the conversion of a great multitude of souls, in a short space of time; turning them from a formal, cold, and careless profession of Christianity, to the lively exercise of every christian grace, and the powerful practice of our holy religion. The great God has seemed to act over again the miracle of Gideon’s fleece, which was plentifully watered with the dew of heaven, while



the rest of the earth round about it was dry, and had no such remarkable blessing.

“There has been a great and just complaint, for many years, among the ministers and churches of Old England, and in New, (except about the time of the late earthquake there,) that the work of conversion goes on very slowly, that the Spirit of God, in his saving influences, is much withdrawn from the ministrations of his word; and there are few that receive the ministrations of the gospel, with any eminent success upon their hearts. But as the gospel is the same divine instrument of grace still, as ever it was in the days of the apostles, so our ascended Saviour, now and then, takes a special occasion to manifest the divinity of this gospel, by a plentiful effusion of his Spirit where it is preached: then sinners are turned into saints in numbers, and there is a new face of things spread over a town or country. The wilderness and the solitary places are glad, the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose; and surely, concerning this instance, we may add, that they have seen the glory of the Lord there, and the excellency of our God; they have seen the outgoings of God our King in his sanctuary.”

This work was the first of a series of publications from Mr. Edwards, intended to explain the nature and effects of saving conversion, and the nature of a genuine work of the Holy Spirit in a community. As a religious narrative, it is one of the most interesting I have hitherto met with; having all that exactness of description and vividness of colouring, which attend the account of an eyewitness, when drawn up, not from recollection, but in the very passing of the scenes which he describes. It proved a most useful and seasonable publication. For a long period, revivals of religion had been chiefly unknown, both in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe. The church at large had generally ceased to expect events of this nature, regarding them as confined to apostolic times, and to the ultimate triumphs of Christianity; and appear to have entertained very imperfect views of their causes, their nature, and the manner in which they ought to be regarded. In no previous publication had these important subjects been adequately explained. The particular event, which Mr. Edwards had the privilege of recording, viewed as a remarkable work of Divine grace, has, to this day, scarcely a parallel in the modern annals of the church. His own views of these subjects were alike removed from the apathy of unbelief, and the wildness of enthusiasm; they were derived, not merely from his familiarity with the facts, but from just conceptions of the intellectual and moral faculties of man, and from a thorough knowledge of the word of God. And while the “Narrative of Surprising Conversions” served to inspire the church at large with a new and higher kind of faith, and hope, and zeal, it also proved a safe directory of their views and their conduct. In a short time it was extensively circulated, both in England and Scotland; and in the latter country, as we shall soon have occasion to remark, its diffusion was speedily followed by salutary and important consequences.

It may not be improper to insert in this place the following letter of Mr. Edwards, giving an account of a surprising and alarming providence, which attended the people of Northampton, in the early part of 1737.

*“Northampton, March 19, 1737.*

“We in this town were, the last Lord’s day, (March 13th,) the spectators, and many of us the subjects, of one of the most amazing instances of Divine preservation, that perhaps was ever known in the world. Our meeting-house is old and decayed, so that we have been for some time building a new one, which is yet unfinished. It has been observed of late, that the house we have hitherto met in, has gradually spread at the bottom; the sills and walls giving way, especially in the foreside, by reason of the weight of timber at top pressing on the braces, that are inserted into the posts and beams of the house. It has done so more than ordinarily this spring: which seems to have been occasioned by the heaving of the ground, through the extreme frosts of the winter past, and its now settling again on that side which is next the sun, by the spring thaws. By this means, the underpinning has been considerably disordered, which people were not sensible of, till the ends of the joists, which bore up the front gallery, were drawn off from the girts on which they rested, by the walls giving way. So that in the midst of the public exercise in the forenoon, soon after the beginning of the sermon, the whole gallery—full of people, with all the seats and timbers, suddenly, and without any warning—sunk, and fell down, with the most amazing noise, upon the heads of those that sat under, to the astonishment of the congregation. The house was filled with dolorous shrieking and crying; and nothing else was expected than to find many people dead, or dashed to pieces.

“The gallery, in falling, seemed to break and sink first in the middle; so that those who were upon it were thrown together in heaps before the front door. But the whole was so sudden, that many of those who fell, knew nothing what it was, at the time, that had befallen them. Others in the congregation thought it had been an amazing clap of thunder. The falling gallery seemed to be broken all to pieces before it got down; so that some who fell with it, as well as those who were under, were buried in the ruins; and were found pressed under heavy loads of timber, and could do nothing to help themselves.

“But so mysteriously and wonderfully did it come to pass, that every life was preserved; and though many were greatly bruised, and their flesh torn, yet there is not, as I can understand, one bone broken, or so much as put out of joint, among them all. Some, who were thought to be almost dead at first, are greatly recovered; and but one young woman seems yet to remain in dangerous circumstances, by an inward hurt in her breast; but of late there appears more hope of her recovery.

“None can give an account, or conceive, by what means people’s lives and limbs should be thus preserved, when so great a multitude were thus immidentally exposed. It looked as though it was impossible, but that great numbers must instantly be crushed to death, or dashed in pieces. It seems unreasonable to ascribe it to any thing else but the care of Providence, in disposing the motions of every piece of timber, and the precise place of safety where every one should sit and fall, when none were in any capacity to care for their own preservation. The preservation seems to be most wonderful, with respect to the women and children in the middle alley, under the gallery, where it came down first, and with greatest force, and where there was nothing to break the force of the falling weight.

“Such an event may be a sufficient argument of a Divine providence over the lives of men. We thought ourselves called on to set apart a day to be spent in the solemn worship of God, to humble ourselves under such a rebuke of

God upon us, in time of public service in his house, by so dangerous and surprising an accident; and to praise his name for so wonderful, and as it were miraculous, a preservation. The last Wednesday was kept by us to that end; and a mercy, in which the hand of God is so remarkably evident, may be well worthy to affect the hearts of all who hear it.”

In 1738, the “Narrative of Surprising Conversions” was republished in Boston, with a preface by four of the senior ministers of that town.

To it were prefixed five discourses, on the following subjects:

I. Justification by Faith alone. Rom. iv. 5.

II. Pressing into the Kingdom of God. Luke xvi. 16.

III. Ruth’s Resolution. Ruth i. 16.

IV. The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners. Rom. iii. 19.

V. The Excellency of Jesus Christ. Rev. v. 5, 6.

The first four of these discourses were delivered during the revival of religion, and were published at the earnest desire of those to whom they were preached. In fixing on the particular discourses necessary to make up the volume, he was guided by the choice of the people. “What has determined them in this choice,” he observes, “is the experience of special benefit to their souls from *these discourses*. Their desire to have them in their hands, from the press, has long manifested, and often expressed to me; their earnestness in it is evident from this, that though it be a year to them of the greatest charge that ever has been, by reason of the expense of building a new meeting-house, yet they chose rather to be at this additional expense now, though it be very considerable, than to have it delayed another year.” In publishing the discourse on “Justification,” he was also influenced by the urgent request of several ministers, who were present when a part of it was delivered, and whose opinion and advice he thought deserving of great respect. This discourse, though when first written of a much less size than as it is printed, was preached at two successive public lectures, in the latter part of 1734. It was a time, when the minds of the people, in all that section of country, were very much agitated by a controversy on that very subject; when some were brought to doubt of that way of acceptance with God, which they had been taught from their infancy was the only way; and when many were engaged in looking more thoroughly into the grounds of those doctrines in which they had been educated; that this discourse seemed to be remarkably blessed, not only in establishing the judgments of men in this truth, but in engaging their hearts in a more earnest pursuit of justification, by faith in the righteousness of Christ. “*At that time*,” says the author, “while I was greatly reproached for defending this doctrine in the pulpit, and just upon my suffering a very open abuse for it, God’s work wonderfully broke forth among us, and souls began to flock to Christ, as the Saviour in whose righteousness alone they hoped to be justified. So that this was the doctrine, on which this work, in its beginning, was founded, as it evidently was in the whole progress of it.” He regarded these facts as a remarkable testimony of God’s approbation of the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

This discourse, which is really a treatise of more than one hundred closely printed pages, exhibited the subject in a light so new, clear, and convincing, and so effectually removed the difficulties with which, till then, it was supposed to be attended, that on its first publication it met a very welcome reception, and from that time to the present has been regarded as the common text-

book of students in theology. It would not be easy to find another treatise on the same subject, equally able and conclusive.

There are individuals, who, having received their theological views from the strictest sect of a given class of theologians, regard the sermon on "Pressing into the kingdom of God," as inconsistent with those principles of moral agency, which are established in the treatise on the "Freedom of the Will;" and charitably impute the error to the imperfect views of the author at this period. While a member of college, however, Mr. Edwards, in investigating the subject of *Power*, as he was reading the Essay of Locke, came to the settled conclusion, that men have *in the physical sense*, the power of repenting and turning to God. A further examination might perhaps evince, that the points in question are less consistent with some peculiar views of theology, of a more modern date, than with any, logically deducible from the treatise on the "Will." The sermon itself, like the rest, has uncommon ardour, unction, and solemnity, and was one of the most useful which he delivered.

The sermon on the "Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners," in the language of the text, literally *stops the mouth* of every reader, and compels him, as he stands before his Judge, to admit, if he does not feel, the justice of his sentence. I know not where to find, in any language, a discourse so well adapted to strip the impenitent sinner of every excuse, to convince him of his guilt, and to bring him low before the justice and holiness of God. According to the estimate of Mr. Edwards, it was far the most powerful and effectual of his discourses; and we scarcely know of any other sermon which has been favoured with equal success.

The sermon on the "Excellency of Christ," was selected by Mr. Edwards himself, partly because he had been importuned to publish it by individuals in another town, in whose hearing it was occasionally preached; and partly because he thought that a discourse on such an evangelical subject, would properly follow others that were chiefly awakening; and that something of the excellency of the *Saviour* was proper to succeed those things, that were to show the necessity of *salvation*. No one who reads it will hesitate to believe, that it was most happily selected. I have met with no sermon hitherto, so admirably adapted to the circumstances of a sinner, when, on the commencement of his repentance, he renounces every other object of trust, but the righteousness of Christ. Taking the whole volume, as thus printed, the Narrative and the Five Discourses, we suppose it to have been one of the most effectual, in promoting the work of salvation, which has hitherto issued from the press.

The sixth child, and eldest son, of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards was born July 25, 1738, and after *his* father was baptized by the name of Timothy.

About this period, Mr. Joseph Bellamy, afterwards the Rev. Dr. Bellamy of Bethlem, Connecticut, went to Northampton to pursue his theological studies under Mr. Edwards, and resided for a considerable period in his family. The very high respect which he cherished for the eminent talents and piety of Mr. Edwards, and which drew him to Northampton, was reciprocated by the latter; and a friendship commenced between them, which terminated only with life.<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning of March, 1739, Mr. Edwards commenced a series of sermons from Isaiah li. 8. "For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." The eight first were delivered

during that month, the eight next in the two following months, and the whole series, thirty in all, was completed before the close of August. After explaining the text, he derives from it the following doctrine: "The work of redemption is a work, which carries on from the fall of man to the end of the world." The subject was one in which Mr. Edwards felt the deepest interest; but he appears never to have repeated the series of discourses to his people. What his ultimate intentions were, we may learn, however, from the following extract of a letter, written by him many years afterwards: "I have had on my mind and heart (which I long ago began, not with any view to publication) a great work, which I call *a History of the Work of Redemption*, a body of divinity in an entire new method, being thrown into the form of a history, considering the affair of christian theology, as the whole of it, in each part, stands in reference to the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ, which I suppose is to be the grand design of all God's designs, and the *summum* and *ultimum* of all God's operations and decrees, particularly considering all parts of the grand scheme in their historical order;—The order of their existence, or their being brought forth to view, in the course of divine dispensations, or the wonderful series of successive acts and events; beginning from eternity and descending from thence to the great work and successive dispensations of the infinitely wise God in time, considering the chief events coming to pass in the church of God, and revolutions in the world of mankind, affecting the state of the church and the affair of redemption, which we have an account of in history or prophecy, till at last we come to the general resurrection, last judgment, and consummation of all things, when it shall be said, *It is done*, I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and *the End*; concluding my work, with the consideration of that perfect state of things, which shall be finally settled to last for eternity.—This history will be carried on with regard to all three worlds,—heaven, earth, and hell; considering the connected successive events and alterations in each, so far as the Scriptures give any light; introducing all parts of divinity in that order which is most scriptural and most natural; which is a method which appears to me the most beautiful and entertaining, wherein every doctrine will appear to the greatest advantage, in the brightest light, in the most striking manner, showing the admirable contexture and harmony of the whole."

From this it is obvious, that he long cherished the intention of re-writing and enlarging the work, and of turning it into a regular treatise; but this design he never accomplished. We shall have occasion to allude to this work hereafter.

The sixth daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards was born June 24, 1740, and named Susannah.

The circumstances which caused the remarkable attention to religion, which began in 1734, to decline, were chiefly local in their nature, and limited in their influence, either to Northampton, or to the county of Hampshire. The consequence was, that it continued to exist, in various sections of the country, to the east, the south, and the west, during the five following years. By the astonishing work of grace at Northampton, an impulse had been given to the churches of this whole western world, which could not soon be lost. The history of that event, having been extensively circulated, had produced a general conviction in the minds of Christians, that the preaching of the gospel might be attended by effects, not less surprising, than those which followed it in apostolic times. This conviction produced an important change in the views, and

conduct, both of ministers and churches. The style of preaching was altered: it became, extensively, more direct and pungent, and more adapted to awaken the feelings and convince the conscience. The prayers of good men, both in public and private, indicated more intense desires for the prevalence of religion, and a stronger expectation that the word of God would be attended with an immediate blessing. As the natural result of such a change, revivals of religion were witnessed in numerous villages in New Jersey, Connecticut, and the eastern parts of New England; and even where this was not the case, religion was so extensively and unusually the object of attention, during the period specified, that the church at large seemed preparing for events of a more interesting nature, than any that had yet been witnessed.

In consequence of the high reputation, which Mr. Edwards had acquired as a powerful and successful preacher, and as a safe and wise counsellor to the anxious and inquiring, he received frequent invitations from churches, near and more remote, to come and labour among them for a little period; and with the consent of his people, (his own pulpit always being supplied,) he often went forth on these missionary tours, and found an ample reward in the abundant success which crowned his labours. In this, his example was soon followed by several distinguished ministers in Connecticut and New Jersey. In one of these excursions, he spent some little time at Enfield in Connecticut, where he preached, on the 8th of July, 1741, the well-known sermon, entitled, "*Sinners in the hands of an angry God*," from Deut. xxxii. 35.; which was the cause of an immediate and general revival of religion throughout the place. It was soon afterwards published.

On the 2d of September following, he preached the sermon, entitled, "The Sorrows of the Bereaved spread before Jesus," at the funeral of his uncle, the Rev. William Williams of Hatfield, a gentleman highly respected for his sound understanding, piety, and faithfulness as a minister. This sermon was immediately afterwards published.

## FOOTNOTES

1 Mr. Bellamy was settled at Bethlem in the spring of 1740, in the midst of a general attention to religion, on the part of the people of that place.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected

by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

**CHAPTER IX.**

COMMENCEMENT OF A SECOND GREAT REVIVAL OF RELIGION, IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 1740—VISIT OF MR. WHITEFIELD AT NORTHAMPTON—IMPULSES—JUDGING OF THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF OTHERS—LETTER TO MR. WHEELOCK—GREAT EFFECTS OF A PRIVATE LECTURE OF MR. E.—LETTER TO HIS DAUGHTER—LETTER TO A YOUNG LADY IN CONNECTICUT—LAY PREACHING—LETTER OF REV. G. TENNENT—SERMON AT NEW-HAVEN—"DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF A WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD"—PREFACES BY MR. COOPER AND MR. WILLISON—MR. SAMUEL HOPKINS.

WHILE Mr. Edwards was thus occasionally serving his Divine Master abroad, he found, also, that his labours at home began to be attended with similar success. A great reformation in morals, as well as religion, had been the consequence of the preceding revival of religion. Associations for prayer and social religion had been regularly kept up, and a few instances of awakening and conversion had all along been known, even at the season of the greatest stupidity. In the spring of 1740, there was a perceptible alteration for the better; and the influence of the Spirit of God was most obvious on the minds of the people, particularly on those of the young, in causing greater seriousness and solemnity, and in prompting them to make religion far more generally the subject of conversation. Improperities of conduct, too often allowed, were more generally avoided; greater numbers resorted to Mr. Edwards to converse with him respecting their salvation; and, in particular individuals, there appeared satisfactory evidence of an entire change of character. This state of things continued through the summer and autumn.

On the evening of Thursday, the 16th of October, 1740, Mr. Whitefield came to Northampton to see Mr. Edwards, and to converse with him respecting the work of God in 1735, and remained there until the morning of the 20th. In this interval he preached five sermons, adapted to the circumstances of the town, reproving the backslidings of some, the obstinate impenitence of others, and summoning all, by the mercies with which the town had been distinguished, to return to God. His visit was followed by an awakening among pro-

fessors of religion, and soon afterwards by a deep concern among the young, and there were some instances of hopeful conversion. This increased during the winter; and in the spring of 1741 religion became the object of general attention.

On Monday, Mr. Edwards, with the Rev. Mr. Hopkins of West Springfield, his brother-in-law, and several other gentlemen, accompanied Mr. Whitefield on the east side of the river as far as East Windsor, to the house of his father, the Rev. Timothy Edwards. While they were thus together, he took an opportunity to converse with Mr. Whitefield alone, at some length, on the subject of *impulses*, and assigned the reasons which he had to think, that he gave too much heed to such things. Mr. Whitefield received it kindly, but did not seem inclined to have much conversation on the subject, and in the time of it, did not appear convinced by anything which he heard. He also took occasion in the presence of others, to converse with Mr. Whitefield at some length, about his too customary practice of *judging other persons to be unconverted*; examined the scriptural warrant for such judgments, and expressed his own decided disapprobation of the practice. Mr. Whitefield, at the same time, mentioned to Mr. Edwards his design of bringing over a number of young men from England, into New Jersey and Pennsylvania, to be ordained by the two Mr. Tennents. Their whole interview was an exceedingly kind and affectionate one; yet Mr. Edwards supposed that Mr. Whitefield regarded him somewhat less as an intimate and confidential friend, than he would have done, had he not opposed him in two favourite points of his own practice, for which no one can be at a loss to perceive that he could find no scriptural justification. Each however regarded the other with great affection and esteem, as a highly favoured servant of God; and Mr. Edwards, as we shall soon see, speaks of Mr. Whitefield's visit to Northampton in terms of the warmest approbation.

In the month of May, a private lecture of Mr. Edwards's was attended with very powerful effects on the audience, and ultimately upon the young of both sexes, and on children throughout the town; and during the summer, and the early part of the autumn, there was a glorious progress in the work of God on the hearts of sinners in conviction and conversion, and great numbers appeared to become the real disciples of Christ.

Among the ministers, who at this period occasionally left their own congregations, and went forth as labourers into the common field to gather in the harvest, one of those who were most distinguished for their activity and success, was the Rev. Mr. Wheelock, of Lebanon, afterwards the president of Dartmouth college. In the following letter from Mr. Edwards to this gentleman, he urges him to visit Scantic, a feeble settlement in the northern part of his father's parish: the inhabitants of which were too remote to attend public worship regularly at East Windsor, and yet too few and feeble to maintain it themselves.

“Northampton, June 9, 1741.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“The special occasion of my now writing to you is a desire I have of two things; one is, that you and your brother Pomeroy would go to Scantic, in my father's parish, and preach there as often as the people will be willing to hear you, and continue so doing as long as the concerns of your own parishes will allow of your being absent. You know the wretched circumstances of that so-



ciety; and if ever they are healed, I believe it must be by a reviving and prevailing of true religion among them. By all that I can understand, they are wholly dead, in this extraordinary day of God's gracious visitation. You have lately been so remarkable blessed elsewhere, that I cannot but hope you would have success there also. I have written to my father, to inform him that I have desired this of you.

"Another thing that I desire of you is, that you would come up hither and help us, both you and Mr. Pomeroy. There has been a reviving of religion among us of late; but your labours have been much more remarkably blessed than mine. Other ministers, I have heard, have shut up their pulpits against you; but here I engage you shall find one open. May God send you hither, with the like blessing as he has sent you to some other places; and may your coming be a means to humble me, for my barrenness and unprofitableness, and a means of my instruction and enlivening. I want an opportunity to concert measures with you, for the advancement of the kingdom and glory of our Redeemer. Please to communicate what I write to Mr. Pomeroy, and give my service to him. I desire the prayers of you both, that God will give me more of that holy spirit, and happy success, with which you are replenished.

I am, Dear Sir,  
your unworthy brother and fellow-labourer,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS."

As very few of Mr. Edwards's letters to his own family are preserved, it is proper to give those few to the reader, even when they are not otherwise interesting, in order to exhibit his true character, as an affectionate and faithful christian father. The following was addressed to his eldest daughter, in her thirteenth year, while residing with her aunt, Mrs. Huntington, at Lebanon.

*Northampton, June 25th, 1741.*

To Miss Sarah Edwards, Lebanon.

MY DEAR CHILD,

Your mother has received two letters from you, since you went away. We rejoice to hear of your welfare, and of the flourishing state of religion in Lebanon. I hope you will well improve the great advantage God is thereby putting into your hands, for the good of your own soul. You have very weak and infirm health, and I am afraid are always like to have; and it may be, are not to be long-lived; and while you do live, are not like to enjoy so much of the comforts of this life as others do, by reason of your want of health; and therefore, if you have no better portion, will be miserable indeed. But, if your soul prospers, you will be a happy, blessed person, whatever becomes of your body. I wish you much of the presence of Christ, and of communion with him, and that you might live so as to give him honour, in the place where you are, by an amiable behaviour towards all.

Your mother would have you go on with your work, if you can, and she would be glad if your aunt would set you to work something of hers, though you do but little in a day. She would have you send word by Mr. Wheelock, who I suppose will come up the next week, or the week after, whether you are well enough to make lace: if you are, she will send you a lace and bobbins.

The flourishing of religion in this town, and in these parts of the country, has rather increased since you went away. Your mother joins with me in giving her love to you, and to your uncle and aunt. Your sisters give their love to you, and their duty to them. The whole family is glad, when we hear from you. Recommending you to the continual care and mercy of heaven, I remain your loving father,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

Some time in the course of the year, a young lady, residing at S —, in 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.

Letter addressed to a Young Lady at S —, Conn. in the year 1741.

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

As you desired me to send you, in writing, some directions how to conduct yourself in your christian course, I would now answer your request. The sweet remembrance of the great things I have lately seen at S —, inclines me to do anything in my power, to contribute to the spiritual joy and prosperity of God’s people there.

1. I would advise you to keep up as great a strife and earnestness in religion, as if you knew yourself to be in a state of nature, and were seeking conversion. We advise persons under conviction, 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 so; 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 dark, and have ‘pierced themselves through with many sorrows;’ whereas, if they had done as the apostle did, (Phil. iii. 12-14.) their path would have been ‘as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.’

2. Do not 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. Pray that your eyes may be opened, that you may receive sight, that you may know yourself, and be brought to God’s footstool; 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. Those who have most of these things, have need still to pray for them; for there is so much blindness and hardness, 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 bringing them out of darkness into God’s marvellous light, and be a kind of new conversion and resurrection from the dead. There are very few requests that are proper for an impenitent man, that are not also, in some sense, proper for the godly.

3. When you hear a sermon, hear for yourself. Though what is spoken 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, 'In what respect is this 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 do not 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 spirit, and his injuriousness to the renewed; humbling 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. xvi. 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.'

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 to look upon the faithfulness of Christ, in unchangeably continuing his loving-kindness, notwithstanding all your great unworthiness since your conversion.

6. Be always greatly abased for your remaining sin, and never think that you lie low enough for it; but yet be not 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, the merit of whose righteousness, and the greatness of whose love and faithfulness, infinitely overtop the highest mountains of our sins.

7. When you engage in the duty of prayer, or come to the Lord's supper, or attend any other duty of divine worship, come to Christ as Mary Magdalen<sup>1</sup> did; (Luke vii. 37, 38.) come, and cast yourself 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 viper that is in the heart, the greatest disturber of the soul's peace, and of sweet communion with Christ: it was the first sin committed, and lies lowest in the foundation of Satan's whole building, and is with the greatest difficulty rooted out, and is the most hidden, secret, and deceitful of all lusts, and often creeps insensibly into the midst of religion, even, sometimes, under the disguise of humility itself.

9. That you may pass a correct judgment concerning yourself, always look upon those as the best discoveries, and the best comforts, that have most of these two effects: those that make you least and lowest, and most like a child; and those that 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, in dark and dull frames of mind, it is proper to review your past experience; but do not consume too much time and strength in this way: 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, will do more toward scattering clouds of darkness in one minute, than examining old experience, by the best marks that can be given, through a whole year.

11. When the exercise of grace is low, and corruption prevails, and by that means fear prevails; do not desire to have fear cast out any other way, than by the reviving and prevailing of love in the heart: by this, fear will be effectually expelled, as darkness in a room vanishes away, when the pleasant beams of the sun are let into it.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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 prayer and fasting 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 the circumstances and aggravations attending them, and spreading all the abominations of your heart very particularly, and fully as possible, before him.

15. Do not let the adversaries of the cross have occasion to reproach religion on your account. How holily should the children of God, the redeemed and the beloved of the Son of God, behave themselves. Therefore, ‘walk as children of the light, and of the day,’ and ‘adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour;’ and especially, abound in what are called the christian virtues, and make you like the Lamb of God: be meek and lowly of heart, and full of pure, heavenly, and humble love to all; 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.

16. 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 robes of his righteousness.

17. Pray much for the ministers and the church of God; especially, that he would carry on his glorious work which he has now begun, till the world shall be full of his glory.”

About this period, a considerable number of lay members of the church began, in various parts of New England, to hold religious meetings, and to preach and exhort in the manner of ministers. They were usually men of worth, and desirous of doing good; but having much zeal, and little knowledge, and often but little discretion, the church, at that period, had certainly very little reason to rejoice in their labours. The following letter of the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, written probably in the autumn of 1741, explains his own views on this subject.<sup>2</sup>

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I rejoice to hear that my poor labours have been of any service to any in New England. All glory be to the great and glorious God, when out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, he is pleased sometimes to ordain praise. I rejoice to hear the progress of God's work among you, this last summer and that there are any appearances of its continuance: Blessed be God, dear brother! As to the subject you mention of *laymen being sent out to exhort and to teach*, supposing them to be real converts, I cannot but think, if it be encouraged and continued, it will be of dreadful consequence to the church's peace and soundness in the faith. I will not gainsay but that private persons may be of service to the church of God by private, humble, fraternal reproof, and exhortations; and no doubt it is their duty to be faithful in these things. But in the mean time if christian prudence and humility do not attend their essays, they are like to be prejudicial to the church's real well-being. But for ignorant young converts to take upon them authoritatively to instruct and exhort publicly, tends to introduce the greatest errors and the grossest anarchy and confusion. The ministers of Christ should be apt to teach and able to convince gainsayers, and it is dangerous to the pure church of God, when those are novices, whose lips should preserve knowledge. It is base presumption, whatever zeal be pretended to, notwithstanding, for any persons to take this honour to themselves, unless they be called of God, as Aaron. I know most young zealots are apt, through ignorance, inconsideration, and pride of heart, to undertake what they have no proper qualifications for: and, through their imprudences and enthusiasm, the church of God suffers. I think all that fear God, should rise up and crush the enthusiastic creature in the egg. Dear brother, the times we live in are dangerous. The churches in America and elsewhere are in great hazard of enthusiasm: we have need to think of the maxim, *principiis obsta*. May Zion's King protect his church! I add no more, but love, and beg a remembrance in your prayers.

GILBERT TENNENT."

In the September following, Mr. Edwards attended the public commencement at New-Haven, and on the 10th of that month preached his celebrated sermon entitled, "Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God," which, in consequence of a general request from the clergy, and other gentlemen attending the commencement, was published soon after at Boston, accompanied with a Preface from the Rev. Mr. Cooper; and in Scotland the ensuing year, with a preface from the Rev. Mr. Willison. This sermon, by exhibiting the distinguishing marks between an imaginary and a real work of the Spirit of God, and by applying those marks to the work of grace then begun, and rapidly spreading throughout the northern and middle colonies, became an unanswerable defence, not only of that, but of all genuine revivals of religion. It was indeed the object of immediate and reiterated attacks from the press; but being built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, it stands sure, while those attacks and their authors are forgotten. It exhibits the scriptural evidences of a genuine revival of religion, in much the same manner, as his subsequent treatise on "Religious Affections," does those of a genuine conversion. Mr. Cooper thus introduces it to the Christians of New England:

"If any are disposed to receive conviction, have mind open to light, and are really willing to know of the present work, whether it be of God; it is with great satisfaction and pleasure I can recommend to them the following sheets,

in which they will find the “distinguishing marks” of such a work, as they are to be found in the Holy Scriptures, applied to the uncommon operation that has been on the minds of many in this land. Here the matter is tried by the infallible touchstone of the Holy Scriptures, and is weighed in the balance of the sanctuary with great judgment and impartiality.

“A performance of this kind is seasonable and necessary; and I desire heartily to bless God, who inclined this, his servant, to undertake it, and has greatly assisted him in it. The reverend author is known to be ‘a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven;’ the place where he has been called to exercise his ministry has been famous for experimental religion; and he has had opportunities to observe this work in many places where it has powerfully appeared, and to converse with numbers that have been the subjects of it. These things qualify him for this undertaking, above most. His arguments in favour of the work, are strongly drawn from Scripture, reason, and experience: and I shall believe every candid, judicious reader will say, he writes very free from an enthusiastic or a party spirit. The use of human learning is asserted; a methodical way of preaching, the fruit of study as well as prayer, is recommended; and the exercise of charity, in judging others, pressed and urged: and those things, which are esteemed the blemished, are like to be the hindrances, of the work, are with great faithfulness cautioned and warned against.—Many, I believe, will be thankful for this publication. Those who have already entertained favourable thoughts of this work, will be confirmed by it; and the doubting may be convinced and satisfied. But if there be any, after all, who cannot see the signatures of a Divine hand on the work, it is to be hoped they will be prevailed on to spare their censures, and stop their oppositions, lest ‘haply they should be found to fight against God.’—I will only add my prayer, That the worthy author of this discourse may long be continued a burning and a shining light, in the golden candlestick where Christ has placed him, and from thence diffuse his light throughout these provinces! That the Divine Spirit, whose cause is here espoused, would accompany this, and the other valuable publications of his servant, with his powerful influences; that they may promote the Redeemer’s interests, serve the ends of vital religion, and so add to the author’s present joy and future crown!”

The following is the testimony of the Rev. Mr. Willison, to the churches of Scotland. “The ensuing treatise, by the Rev. Mr. Edwards, of Northampton, in New England, concerning the work and operation of the Holy Spirit on men’s consciences, is, in my humble opinion, a most excellent, solid, judicious, and scriptural performance; which I hope, through the Divine blessing, will prove most useful to the church, for discerning a true and real work of the Spirit of God, and for guarding against delusions and mistakes. It is certainly a great mercy to the church, that this subject hath been undertaken and handled by such an experienced, well furnished scribe, that hath been long acquainted with the Spirit of God’s dealings with the souls of men, in his own congregation, and the country where he lives. And seeing the extraordinary work there at present, though several thousand miles distant from Scotland, is of the same kind with that at Cambuslang and other places about, and meets with the same opposition; the author doth, with great judgment, answer the common objections which are made against the work, both here and there, so that scarce any thing further needs be added. He warns people very warmly against opposing or reproaching the work of the Holy Spirit. He being the Third Person of the

glorious Trinity, and God equal with the Father and the Son, and the great applier of the redemption purchased for us; it becomes all men highly to honour him and his work, and to look upon it as highly dangerous to speak a word against him, according to Matt. xii. 32.—I shall add no more, but my fervent prayers to God, to bless both the author and his discourse, and that he would pour out his Spirit yet more abundantly, both on America and all the British dominions; and that he would hasten the glory of the latter days, when the Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles, and that all the kingdoms of the world may become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, that he may reign for ever and ever! Amen and Amen.”

It was during this visit to New-Haven, that Mr. Hopkins<sup>3</sup>, then about to receive the degree of A.B. at Yale college, first saw Mr. Edwards. He soon after became his pupil, and continued his intimate friend through life, and was ultimately his biographer. The impression made on his mind, may be gathered from the following account of the subject, in the Memoirs of his own life. “When I heard Mr. Tennent,” (the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, who had preached often at New-Haven in the preceding March.) “I thought he was the greatest and best man, and the best preacher, that I had ever seen or heard. His words were to me ‘like apples of gold in pictures of silver.’ And I thought that, when I should leave the college, as I was then in my last year, I would go and live with him, wherever I should find him. But just before the commencement in September, when I was to take my degree, on the seventeenth day of which month I was twenty years old, Mr. Edwards, of Northampton, came to New-Haven, and preached. He then preached the sermon on *The Trial of the Spirits*, which was afterwards printed. I had before read his sermons on Justification, &c., and his Narrative of Remarkable Conversions at Northampton, which took place about seven years before this. Though I then did not obtain any personal acquaintance with him, any further than by hearing him preach; yet I conceived such an esteem of him, and was so pleased with his preaching, that I altered my former determination with respect to Mr. Tennent, and concluded to go and live with Mr. Edwards, as soon as I should have opportunity, though he lived about eighty miles from my father’s house.”

## FOOTNOTES

1 This is a very common mistake. The woman here mentioned was not Mary Magdalen.

2 The superscription and date are gone from the MS. but having Mr. Edwards’s hand-writing on the back, I suppose the letter to have been written to him.

3 Afterwards the Rev. Samuel Hopkins, D. D. of Newport, author of the System of Divinity

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER X.

TEMPORARY ABATEMENT OF RELIGIOUS ATTENTION—LETTER TO MR. BELLAMY—MISSIONARY TOUR—SUCCESS AT LEICESTER—MR. HOPKINS BECOMES A MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY—MR. BUELL'S SUCCESSFUL LABOURS AT NORTHAMPTON—MR. EDWARDS'S NARRATIVE OF THE REVIVAL AT NORTHAMPTON, IN 1740-1742—COVENANT ENTERED INTO BY THE CHURCH.

FOR about three months, or from November to January, there was an obvious abatement in the attention to religion at Northampton; and although there were instances of conversion from time to time through the winter, yet they were less frequent than before. Mr. Edwards alludes to this fact, in the following letter to Mr. Bellamy, of Bethlehem.

“Northampton, Jan. 21, 1742.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I received yours of Jan. 11, for which I thank you. Religion, in this and the neighbouring towns, has now of late been on the decaying hand. I desire your prayers, that God would quicken and revive us again; and particularly, that he would greatly humble, and pardon, and quicken me, and fill me with his own fulness; and, if it may consist with his will, improve me as an instrument to revive his work. There has been, the year past, the most wonderful work among children here, by far, that ever was. God has seemed almost wholly to take a new generation, that are come on since the late great work, seven years ago.—Neither earth nor hell can hinder his work that is going on in the country. Christ gloriously triumphs at this day. You have probably before now heard of the great and wonderful things that have lately been wrought at Portsmouth, the chief town in new Hampshire. There are also appearing great things at Ipswich and Newbury, the two largest towns in this province except Boston, and several other towns beyond Boston, and some towns nearer. By what I can understand, the work of God is greater at this day in the land than it has been at any time. O what cause have we, with exulting hearts, to agree to give glory to him, who thus rides forth in the chariot of his salvation, conquering and to conquer; and earnestly to pray, that now the Sun of righteousness would come forth like a bridegroom, rejoicing



as a giant, to run his race from one end of the heavens to the other, that nothing may be hid from the light and heat thereof.

It is not probable that I shall be able to attend your meeting at Guilford. I have lately been so much gone from my people, and don't know but I must be obliged to leave 'em again next week about a fortnight, being called to Leicester, a town about half way to Boston, where a great work of grace has lately commenced; and probably soon after that to another place; and having at this time some extraordinary affairs to attend to at home. I pray that Christ, our good Shepherd, will be with you, and direct you and greatly strengthen and bless you.

Dear Sir, I have none of those books you speak of, to sell. I have only a few, that I intend to send to some of my friends. I have already sent you one of my New-Haven sermons, by Mr. ——. Nevertheless, I have herewith sent another, which I desire you to give to Mr. Mills, if he has none; but if he has, dispose of it where you think it will do most good. I have also sent one of those sermons I preached at Enfield; as to the other, I have but one of them in the world.

I am, dear Sir, your affectionate and unworthy brother, and fellow-labourer,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

The absence from his people, alluded to in the preceding letter, occurred in consequence of a missionary tour of some length, in the two preceding months; during which he visited various places, to which he had been invited, in consequence of an unusual attention to religion there, among the people. His own congregation, readily admitting that, at such a time, there was a louder call for his services in those places, than in Northampton, consented, in the true spirit of christian benevolence, that he should listen to these calls of Providence, and go forth into other fields of labour. In so doing, they soon found a fulfilment of the promise, that he who watereth shall be watered himself. On Monday the 25th of January, Mr. Edwards set out for Leicester, and remained there several weeks, preaching with remarkable success. The revival of religion almost immediately pervaded the whole congregation, and great numbers were believed to be the subjects of hopeful conversion. On Wednesday, January 27th, Mr. Buell, a class-mate of Mr. Hopkins, who, though he left college in the September preceding, had already been preaching some time, and had gained the reputation of an uncommonly engaged and animated preacher, came to Northampton, to preach during the absence of Mr. Edwards. Immediately the work of grace, which had for a season declined, was again carried on with even greater power than before. A high degree of religious feeling was excited in the church; a solemn, anxious attention to the salvation of the soul, was witnessed extensively among the congregation; and, soon after the return of Mr. Edwards, the work of conviction and conversion again went forward with renewed success.

Mr. Hopkins alludes to these events, in his own narrative. “In the month of December,” he observes, “being furnished with a horse, I set out for Northampton, with a view to live with Mr. Edwards, where I was an utter stranger. When I arrived there, Mr. Edwards was not at home; but I was received with great kindness by Mrs. Edwards and the family, and had encouragement that I might live there during the winter. Mr. Edwards was absent on a preaching tour, as people in general were greatly attentive to religion and preaching, which was attended with remarkable effects, in the conviction and supposed conversion of multitudes. I was very gloomy, and was most of the time retired in my chamber. After some days, Mrs. Edwards came into my chamber, and said, “As I was now become a member of the family for a season, she

felt herself interested in my welfare; and, as she observed that I appeared gloomy and dejected, she hoped I would not think she intruded, by her desiring to know, and asking me what was the occasion of it, or to that purpose. I told her the freedom she used was agreeable to me; that the occasion of the appearance which she mentioned, was the state in which I considered my-self. I was in a Christless, graceless state, and had been under a degree of conviction and concern for myself, for a number of months; had got no relief, and my case, instead of growing better, appeared to grow worse. Upon which we entered into a free conversation; and on the whole she told me, that she had peculiar exercises in prayer respecting me, since I had been in the family; that she trusted I should receive light and comfort, and doubted not that God intended yet to do great things by me.

“Religion was now at a lower ebb at Northampton than it had been of late, and than it appeared to be in the neighbouring towns, and in New Eng-land in general. In the month of January, Mr. Buell, my class-mate, came to Northampton, having commenced a zealous preacher of the gospel; and was the means of greatly reviving the people to zeal in religion. He preached every day, and sometimes twice a day, publicly, Mr. Edwards being out of town, preaching in distant towns. Professing Christians appeared greatly revived and comforted; and a number were under conviction; and I think there were some hopeful new converts. After Mr. Buell had been in Northampton a week or two, he set out on a tour towards Boston.”

Having thus alluded to the religious state of Northampton at this period, so far as was necessary to exhibit the order and connexion of events; we now proceed to give Mr. Edwards’s own account of the revival of religion in that town, in 1740-1742, as communicated in a letter to a minister of Boston.

“Northampton, Dec.12, 1743.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Ever since the great work of God, that was wrought here about nine years ago, there has been a great and abiding alteration in this town, in many respects. There has been vastly more religion kept up in the town, among all sorts of persons, in religious exercises, and in common conversation; there has been a great alteration among the youth of the town, with respect to revelry, frolicking, profane and licentious conversation, and lewd songs; and there has also been a great alteration, amongst both old and young, with regard to tavern-haunting. I suppose the town has been in no measure so free of vice in these respects, for any long time together, for sixty years, as it has been these nine years past. There has also been an evident alteration, with respect to a charitable spirit to the poor; though I think with regard to this, we in this town, as well as the land in general, come far short of gospel rules. And though after that great work nine years ago, there has been a very lamentable decay of religious affections, and the engagedness of people’s spirit in religion; yet many societies for prayer and social worship were all along kept up, and there were some few instances of awakening, and deep concern about the things of another world, even in the most dead time.

In the year 1740, in the spring before Mr. Whitefield came to this town, there was a visible alteration: there was more seriousness and religious conversation, especially among young people; those things that were of ill tendency among them, were forborne; and it was a very frequent thing for persons to consult their minister upon the salvation of their souls; and in some particular persons there appeared a great attention about that time. And thus it continued, until Mr. Whitefield came to town, which was about the middle of October following: he preached here four sermons in the meeting-house, (besides a private lecture at my house,) one on Friday, another on Sat-

urday, and two upon the sabbath. The congregation was extraordinarily melted by every sermon; almost the whole assembly being in tears for a great part of sermon time. Mr. Whitefield's sermons were suitable to the circumstances of the town; containing a just reproof of our backslidings, and in a most moving and affecting manner, making use of our great professions, and great mercies, as arguments with us to return to God, from whom we had departed. Immediately after this, the minds of the people in general appeared more engaged in religion, showing a greater forwardness to make religion the subject of their conversation, and to meet frequently for religious purposes, and to embrace all opportunities to hear the word preached. The revival at first appeared chiefly among professors, and those that had entertained hope that they were in a state of salvation, to whom Mr. Whitefield chiefly addressed himself; but in a very short time, there appeared an awakening and deep concern among some young persons, that looked upon themselves in a Christless state; and there were some hopeful appearances of conversion, and some professors were greatly revived. In about a month or six weeks, there was a great attention in the town, both as to the revival of professors and the awakening of others. By the middle of December, a considerable work of God appeared among those that were very young; and the revival of religion continued to increase, so that in the spring an engagedness of spirit, about the things of religion, was become very general amongst young people and children, and religious subjects almost wholly took up their conversation when they were together.

In the month of May, 1741, a sermon was preached to a company, at a private house. Near the conclusion of the discourse, one or two persons, that were professors, were so greatly affected with a sense of the greatness and glory of divine things, and the infinite importance of the things of eternity, that they were not able to conceal it—the affection of their minds overcoming their strength, and having a very visible effect upon their bodies. When the exercises were over, the young people that were present removed into the other room for religious conference; and particularly that they might have opportunity to inquire of those, that were thus affected, what apprehensions they had, and what things they were that thus deeply impressed their minds; and there soon appeared a very great effect of their conversation; the affection was quickly propagated throughout the room; many of the young people and children, that were professors, appeared to be overcome with a sense of the greatness and glory of divine things, and with admiration, love, joy, and praise, and compassion to others, that looked upon themselves as in a state of nature; and many others at the same time were overcome with distress, about their sinful and miserable estate and condition; so that the whole room was full of nothing but outcries, faintings, and the like. Others soon heard of it in several parts of the town, and came to them; and what they saw and heard there, was greatly affecting to them, so that many of them were overpowered in like manner, and it continued thus for some hours; the time being spent in prayer, singing, counselling, and conferring. There seemed to be a consequent happy effect of that meeting, to several particular persons, and on the state of religion in the town in general. After this, were meetings from time to time, attended with like appearances. But a little after it, at the conclusion of the public exercises on the sabbath, I appointed the children that were under seventeen years of age, to go from the meeting-house to a neighbouring house, that I might there further enforce what they had heard in public, and might give in some counsels proper for their age. The children were there very generally and greatly affected with the warnings and counsels that were given them, and many exceedingly overcome; and the room was filled with cries; and when they were dismissed, they almost all of them went home crying aloud through the streets, to all parts of the town. The like appearances attended several such meet-

ings of children, that were appointed. But their affections appeared by what followed, to be of a very different nature: in many, they appeared indeed but childish affections, and in a day or two would leave them as they were before; others were deeply impressed; their convictions took fast hold of them, and abode by them: and there were some that, from one meeting to another, seemed extraordinarily affected for some time, to but little purpose, their affections presently vanishing from time to time; but yet afterwards, were seized with abiding convictions, and their affections became durable.

About the middle of the summer, I called together the young people that were communicants, from sixteen to twenty-six years of age, to my house; which proved to be a most happy meeting: many seemed to be very greatly and most agreeably affected with those views, which excited humility, self-condemnation, self-abhorrence, love, and joy: many fainted under these affections. We had several meetings that summer, of young people, attended with like appearances. It was about that time, that there first began to be cryings out in the meeting-house; which several times occasioned many of the congregation to stay in the house after the public exercises were over, to confer with those who seemed to be overcome with religious convictions and affections, which was found to tend much to the propagation of their impressions, with lasting effect upon many; conference being, at these times, commonly joined with prayer and singing. In the summer and autumn, the children in various parts of the town had religious meetings by themselves, for prayer, sometimes joined with fasting; wherein many of them seemed to be greatly and properly affected, and I hope some them savingly wrought upon.

The months of August and September were the most remarkable of any this year, for appearances of the conviction and conversion of sinners, and great revivings, quickenings, and comforts of professors, and for extraordinary external effects of these things. It was a very frequent thing, to see a house full of outcries, faintings, convulsions, and such like, both with distress, and also with admiration and joy. It was not the manner here to hold meetings all night, as in some places, nor was it common to continue them till very late in the night; but it was pretty often so, that there were some that were so affected, and their bodies so overcome, that they could not go home, but were obliged to stay all night where they were. There was no difference, that I know of here, with regard to these extraordinary effects, in meetings in the night and in the day time: the meetings in which these effects appeared in the evening, being commonly begun, and their extraordinary effects, in the day, and continued in the evening; and some meetings have been very remarkable for such extraordinary effects, that were both begun and finished in the day time. There was an appearance of a glorious progress of the work of God upon the hearts of sinners, in conviction, and conversion, this summer and autumn, and great numbers, I think we have reason to hope, were brought savingly home to Christ. But this was remarkable: the work of God in his influences of this nature, seemed to be almost wholly upon a new generation—those that were not come to years of discretion in that wonderful season, nine years ago; children, or those that were then children: others, who had enjoyed that former glorious opportunity, without any appearance of saving benefit, seemed now to be almost wholly passed over and let alone. But now we had the most wonderful work among children, that ever was in Northampton. The former outpouring of the Spirit was remarkable for influences upon the minds of children, beyond all that had ever been before; but this far exceeded that. Indeed, as to influences on the minds of professors, this work was by no means confined to a new generation. Many, of all ages, partook of it; but yet, in this respect, it was more general on those that were of

the young sort. Many, who had been formerly wrought upon, and in the time of our declension had fallen into decays, and had in a great measure left God, and gone after the world, now passed under a very remarkable new work of the Spirit of God, as if they had been the subjects of a second conversion. They were first led into the wilderness, and had a work of conviction; having much deeper convictions of the sins of both nature and practice, than ever before; though with some new circumstances, and something new in the kind of conviction in some, with great distress, beyond what they had felt before their first conversion. Under these convictions, they were excited to strive for salvation, and the kingdom of heaven suffered violence from some of them, in a far more remarkable manner than before; and after great convictions and humblings, and agonizing with God, they had Christ discovered to them anew, as an all-sufficient Saviour, and in the glories of his grace, and in a far more clear manner than before; and with greater humility, self-emptiness, and brokenness of heart, and a purer, a higher joy, and greater desires after holiness of life; but with greater self-diffidence and distrust of their treacherous hearts. One circumstance, wherein this work differed from that, which had been in the towns five or six years before, was, that conversions were frequently wrought more sensibly and visibly; the impressions stronger, and more manifest by their external effects; the progress of the Spirit of God in conviction, from step to step, more apparent; and the transition from one state to another, more sensible and plain; so that it might, in many instances, be as it were seen by bystanders. The preceding season had been very remarkable on this account, beyond what had been before; but this more remarkable than that. And in this season, these apparent or visible conversions, (if I may so call them,) were more frequently in the presence of others, at religious meetings, where the appearances of what was wrought on the heart fell under public observation.

After September, 1741, there seemed to be some abatement of these extraordinary appearances, yet they did not wholly cease, but there was something of them, from time to time, all winter. About the beginning of February, 1742, Mr. Buell came to this town. I was then absent from home, and continued so till about a fortnight after. Mr. Buell preached from day to day, almost every day, in the meeting-house.—I had left him the free use of my pulpit, having heard of his designed visit, before I went from home. He spent almost the whole time having religious exercises with the people, either in public or private, the people continually thronging him. When he first came, there came with him a number of the zealous people from Suffield, who continued here for some time. There were very extraordinary effects of Mr. Buell's labours; the people were exceedingly moved, crying out in great numbers in the meeting-house, and a great part of the congregation commonly staying in the house of God, for hours after the public service. Many also were exceedingly moved in private meetings, where Mr. Buell was: almost the whole town seemed to be in a great and continual commotion, day and night, and there was indeed a very great revival of religion. But it was principally among professors; the appearances of a work of conversion were in no measure as great, as they had been the summer before. When I came home, I found the town in very extraordinary circumstances, such as, in some respects, I never saw it in before. Mr. Buell continued here a fortnight or three weeks after I returned: there being still great appearances attending his labours; many in their religious affections being raised far beyond what they had ever been before: and there were some instances of persons lying in a sort of trance, remaining perhaps for a whole twenty-four hours motionless, and with their senses locked up; but in the mean time under strong imaginations, as though they went to heaven, and had there a vision of glorious and delightful objects. But when the people were raised to this height, Sa-

tan took the advantage, and his interposition, in many instances, soon became very apparent: and a great deal of caution and pains were found necessary, to keep the people, many of them, from running wild.

In the month of March, I led the people into a solemn public renewal of their covenant with God. To that end, having made a draft of a covenant, I first proposed it to some of the principal men in the church; then to the people, in their several religious associations in various parts of the town; then to the whole congregation in public; and then I deposited a copy of it in the hands of each of the four deacons, that all who desired it might resort to them, and have opportunity to view and consider it. Then the people in general, that were above fourteen years of age, first subscribed the covenant with their hands; and then, on a day of fasting and prayer, all together presented themselves before the Lord in his house, and stood up, and solemnly manifested their consent to it, as their vow to God. The covenant was as follows:

### COPY OF A COVENANT,

Entered into and subscribed, by the people of God at Northampton, and owned before God in his house as their vow to the Lord, and made a solemn act of public worship, by the congregation in general that were above fourteen years of age, on a day of fasting and prayer for the continuance and increase of the gracious presence of God in that place.

March 16th, 1742.

Acknowledging God's great goodness to us, a sinful, unworthy, people, in the blessed manifestations and fruits of his gracious presence in this town, both formerly and lately, and particularly in the very late spiritual revival; and adoring the glorious majesty, power, and grace of God, manifested in the present wonderful outpouring of his Spirit, in many parts of this land, in this place; and lamenting our past backslidings and ungrateful departings from God, and humbly begging of God that he would not mark our iniquities, but, for Christ's sake, come over the mountains of our sins, and visit us with his salvation, and continue the tokens of his presence with us, and yet more gloriously pour out his blessed Spirit upon us, and make us all partakers of the divine blessings he is, at this day, bestowing here, and in many parts of this land; we do this day present ourselves before the Lord, to renounce our evil ways, we put away our abominations from before God's eyes, and with one accord, to renew our engagements to seek and serve God: and particularly do now solemnly promise and vow to the Lord as follows:—

In all our conversation, concerns, and dealings with our neighbour, we will have a strict regard to rules of honesty, justice, and uprightness, that we don't overreach or defraud our neighbour in any matter, and either wilfully, or through want of care, injure him in any of his honest possessions or rights; and in all our communication will have a tender respect, not only to our own interest, but also to the interest of our neighbour; and will carefully endeavour, in everything, to do to others as we should expect, or think reasonable, that they should do to us, if we were in their case, and they in ours.

And particularly we will endeavour to render every one his due, and will take heed to ourselves, that we don't injure our neighbour, and give him just cause of offence, by wilfully or negligently forbearing to pay our honest debts.

And wherein any of us, upon strict examination of our past behaviour, may be conscious to ourselves, that we have by any means wronged any of our neighbours in

their outward estate, we will not rest, till we have made that restitution, or given that satisfaction, which the rules of moral equity require; or if we are, on a strict and impartial search, conscious to ourselves, that we have in any other respect considerably injured our neighbour, we will truly endeavour to do that, which we in our consciences suppose christian rules require, in order to a reparation of the injury, and removing the offence given thereby.

And furthermore we promise, that we will not allow ourselves any back-biting; and that we will take great heed to ourselves to avoid all violations of those christian rules, Tit. iii. 2. 'Speak evil of no man;' Jam. iv. 11. 'Speak not evil one of another, brethren;' and 2. Cor. xii:20. 'Let there be no strifes, backbitings, whisperings;' and that we will not only not slander our neighbour, but also will not feed a spirit of bitterness, ill will, or secret grudge against our neighbour, insist on his real faults needlessly, and when not called to it, or from such a spirit, speak of his failings and blemishes with ridicule, or an air of contempt.

And we promise, that we will be very careful to avoid doing anything to our neighbour from a spirit of revenge. And that we will take great care that we do not, for private interest or our own honour, or to maintain ourselves against those of a contrary party, or to get our wills, or to promote any design in opposition to others, do those things which we, on the most impartial consideration are capable of, can think in our consciences will tend to wound religion, and the interests of Christ's kingdom.

And particularly, that so far as any of us, by Divine Providence, have any special influence upon others, to lead them in the management of public affairs, we will not make our own worldly gain, or honour, or interest in the affections of others, or getting the better of any of a contrary party, that are in any respect our competitors, or the bringing or keeping them down, our governing aim, to the prejudice of the interest of religion, and the honour of Christ.

And in the management of any public affair, wherever there is a difference of opinions, concerning any outward possessions, privileges, rights, or properties, we will not willingly violate justice for private interest: and with the greatest strictness and watchfulness, will avoid all unchristian bitterness, vehemence, and heat of spirit; yea, though we should think ourselves injured by a contrary party; and in the time of the management of such affairs, will especially watch over ourselves, our spirits, and our tongues, to avoid all unchristian inveighings, reproachings, bitter reflecting, judging and ridiculing others, either in public meetings or in private conversation, either to men's faces, or behind their backs; but will greatly endeavour, so far as we are concerned, that all should be managed with christian humility, gentleness, quietness, and love.

And furthermore we promise, that we will not tolerate the exercise of enmity and ill will, or revenge in our hearts, against any of our neighbours; and we will often be strictly searching and examining our own hearts with respect to that matter.

And if any of us find that we have an old secret grudge against any of our neighbours, we will not gratify it, but cross it, and endeavour to our utmost to root it out, crying to God for his help; and that we will make it our true and faithful endeavour, in our places, that a party spirit may not be kept up amongst us, but that it may utterly cease; that for the future, we may all be one, united in undisturbed peace and unfeigned love.

And those of us that are in youth, do promise, never to allow ourselves in any diversions or pastimes, in meetings, or companies of young people, that we, in our consciences, upon sober consideration, judge not well to consist with, or would sinfully tend to hinder, the devoutest and most engaged spirit in religion, or indispose the

mind for that devout and profitable attendance on the duties of the closet, which is most agreeable to God's will, or that we, in our most impartial judgment, can think tends to rob God of that honour which he expects, by our orderly serious attendance on family worship.

And furthermore we promise, that we will strictly avoid all freedoms and familiarities in company, so tending either to stir up or gratify a lust of lasciviousness, that we cannot in our consciences think will be approved by the infinitely pure and holy eye of God, or that we can think, on serious and impartial consideration, we should be afraid to practise, if we expected in a few hours to appear before that holy God, to give an account of ourselves to him, as fearing they would be condemned by him as unlawful and impure.

We also promise, with great watchfulness, to perform relative duties, required by christian rules, in the families we belong to, as we stand related respectively, towards parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, masters or mistresses, and servants.

And we now appear before God, depending on Divine grace and assistance, solemnly to devote our whole lives, to be laboriously spent in the business of religion; ever making it our greatest business, without backsliding from such a way of living, not hearkening to the solicitations of our sloth, and other corrupt inclinations, or the temptations of the world, that tend to draw us off from it; and particularly, that we will not abuse a hope or opinion that any of us may have, of our being interested in Christ, to indulge ourselves in sloth, or the more easily to yield to the solicitations of any sinful inclinations; but will run with perseverance the race that is set before us, and work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

And because we are sensible that the keeping these solemn vows may hereafter, in many cases, be very contrary to our corrupt inclinations and carnal interests, we do now therefore appear before God to make a surrender of all to him, and to make a sacrifice of every carnal inclination and interest, to the great business of religion and the interest of our souls.

And being sensible of our weakness, and the deceitfulness of our own hearts, and our proneness to forget our most solemn vows, and lose our resolutions, we promise to be often strictly examining ourselves by these promises, especially before the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and beg of God that he would, for Christ's sake, keep us from wickedly dissembling in these our solemn vows; and that he who searches our hearts, and ponders the path of our feet, would, from time to time, help us in trying ourselves by this covenant, and help us to keep covenant with him, and not leave us to our own foolish, wicked, and treacherous hearts.

In the beginning of the summer of 1742, there seemed to be an abatement of the liveliness of people's affections in religion; but yet many were often in a great height of them. And in the fall and winter following, there were at times extraordinary appearances. But in the general, people's engagedness in religion, and the liveliness of their affections, have been on the decline; and some of the young people especially, have shamefully lost their liveliness and vigour in religion, and much of the seriousness and solemnity of their spirits. But there are many that walk as becometh saints; and to this day there are a considerable number in town that seem to be near to God, and maintain much of the life of religion, and enjoy many of the sensible tokens and fruits of his gracious presence.

With respect to the late season of revival of religion amongst us for three or four years past, it has been observable, that in the former part of it, in the years 1740 and 1741, the work seemed to be much more pure, having less of a corrupt mixture than in



the former great outpouring of the Spirit, in 1735 and 1736. Persons seemed to be sensible of their former errors, and had learned more of their own hearts, and experience had taught them more of the tendency and consequences of things. They were now better guarded, and their affections were not only stronger, but attended with greater solemnity, and greater humility and self-distrust, and greater engagedness after holy living and perseverance: and there were fewer errors in conduct. But in the latter part of it, in the year 1742, it was otherwise: the work continued more pure till we were infected from abroad: our people hearing of, and some of them seeing, the work in other places, where there was greater visible commotion than here, and the outward appearances were more extraordinary, were ready to think that the work in those places far excelled what was amongst us, and their eyes were dazzled with the high profession and great show that some made, who came hither from other places.

That those people went so far beyond them in raptures and violent emotions of the affections, and a vehement zeal, and what they call boldness for Christ, our people were ready to think was owing to far greater attainments in grace, and intimacy with heaven: they looked little in their own eyes in comparison with them, and were ready to submit themselves to them, and yield themselves up to their conduct, taking it for granted, that everything was right that they said and did. These things had a strange influence on the people, and gave many of them a deep and unhappy tincture, from which it was a hard and long labour to deliver them, and from which some of them are not fully delivered to this day.

The effects and consequences of things among us plainly show the following things, viz. That the degree of grace is by no means to be judged of by the degree of joy, or the degree of zeal; and that indeed we cannot at all determine by these things, who are gracious and who are not; and that it is not the degree of religious affections, but the nature of them, that is chiefly to be looked at. Some that have had very great raptures of joy, and have been extraordinarily filled, (as the vulgar phrase is,) and have had their bodies overcome, and that very often, have manifested far less of the temper of Christians in their conduct since, than some others that have been still, and have made no great outward show. But then again, there are many others, that have had extraordinary joys and emotions of mind, with frequent great effects upon their bodies, that behave themselves stedfastly, as humble, amiable, eminent Christians.

'Tis evident that there may be great religious affections in individuals, which may in show and appearance resemble gracious affections, and have the same effects upon their bodies, but are far from having the same effect on the temper of their minds and the course of their lives. And likewise there is nothing more manifest, by what appears amongst us, than that the good estate of individuals is not chiefly to be judged of by any exactness of steps, and method of experiences, in what is supposed to be the first conversion; but that we must judge by the spirit that breathes, the effect wrought upon the temper of the soul in the time of the work and remaining afterwards. Though there have been very few instances among professors, amongst us, of what is ordinarily called scandalous sins, known to me; yet the temper that some of them show, and the behaviour they have been of, together with some things in the nature and circumstances of their experiences, make me much afraid lest there be a considerable number that have woefully deceived themselves. Though, on the other hand, there is a great number whose temper and conversation is such, as justly confirms the charity others towards them; and not a few, in whose disposition and walk there are amiable appearances of eminent grace. And notwithstanding all the corrupt mixtures that have been in the late work here, there are not only many blessed fruits of it, in particular persons that yet re-main, but some good effects of it upon the town in general. A spirit of

party has more extensively subsided. I suppose there has been less appearance these three or four years past, of that division of the town into two parties, which has long been our bane, than has been at any time during the preceding thirty years; and the people have apparently had much more caution, and a greater guard on their spirit and their tongues, to avoid contention and unchristian heats, in town-meetings, and on other occasions. And 'tis a thing greatly to be rejoiced in, that the people very lately came to an agreement and final issue, with respect to their grand controversy relating to their common lands; which has been, above any other particular thing, a source of mutual prejudices, jealousies, and debates, for fifteen or sixteen years past. The people also seem to be much more sensible of the danger of resting in old experiences, or what they were subjects of at their supposed first conversion; and to be more fully convinced of the necessity of forgetting the things that are behind, and pressing forward and maintaining earnest labour, watchfulness, and prayerfulness, as long as they live.

I am, Rev. Sir,  
Your friend and brother,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS"

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

**CHAPTER XI.**

MRS. EDWARDS. HER SOLEMN SELF-DEDICATIONS HER UNCOMMON DISCOVERIES OF THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS AND GLORY; AND OF THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST REMARKS CONCERNING THEM.

IN speaking of Mrs. Edwards, we have already had occasion to remark, that her piety appears to have been in no ordinary degree pure, intense, and elevated, and that her views of spiritual and heavenly things were uncommonly clear and joyful. Near the close of the year 1738, according to the testimony of Mr. Edwards, she was led, under an uncommon discovery of God's excellency, and in an high exercise of love to God, and of rest and joy in him, to make a new and most solemn dedication of herself to his service and glory, an entire renunciation of the world, and a resignation of all to God. After this, she had often such views of the glory of the divine perfections, and of Christ's excellencies, and at times, for hours together, without any interruption, that she was overwhelmed, and as it were swallowed up, in the light and joy of the love of God. In the summer of 1740, after a new and more perfect resignation of herself to God, with yet greater fervency, her views of the glory of God, and of the excellency of Christ, became still more clear and transporting; and in the following winter, after a similar but more perfect resignation of herself, and acceptance of God as the only portion and happiness of her soul, God appeared to vouchsafe to her, for a long period, a degree of spiritual light and enjoyment, which seemed to be, in reality, an anticipation of the joys of the heavenly world. There was so much that was unusual and striking in this state of mind, that her husband requested her to draw up an exact statement of it; which, having been preserved, is now presented to the reader.

"On Tuesday night, Jan. 19, 1742," observes Mrs. Edwards, "I felt very uneasy and unhappy, at my being so low in grace. I thought I very much needed help from God, and found a spirit of earnestness to seek help of him, that I might have more holiness. When I had for a time been earnestly wrestling with God for it, I felt within myself great quietness of spirit, unusual submission to God, and willingness to wait upon him, with respect to the time

and manner in which he should help me, and wished that he should take his own time, and his own way, to do it.

“The next morning I found a degree of uneasiness in my mind, at Mr. Edwards’s suggesting, that he thought I had failed in some measure in point of prudence, in some conversation I had with Mr. Williams, of Hadley, the day before. I found, that it seemed to bereave me of the quietness and calm of my mind, in any respect not to have the good opinion of my husband. This, I much disliked in myself, as arguing a want of a sufficient rest in God, and felt a disposition to fight against it, and look to God for his help, that I might have a more full and entire rest in him, independent of all other things. I continued in this frame, from early in the morning until about 10 o’clock, at which time the Rev. Mr. Reynolds went to prayer in the family.

“I had, before this, so entirely given myself up to God, and resigned up every thing into his hands, that I had, for a long time, felt myself quite alone in the world; so that the peace and calm of my mind, and my rest in God, as my only and all-sufficient happiness, seemed sensibly above the reach of disturbance from any thing but these two: 1st. My own good name and fair reputation among men, and especially the esteem and just treatment of the people of this town; 2dly. And more especially, the esteem, and love, and kind treatment of my husband. At times, indeed, I had seemed to be considerable elevated above the influence of even these things; yet I had not found my calm, and peace, and rest in God so sensibly, fully, and constantly, above the reach of disturbance from them, until now.

While Mr. Reynolds was at prayer in the family this morning, I felt an earnest desire that, in calling on God, he should say, *Father*, or that he should address the Almighty under that appellation: on which the thought turned in my mind.—Why can I say, *Father*?—Can I now at this time, with the confidence of a child, and without the least misgiving of heart, call God my Father?—This brought to my mind two lines of Mr. Erskine’s sonnet:

‘I see him lay his vengeance by,  
‘And smile in Jesus’ face.’

“I was thus deeply sensible, that my sins did loudly call for vengeance; but I then by faith saw God ‘lay his vengeance by, and smile in Jesus’ face.’ It appeared to be real and certain that he did so. I had not the least doubt, that he then sweetly smiled upon me, with the look of forgiveness and love, having laid aside all his displeasure towards me, for Jesus’ sake; which made me feel very weak, and somewhat faint.

“In consequence of this, I felt a strong desire to be alone with God, to go to him, without having any one to interrupt the silent and soft communion, which I earnestly desired between God and my own soul; and accordingly withdrew to my chamber. It should have been mentioned that, before I retired, while Mr. Reynolds was praying, these words, in Rom. viii. 34. came into my mind, ‘Who is he that condemneth; it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us;’ as well as the following words, ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ,’ &c.; which occasioned great sweetness and delight in my soul. But when I was alone, the words came to my mind with far greater power and sweetness; upon which I took the Bible, and read the words to the end of the

chapter, when they were impressed on my heart with vastly greater power and sweetness still. They appeared to me with undoubted certainty as the words of God, and as words which God did pronounce concerning me. I had no more doubt of it, than I had of my being. I seemed as it were to hear the great God proclaiming thus to the world concerning me; ‘Who shall lay any thing to thy charge,’ &c.; and had it strongly impressed on me, how impossible it was for any thing in heaven or earth, in this world or the future, ever to separate me from the love of God which was in Christ Jesus. I cannot find language to express, how *certain* this appeared—the everlasting mountains and hills were but shadows to it. My safety, and happiness, and eternal enjoyment of God’s immutable love, seemed as durable and unchangeable as God himself. Melted and overcome by the sweetness of this assurance, I fell into a great flow of tears, and could not forbear weeping aloud. It appeared certain to me that God was my Father, and Christ my Lord and Saviour, that he was mine and I his. Under a delightful sense of the immediate presence and love of God, these words seemed to come over and over in my mind, ‘My God, my all; my God, my all.’ The presence of God was so near, and so real, that I seemed scarcely conscious of any thing else. God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, seemed as distinct persons, both manifesting their inconceivable loveliness, and mildness, and gentleness, and their great and immutable love to me. I seemed to be taken under the care and charge of my God and Saviour, in an inexpressibly endearing manner; and Christ appeared to me as a mighty Saviour, under the character of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, taking my heart, with all its corruptions, under his care, and putting it at his feet. In all things, which concerned me, I felt myself safe under the protection of the Father and the Saviour; who appeared with supreme kindness to keep a record of every thing that I did, and of every thing that was done to me, purely for my good.

“The peace and happiness, which I hereupon felt, was altogether inexpressible. It seemed to be that which came from heaven; to be eternal and unchangeable. I seemed to be lifted above earth and hell, out of the reach of every thing here below, so that I could look on all the rage and enmity of men or devils, with a kind of holy indifference, and an undisturbed tranquillity. At the same time, I felt compassion and love for all mankind, and a deep abasement of soul, under a sense of my own unworthiness. I thought of the ministers who were in the house, and felt willing to undergo any labour and self-denial, if they would but come to the help of the Lord. I also felt myself more perfectly weaned from all things here below, than ever before. The whole world, with all its enjoyments, and all its troubles, seemed to be nothing:—My God was my all, my only portion. No possible suffering appeared to be worth regarding: all persecutions and torments were a mere nothing. I seemed to dwell on high, and the place of defence to be the munition of rocks.

“After some time, the two evils mentioned above, as those which I should have been least able to bear, came to my mind—the ill treatment of the town, and the ill will of my husband; but now I was carried exceedingly above even such things as these, and I could feel that, if I were exposed to them both, they would seem comparatively nothing. There was then a deep snow on the ground, and I could think of being driven from my home into the cold and snow, of being chased from the town with the utmost contempt and malice, and of being left to perish with the cold, as cast out by all the world, with perfect calmness and serenity. It appeared to me, that it would not move me, or in

the least disturb the inexpressible happiness and peace of my soul. My mind seemed as much above all such things, as the sun is above the earth.

"I continued in a very sweet and lively sense of divine things, day and night, sleeping and waking, until Saturday, Jan. 23. On Saturday morning, I had a most solemn and deep impression on my mind of the eye of God as fixed upon me, to observe what improvement I made of those spiritual communications I had received from him; as well as of the respect shown Mr. Edwards, who had then been sent for to preach at Leicester. I was sensible that I was sinful enough to bestow it on my pride, or on my sloth, which seemed exceedingly dreadful to me. At night, my soul seemed to be filled with an inexpressibly sweet and pure love to God, and to the children of God; with a refreshing consolation and solace of soul, which made me willing to lie on the earth, at the feet of the servants of God, to declare his gracious dealings with me, and breathe forth before them my love, and gratitude, and praise.

"The next day, which was the sabbath, I enjoyed a sweet, and lively, and assured sense of God's infinite grace, and favour, and love to me, in taking me out of the depths of hell, and exalting me to the heavenly glory, and the dignity of a royal priesthood.

"On Monday night, Mr. Edwards, being gone that day to Leicester, I heard that Mr. Buell was coming to this town, and from what I had heard of him, and of his success, I had strong hopes that there would be great effects from his labours here. At the same time, I had a deep and affecting impression, that the eye of God was ever upon my heart, and that it greatly concerned me to watch my heart, and see to it that I was perfectly resigned to God, with respect to the instruments he should make use of to revive religion in this town, and be entirely willing, if it was God's pleasure, that he should make use of Mr. Buell; and also that other Christians should appear to excel me in christian experience, and in the benefit they should derive from ministers. I was conscious, that it would be exceedingly provoking to God if I should not be thus resigned, and earnestly endeavoured to watch my heart, that no feelings of a contrary nature might arise; and was enabled, as I thought, to exercise full resignation, and acquiescence in God's pleasure, as to these things. I was sensible what great cause I had to bless God, for the use he had made of Mr. Edwards hitherto; but thought, if he never blessed his labours any more, and should greatly bless the labours of other ministers, I could entirely acquiesce in his will. It appeared to me meet and proper, that God should employ babes and sucklings to advance his kingdom. When I thought of these things, it was my instinctive feeling to say, 'Amen, Lord Jesus! Amen, Lord Jesus!' This seemed to be the sweet and instinctive language of my soul.

"On Tuesday, I remained in a sweet and lively exercise of this resignation, and love to and rest in God, seeming to be in my heart from day to day, far above the reach of every thing here below. On Tuesday night, especially the latter part of it, I felt a great earnestness of soul and engagedness in seeking God for the town, that religion might now revive, and that God would bless Mr. Buell to that end. God seemed to be very near to me while I was thus striving with him for these things, and I had a strong hope that what I sought of him would be granted. There seemed naturally and unavoidably to arise in my mind an assurance that now God would do great things for Northampton.

"On Wednesday morning, I heard that Mr. Buell arrived the night before at Mr. Phelps's, and that there seemed to be great tokens and effects of the pres-

ence of God there, which greatly encouraged and rejoiced me. About an hour and a half after, Mr. Buell came to our house; I sat still in entire resignedness to God, and willingness that God should bless his labours here as much as he pleased; though it were to the enlivening of every saint, and to the conversion of every sinner, in the town. These feelings continued afterwards, when I saw his great success; as I never felt the least rising of heart to the contrary, but my submission was even and uniform, without interruption or disturbance. I rejoiced when I saw the honour which God put upon him, and the respect paid him by the people, and the greater success attending his preaching, than had followed the preaching of Mr. Edwards immediately before he went to Leicester. I found rest and rejoicing in it, and the sweet language of my soul continually was, 'Amen, Lord Jesus! Amen, Lord Jesus!'

"At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, a lecture was preached by Mr. Buell. In the latter part of the sermon, one or two appeared much moved, and after the blessing, when the people were going out, several others. To my mind there was the clearest evidence, that God was present in the congregation, on the work of redeeming love; and in the clear view of this, I was all at once filled with such intense admiration of the wonderful condescension and grace of God, in returning again to Northampton, as overwhelmed my soul, and immediately took away my bodily strength. This was accompanied with an earnest longing, that those of us, who were the children of God, might now arise and strive. It appeared to me, that the angels in heaven sung praises, for such wonderful, free, and sovereign grace, and my heart was lifted up in adoration and praise. I continued to have clear views of the future world, of eternal happiness and misery, and my heart full of love to the souls of men. On seeing some, that I found were in a natural condition, I felt a most tender compassion for them; but especially was I, while I remained in the meeting-house, from time to time overcome, and my strength taken away, by the sight of one and another, whom I regarded as the children of God, and who, I had heard, were lively and animated in religion. We remained in the meeting-house about three hours, after the public exercises were over. During most of the time, my bodily strength was overcome; and the joy and thankfulness, which were excited in my mind, as I contemplated the great goodness of God, led me to converse with those who were near me, in a very earnest manner.

"When I came home, I found Mr. Buell, Mr. Christophers, Mr. Hopkins, Mrs. Eleanor Dwight, the wife of Mr. Joseph Allen, and Mr. Job Strong, at the house. Seeing and conversing with them on the Divine goodness, renewed my former feelings, and filled me with an intense desire that we might all arise, and with an active, flowing, and fervent heart give glory to God. The intensity of my feelings again took away my bodily strength. The words of one of Dr. Watts's Hosannas powerfully affected me; and in the course of the conversation, I *uttered them as the real language of my heart, with great earnestness and emotion.*

'Hosanna to King David's Son,  
Who reigns on a superior throne,' &c.

*And while I was uttering the words, my mind* was so deeply impressed with the love of Christ, and a sense of his immediate presence, that I could with difficulty refrain from rising from my seat, and leaping for joy. I contin-

ued to enjoy this intense, and lively, and refreshing sense of divine things, accompanied with strong emotions, for nearly an hour; after which, I experienced a delightful calm, and peace and rest in God, until I retired for the night; and during the night, both waking and sleeping, I had joyful views of divine things, and a complacential rest of soul in God. I awoke in the morning of Thursday, Jan. 28th, in the same happy frame of mind, and engaged in the duties of my family with a sweet consciousness, that God was present with me, and with earnest longings of soul for the continuance and increase of the blessed fruits of the Holy Spirit in the town. About nine o'clock, these desires became so exceedingly intense, when I saw numbers of the people coming into the house, with an appearance of deep interest in religion, that my bodily strength was much weakened, and it was with difficulty that I could pursue my ordinary avocations. About 11 o'clock, as I accidentally went into the room where Mr. Buell was conversing with some of the people, I heard him say, 'O that we, who are the children of God, should be cold and lifeless in religion!' and I felt such a sense of the deep ingratitude manifested by the children of God, in such coldness and deadness, that my strength was immediately taken away, and I sunk down on the spot. Those who were near raised me, and placed me in a chair; and from the fulness of my heart, I expressed to them, in a very earnest manner, the deep sense I had of the wonderful grace of Christ towards me, of the assurance I had of his having saved me from hell, of my happiness running parallel with eternity, of the duty of giving up all to God, and of the peace and joy inspired by an entire dependence on his mercy and grace. Mr. Buell then read a melting hymn of Dr. Watts's,<sup>1</sup> concerning the loveliness of Christ, the enjoyments and employments of heaven, and the Christian's earnest desire of heavenly things; and the truth and reality of the things mentioned in the hymn, made so strong an impression on my mind, and my soul was drawn so powerfully towards Christ and heaven, that I leaped unconsciously from my chair. I seemed to be drawn upwards, soul and body, from the earth towards heaven; and it appeared to me that I must naturally and necessarily ascend thither. These feelings continued while the hymn was reading, and during the prayer of Mr. Christophers, which followed. After the prayer, Mr. Buell read two other hymns, on the glories of heaven, which moved me so exceedingly, and drew me so strongly heavenward, that it seemed as it were to draw my body upwards, and I felt as if I must necessarily ascend thither. At length my strength failed me, and I sunk down; when they took me up and laid me on the bed, where I lay for a considerable time, faint with joy, while contemplating the glories of the heavenly world. After I had lain a while, I felt more perfectly subdued and weaned from the world, and more fully resigned to God, than I had ever been conscious of before. I felt an entire indifference to the opinions, and representations, and conduct of mankind respecting me; and a perfect willingness, that God should employ some other instrument than Mr. Edwards, in advancing the work of grace in Northampton. I was entirely swallowed up in God, as my only portion, and his honour and glory was the object of my supreme desire and delight. At the same time, I felt a far greater love to the children of God, than ever before. I seemed to love them as my own soul; and when I saw them, my heart went out towards them, with an inexpressible endearedness and sweetness. I beheld them by faith in their risen and glorified state, with spiritual bodies re-fashioned after the image of Christ's glorious body, and arrayed in the beauty of heaven.



The time when they would be so appeared very near, by faith it seemed as if it were present. This was accompanied with a ravishing sense of the unspeakable joys of the upper world. They appeared to my mind in all their reality and certainty, and as it were in actual and distinct vision; so plain and evident were they to the eye of my faith, I seemed to regard them as begun. These anticipations were renewed over and over, while I lay on the bed, from twelve o'clock till four, being too much exhausted by emotions of joy, to rise and sit up; and during most of the time, my feelings prompted me to converse very earnestly with one and another of the pious women, who were present, on those spiritual and heavenly objects, of which I had so deep an impression. A little while before I arose, Mr. Buell and the people went to meeting.

"I continued in a sweet and lively sense of divine things, until I retired to rest. That night, which was Thursday night, Jan. 28, was the sweetest night I ever had in my life. I never before, for so long a time together, enjoyed so much of the light, and rest, and sweetness of heaven in my soul, but without the least agitation of body during the whole time. The great part of the night I lay awake, sometimes asleep, and sometimes between sleeping and waking. But all night I continued in a constant, clear, and lively sense of the heavenly sweetness of Christ's excellent and transcendent love, of his nearness to me, and of my dearness to him; with an inexpressibly sweet calmness of soul in an entire rest in him. I seemed to myself to perceive a glow of divine love come down from the heart of Christ in heaven, into my heart, in a constant stream, like a stream or pencil of sweet light. At the same time, my heart and soul all flowed out in love to Christ; so that there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing of heavenly and divine love, from Christ's heart to mine; and I appeared to myself to float or swim, in these bright, sweet beams of the love of Christ, like the motes swimming in the beams of the sun, or the streams of his light which come in at the window. My soul remained in a kind of heavenly elysium. So far as I am capable of making a comparison, I think that what I felt each minute, during the continuance of the whole time, was worth more than all the outward comfort and pleasure, which I had enjoyed in my whole life put together. It was a pure delight, which fed and satisfied the soul. It was pleasure, without the least sting, or any interruption. It was a sweetness, which my soul was lost in. It seemed to be all that my feeble frame could sustain, of that fulness of joy, which is felt by those, who behold the face of Christ, and share his love in the heavenly world. There was but little difference, whether I was asleep or awake, so deep was the impression made on my soul; but if there was any difference, the sweetness was greatest and most uninterrupted while I was asleep.

"As I awoke early the next morning, which was Friday, I was led to think of Mr. Williams of Hadley preaching that day in the town, as had been appointed; and to examine my heart, whether I was willing that he, who was a neighbouring minister, should be extraordinarily blessed, and made a greater instrument of good in the town, than Mr. Edwards; and was enabled to say, with respect to that matter, 'Amen, Lord Jesus!' and to be entirely willing, if God pleased, that he should be the instrument of converting every soul in the town. My soul acquiesced fully in the will of God, as to the instrument, if his work of renewing grace did but go on.

"This lively sense of the beauty and excellency of divine things continued during the morning, accompanied with peculiar sweetness and delight. To my

own imagination, my soul seemed to be gone out of me to God and Christ in heaven, and to have very little relation to my body. God and Christ were so present to me, and so near me, that I seemed removed from myself. The spiritual beauty of the Father and the Saviour, seemed to engross my whole mind; and it was the instinctive feeling of my heart, 'Thou art; and there is none beside thee.' I never felt such an entire emptiness of self-love, or any regard to any private, selfish interest of my own. It seemed to me, that I had entirely done with myself. I felt that the opinions of the world concerning me were nothing, and that I had no more to do with any outward interest of my own, than with that of a person whom I never saw. The glory of God seemed to be all, and in all, and to swallow up every wish and desire of my heart.

"Mr. Sheldon came into the house about 10 o'clock, and said to me as he came in, 'The Sun of righteousness arose on my soul this morning, before day;' upon which I said to him in reply, 'That Sun has not set upon my soul all this night; I have dwelt on high in the heavenly mansions; the light of divine love has surrounded me; my soul has been lost in God, and has almost left the body.' This conversation only served to give me a still livelier sense of the reality and excellence of divine things, and that to such a degree, as again to take away my strength, and occasion great agitation of body. So strong were my feelings, I could not refrain from conversing with those around me, in a very earnest manner, for about a quarter of an hour, on the infinite riches of divine love in the work of salvation; when, my strength entirely failing, my flesh grew very cold, and they carried me and set me by the fire. As I sat there, I had a most affecting sense of the mighty power of Christ, which had been exerted in what he had done for my soul, and in sustaining and keeping down the native corruptions of my heart, and of the glorious and wonderful grace of God in causing the ark to return to Northampton. So intense were my feelings, when speaking of these things, that I could not forbear rising up and leaping with joy and exultation. I felt at the same time an exceedingly strong and tender affection for the children of God, and realized, in a manner exceedingly sweet and ravishing, the meaning of Christ's prayer, in John xvii. 21. 'That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.' This union appeared to me an inconceivable, excellent, and sweet oneness; and at the same time I felt that oneness in my soul, with the children of God who were present. Mr. Christophers then read the hymn out of the Penitential cries, beginning with

'My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
My spirit doth rejoice;'

The whole hymn was deeply affecting to my feelings: but when these words were read,

'My sighs at length are turn'd to songs,  
The Comforter is come:—'

So conscious was I of the joyful presence of the Holy Spirit, I could scarcely refrain from leaping with transports of joy. This happy frame of mind continued until two o'clock, when Mr. Williams came in, and we soon went to meeting. He preached on the subject of the assurance of faith. The whole ser-

mon was affecting to me, but especially when he came to show the way in which assurance was obtained, and to point out its happy fruits. When I heard him say, that *those who have assurance, have a foretaste of heavenly glory*, I knew the truth of it from what I then felt: I knew that I then tasted the clusters of the heavenly Canaan: my soul was filled and overwhelmed with light, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and seemed just ready to go away from the body. I could scarcely refrain from expressing my joy aloud, in the midst of the service. I had, in the mean time, an overwhelming sense of the glory of God, as the Great Eternal All, and of the happiness of having my own will entirely subdued to his will. I knew that the foretaste of glory, which I then had in my soul, came from him, that I certainly should go to him, and should, as it were, drop into the Divine Being, and be swallowed up in God.

“After meeting was done, the congregation waited while Mr. Buell went home, to prepare to give them a lecture. It was almost dark before he came, and, in the mean time, I conversed in a very earnest and joyful manner, with those who were with me in the pew. My mind dwelt on the thought, that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and it appeared to me that he was going to set up a reign of love on the earth, and that heaven and earth were, as it were, coming together; which so exceedingly moved me that I could not forbear expressing aloud, to those near me, my exultation of soul. This subsided into a heavenly calm, and a rest of soul in God, which was even sweeter than what preceded it. Afterwards, Mr. Buell came and preached; and the same happy frame of mind continued during the evening, and night, and the next day. In the forenoon, I was thinking of the manner in which the children of God had been treated in the world—particularly of their being shut up in prison—and the folly of such attempts to make them miserable, seemed to surprise me. It appeared astonishing, that men should think, by this means, to injure those who had such a kingdom within them. Towards night being informed that Mrs. P——had expressed her fears lest I should die before Mr. Edwards’s return, and he should think the people had killed his wife; I told those who were present, that I chose to die in the way that was most agreeable to God’s will, and that I should be willing to die in darkness and horror, if it was most for the glory of God.

“In the evening, I read those chapters in John, which contain Christ’s dying discourse with his disciples, and his prayer with them. After I had done reading, and was in my retirement, a little before bed-time, thinking on what I had read, my soul was so filled with love to Christ, and love to his people, that I fainted under the intenseness of the feeling. I felt, while reading, a delightful acquiescence in the petition to the Father—‘I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.’ Though it seemed to me infinitely better to die to go to Christ, yet I felt an entire willingness to continue in this world so long as God pleased, to do and suffer what he would have me.

“After retiring to rest and sleeping a little while, I awoke and had a very lively consciousness of God’s being near me. I had an idea of a shining way, or path of light, between heaven and my soul, somewhat as on Thursday night, except that God seemed nearer to me, and as it were close by, and the way seemed more open, and the communication more immediate and more free. I lay awake most of the night, with a constant delightful sense of God’s great love and infinite condescension, and with a continual view of God as *near*,

and as *my God*. My soul remained, as on Thursday night, in a kind of heavenly elysium. Whether waking or sleeping, there was no interruption, throughout the night, to the views of my soul, to its heavenly light, and divine, inexpressible sweetness. It was without any agitation or motion of the body. I was led to reflect on God's mercy to me, in giving me, for many years, a willingness to die; and after that, for more than two years past, in making me willing to live, that I might do and suffer whatever he called me to here; whereas, before that, I often used to feel impatient at the thought of living. This then appeared to me, as it had often done before, what gave me much the greatest sense of thankfulness to God. I also thought how God had graciously given me, for a great while, an entire resignation to his will, with respect to the kind and manner of death that I should die; having been made willing to die on the rack, or at the stake, or any other tormenting death, and, if it were God's will, to die in darkness: and how I had that day been made very sensible and fully willing, if it was God's pleasure and for his glory, to die in horror. But now it occurred to me, that when I had thus been made willing to live, and to be kept on this dark abode, I used to think of living no longer than to the ordinary age of man. Upon this I was led to ask myself, Whether I was not willing to be kept out of heaven even longer; and my whole heart seemed immediately to reply, 'Yes, a thousand years, if it be God's will, and for his honour and glory:' and then my heart, in the language of resignation, went further, and with great alacrity and sweetness, to answer as it were over and over again, 'Yes, and live a thousand years in horror, if it be most for the glory of God: yea, I am willing to live a thousand years a hell upon earth, if it be most for the honour of God.' But then I considered with myself, What this would be, to live a hell upon earth, for so long a time; and I thought of the torment of my body being so great, awful, and overwhelming, that none could bear to live in the country where the spectacle was seen, and of the torment and horror of my mind being vastly greater than the torment of my body; and it seemed to me that I found a perfect willingness, and sweet quietness and alacrity of soul, in consenting that it should be so, if it were most for the glory of God; so that there was no hesitation, doubt, or darkness in my mind, attending the thoughts of it, but my resignation seemed to be clear, like a light that shone through my soul. I continued saying, 'Amen, Lord Jesus! Amen, Lord Jesus! glorify thyself in me, in my body and my soul,'—with a calm and sweetness of soul, which banished all reluctance. The glory of God seemed to overcome me and swallow me up, and every conceivable suffering, and every thing that was terrible to my nature, seemed to shrink to nothing before it. This resignation continued in its clearness and brightness the rest of the night, and all the next day, and the night following, and on Monday in the forenoon, without interruption or abatement. All this while, whenever I thought of it, the language of my soul was, with the greatest fulness and alacrity, 'Amen, Lord Jesus! Amen, Lord Jesus!' In the afternoon of Monday, it was not quite so perceptible and lively, but my mind remained so much in a similar frame, for more than a week, that I could never think of it without an inexpressible sweetness in my soul.

"After I had felt this resignation on Saturday night, for some time as I lay in bed, I felt such a disposition to rejoice in God, that I wished to have the world join me in praising him; and was ready to wonder how the world of mankind could lie and sleep, when there was such a God to praise, and rejoice in, and could scarcely forbear calling out to those who were asleep in the

house, to arise, and rejoice, and praise God. When I arose on the morning of the sabbath, I felt a love to all mankind, wholly peculiar in its strength and sweetness, far beyond all that I had ever felt before. The power of that love seemed to be inexpressible. I thought, if I were surrounded by enemies, who were venting their malice and cruelty upon me, in tormenting me, it would still be impossible that I should cherish any feelings towards them but those of love, and pity, and ardent desires for their happiness. At the same time I thought, if I were cast off by my nearest and dearest friends, and if the feelings and conduct of my husband were to be changed from tenderness and affection, to extreme hatred and cruelty, and that every day, I could so rest in God, that it would not touch my heart, or diminish my happiness. I could still go on with alacrity in the performance of every act of duty, and my happiness remain undiminished and entire.

“I never before felt so far from a disposition to judge and censure others, with respect to the state of their hearts, their sincerity, or their attainments in holiness, as I did that morning. To do this, seemed abhorrent to every feeling of my heart. I realized also, in an unusual and very lively manner, how great a part of Christianity lies in the performance of our social and relative duties to one another. The same lively and joyful sense of spiritual and divine things continued throughout the day—a sweet love to God and all mankind, and such an entire rest of soul in God, that it seemed as if nothing that could be said of me, or done to me, could touch my heart, or disturb my enjoyment. The road between heaven and my soul seemed open and wide, all the day long; and the consciousness I had of the reality and excellence of heavenly things was so clear, and the affections they excited so intense, that it overcame my strength, and kept my body weak and faint, the great part of the day, so that I could not stand or go without help. The night also was comforting and refreshing.

“This delightful frame of mind was continued on Monday. About noon, one of the neighbours who was conversing with me, expressed himself thus, ‘One smile from Christ is worth a thousand million pounds,’ and the words affected me exceedingly, and in a manner which I cannot express. I had a strong sense of the infinite worth of Christ’s approbation and love, and at the same time of the grossness of the comparison; and it only astonished me, that any one could compare a smile of Christ to any earthly treasure.—Towards night, I had a deep sense of the awful greatness of God, and felt with what humility and reverence we ought to behave ourselves before him. Just then Mr. W——came in, and spoke with a somewhat light, smiling air, of the flourishing state of religion in the town; which I could scarcely bear to see. It seemed to me, that we ought greatly to revere the presence of God, and to behave ourselves with the utmost solemnity and humility, when so great and holy a God was so remarkably present, and to rejoice before him with trembling.—In the evening, these words, in the Penitential Cries,—‘The Comforter is come!’—were accompanied to my soul with such conscious certainty, and such intense joy, that immediately it took away my strength, and I was falling to the floor; when some of those who were near me caught me and held me up. And when I repeated the words to the by-standers, the strength of my feelings was increased. The name—‘The Comforter’—seemed to denote that the Holy Spirit was the only and infinite Fountain of comfort and joy, and this seemed real and certain to my mind. These words—‘the comforter’—seemed as if they were immensely great, enough to fill heaven and earth.

“On Tuesday after dinner, Mr. Buell, as he sat at table, began to discourse about the glories of the upper world; which greatly affected me, so as to take away my strength. The views and feelings of the preceding evening, respecting the Great Comforter, were renewed in the most lively and joyful manner; so that my limbs grew cold, and I continued to a considerable degree overcome for about an hour, earnestly expressing to those around me, my deep and joyful sense of the presence and divine excellence of the Comforter, and of the glories of heaven.

“It was either on Tuesday or Wednesday, that Mr. W —— came to the house, and informed what account Mr. Lyman, who was just then come from Leicester, on his way from Boston, gave of Mr. Edwards’s success, in making peace and promoting religion at Leicester. The intelligence inspired me with such an admiring sense of the great goodness of God, in using Mr. Edwards as the instrument of doing good, and promoting the work of salvation, that it immediately overcame me, and took away my strength, so that I could no longer stand on my feet. On Wednesday night, Mr. Clark, coming in with Mr. Buell and some of the people, asked me how I felt. I told him that I did not feel at all times alike, but this I thought I could say, that I had given up all to God; and there is nothing like it, nothing like giving all up to him, esteeming all to be his, and resigning all at his call. I told him that, many a time within a twelve-month, I had asked myself when I lay down, How I should feel, if our house and all our property in it should be burnt up, and we should that night be turned out naked; whether I could cheerfully resign all to God; and whether I so saw that all was his, that I could fully consent to his will, in being deprived of it? and that I found, so far as I could judge, an entire resignation to his will, and felt that, if he should thus strip me of every thing, I had nothing to say, but should, I thought, have an entire calm and rest in God, for it was his own, and not mine. After this, Mr. Phelps gave us an account of his own feelings, during a journey from which he had just returned; and then Mr. Pomeroy broke forth in the language of joy, and thankfulness, and praise, and continued speaking to us nearly an hour, leading us all the time to rejoice in the visible presence of God, and to adore his infinite goodness and condescension. He concluded by saying, ‘I would say more if I could; but words were not made to express these things.’ This reminded me of the words of Mrs. Rowe:

‘More I would speak, but all my words are faint:  
Celestial Love, what eloquence can paint?  
No more, by mortal words, can be expressed;  
But vast Eternity shall tell the rest:’

And my former impressions of heavenly and divine things were renewed with so much power, and life, and joy, that my strength all failed me, and I remained for some time faint and exhausted. After the people had retired, I had a still more lively and joyful sense of the goodness and all-sufficiency of God, of the pleasure of loving him, and of being alive and active in his service, so that I could not sit still, but walked the room for some time, in a kind of transport. The contemplation was so refreshing and delightful, so much like a heavenly feast within the soul, that I felt an absolute indifference as to any external circumstances; and, according to my best remembrance, this enlivening of my spirit continued so, that I slept but little that night.

“The next day, being Thursday, between ten and eleven o’clock, and a room full of people being collected, I heard two persons give a minute account of the enlivening and joyful influences of the Holy Spirit on their own hearts. It was sweet to me to see others before me in their divine attainments, and to follow after them to heaven. I thought I should rejoice to follow the negro servants in the town to heaven. While I was thus listening, the consideration of the blessed appearances there were of God’s being there with us, affected me so powerfully, that the joy and transport of the preceding night were again renewed. After this they sang a hymn, which greatly moved me, especially the latter part of it, which speaks of the ungratefulness of not having the praises of Christ always on our tongues. Those last words of the hymn seemed to fasten on my mind, and as I repeated them over, I felt such intense love to Christ, and so much delight in praising him, that I could hardly forbear leaping from my chair and singing aloud for joy and exultation. I continued thus extraordinarily moved until about one o’clock, when the people went away.”

I am well aware, that very different views will be formed of the preceding narrative, by different individuals. Those who have no conception of what is meant by the religion of the heart, will doubtless pronounce it the offspring of a diseased body, or a distempered brain. Others, who profess the religion of Christ, but whose minds usually come in contact with nothing which is not merely *palpable*—with nothing but what they can either see, or hear, or feel, or taste—will probably regard it as the effect of mere enthusiasm. While others, who are both more intellectual and more spiritual in their objects of contemplation, will at once perceive that the state of mind therein described, is one to which they themselves are chiefly or wholly strangers; and will therefore very naturally and rationally wish to learn somewhat more minutely the circumstances of the individual, who was the subject of these spiritual discoveries, as well as their actual effect upon her character. On these points, the testimony of Mr. Edwards is full and explicit; and from his authority we state the following facts.

At this time, Mrs. Edwards had been long, in an uncommon manner, growing in grace, and rising by very sensible degrees to higher love to God, weanedness from the world, and mastery over sin and temptation, through great trials and conflicts, and long-continued struggling and fighting with sin, and earnest and constant prayer and labour in religion, and engagedness of mind in the use of all means, attended with a great exactness of life; and this growth had been attended not only with a great increase of religious affections, but with a most visible alteration of outward behaviour; particularly in living above the world, and in a greater degree of steadfastness and strength in the way of duty and self-denial: maintaining the christian conflict against temptations, and conquering from time to time under great trials; persisting in an unmoved, untouched calm and rest, under the changes and accidents of time, such as seasons of extreme pain and apparent hazard of immediate death. These transports did not arise from bodily weakness, but were greatest in the best state of health. They were accompanied with a lively sense of the greatness of God, and her own littleness and vileness; and had abiding effects in the increase of the sweetness, rest, and humility, which they left upon the soul, and in a new engagedness of heart to live to the honour of God, and to watch and fight against sin. They were attended with no enthusiastical disposition to follow impulses or supposed revelations, nor with any appearance of spiritual

pride; but on the contrary with a very great increase of meekness and humility, and a disposition in honour to prefer others, as well as with a great aversion to judging others, and a strong sense of the importance of moral, social duties. They were accompanied with an extraordinary sense of the awful majesty of God, so as frequently to take away the bodily strength; with a sense of the holiness of God, as of a flame infinitely pure and bright, so as oftentimes to overwhelm soul and body, with an extraordinary view of the infinite terrible-ness of his wrath, of the exceeding sinfulness of her own heart, and of a desert of that wrath for ever; with an intense sorrow for sin, so as entirely to prostrate the strength of the body; with a clear certainty of the truth of the great things revealed in the gospel; with an overwhelming sense of the glory of the work of redemption, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, of the glorious harmony of the divine attributes appearing therein, as that wherein mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other; with a sight of the glorious sufficiency of Christ, a constant immovable trust in God, an overwhelming sense of his glorious unsearchable wisdom, a sweet rejoicing at his being infinitely and unchangeably happy, independent, and all-sufficient, at his reigning over all, and doing his own will with uncontrollable power and sovereignty; with a delightful sense of the glory of the Holy Spirit as the great Comforter; with intense desires for the honour and glory of God's name, a clear and constant preference of it, not only to her own temporal interests, but to her spiritual comfort; with a willingness to live and die in spiritual darkness, if the honour of God required it, a great lamenting of ingratitude, intense longings and faintings after higher love to Christ, and greater conformity to him—particularly to be more perfect in humility and adoration; with great delight in singing praises to God and Jesus Christ, a desire that this present life might be one continued song of praise, and an overcoming pleasure at the thought of spending eternity in that exercise; with a living by faith in a very unusual manner; with a uniform distrust of her own strength, and a great dependence on God for help; with intense longings that all Christians might be fervent in love, and active in the service of God; with taking pleasure in watchfulness and toil, self-denial and bearing the cross; with a melting compassion for those who were in a state of nature, and for Christians under darkness, a universal benevolence to all mankind, a willingness to endure any suffering for the conversion of the impenitent—her compassion for them being often to that degree, that she could find no support nor rest, but in going to God and pouring out her soul in prayer for them; with earnest desires that the then existing work of Divine grace might be carried on with greater purity, and freedom from all bitter zeal, censoriousness, spiritual pride, and angry controversy, and that the kingdom of Christ might be established through the earth, as a kingdom of holiness, peace, and joy; with unspeakable delight in the thoughts of heaven, as a world of love, where love shall be the saints' eternal food, where they shall dwell in the light of love, and where the very air and breath will be nothing but love; with intense love to the people of God, as to those who will soon wear his perfect image; with earnest desires that others might love God better than herself, and attain to higher degrees of holiness; with a delight in conversing on the most spiritual and heavenly things in religion, often engaging in such conversation, with a degree of feeling too intense to be long endured; and with a lively sense of the importance of charity to the poor, as well as of the need which ministers have of the influences of the Holy Spirit, and earnest longings



and wrestlings with God for them in prayer. She had also, according to Mr. Edwards, the greatest, fullest, longest continued, and most constant assurance of the favour of God, and of a title to future glory, that he ever saw any appearance of, in any person;—enjoying, especially near the time in which he made this statement, to use her own expression, the riches of Full Assurance; as well as an uninterrupted, entire resignation to God, with respect to health or sickness, ease or pain, life or death, and an entire resignation of the lives of her nearest earthly friends. These things were attended with a constant, sweet peace and serenity of soul, without a cloud to interrupt it, a continual rejoicing in all the works of nature and providence, a wonderful access to God by prayer, sensibly conversing with him, as much as if Christ were here on earth; frequent, plain, sensible, and immediate answers of prayer, all tears wiped away, all former troubles and sorrows of life forgotten, excepting sorrow for sin, doing every thing for God and his glory, doing it as the service of love, with a continual uninterrupted cheerfulness, peace, and joy. “O how good,” she once observed, “is it to work for God in the day time, and at night to lie down under his smiles.” Instead of slighting the means of grace in consequence of these discoveries, she was never more sensible of her need of instruction; instead of regarding herself as free from sin, she was led by her clearer sight of the Divine holiness, to perceive more fully the sinfulness of her own heart; instead of neglecting the business of life, she performed it with greater alacrity, as a part of the service of God—declaring that, when thus done, it was as delightful as prayer itself. At the same time, she discovered an extreme anxiety to avoid every sin, and to discharge every moral obligation, was most exemplary in the performance of every social and relative duty, exhibited great inoffensiveness of life and conversation, great meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of spirit, and avoided, with remarkable conscientiousness, all those things which she regarded as failings in her own character.

To those who, after reading this statement of facts, still regard the preceding narrative as the offspring of enthusiasm, we shall draw our reply from Mr. Edwards himself: “Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the offspring of a distempered brain; let my brain be possessed evermore of that happy distemper! If this be distraction; I pray God that the world of mankind may all be seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatific, glorious distraction! What notion have they of true religion, who reject what has here been described? What shall we find to correspond with these expressions of Scripture, *The peace of God, that passeth all understanding: Rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: God’s shining into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ: With open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of God, and being changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: Being called out of darkness into marvellous light: and having the day-star arise in our hearts?* What, let me ask, if these things that have been mentioned do not correspond with these expressions; what else can we find that does correspond with them?”

Mr. Edwards adds, that he had witnessed many instances, in Northampton and elsewhere, of other persons, which were in general of the same kind with these, though not so high in degree, in any instance; and, in many of them, not so pure and unmixed, or so well regulated. In some individuals, who discovered very intense religious affections, there was obviously a great mixture of

nature with grace, and in some a sad degenerating of religious affections; yet, in most instances, they were uniform in their character, and obviously the result of fervent piety.

That such full and clear discoveries of the Divine excellency and glory, as those recited in the preceding narrative, are uncommon, is unhappily too true: still they are far from being singular; for accounts of a similar nature may be found in the private diaries of men of distinguished piety, in almost every age of the church.<sup>2</sup> They are not however probably more uncommon, than are great attainments in piety; and, when enjoyed by those who have made such attainments, ought, in no respect, to be regarded as surprising. There is certainly in God a goodness and a glory, infinitely surpassing the comprehension of the highest created beings. This goodness and glory, which constitutes the Divine beauty and loveliness, God is able to reveal to the mind of every intelligent creature, as far as his faculties extend. If the mind, to which this revelation is made, has a supreme relish for holiness; the discovery of this spiritual beauty of the Divine mind will communicate to it an enjoyment, which is pure and heavenly in its nature; and the degree of this enjoyment, in every case, will be proportioned to the measure of the faculties, and to the fulness of the discovery. This is obviously true in the heavenly world. God there reveals his glory—not in all its infinite brightness: this, he cannot do to a created intelligence: he reveals it—in as strong an effulgence as the minds of saints and angels can endure. Were a revelation, equally clear and full, to be made to one of us here on earth, it would obviously overwhelm and destroy the life of the body; for John, even when he beheld the glorified body of Christ, fell at his feet as dead. In proportion as an individual is possessed of holiness, so much more near does he come to God, and so much more clear and distinct is his perception of his true character. “If a man love me,” says Christ, “he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Such discoveries of the Divine beauty and glory are therefore the *promised reward*, as well as the natural consequence, of distinguished holiness; and a well authenticated narrative, of the manner in which they were made, in a given instance, even if they were unusual in degree, instead of exciting our distrust or surprise, should lead us, with a noble emulation, to “press forward towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

## FOOTNOTES

1 Probably the 91st Hymn of the 2d Book, beginning with

“O the delights, the heavenly joys,  
The glories of the place.”

2 As examples of this nature, the reader is referred to the writings of Flavel, L. Baxter, and Brainerd, and of Mr. Edwards himself.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected

by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

**CHAPTER XII.**

EXTENT OF THE REVIVAL OF 1740-1748—AUSPICIOUS OPENING—OPPOSED BY ITS ENEMIES: AND INJURED BY ITS FRIENDS—"THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL IN NEW ENGLAND"—ATTESTATIONS OF NUMEROUS MINISTERS—CAUSES OF ITS DECLINE—INFLUENCE OF MR. WHITEFIELD, MR. TENNENT, AND OTHERS—INFLUENCE OF MR. EDWARDS'S PUBLICATIONS IN SCOTLAND—GREAT REVIVAL OF RELIGION THERE—HIS CORRESPONDENTS IN THAT COUNTRY—LETTER TO MR. M'CULLOCH—ANSWER TO DO—LETTER FROM MR. ROBE.

THE reader can scarcely need to be informed, that the revival of religion, of which we have been speaking, was not confined to Northampton. It began there, and at Boston, and many other places, in 1740, and in that, and the three following years, prevailed, to a greater or less degree, in more than one hundred and fifty congregations in New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; as well as in a considerable number more, in Maryland and Virginia, in 1744. At its commencement, it appears to have been, to an unusual degree, a silent, powerful, and glorious work of the Spirit of God—the simple effect of truth applied to the conscience, and accompanied by his converting grace. So auspicious indeed was the opening of this memorable work of God, and so rapid its progress, that the promised reign of Christ on the earth was believed, by many, to be actually begun. Had it continued of this unmixed character, so extensive was its prevalence, and so powerful its operation, it would seem that in no great length of time, it would have pervaded the western world. As is usual in such cases, it was opposed by the enemies of vital religion, and with a violence proportioned to its prevalence and power. But its worst enemies were found among its most zealous friends: and Mr. Edwards appear to have been early aware, that the measures too generally resorted to, by many of them, to extend its influence over the whole country, as well as throughout every town and village where it was actually begun, were only adapted to introduce confusion and disorder, as far as they prevailed. To check these commencing evils, if possible, and to bear his own testimony to the work as a genuine work of the Holy Spirit, he prepared and published his "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, in 1740." In this treatise, after

presenting evidence most clear and convincing that the attention to religion, of which he speaks, was a glorious work of God, and showing the obligations which all were under, to acknowledge and promote it, as well as the danger of the contrary conduct; he points out various particulars in which its friends had been injuriously blamed, then exhibits the errors and mistakes into which they had actually fallen, and concludes by showing positively, what ought to be done to promote it. This work, which was published in 1742, excited a very deep interest in the American churches, and was immediately republished in Scotland. The author, from his uncommon acquaintance with the Scriptures, the soundness of his theological views, his intuitive discernment of the operations of the mind, his knowledge of the human heart both before and after its renovation by the Spirit of God, his familiarity with revivals of religion, his freedom from enthusiasm, and his utter aversion to extravagance and disorder, was admirably qualified to execute it in the happiest manner: and, from the time of its first publication, it has been, to a very wide extent, the common text-book of evangelical divines, on the subject of which it treats. If the reader will examine the various accounts of revivals of religion, he will find that no one of them, anterior to this, furnishes an explanation of the subject, in accordance with the acknowledged principles of mental philosophy.

In 1743, about one hundred and sixty ministers published their attestations to this work, as in their own view a genuine work of the Spirit of God, and as having been extraordinary and remarkable; on account of the numbers who discovered a deep anxiety for their salvation; on account of its rapid progress from place to place; and on account of the power with which it was carried on. Yet, while they bear witness to the great numbers who appeared to have become real Christians, to the extensive reformation of morals which it occasioned, and to a greater prevalence of religion than they had before witnessed; many of them also regret the extravagances and irregularities, which in some places had been permitted to accompany it. Among these, they particularly point out—a disposition to make secret impulses on the mind a rule of duty laymen invading the ministerial office, and under a pretence of exhorting, setting up preaching—ministers invading each other's provinces—indiscreet young men rushing into particular places, and preaching on all occasions—unscriptural separations of churches, and of ministers from their churches—a rash judging of the religious state of others—and a controversial, uncharitable, and censorious spirit.

There can be no doubt, that both parts of this statement are true. Although this most extensive work of grace opened on New England, in 1740 and 1741, in a manner eminently auspicious; yet in the two following years, it assumed, in various places, a somewhat different aspect, and was unhappily marked with irregularity and disorder. This was doubtless owing, in some degree, to the fact, that many ministers of wisdom and sound discretion, not adverting sufficiently to the extent and importance of the apostolic exhortation, "Let all things be done decently and in order," either encouraged, or did not effectually suppress, outcries, falling down and swooning, in the time of public and social worship, the speaking and praying of women in the church and in mixed assemblies, the meeting of children by themselves for religious worship, and singing and praying aloud in the streets; but far more to the unrestrained zeal of a considerable number of misguided men—some of them preachers of the gospel, and others lay exhorters—who, intending to take Mr. Whitefield as

their model, travelled from place to place, preaching and exhorting wherever they could collect an audience; pronounced definitively and unhesitatingly with respect to the piety of individuals, both ministers and private Christians; and whenever they judged a minister, or a majority of his church, destitute of piety—which they usually did, not on account of their false principles or their irreligious life, but for their want of an ardour and zeal equal to their own—advised, in the one case, the whole church to withdraw from the minister; and in the other, a minority to separate themselves from the majority, and to form a distinct church and congregation. This indiscreet advice had, at times, too much influence, and occasioned in some places the sundering of churches and congregations, in others the removal of ministers, and in others the separation of individuals from the communion of their brethren. It thus introduced contentions and quarrels into churches and families, alienated ministers from each other, and from their people, and produced, in the places where these consequences were most discernible, a wide-spread and riveted prejudice against revivals of religion. It is deserving perhaps of inquiry, Whether the subsequent slumber of the American church, for nearly seventy years, may not be ascribed, in an important degree, to the fatal re-action of these unhappy measures.

There can be no doubt that on Mr. Whitefield (although by his multiplied and successful labours he was the means of incalculable good to the churches of America, as well as to those of England and Scotland) these evils are, to a considerable degree, to be charged, as having first led the way in this career of irregularity and disorder. He did not go as far as some of his followers; but he opened a wide door, and went great lengths, in these forbidden paths; and his imitators, having less discretion and experience, ventured, under the cover of his example, even beyond the limits which he himself was afraid to pass. His published journals show, that he was accustomed to decide too authoritatively, whether others, particularly ministers, were converted; as well as to insist that churches ought to remove those, whom they regarded as unconverted ministers; and that individual Christians or minorities of churches, where a majority refused to do this, were bound to separate themselves. Mr. Edwards, wholly disapproving of this conduct, conversed with Mr. Whitefield freely, in the presence of others, about his practice of pronouncing ministers, and other members of the christian church, unconverted; and declares that he supposed him to be of the opinion, that unconverted ministers ought not to be continued in the ministry; and that he supposed that he endeavoured to propagate this opinion, and a practice agreeable thereto. The same may be said, in substance, of Mr. G. Tennent, Mr. Finley, and Mr. Davenport, all of whom became early convinced of their error, and with christian sincerity openly acknowledged it. At the same time, while these things were to be regretted in themselves, and still more so in their unhappy consequences, the evidence is clear that, in far the greater number of places, these irregularities and disorders, if in any degree prevalent, were never predominant; and that the attention to religion in these places, while it continued, was most obviously a great and powerful work of the Spirit of God. The testimony of the ministers of those places, on these points, is explicit. It is given with great caution, and with the utmost candour; it acknowledges frankly the evils then experienced; and it details the actual moral change wrought in individuals and in society at large, in such a

manner, that no one, who believes in regeneration as the work of the Holy Spirit, can doubt that this change was effected by the finger of God.

Though the attention to religion, at this period, was more powerful and more universal at Northampton, than in almost any other congregation, there was yet scarcely one in which so few of these evils were experienced. The reason was, that their spiritual guide had already formed, in his own mind, settled principles respecting a genuine revival of religion—as to its cause, its nature, and in the most important points, as to the manner in which it was to be treated. He regarded it as caused—not by appeals to the feelings or the passions, but—by the truth of God brought home to the mind, in a subordinate sense by the preaching of the gospel, but in a far higher sense by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit. He considered such an event, so far as man is concerned, as the simple effect of a practical attention to truth, on the conscience and the heart. He felt it to be his great, and in a sense his only, duty, therefore, to urge divine truth on the feelings and consciences of his hearers, with all possible solemnity and power. How he in fact urged it, his published sermons will show.

Yet even in Northampton many things occurred, which not only were deviations from decorum and good sense, but were directly calculated, as far as they prevailed, to change that which, in its commencement, was, to an uncommon degree, a silent and powerful work of Divine grace, into a scene of confusion and disorder. This was owing chiefly to contagion from without. “The former part of the revival of religion, in 1740 and 1741, seemed to be much more pure, having less of a corrupt mixture than in that of 1735 and 1736.—But in 1742, it was otherwise: the work continued more pure till we were infected from abroad. Our people hearing of, and some of them seeing, the work in other places, where there was a greater visible commotion than here, and the outward appearances were more extraordinary, their eyes were dazzled with the high professions and great show that some made, who came in hither from other places. That these people went so far before them in raptures and violent emotions of the affections, and a vehement zeal, and what they called *boldness for Christ*, our people were ready to think was owing to far greater attainments in grace and intimacy with heaven. These things had a strange influence on the people, and gave many of them a deep and unhappy tincture, from which it was a hard and long labour to deliver them, and from which some of them are not fully delivered to this day.”

In many parishes, where the attention to religion commenced in 1742, it was extensively, if not chiefly, of this unhappy character. This was particularly true in the eastern part of Connecticut, and in the eastern and southeastern part, and some of the more central parishes, of Massachusetts. Churches and congregations were torn asunder, many ministers were dismissed, churches of a separatist character were formed, the peace of society was permanently broken up, and a revival of religion became extensively, in the view of the community, another name for the prevalence of fanaticism, disorder, and misrule. This unhappy and surprising change should prove an everlasting beacon to the church of God.

I have already had occasion to remark, that the “Narrative of Surprising Conversions” was repeatedly published, and extensively circulated, throughout England and Scotland. The same was true of Mr. Edwards’s Five Sermons preached during the revival of religion in 1734-5, and of his discourse on “the

Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God.” The effect of these publications, particularly of the first, was in the latter country great and salutary. The eyes both of ministers and Christians were extensively opened to the fact, that an effusion of the Spirit, resembling in some good degree those recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, might take place, and might rationally be expected to take place, in modern times, in consequence of the direct and powerful application of similar means. Scotland was at that time favoured with the labours of many clergymen, greatly respected for their piety and talents; among whom were the Rev. William M’Culloch of Cambuslang, the Rev. John Robe of Kilsyth, the Rev. John M’Laurin of Glasgow, the Rev. Thomas Gillespie of Carnock, the Rev. John Willison of Dundee, and the Rev. John Erskine of Kirkintilloch, afterwards Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh. These gentlemen, and many of their associates in the ministry, appear, at the time of which we are speaking, to have preached, not only with great plainness and fervency, but with the strongest confidence of immediate and great success; and, as a natural consequence, the church of Scotland soon witnessed a state of things, to which she had long been a stranger.

In February, 1742, a revival of religion began at Cambuslang, the parish of Mr. M’Culloch, four miles from Glasgow, resembling in its power and rapidity, and the number of conversions, that in Northampton, in 1734-5; and in the course of that year, scenes of a similar nature were witnessed in Kilsyth, Glasgow, Dundee, Carnock, Kirkintilloch, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and upwards of thirty towns and villages, in various parts of that kingdom. Thus the darkness which covers the earth was dispersed, for a season, from over these two countries, and the clear light of heaven shone down upon them, with no intervening cloud. In such circumstances, it might naturally be expected, that the prominent clergymen in both, feeling a common interest, and being engaged in similar labours, would soon open a mutual correspondence.

The first of Mr. Edwards’s correspondents in Scotland, was the Rev. Mr. M’Laurin of Glasgow; but, unfortunately, I have been able to procure none of the letters which passed between them. That gentleman, in the early part of 1743, having informed Mr. Edwards that his friend, Mr. M’Culloch of Cambuslang, had intended to write to him with a view of offering a correspondence, but had failed of the expected opportunity; Mr. Edwards addressed to the latter the following letter.

“To the Rev. William M’Culloch, Cambuslang.

*Northampton, May 12, 1743.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Mr. M’Laurin of Glasgow, in a letter he has lately sent me, informs me of your proposing to write a letter to me, and of your being prevented by the failing of the expected opportunity. I thank you Rev. Sir, that you had such a thing in your heart. We were informed last year, by the printed and well attested narrative, of the glorious work of God in your parish; which we have since understood has spread into many other towns and parishes in that part of Scotland; especially are we informed of this by Mr. Robe’s Narrative, and I

perceive by some papers of the Weekly History, sent me by Mr. M'Laurin of Glasgow, that the work has continued to make glorious progress at Cambuslang, even till it has prevailed to a wonderful degree indeed. God has highly favoured and honoured you, dear Sir, which may justly render your name precious to all that love our Lord Jesus Christ. We live in a day wherein God is doing marvellous things: in that respect, we are distinguished from former generations. God has wrought great things in New England, which, though exceedingly glorious, have all along been attended with some threatening clouds; which, from the beginning, caused me to apprehend some great stop or check to be put to the work, before it should be begun and carried on in its genuine purity and beauty, to subdue all before it, and to prevail with an irresistible and continual progress and triumph; and it is come to pass according to my apprehensions. But yet I cannot think otherwise, than that what has now been doing, is the forerunner of something vastly greater, more pure, and more extensive. I can't think that God has come down from heaven, and done such great things before our eyes, and gone so much beside and beyond his usual way of working, and wrought so wonderfully, and that he has gone away with a design to leave things thus. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? And will God, when he has wrought so wonderfully, and made the earth to bring forth in one day, bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? And shall he cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? I live upon the brink of the grave, in great infirmity of body, and nothing is more uncertain, than whether I shall live to see it: but, I believe God will revive his work again before long, and that it will not wholly cease till it has subdued the whole earth. But God is now going and returning to his place, till we acknowledge our offence, and, I hope, to humble his church in New England, and purify it, and so fit it for yet greater comfort, that he designs in due time to bestow upon it. God may deal with his church, as he deals with a particular saint; commonly, after his first comfort, the clouds return, and there is a season of remarkable darkness, and hiding of God's face, and buffetings of Satan; but all to fit for greater mercy; and as it was with Christ himself, who, presently after the heavens were opened above his head, and the Spirit was poured out upon him, and God wonderfully testified his love to him, was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil forty days. I hope God will show us our errors, and teach us wisdom by his present withdrawals. Now in the day of adversity, we have time and cause to consider, and begin now to have opportunity to see, the consequences of our conduct. I wish that God's ministers and people, every where, would take warning by our errors, and the calamities that are the issue of them. I have mentioned several things, in my letters to Mr. M'Laurin and Mr. Robe; another I might have mentioned, that most evidently proves of ill consequence, that is, we have run from one extreme to another, with respect to talking of experiences; that whereas formerly there was too great a reservedness in this matter, of late many have gone to an unbounded openness, frequency, and constancy, in talking of their experiences, declaring almost every thing that passes between God and their own souls, every where and before every body. Among other ill consequences of such a practice, this is one, that religion runs all into that channel; and religion is placed very much in it, so that the strength of it seems to be spent in it; that other duties, that are of vastly greater importance, have been looked upon as light in comparison of this, so that other parts of religion have been really much injured thereby: as



when we see a tree excessively full of leaves, we find so much less fruit; and when a cloud arises with an excessive degree of wind, we have the less rain. How much, dear Sir, does God's church at such a day need the constant gracious care and guidance of our good Shepherd; and especially, we that are ministers.

I should be glad, dear Sir, of a remembrance in your prayers, and also of your help, by informations and instructions, by what you find in your experience in Scotland. I believe it to be the duty of one part of the church of God thus to help another.

I am, dear Sir, your affectionate

Brother and servant in Jesus Christ,

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

The following is the answer of Mr. M'Culloch to the preceding letter.

"*Cambuslang, Aug. 13, 1743.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

The happy period in which we live, and the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, wherewith you first were visited, in Northampton, in the year 1734; and then, more generally, in New England, in 1740, and 1741; and then we, in several places in Scotland, in 1742, and 1743; and the strong opposition made to this work, with you and with us, checked by an infinitely superior power; often brings to my mind that prophecy, "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." I cannot help thinking that this prophecy eminently points at our times; and begins to be fulfilled in the multitudes of souls that are bringing in to fear the Lord, to worship God in Christ, in whom his name is, and to see his glory in his sanctuary. And it is, to me, pretty remarkable, that the prophet here foretells they should do so, in the period he points at, not from east to west, but from west to east; mentioning the west before the east, contrary to the usual way of speaking in other prophecies, as where Malachi foretells, that the name of the Lord should be great among the Gentiles, from the rising of the sun to the west, (Mal. i. 11.) and our Lord Jesus, that many should come from the east and west, &c. (Matt. viii. 11.) And in this order it was, that the light of the gospel came to dawn on the several nations, in the propagation of it through the world. But the prophet here, under the conduct of the Holy Spirit, who chooses all his words in infinite wisdom, puts the west before the east; intending, as I conceive, thereby to signify, that the glorious revival of religion, and the wide and diffusive spread of vital Christianity, in the latter times of the gospel, should begin in the more *westerly* parts, and proceed to these more *easterly*. And while it should be doing so, or shortly after, great opposition should arise, *the enemy should come in as a flood*: Satan should, with great violence, assault particular believing souls; and stir up men to malign and reproach the work of God; and, it's likely also, raise a terrible persecution against the church. But while the enemy might seem, for a time, to

be thus carrying all before him, *the Spirit of the Lord should lift up a standard against him*; give a banner to them that fear him, and animate them to display it for the truth, and make his word mightily to prevail, and bear down all opposing power. For on what side soever the Almighty and Eternal Spirit of Jehovah lifts up a standard, there the victory is certain; and we may be sure he will lift it up in defence of his own work. The Chaldee paraphrase makes the words in the latter part of this verse, to allude to the river Euphrates, when it breaks over all its banks, and overflows the adjacent plains: thus when persecutors shall come in, as the inundation of the river Euphrates, they shall be broke in pieces by the word of the Lord.

The whole of this verse seems to me to have an aspect to the present and past times, for some years. The Sun of righteousness has been making his course from west to east, and shedding his benign and quickening influences, on poor forlorn and benighted souls, in places vastly distant from one another. But clouds have arisen and intercepted his reviving beams. The enemy of salvation has broke in as an overflowing flood, almost overwhelmed poor souls, newly come into the spiritual world, after they had got some glimpse of the glory of Christ, with a deluge of temptations; floods of ungodly men, stirred up by Satan, and their natural enmity at religion, have affrighted them; mistaken and prejudiced friends have disowned them. Many such things have already befallen the subjects of this glorious work of God of late years. But I apprehend more general and formidable trials are yet to come: and that the enemy's coming in as a flood, may relate to a flood of errors or persecutions of fierce enemies, rushing in upon the church and threatening to swallow her up. But our comfort is, that the Spirit of the Lord of hosts will lift up a standard, against all the combined powers of earth and hell, and put them to flight; and Christ having begun to conquer, so remarkably, will go on from conquering to conquer, till the whole earth be filled with his glory. Rev. xii. 15, Isa. xvii. 12, 13.

I mention these things, dear Sir, not for your information, for I know that I can add nothing to you; but to show my agreement with you, in what you express as your sentiments, that what has now been a doing is the forerunner of something vastly greater, more pure, and more extensive, and that God will revive his work again, ere long, and that it will not wholly cease, till it has subdued the whole earth: and, without pretending to prophecy, to hint a little at the ground of my expectations. Only I'm afraid (which is a thing you do not hint at) that before these glorious times, some dreadful stroke or trial may yet be abiding us. May the Lord prepare us for it. But as to this, I cannot and dare not peremptorily determine. All things I give up to farther light, without pretending to fix the times and seasons for God's great and wonderful works, which he has reserved in his own power, and the certain knowledge of which he has locked up in his own breast."

The same conveyance brought Mr. Edwards the following letter, from the Rev. Mr. Robe, of Kilsyth.

*"Kilsyth, Aug. 16, 1743.*

REV. SIR, AND VERY DEAR BROTHER,

We acknowledge, with praise and thanks, the Lord's keeping his work hitherto, *with us*, free from those errors and disorders, which, through the subtlety of the serpent, and corruptions even of good men, were mixed with it in

New England. As this was no more just ground of objection against what was among you, being a real work of the Holy Spirit, than the same things were against the work of God in Corinth, and other places, at the first conversion of the pagans, and afterwards at the reformation from popery; so the many adversaries to this blessed work here, have as fully made use of all those errors, disorders, and blemishes, against it *there*, as objections, as if they had really been *here*. The most unseasonable accounts from America, the most scurrilous and bitter pamphlets, and representations from mistaking brethren, were much and zealously propagated. Only it was overruled by Providence, that those letters and papers dropped what was a real testimony to the goodness of the work they designed to defame and render odious. Many thinking persons concluded, from the gross calumnies forged and spread against the Lord's work here, within a few miles of them, that such stories from America could not be much depended on.

What you write about the trial of extraordinary joys and raptures, by their concomitants and effects, is most solid; and our practice, by all I know, hath been conformable to it. It hath been in the strongest manner declared, that no degree of such rapturous joys evidenced them to be from God, unless they led to God, and carried with them those things which accompany salvation. Such conditional applications of the promises of grace and glory as you justly recommend, hath been all along our manner. A holy fear of caution and watchfulness, hath been much pressed upon the subjects of this work, who appeared to believe through grace. And what is greatly comfortable, and reason of great praise to our God, is, that there is, as is yet known to any one in these bounds, no certain instance of what can be called apostacy; and not above four instances of any who have fallen into any gross sin.

As to the state and progress of this blessed work here, and in other places, it is as followeth. Since the account given in the several prints of my Narrative, which I understand is or will be at Boston; the awakening of secure sinners hath and doth continue in this congregation; but not in such multitudes as last year, neither can it be reasonably expected. What is ground of joy and praise is, that there scarce hath been two or three weeks, but wherein I have some instance of persons newly awakened, besides several come to my knowledge who have been awakened, and appear in a most hopeful state, before they were known to me. Of which I had an instance yesterday, of a girl awakened, as she saith, in October last. I have, at writing this, an instance of a woman who appears to have obtained a good issue of her awakening last year; though I supposed it had come to nothing, through her intermitting to come to me of a long time. There is this difference in this parish betwixt the awakening last year and now; that some of their bodies have been affected by their fears, in a convulsive or hysteric way; and yet the inward distress of some of them hath been very sharp. I have seen two or three, who have fainted under apprehension of the hiding of God's face, or of their having received the Lord's supper unworthily. In some of the neighbouring congregations, where this blessed work was last year, there are instances of discernible awakenings this summer. In the large parish of St. Ninians, to the north of this, I was witness to the awakening of some, and conversed with others awakened, the middle of July last. In the parish of Sintrie to the west of St. Ninians there were several newly awakened at the giving the Lord's supper, about the end of July. In Gargunnock, Kippen, Killern, farther north and west, the Lord's work is yet

discernible. At Muthel, which is about twenty miles north from this, the minister wrote me about the middle of July, that this blessed work, which hath appeared there since last summer as at Cambuslang, yet continued; and hath spread into other parishes, and reacheth even to the Highlands bordering upon that parish.

I am not without hopes of having good accounts of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the shires of Rosse and Nairn among the northernmost parts of Scotland. There was more than ordinary seriousness, in some parishes, in hearing the word, and in a concern about their souls, in the spring, when I saw some godly ministers from those bounds. This more than ordinary seriousness in hearing, and about communion times, is observable in several parts in Scotland, this summer. Societies for prayer setting up where there were none, and in other places increasing. A concern among the young are in some of the least hopeful places in Scotland, particularly in the Meuse near the English borders. There is a great likelihood of the Lord's doing good by the gospel, in this discernible way, in those bounds. Mr. M'Laurin, my dear brother, gives you an account of the progress of this work to the west of Glasgow, and other places. There have been very extraordinary manifestations of the love of God, in Christ Jesus, unto this people, in the use of the holy supper, and in the dispensation of the word about that time, this summer; which hath made the Lord's people desire it a second time in these congregations during the summer season. It was given here upon the first sabbath of July, and is to be given here next Lord's day, a second time, upon such a desire.

Your affectionate brother and servant

In our dearest Lord,

JAMES ROBE."

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Sereno E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

**CHAPTER XIII.**

FIRST INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BRAINERD—SEPARATIONS FROM CHURCHES—LETTER TO REV. MR. WHITMAN—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. CLAP—CHARACTER OF THAT GENTLEMAN—SERMON AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. ABERCROMBIE—LETTER TO MR. M'CULLOCH—VIEWS OF THE PROPHECIES RELATIVE TO THE CHURCH—SERMON AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. BUELL.

In September, 1743, Mr. Edwards, while attending the public commencement at New-Haven, first became acquainted with David Brainerd, then a missionary at Kaunaumee. Brainerd, when a sophomore in college, in consequence of some indiscreet remarks, uttered in the ardour of his religious zeal, respecting the opposition of two of the faculty to the preaching of Mr. Whitefield, but which a generous mind would have wholly disregarded, had been expelled from the college. As this was the commencement, at which his class were to receive the degree of A.B., he came to New-Haven to attempt a reconciliation with the faculty, and made to them a truly humble and christian acknowledgment of his fault. "I was witness," says Mr. Edwards, "to the very christian spirit which Brainerd showed at that time; being then at New-Haven, and one whom he thought fit to consult on that occasion. There truly appeared in him a great degree of calmness and humility; without the least appearance of rising of spirit for any ill-treatment which he supposed he had suffered, or the least backwardness to abase himself before those, who, as he thought, had wronged him. What he did was without any objection or appearance of reluctance, even in private to his friends, to whom he freely opened himself. Earnest application was made on his behalf, that he might have his degree then given him; and particularly by the Rev. Mr. Burr of Newark, one of the correspondents of the Honourable Society in Scotland; he being sent from New Jersey to New-Haven, by the rest of the commissioners, for that end; and many arguments were used, but without success. He desired his degree, as he thought it would tend to his being more extensively useful; but still, when he was denied it, he manifested no disappointment nor resentment."

I have already alluded to the numerous separations of individual members, from the churches to which they belonged, which occurred about this period, and usually for the alleged want of piety, either of the minister or of the church. As these commonly took place without a regular dismissal, it became a practical question of some interest, how the withdrawing members should be treated. Mr. Edwards, having been consulted on this subject, with reference to

some of the members of the second church in Hartford, who had thus withdrawn, addressed the following letter to the minister of that church.

“To the Rev. Elnathan Whitman, of Hartford, Connecticut.

*Northampton, Feb. 9, 1744.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Mr. P—was here this week, and requested my opinion, with respect to the proper treatment of a number of persons, who have absented themselves from your meeting, and have since attended public worship in W ——. I declined giving any opinion, except a very general one, to him; but, on reflection, have concluded to express my thoughts to you, as a friend, leaving you to attach to them such weight as you may see cause.

“As to differences, among professing Christians, of opinion and practice, about things that appertain to religion, and the worship of God, I am ready to think that you and I are agreed, as to the general principles of liberty of conscience; and that men’s using methods with their neighbours, to oblige them to a conformity to their sentiments or way, is in nothing so unreasonable, as in the worship of God; because that is a business, in which each person acts for himself, with his Creator and Supreme Judge, as one concerned for his own acceptance with him; and on which depends his own, and not his neighbour’s, eternal happiness, and salvation from everlasting ruin. And it is an affair, wherein every man is infinitely more concerned with his Creator than he is with his neighbour. And so I suppose that it will be allowed, that every man ought to be left to his own conscience, in what he judges will be most acceptable to God, or what he supposes is the will of God, as to the kind, or manner, or means of worship, or the society of worshippers he should join with in worship. Not but that a great abuse may be made of this doctrine of liberty of conscience in the worship of God. I know that many are ready to justify every thing in their own conduct, from this doctrine, and I do not suppose that men’s pretence of conscience is always to be regarded, when made use of to justify their charging the society of worshippers they unite with, or the means of their worship, or indeed the kind or manner of their worship. Men may make this pretence at times under such circumstances, that they may, obviously, be worthy of no credit in what they pretend. It may be manifest from the nature and circumstances of the case, and their own manner of behaviour, that it is not conscience, but petulancy, and malice, and wilfulness, and obstinacy, that influence them. And, therefore, it seems to me evident, that, when such pleas are made, those that are especially concerned with them as persons that are peculiarly obliged to take care of their souls, have no other way to do, but to consider the nature and circumstances of the case, and from thence to judge whether the case be such as will admit of such a plea, or whether the nature of things will admit of such a supposition, that the men act conscientiously in what they do, considering all things that appertain to the case. And in this, I conceive, many things are to be considered and laid together, as—the nature of that thing is the subject of controversy, or wherein they differ from others, or have changed their own practice—the degree in which it is disputable, or how it may be supposed liable to diversity of opinion, one way or the other, as to its agreeableness to the word of God, and as to the importance of it, with regard

to men's salvation or the good of their souls—the degree of knowledge or ignorance of the persons, the advantages they had for information, or the disadvantages they have been under, and what has been in their circumstances that might mislead the judgment—the principles that have been instilled into them—the instructions they have received from those, of whose piety and wisdom they have had a high opinion, which might misguide the judgment of persons of real honesty, and sincerity, and tender conscience—the example of others—the diversity of opinion among ministers—the general state of things in the land—the character of the persons themselves—and the manner of their behaviour in the particular affair in debate.

Now, Sir, with regard to those persons that have gone from you, to W— however you may look upon their behaviour herein as very disorderly, yet, if you suppose (the case being considered with all its circumstances) that there was any room for charity, that it might be through infirmity, ignorance, and error of judgment, so that they might be truly conscientious in it; that is, might really believe it to be their duty, and what God required of them, to do as they have done; you would, I imagine, by no means think, that they ought to be proceeded with, in the use of such means as are proper to be used with contumacious offenders, or those that are stubborn and obstinate in scandalous vice and wilful wickedness; or that you would think it proper to proceed with persons, towards whom there is this room left for charity, that possibly they may be honest and truly conscientious, acting as persons afraid to offend God, so as to cut them off from the communion of the Lord, and cast them forth into the visible kingdom of Satan, to be as harlots and publicans.

Now, it may be well to examine, whether it can positively be determined, when all things are taken into consideration with respect to these persons, who have absented themselves from your assembly, that it is not possible in their case, that this might really be their honest judgment, that it was their duty to do so, and that God required it of them, and that they should greatly expose the welfare of their own souls, in attending no other public worship but that in your congregation. I suppose these persons are not much versed in casuistical divinity. They are of the common people, whose judgments, in all nations and ages, are exceedingly led and swayed. They are not very capable of viewing things in the extent of their consequences, and of estimating things in their true weight and importance. And you know, dear Sir, the state that things have been in, in the country. You know what opinions have lately prevailed, and have been maintained and propagated, by those that have been lifted up to heaven, in their reputation for piety and great knowledge in spiritual things, with a great part of the people of New England. I do not pretend to know what has influenced these people, in particular; but I think, under these circumstances, it would be no strange thing, if great numbers of the common people in the country, who are really conscientious, and concerned to be accepted with God, and to take the best course for the good of their souls, should really think in their hearts that God requires them to attend the ministry of those that are called New Light Ministers, and that it would be dangerous to their souls, and what God approved not of, ordinarily to attend the ministry of others; yea, I should think it strange if it were otherwise. It ought to be considered, how public controversy, and a great and general cry in matters of religion, strongly influences the conduct of multitudes of the common people, how it blinds their minds, and wonderfully misleads their judgments. And the rules of the gospel,

and the example of the apostles, most certainly require that great allowances be made in such cases. And particularly the example of the apostle Paul, with regard to great numbers of professing Christians, in the church of Corinth; who, in a time of great and general confusion in that church, through the evil instructions of teachers whom they admired, who misled and blinded their judgments, ran into many and great disorders in their worship, and woeful schisms and divisions among themselves—particularly with regard to ministers, and even with regard to the apostle Paul himself, whom many of them seem for a time to have forsaken, to follow others who set up themselves in opposition to him; though, as he says, he had been their father who begat them through the gospel. Yet with how much gentleness does the apostle treat them, still acknowledging them as brethren; and though he required church censures to be used with regard to the incestuous person, yet there is no intimation of the apostle taking any such course, with those that had been misled by these false teachers, or with any that had been guilty of these disorders, except with the false teachers themselves. But as soon as they are brought off from following these false apostles any longer, he embraces them without further ado, with all the love and tenderness of a father; burying all their censoriousness, and schisms, and disorders, at the Lord's supper, as well as their ill treatment of him, the extraordinary messenger of Christ to them. And, indeed, the apostle never so much as gave any direction for the suspension of any one member from the Lord's supper, on account of these disorders, or from any other part of the public worship of God; but instead of this, gives them directions how they shall go on to attend the Lord's supper, and other parts of worship, in a better manner. And he himself, without suspension or interruption, goes on to call and treat them as beloved brethren, Christians, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints; and praises God in their behalf, for the grace that is given to them by Christ Jesus; and often and abundantly exhibits his charity towards them, in innumerable expressions which I might mention. And nothing is more apparent than that he does not treat them as persons, with respect to whom there lies a bar in the way of others treating them with the charity that belongs to saints, and good and honest members of the christian church, until the bar be removed by a church process. And, indeed, the insisting on a church process with every member that has behaved disorderly, in such a state of general confusion, is not a way to build up the church of God, (which is the end of church discipline,) but to pull it down. It will not be the way to cure a diseased member, but to bring a disease on the whole body.

I am not alone in these sentiments; but I have reason to think that Col. Stoddard, from the conversation I have had with him, is in the like way of thinking. There came hither, the last fall, two young men belonging to the church at New-Haven, who had been members of Mr. Noyes's church, but had left it and joined the separate church, and entered into covenant with it, when that church was embodied. This was looked upon as a crime, that ought not to be passed over, by Mr. Noyes and the rector. They declared themselves willing to return to Mr. Noyes's meeting; but a particular confession was required of them in the meeting-house. Accordingly, each of them had offered a confession, but it was not thought sufficient; but it was required that they should add some things, of which they thought hard; and they consulting me about it, I acquainted Col. Stoddard with the affair, and desired his thoughts. He said he looked upon it unreasonable to require any confession at all; and that, consid-



ering the general state of confusion that had existed, and the instructions and examples these young men had had, it might well be looked upon enough, that they were now willing to change their practice, and return again to Mr. Noyes's meeting. Not that you, Rev. Sir, are obliged to think as Col. Stoddard does; yet I think, considering his character and relation, his judgment may well be of so much weight, as to engage you the more to attend to and weigh the reasons he gives.

The objections, that these persons may have had against ordinarily attending your meeting, may be very trivial; but yet I suppose that, through infirmity, the case may be so with truly honest Christians, that trivial things may have great weight in their consciences, so as to have fast hold of them, until they are better enlightened: as in the former times of the country, it was with respect to the controversy between presbyterians and congregationalists. It was, as I have heard, in those days real matter of question with some, whether a presbyterian, living and dying such, could be saved. Some presbyterians, that have lived with us, have desired baptism for their children, who yet lived in neglect of the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, because of a difference in some trivial circumstances of the administration, from the method of the church of Scotland. This matter being discoursed of, it was thought by Col. Stoddard in particular, that their neglect ought to be borne with, and they ought to be looked upon as Christians, and their children received to baptism; because, however trivial the foundation of their scruples were, yet through ignorance they might be honest and conscientious in them.

As to the church covenant, that these persons have entered into, wherein they have obliged themselves ordinarily to join in the worship of that church; I suppose none interpret the promises of a church covenant in such a sense, as to exclude all reserves of liberty, in case of an alteration of the judgment, in the affairs of conscience and religion, in one respect or another. As if a person, after incorporating with a congregational church, should become a conscientious episcopalian, or anabaptist, or should, by any change of judgment, come to think the means or manner of worship unlawful; and so in other respects that might be mentioned.

And if it be so that these persons, in some of their conversation and behaviour, have manifested a contentious, froward spirit, at the time of their withdrawing from your church; I confess this gives greater ground of suspicion of the sincerity of their plea of conscience; yet, as to this, I humbly conceive allowances must be made. It must be considered, that it is possible that persons, in an affair of this nature, may, in the thing itself, be conscientious, and yet, in the course of the management of it, may be guilty of very corrupt mixtures of passion and every evil disposition; as indeed is commonly the case with men, in long controversies of whatever nature, and even with conscientious men. And therefore it appears to me, that if persons in such a case are not obstinate, in what is amiss in them in this respect, and don't attempt to justify their frowardness and unchristian speeches, they notwithstanding may deserve credit, when they profess themselves conscientious in the affair in general.

Thus, dear Sir, I have freely communicated to you some of my thoughts, with regard to some of the concerns of this difficult day, which prove a trouble to you; not however with any aim at directing your conduct, but merely to comply with the request to which I have alluded. I am fully sensible, that I am not the pastor of the second church of Hartford; and I only desire you would

impartially consider the reasons I have offered. Begging of Christ, our common Lord, that he would direct you in your theory and practice, to that which will be acceptable in his sight,

I remain, Rev. Sir,  
Your friend and brother,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

In May, 1743, Mr. Edwards went, as he often did, to Boston, to attend the convention of the clergy, which is held the day after the General Election. He was on horseback, and had his eldest daughter on a pillion behind him. At Brookfield, they fell in company with the Rev. Mr. Clap, rector of Yale College, his wife and son-in-law, also on horseback, with several others, all traveling in the same direction; and Mr. Edwards, joining the company, rode side by side with Mr. Clap, during a considerable part of the journey. At the commencement of Harvard college in the following year, 1744, Mr. Clap stated, before a large number of gentlemen, both at Boston and Cambridge, that, while riding through Leicester, in May of the year preceding, he was informed by Mr. Edwards, that Mr. Whitefield told him, “that he had the design of turning out of their places the greater part of the ministers of New England, and of supplying their pulpits with ministers from England, Scotland, and Ireland.” This statement surprised those who heard it; yet, coming from such a source, it was believed, and extensively circulated. Mr. Edwards heard of it with astonishment, and without hesitation denied that he had said so. Mr. Clap, hearing of this denial, addressed a letter to Mr. Edwards, dated Oct. 12, 1744, in which he stated anew the alleged conversation, in the same terms; but before the latter received it, he had forwarded a letter to Mr. Clap, dated Oct. 18, 1744, showing him his mistake, and calling on him to correct it. On Oct. 29th, he wrote a reply to Mr. Clap’s letter of the 12th; and receiving another, dated Oct. 28th, before he sent it, he replied to that also in the postscript, under date of Nov. 3d. Mr. Clap, finding that Mr. Edwards’s contradiction of his statement was believed; and having heard, though incorrectly, that Mr. Edwards was about to publish such a contradiction; incautiously published a letter to his friend in Boston, in which he not only re-asserted his former statement, but declared that Mr. Edwards, in his private correspondence with him on the subject, had made a declaration, equally full and strong, to the same point. Mr. Edwards published a reply, in a letter to his friend in Boston, dated Feb. 4, 1745; in which he gave his two letters of Oct. 18, and Oct. 29, with the postscript of Nov. 3; from which it appears that, instead of admitting the truth of Mr. Clap’s statement, he had most explicitly and solemnly denied it; and, in order to show how Mr. Clap might have been led into the mistake, acknowledged that he himself supposed that Mr. Whitefield was formerly of the opinion, that unconverted ministers ought not to be continued in the ministry; and that he himself supposed that Mr. Whitefield endeavoured to propagate this opinion, and a practice agreeable to it; and that all he had ever stated to any one was, his own opinion merely, and not any declared design of Mr. Whitefield. He also admitted, that Mr. Whitefield told him he intended to bring over a number of young men, to be ordained by the Messrs. Tennents, in New Jersey. He then asks, whether this is the same thing as Mr. Clap asserted, and

suggests a variety of arguments, which seem absolutely conclusive, that he could never have made such a statement.

Mr. Clap, in reply to this, in a letter to Mr. Edwards, dated April 1, 1745, enters seriously upon the task of showing that Mr. Edwards's assertion—"that Mr. Whitefield told him, that he intended to bring over a number of young men, to be ordained by the Messrs. Tennents, in New Jersey"—connected with the assertion—that Mr. Edwards himself supposed, that Mr. Whitefield was formerly of the opinion, that unconverted ministers ought not to be continued in the ministry, and that Mr. Edwards himself supposed that Mr. Whitefield endeavoured to propagate this opinion, and a practice agreeable to it—was equivalent to Mr. Edwards's saying, that Mr. Whitefield told him, "that he had the design of turning out of their places the greater part of the ministers of New England, and of supplying their places with ministers from England, Scotland, and Ireland."

Mr. Edwards, in a letter to Mr. Clap, of May 20, 1745, after exposing in a few words the desperate absurdity of this attempt, enters on the discussion of the question—Whether he ever made such a statement to Mr. Clap?—with as much calmness as he afterwards exhibited in examining the question of a self-determining power; and with such logical precision of argument, that probably no one of his readers ever had a doubt left upon his mind, with regard to it;—no, not even his antagonist himself; for he never thought proper to attempt a reply; and in the public protest of the faculty of Yale college, against Mr. Whitefield, he and his associates in office say, in alluding to this very conversation, "You told the Rev. Mr. Edwards of Northampton, that you intended to bring over a number of young men from England, to be ordained by the Tennents." Those who have an opportunity of reading these communications, will find, in those of Mr. Edwards, an example of a personal controversy, conducted throughout, and to a very uncommon degree, in the spirit of the gentleman and the Christian.

This occurred at a period of great excitement, when many ministers had been removed, and many churches rent asunder; and when the minds of men were of course prepared beforehand to believe every thing that favoured their own side of the question. Mr. Clap was in this case obviously mistaken; still he was truly a man of respectability and worth. He had a powerful mind, rich in invention, and stored with knowledge, was profoundly versed in mathematics, physics, and astronomy, as well as the principles of law, and proved an able instructor and governor of the institution over which he presided. He was elected by a board of trustees, exclusively Arminian in sentiment, and all his associates in office held the same tenets. At the same time, though he entered warmly into the controversy relative to Mr. Whitefield, from a full conviction that it was his design to occasion the separation of churches, and to procure as far as possible the ejection of all whom he regarded as unconverted ministers; and was doubtless happy in supposing himself able to prove that such was his avowed design, on the testimony of one of his warmest friends; yet he was far from taking the low ground of orthodoxy assumed by many on the same side, but always adhered to the doctrines of grace, and ultimately became their champion. Some time after this, he showed his magnanimity, by introducing the *Essay on the Freedom of the Will*, as a classic in the college.

In August, 1744, Mr. Edwards preached the sermon entitled, "The True Excellency of a Gospel Minister," at the ordination of Mr. Robert Abercrom-

bie, to the ministry of the gospel, at Pelham. This gentleman was from Scotland, having been made known to Mr. Edwards by his correspondents in that country; and through his kind offices was introduced to the people at Pelham. The sermon was immediately published.

The reader will probably recollect, that Mr. M'Culloch, in his letter of August 13, 1743, had expressed the opinion, that the church of God, previous to her ultimate extension and triumph, was destined to meet with "more extensive and formidable trials," than she had ever before experienced. Mr. Edwards, from a minute investigation of the scriptural prophecies, having been convinced that this, which was at that time the commonly received opinion of the church, was erroneous; expresses his dissent from it in the following answer.

"To the Rev. Mr. M'Culloch.

*Northampton, March 5, 1744.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I return you thanks for your most obliging, entertaining, and instructive letter, dated Aug. 13, 1743, which I received about the latter end of October: my answering which has been unhappily delayed, by reason of my distance from Boston, and not being able to find any opportunity to send thither, till the ship was gone that brought your letter; which I much regretted. My delaying to answer has been far from arising from any indifference with respect to this correspondence, by which I am sensible I am highly honoured and privileged.

'Tis probable that you have been informed, by other correspondents, before now, what the present state of things in New England is: it is, indeed, on many accounts very melancholy; there is a vast alteration within these two years; for about so long I think it is, since the Spirit of God began to withdraw, and this great work has been on the decline. Great numbers in the land, about two years ago, were raised to an exceedingly great height in joy and elevation of mind; and through want of watchfulness, and sensibleness of the danger and temptation that there is in such circumstances, many were greatly exposed, and the devil taking the advantage, multitudes were soon, and to themselves insensibly, led far away from God and their duty; God was provoked that he was not sanctified in this height of advancement, as he ought to have been; he saw our spiritual pride and self-confidence, and the polluted flames that arose of intemperate, unhallowed zeal; and he soon, in a great measure, withdrew from us; and the consequence has been, that the enemy has come in like a flood, in various respects, until the deluge has overwhelmed the whole land. There had from the beginning been a great mixture, especially in some places, of false experiences, and false religion with true; but from about this time, the mixture became much greater, many were led away with sad delusions; and this opened the door for the enemy to come in like a flood in another respect, it gave great advantages to these enemies and opposers of this work, furnished them with weapons and gave them new courage, and has laid the friends of the work under such disadvantage, that nothing that they could do would avail any thing to withstand their violence. And now it is come to that, that the work is put to a stop every where, and it is a day of the enemy's triumph; but I believe

also a day of God's people's humiliation, which will be better to them in the end than their elevations and raptures. The time has been amongst us when the sower went forth to sow, and we have seen the spring wherein the seed sprang up in different sorts of ground, appearing then fair and flourishing; but this spring is past, and we now see the summer, wherein the sun is up with a burning heat, that tries the sorts of ground; and now appears the difference, the seed in stony ground, where there was only a thin layer of earth on a rock, withers away, the moisture being dried out; and the hidden seeds and roots of thorns, in unsubdued ground, now spring up and choke the seed of the word. Many high professors are fallen, some into gross immoralities, some into a rooted spiritual pride, enthusiasm, and an incorrigible wildness of behaviour, some into a cold frame of mind, showing a great indifference to the things of religion. But there are many, and I hope those the greater part of those that were professed converts, who appear hitherto like the good ground, and notwithstanding the thick and dark clouds, that so soon follow that blessed sunshine that we have had; yet I cannot but stedfastly maintain a hope and persuasion that God will revive his work, and that what has been so great and very extraordinary, is a forerunner of a yet more glorious and extensive work.—It has been slanderously reported and printed concerning me, that I have often said, that the Millennium was already begun, and that it began at Northampton. A doctor of divinity in New England has ventured to publish this report to the world, from a single person, who is concealed and kept behind the curtain: but the report is very diverse from what I have ever said. Indeed I have often said, as I say now, that I looked upon the late wonderful revivals of religion as forerunners of those glorious times so often prophesied of in the Scripture, and that this was the first dawning of that light, and beginning of that work, which, in the progress and issue of it, would at last bring on the church's latter-day glory; but there are many that know that I have from time to time added, that there would probably be many sore conflicts and terrible convulsions, and many changes, revivings, and intermissions, and returns of dark clouds, and threatening appearances, before this work shall have subdued the world, and Christ's kingdom shall be every where established and settled in peace, which will be the lengthening of the Millennium or day of the church's peace, rejoicing, and triumph on earth, so often spoken of. I was much entertained and delighted, dear Sir, with your thoughts on that text in Isa. lix. 19. which you signify in your letter, and so have many others been to whom I have communicated them; and as to what you say of some dreadful stroke or trial yet abiding, before the happy days of the promised peace and prosperity of the church, I so far agree with you, that I believe that, before the church of God shall have obtained the conquest, and the visible kingdom of Satan on earth shall receive its overthrow, and Christ's kingdom of grace be every where established on its ruins, there shall be a great and mighty struggle between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan, attended with the greatest and most extensive convulsions and commotion, that ever were upon the face of the earth, wherein doubtless many particular Christians will suffer, and perhaps some parts of the church.

“But that the enemies of the church of God should ever gain such advantages against her any more, as they have done in times past, that the victory should ever any more be on their side, or that it shall ever be given to the beast again to make war with the saints, and to prevail against them, and overcome

them, (as in Rev. xiii. 7. and Rev. xi. 7. and Dan. vii. 21.) to such a degree as has been heretofore, is otherwise than I hope. Though in this I would be far from setting up my own judgment, in opposition to others, who are more skilled in the prophecies of Scripture than I am. I think that what has mainly induced many divines to be of that opinion, is what is said in Rev. xi. chap. xi. concerning the slaying of the witnesses, Rev. xi. 7, 8. ver. 7, 8. ‘And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city,’ &c.

The event here spoken of, seems evidently to be that wherein the enemies of the church gain the greatest advantage against her that ever they have, and have the greatest conquest of her that ever they obtained, and bring the church nearest to a total extinction. For a long time the church is very small, represented by two witnesses, and they had been long in a very low state, prophesying in sackcloth; but now they are dead and their enemies triumph over them, as having gotten a complete victory, and look upon it that they are now past all possibility of recovery, there being less prospect of the church’s restoration than ever there was before. But are we to expect this, dear Sir, that Satan will ever find means to bring things to pass, that after all the increase of light that has been in the world, since the Reformation, there shall be a return of a more dark time than in the depth of the darkness of popery, before the Reformation, when the church of God shall be nearer to a total extinction, and have less of visibility, all true religion and light be more blotted out of the memories of mankind, Satan’s kingdom of darkness be more firmly established, all monuments of true religion be more abolished, and that the state of the world should be such, that it should appear further from any hope of a revival of true religion than it ever has done; is this conceivable or possible, as the state of things now is all over the world, even among papists themselves, without a miracle, a greater than any power short of divine can effect, without a long tract of time, gradually to bring it to pass, to introduce the grossest ignorance and extinguish all memory and monuments of truth; which was the case in that great extinction of true religion that was before the Reformation. And besides, if we suppose this war of the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit with the witnesses, wherein he overcomes them and kills them, to be that last war which the church shall have with the beast, that great and mighty conflict that shall be just before the final overthrow of antichrist, that we read of in the “Rev. xvi.” 16th chap. the Rev. xiii. 3th and following verses, and in the “Rev. xix.” 19th chapter how shall we make them consist together? In the Rev. xi. 11th chapter the church conflicts in sorrow, clothed in sackcloth, and in blood; in the Rev. xix. 19th chap. the saints are not represented as fighting in sorrow and blood, though the battle be exceedingly great, but in strength, glory, and triumph. Their Captain goes forth to this battle, in great pomp and magnificence, on a white horse, and on his head many crowns, and on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords; and the saints follow him, not in sackcloth, but coming forth on white horses, clothed in pure linen, clean and white, the raiment of triumph, the same raiment that the saints appear in, Rev. vii. 14. when they appear with palms in their hands, after they had washed their robes, that had been stained with their own blood, and made themselves white in the blood of the Lamb. In the conflict spoken of in chap. xi. the beast makes war with the witnesses, and overcomes them, and kills

them: the same is foretold, Dan. vii. 21. and Rev. xiii. 7. But in that last great battle, just before the fall of antichrist, we find the reverse of this; the church shall obtain a glorious victory over the beast, and the beast is taken and cast into the lake of fire. Rev. xvii. 14. 'These shall make war with the Lamb; and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful:' compared with Rev. xix. 16. chap. xix. 16, to the end, and Rev. xvi. 16, 17. chap. xvi. 16, 17. In that conflict, Rev. xi. chap. xi. the beast has war with the witnesses, and kills them, and their dead bodies lie unburied, as if it were to be meat for the beasts of the earth and fowls of heaven; but in that last conflict, Christ and his church shall slay their enemies, and give their dead bodies to be meat for the beasts of the earth and fowls of heaven, Rev. xix. 17. chap. xix. 17. &c. There is no manner of appearance in the descriptions that are given of that great battle, of any great advantages gained in it against the church, before the enemy is overcome, but all appearance of the contrary. The descriptions in the Rev. xvi."16th and Rev. xix. 19th chapters of Rev. will by no means allow of such an advantage, as that of the overcoming and slaying of the church, or people of God, and their lying for some time unburied, that their dead bodies may be for their enemies to abuse and trample on, and make sport with. In the Rev. xvi. 16th chap. we have an account of their being gathered together into the place called Armageddon; and then the first thing we hear of after that, is the pouring out of the seventh vial of God's wrath, and a voice saying, It is done; and so in Rev. xix. chap. xix. we read of the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies being gathered together, to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army; and then the next thing we hear of is the beast's being taken, &c. The event of the conflict of the beast with the church, Rev. xi. chap. xi. is the triumph of the church's enemies, when they of the people, and kindred, and tongues, and nations, and they that dwell on the earth, shall see the dead bodies of the saints lying in the streets, and shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and send gifts one to another. But the event of that great and last battle, before the fall of antichrist, is quite the reverse of this, even the church's triumphing over their enemies, as being utterly destroyed. Those events, that are consequent on the issue of the war with the witnesses, Rev. xi. chap. xi. do in no wise answer to those, that are represented as consequent on that last conflict of antichrist with the church. 'Tis said that when the witnesses ascended into heaven, the same hour there was an earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand! but this don't seem at all to answer what is described, Rev. xvi. chap. xvi. and Rev. xix. xix. The great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And it had been said before, that there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And in Rev. xix. chap. xix. instead of slaying seven thousand men, it seems as if there was a general slaughter of all the enemies of the church, through the world. And besides, if we read this Rev. xi. 11th chapter through, we shall see that the falling of the tenth part of the city and the rising of the witnesses, and their standing on their feet and ascending into heaven, are represented there as entirely distinct from the accomplishment of the church's glory, after the fall of antichrist, and

God's judging and destroying the enemies of the church. The judgment here spoken of, as executed on God's enemies, are under another woe, and the benefits bestowed on the church, are under another trumpet: for immediately after the account of the rising and ascending of the witnesses, and its consequences, follow these words, Rev. xi. 14, 15. ver. 14, 15. 'The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.' And in the following verses, we have an account of the praises sung to God on the occasion; and in the last verse we have a brief hint of that same great earthquake, and the great hail, and those thunders, and lightnings, and voices, that we have an account of in the latter part of Rev. xvi. chap. xvi. so that the earthquake mentioned in the last verse of Rev. xi. chap. xi. seems to be the great earthquake, that attends the last great conflict of the church and her enemies, rather than that mentioned Rev. xi. 13. ver. 13.

The grand objection against all this is, that it is said, that the witnesses should prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth; and when they have finished their testimony, the beast should make war against them, and kill them, &c. and that it seems manifest that after this they are no longer in sackcloth; for henceforward they are in an exalted state in heaven: and that therefore, seeing the time of their wearing sackcloth is one thousand two hundred and sixty days, i.e. during the time of the continuance of antichrist; hence their being slain, and their rising again, must be at the conclusion of this period, at the end of antichrist's reign.

In answer to which I would say, with submission to better judgments, that I humbly conceive that we can justly infer no more from this prophecy than this, viz. that the one thousand two hundred and sixty days is the proper time (as it were) of the church's trouble and bondage, or being clothed in sackcloth, because it is the appointed time of the reign of antichrist; but this don't hinder but that God, out of great compassion to his church, should, in some respect, shorten the days, and grant that his church should in some measure anticipate the appointed great deliverance that should be at an end of these days, as he has in fact done in the Reformation; whereby his church has had a great degree of restoration granted her, from the darkness, power, and dominion of antichrist, before their proper time of restoration, which is at the end of the one thousand two hundred and sixty days; and so the church, through the compassion of her Father and Redeemer, anticipates her deliverance from her sorrows; and has, in some respects, an end put to her testifying in sackcloth, as many parts of the church are henceforward brought out from under the dominion of the antichristian powers, into a state of liberty; though in other respects, the church may be said still to continue in her sackcloth, and in the wilderness, (as Rev. xii. 14. chap. xii. 14.) till the end of the days. And as to the witnesses standing on their feet, and ascending into heaven; I would propose that it may be considered, Whether any more can be understood by it, than the protestant church's being now (at least as to many parts of it) able to stand on her own legs, and in her own defence, and being raised to such a state, that she henceforward is out of the reach of the Romish powers; that, let them do what they will, they shall never any more be able to get the church under their power, as they had before; as oftentimes in the Scriptures God's people dwelling in safety, out of the reach of their enemies, is represented by their dwelling on



high, or being set on high; Ps. lix. 1. Isa. xxxiii. 16. Ps. lxix. 29. and Ps. xci. 14. and Ps. cvii. 41. Prov. xxix. 25.; and the children of Israel, when brought out of Egypt, were said to be carried on eagle's wings, that is lofty in its flight, flies away towards heaven where none of her enemies can reach her.

I might here observe, that we have other instances of God's shortening the days of his church's captivity and bondage, either at the beginning or latter end, in some measure parallel with this. Thus the proper time of the bondage of the posterity of Abraham, in a strange land, was four hundred years, Gen. xv. 13.; but yet God in mercy delayed their bondage, whereby the time was much shortened at the beginning. So the time wherein it was foretold, that the whole land of Israel should be a desolation and an astonishment, and the land should not enjoy her sabbaths, was seventy years, Jer. xxv. 11, 12.; and these seventy years are dated in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, 21. from Zedekiah's captivity; and yet from that captivity to Cyrus's decree was about fifty-two years, though it was indeed about seventy years before the temple was finished. So the proper time of the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes, wherein both the sanctuary and the host should be trodden under-foot by him, was two thousand and three hundred days, Dan. vii. 13, 14. and yet God gave Israel a degree of deliverance by the Maccabees, and they were holpen with a little help, and the host ceased to be trodden under-foot before that time was expired. Dan. xi. 32, 34.

But in these things, dear Sir, I am by no means dogmatical; I do but humbly offer my thoughts on what you suggested in your letter, submitting them to your censure. 'Tis pity that we should expect such a terrible devastation of the church, before her last and most glorious deliverance, if there be no such thing to be expected. It may be a temptation to some of the people of God, the less earnestly to wish and pray for the near approach of the church's glorious day, and the less to rejoice in the signs of its approach.

But, let us go on what scheme we will, it is most apparent from the Scriptures, that there are mighty strugglings to be expected, between the church of God and her enemies, before her great victory; and there may be many lesser strugglings before that last, and greatest, and universal conflict. Experience seems to show that the church of God, according to God's method of dealing with her, needs a great deal gradually to prepare her for that prosperity and glory that he has promised her on earth; as the growth of the earth, after winter, needs gradually to be prepared for the summer heat: I have known instances, wherein by the heat's coming on suddenly in the spring, without intermissions of cold to check the growth, the branches, many of them, by a too hasty growth, have afterwards died. And perhaps God may bring on a spiritual spring as he does the natural, with now and then a pleasant sunshiny season, and then an interruption by clouds and stormy winds, till at length, by the sun more and more approaching, and the light increasing, the strength of the winter is broken. We are extremely apt to get out of the right way. A very great increase of comfort that is sudden, without time and experience, in many instances, has appeared to wound the soul, in some respects, though it seems to profit it in others. Sometimes, at the same time that the soul seems wonderfully delivered from those lusts, that are more carnal and earthly, there is an insensible increase of those that are more spiritual; as God told the children of Israel, that he would put out the former inhabitants of the land of Canaan, by little and little, and would not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the

field should increase upon them.—We need much experience, to teach us the innumerable ways that we are liable to err, and to show us the evil and pernicious consequences of those errors. If it should please God, before many years, to grant another great revival of religion in New England, we should perhaps be much upon our guard against such errors as we have run into, and which have undone us this time, but yet might run insensibly into other errors that now we think not of.

You inquire of me, Rev. Sir, whether I reject all those for counterfeits that speak of visions and trances. I am far from doing of it: I am and always have been, in that matter, of the same opinion that Mr. Robe expresses, in some of those pamphlets Mr. M'Laurin sent me, that persons are neither to be rejected nor approved on such a foundation. I have expressed the same thing in my discourse on 'the Marks of a Work of the True Spirit,' and have not changed my mind.

I am afraid, dear Sir, that I have been too bold with you, in being so lengthy and tedious, and have been too impertinent and forward to express my opinion upon this and that; but I consider myself as writing to a candid, christian friend and brother, with whom I may be free and bold, and from whom I may promise myself excuse and forgiveness. Dear brother, asking your earnest prayers for me and for New England, I am your affectionate brother, and engaged friend and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

The opinion here expressed by Mr. Edwards, was not the result of a slight and cursory examination of the subject in discussion. He had a considerable time before examined, at great length, the prophecies of Daniel and John, with regard to this very point; and, as we shall soon have occasion to remark, had been convinced that the opinion, then commonly received, that the severest trials of the church were yet future, was erroneous.

The Rev. Samuel Buell, whom I have already mentioned, as having preached at Northampton during the absence of Mr. Edwards, in January, 1742, with uncommon fervour and success, continued his labours, lxxxii as an evangelist among the churches, upwards of four years; and at length accepted of an invitation from the people of East Hampton, a village in the S. E. corner of Long Island, to become their minister. At his request, Mr. Edwards went to East Hampton, and there preached his installation sermon, on the 19th of September, 1746, from Isaiah lxii. 4, 5..

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

First published 1834

CHAPTER XIV.

MISTAKES EXTENSIVELY PREVALENT AT THIS TIME, AS TO THE NATURE AND EVIDENCES OF TRUE GODLINESS—"TREATISE ON RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS"—DESIGN AND CHARACTER OF THE WORK—REPUBLICED ABROAD—LETTER FROM MR. GILLESPIE CONCERNING IT—LETTER FROM MR. EDWARDS TO MR. M'CULLOCH—REPLY TO MR. GILLESPIE—PROPOSAL MADE IN SCOTLAND, FOR UNITED EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER—EFFORTS OF MR. EDWARDS TO PROMOTE IT—LETTER TO MR. M'CULLOCH—"HUMBLE ATTEMPT TO PROMOTE EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER." MISTAKES EXTENSIVELY PREVALENT AT THIS TIME, AS TO THE NATURE AND EVIDENCES OF TRUE GODLINESS—"TREATISE ON RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS"—DESIGN AND CHARACTER OF THE WORK—REPUBLICED ABROAD—LETTER FROM MR. GILLESPIE CONCERNING IT—LETTER FROM MR. EDWARDS TO MR. M'CULLOCH—REPLY TO MR. GILLESPIE—PROPOSAL MADE IN SCOTLAND, FOR UNITED EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER—EFFORTS OF MR. EDWARDS TO PROMOTE IT—LETTER TO MR. M'CULLOCH—"HUMBLE ATTEMPT TO PROMOTE EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER."

From the facts already recited, it will be obvious to the reader, that few ministers, even in the course of a long ministry, have as full an opportunity of learning, from their own observation, the true nature of a revival of religion, and the differences between imaginary and saving conversion, as Mr. Edwards had now enjoyed. He had early discovered, that there was a radical difficulty attending not only every revival of religion, but, in a greater or less degree, also, every instance of supposed conversion:—a difficulty arising from erroneous conceptions, so generally entertained, respecting the question, What is the nature of true religion? or, What are the distinguishing marks of that holiness, which is acceptable in the sight of God?—Perceiving, at an early period of his christian life, that no other subject was equally important to man, that no other was more frequently or variously illustrated by the scriptural writers, and yet, that on no other had professing Christians been less agreed; his attention, as he himself informs us, had been particularly directed to it, from his first commencement of the study of theology; and he was led to examine it with all the diligence, and care, and exactness of search and inquiry, of which his mind was capable. In addition to this, he had not only witnessed, in two successive instances, a solemn and universal attention to religion, among the young as well as among grown persons in his own congregation, and in both, almost all of the latter, as well as very many of the former, gathered into the church; but he had been the spiritual counsellor and guide of multitudes in other congregations, where he had occasionally laboured, as well as of great

numbers who visited him for this purpose at Northampton. These advantages of observation, it may easily be believed, were not lost on a mind like his.

This subject, at the time of which we are speaking, had become, also, a subject of warm and extended controversy. The advocates of revivals of religion, had too generally been accustomed to attach to the mere circumstances of conversion—to the time, place, manner, and means, in and by which it was supposed to be effected—an importance, no where given them in the Scriptures; as well as to conclude, that all affections which were high in degree, and accompanied with great apparent zeal and ardour, were of course gracious in their nature; while their opposers insisted, that true religion did not consist at all in the affections, but wholly in the external conduct. The latter class attributed the uncommon attention to religion, which they could not deny had existed for four years in New England, to artificial excitement merely; while the former saw nothing in it, or in the measures taken to promote it, to condemn, but everything to approve. Mr. Edwards, in his views of the subject, differed materially from both classes. As he knew from his own experience, that sin and the saving grace of God might dwell in the same heart; so he had learned, both from observation and testimony, that much false religion might prevail during a powerful revival of true religion, and that at such a time, multitudes of hypocrites might spring up among real Christians. Thus it was in the revival of religion in the time of Josiah, in that which attended the preaching of John the Baptist, in those which occurred under the preaching of Christ, in the remarkable outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles, and in that which existed in the time of the Reformation. He clearly saw, that it was this mixture of counterfeit religion with true, which in all ages had given the devil his chief advantage against the kingdom of Christ. “By this,” observes Mr. Edwards, “he hurt the cause of Christianity, in and after the apostolic age, much more, than by all the persecutions of both Jews and heathens. By this he prevailed against the Reformation, to put a stop to its progress, more than by all the bloody persecutions of the church of Rome. By this he prevailed against the revivals of religion, that have occurred since the Reformation. By this he prevailed against New England, to quench the love of her espousals, about a hundred years ago. And I think I have had opportunity enough to see plainly, that by this the devil has prevailed against the late great revival of religion in New England, so happy and promising in its beginning. I have seen the devil prevail in this way, against two great revivings of religion in this country. By perverting us from the simplicity that is in Christ, he hath suddenly prevailed to deprive us of that fair prospect we had a little while ago, of a kind of paradisaic state of the church of God in New England.”

These evils, it was obvious, must exist in the church, until their cause was removed, and men had learned to distinguish accurately between true and false religion. To contribute his own best endeavours for the accomplishment of this end, Mr. Edwards prepared and published his “Treatise on Religious Affections.” The great design of this treatise is, to show, in what true religion consists, and what are its distinguishing marks and evidences; and thus to enable every man, who will be honest and faithful with himself, to decide whether he is, or is not, a real Christian. Similar attempts had been made, by many earlier writers; but it may, I believe, safely be asserted, that no one of their efforts, taken as a whole, and viewed as an investigation of the entire subject would now be regarded as in any high degree important or valuable. The subject itself is one of the most difficult which theology presents; and demands for its full investigation, not only ardent piety, and a most intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, but an exact and metaphysical inspection of the faculties and operations of the human mind; which unfortunately few, very few, writers on experimental

religion have hitherto discovered. The work of Mr. Edwards is at once a scriptural and a philosophical view of the subject;—as truly scientific in its arrangement, and logical in its deductions, as any work on the exact sciences. That it is also a thorough and complete view of it, we have this decisive evidence—that no work of the kind, of any value, has appeared since, for which the author has not been indebted, substantially, to the “Treatise on the Affections;” or which has not been that very treatise, in part, or in whole, diluted to the capacity of weaker understandings. The trial, to which the mind of the honest, attentive, and prayerful reader of its pages is subjected, is the very trial of the final day. He who can endure the trial of the “Treatise on the Affections,” will stand unhurt amidst a dissolving universe; and he who cannot will assuredly perish in its ruins. It ought to be the *vade mecum*, not only of every minister, and every Christian, but of every man, who has sobriety of thought enough to realize, that he has any interest in a coming eternity. Every minister should take effectual care that it is well dispersed among the people of his own charge, and that none of them is admitted to a profession of religion, until, after a thorough study of this treatise, he can satisfy both himself and his spiritual guide, not only that he does not rely upon the mere negative signs of holiness, but that he finds within himself those distinguishing marks and evidences of its positive existence, which the Divine Author of holiness has pronounced sure and unerring. It is indeed said, that anxious inquirers will often be discouraged by this course—particularly by a perusal of the Second Part of the treatise—from making a profession of religion, and led to renounce the hope of their own conversion; and the answer is, that he, who, on finding himself discouraged from a profession of religion by the Second Part, is not encouraged to make it by a perusal of the Third Part, should of course, unless his views are perverted by disease or melancholy, consider the call to repent and believe the gospel, as still addressed immediately to himself; and that he, who on the perusal of this Treatise, is led to renounce the hope which he had cherished of his own piety, while he has the best reason to regard it as a false hope, will find almost of course that that hope is soon succeeded by one which will endure the strictest scrutiny. It is also said that many persons cannot understand this treatise; and the answer is, that he who is too young to understand it in its substance, is too young to make a profession of religion; and that he whose mind is too feeble to receive it substantially, when communicated by a kind and faithful pastor, cannot understandingly make such a profession. Pre-eminently is this treatise necessary to every congregation during a revival of religion. It was especially designed by its author to be used on every such occasion; and the minister who then uses it as he ought, will find it like a fan in his hand, winnowing the chaff from the wheat. And until ministers, laying aside the miserable vanity which leads them, in the mere number of those whom they denominate their ‘spiritual children,’ to find an occasion of boasting, and of course to swell that number as much as they can, shall be willing thus faithfully and honestly to make a separation among their inquirers; every revival of religion will open a great and effectual door, through which the enemies as well as the friends of religion, will gain an admission into the house of God. And when they are thus admitted, and the ardour of animal feeling has once subsided, the minister will generally find not only that he has wounded Christ in the house of his friends, but that he has destroyed his own peace, and that of his church, and prepared the way for his own speedy separation from his people.

To prevent this miserable system of deception on the part of ministers and churches, as well as of candidates for a profession of religion, Mr. Edwards wrote the treatise in question. As at first prepared, it was a series of sermons, which he preached from his own pulpit, from the text still prefixed to it, 1 Peter i. 8. “Whom having not

seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” It was thus written and preached, probably in the years 1742 and 1743. Being afterwards thrown into the form of a treatise by the author, it was published early in 1746. In its style it is the least correct of any of the works of Mr. Edwards, published in his life-time; but, as a work exhibiting genuine Christianity in distinction from all its counterfeits, it possesses such singular excellence, that were the books on earth destined to a destruction so nearly universal, that only one beside the Bible could be saved; the church of Christ, if aiming to preserve the volume of the greatest value to man, that which would best unfold to a bereaved posterity the real nature of true religion, would unquestionably select for preservation, the “Treatise on the Affections.”

This treatise was immediately republished in England and Scotland, and was cordially welcomed by all the friends of evangelical religion in those countries, as well as in America. Its appearance in Scotland gave rise to an interesting correspondence, between Mr. Edwards and the Rev. Thomas Gillespie, of Carnock, near Edinburgh; which was commenced by the latter gentleman with the following letter.

Letter from Mr. Gillespie.

*“Carnock, Nov. 24, 1746*

VERY DEAR SIR,

I have ever honoured you for your work’s sake, and what the great Shepherd made you the instrument of, from the time you published the then very extraordinary account of the revival of religion at Northampton, I think in the year 1735. The two performances you published on the subject of the late glorious work in New England, well adapted to that in Scotland, gave me great satisfaction, especially the last of them, for peculiar reasons. This much I think myself bound to say. I have many a time, for some years, designed to claim humbly the privilege of correspondence with you. What has made me defer doing it so long, when some of my brethren and good acquaintances have been favoured with it for a considerable time, it is needless now to mention. I shall only say, I have blamed myself for neglect in that matter. I do now earnestly desire a room in your prayers and friendship, and a letter from you sometimes, when you have occasion to write to Scotland; and I shall wish to be as regular as I can in making a return. With your permission, I propose to trouble you now and then with the proposal of doubts and difficulties that I meet with, and am exercised by; as for other reasons, so because some solutions in the two mentioned performances were peculiarly agreeable to me, and I find from these discourses, that wherein I have differed in some things from many others, my sentiments have harmonized with Mr. Edwards. This especially was the case in some things contained in your ‘Thoughts concerning the Revival of Religion in New England.’ All the apology I make for using such freedom, though altogether unacquainted, is that you will find from my short attestation in Mr. Robe’s Narrative, I am no enemy to you or to the work you have been engaged in, and which you have defended in a way I could not but much approve of. Also my friend and countryman, the Rev. Mr. Robert Abercrombie, will inform you about me, if you have occasion to see him or hear from him.

I longed to see somewhat about impressions respecting facts and future events, &c. whether by scripture texts or otherwise, made on the minds of good people, and supposed to be from the Lord; for I have had too good occasion to know the hurtful,

yea, pernicious tendency of this principle, as commonly managed, upon many persons in manifold instances and various respects. It has indeed surprised me much, that wise, holy, and learned divines, as well as others, have supposed this a spiritual experience, an answer of prayers, an evidence of being highly favoured by the Lord, &c. and I was exceeding glad, that the Lord had directed you to give so seasonable a caveat against what I am assured you had the best reason to term, 'A handle in the hand of the devil,' &c. I was only sorry your then design had not permitted you to say more on that point. It merits a volume; and the proper full discussion of it would be one of the most seasonable and effectual services done the church of Christ, and interest of vital religion through the world, that I know of. I rejoice to find there is a good deal more on that subject interspersed in your 'Treatise of Religious Affections,' which I have got, but could not as yet regularly peruse. I humbly think the Lord calls you, dear Sir, to consider every part of that point in the most critical manner, and to represent fully the consequences resulting from the several principles in that matter, which good people, as well as others, have been so fond of. And as (if I do not mistake) Providence has already put that in your hand as a part of your generation-work, so it will give me, as well as others, vast satisfaction to find more said on the subject by you, if you do not find what is in the mentioned treatises sufficient, as to which I can form no judgment, because, for myself, I have not as yet considered it. If any other author has treated that subject, I do not remember to have met with it, and I believe hell has been no less delighted than surprised, that a regular attack has not been made on them on that side before now. I doubt not they dread the consequences of such assault with exquisite horror. The neglect or oversight, if not the mistakes, of so many learned authors, who have insisted on doctrines that bear similitude or relation to this matter, while it was passed over, I humbly think should teach us humility, and some other useful lessons I need not name to Mr. Edwards.

I hope, dear Sir, it will not offend you, that I humbly offer some remarks, with all due deference, upon what I have observed in looking into your 'Treatise on Religious Affections:' and, upon further perusal, shall frankly represent what I may find difficulty about, if any such passage should cast up; expecting you will be so good as to set me right, if I shall mistake or not perceive your meaning.

Pages 78, 79,\* [\*see vol I pp. 258, 259] there are several passages I do not well understand. Page 78, line 6, *ad finem*, you say, 'That they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual light or sight, is an anti-scriptural and absurd doctrine you are refuting.' But this doctrine, as it is understood by many, is, that Christians ought firmly to believe and trust in Christ without light or sight, and though they are in a dark, dead frame, and for the present having no spiritual experiences and discoveries. Had you said they could not or would not believe or trust without spiritual light or sight, this is what could not be doubted: but I humbly apprehend, the position will not hold as you have laid it, whether it is applied to a sinner or a saint, as I suppose you understand it; for though the sinner never will believe on the Lord Jesus, till he has received a saving manifestation of his glory by the work of the Spirit, yet every sinner, we know, is indispensably bound, at all seasons, by the divine authority, to believe instantly on the Lord Jesus. The command of the Lord, 1 John iii. 23. that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, no less binds the sinner to immediate performance, than the command not to kill, to keep the sabbath day, or any other duty, as to the present performance of which, in way of duty, all agree, the sinner is bound. I suppose none of us think we are authorized, or will adventure to preach, that the sinner should delay to attempt to believe in the Saviour, till he finds light from heaven shining into his mind, or has got a saving sight or discovery of the

Lord Jesus, though it is certain he cannot believe, nor will do it eventually, till favoured with such light or sight; because we should, in that event, put in a qualification where the apostle Paul and Silas did put none; such is their exhortation to the jailor, Acts xvi. 31. Also, as it may be the last call the sinner is to receive, in the dispensation of the word, we are bound to require him instantly to believe, whatever he does or does not feel in himself. If you did intend not the sinner, but the saint, in the before-mentioned positions, as I am apt to think your scope plainly intimates, still I apprehend these your assertions are not tenable; for I humbly suppose the Christian is bound to trust the divine faithfulness plighted in the promise for needful blessings, be his case with respect to light or darkness, sight, &c. what it will; and that no situation the saint can be in, looses him from obligation to glorify the Lord on all occasions, by trusting in him and expecting the fulfilment of his word suiting his case. Also, I would imagine, in Isa. l. 10. the saint is required to believe, in the precise circumstances mentioned in your assertion above mentioned. Pardon my freedom. You do indeed say, 'It is truly the duty of those who are thus in darkness to come out of darkness into light and believe,' page 78, line 5; but how to reconcile that with the mentioned assertion that immediately follows, or with Isa. l. 10. or other scriptures, or said assertions, and the other, of which before, I am indeed at a loss. Sometimes I think it is not believing the promise, or trusting the Lord, and trusting in him, you mean in the positions I have cited; but the belief of the goodness of one's state that he is a saint. If that was what you intended, I heartily wish you had said so much in the book; but as this is not ordinarily what is meant by believing in Scripture, I must suppose it was not the idea affixed to your words; and an expression of yours seems to make it evident. Had you plainly stated the distinction, betwixt the impossibility of one's actually believing, and its yet being his duty to believe, in the circumstances you mentioned, danger of mistake and a handle for cavil had been cut off.

Page 78, line 20, &c., you say, 'To press and urge them to believe, without any spiritual light or sight, tends greatly to help forward the delusions of the prince of darkness.' Had you said, to press them to believe that the Lord was their God, when going on in a course of sin, or when sinning presumptuously, was of such tendency, which probably was in part what you designed, it would, in my humble apprehension, have been much more safe, for the reasons given. Also, as it is ordinarily and justly observed, that they who are most humbled think they are least so, when under a saving work of the Spirit, perhaps in like manner, spiritual light and sight may, in some instances, be mistaken or not duly apprehended; in which case, the person, upon admitting and proceeding upon your suppositions, may perhaps be apt to give way to unbelief, and to say, If I am not to be urged by the Lord's servants to believe in my present circumstances, it would surely be presumptuous in me to entertain thoughts of attempting it. Or, it may be, he shall think he has not that degree of spiritual light or sight, that is absolutely necessary in order to his believing; and thus the evil heart of unbelief shall make him depart from the living God, and neglect to set to his seal that he is true, perhaps from the apprehension that it is his duty to remain as he is, or at least in the persuasion it would be in vain to essay to believe, till matters be otherwise with him. If I have deduced consequences from your words and manner of reasoning, which you think they do not justly bear, I will be glad to be rectified by you, dear Sir, and would be satisfied to know from you, how the practice you remark upon in the fore-mentioned passage tends to help forward the delusions of Satan. I am apt to believe the grounds upon which you proceed, in the whole paragraph I have mentioned, is, that you have with you real Antinomians, who teach things about faith and believing, subversive of new obedience and gospel holiness, and inconsistent with the scrip-



ture doctrines concerning them. But as we have few, if any such at all, (I believe I might say more,) in this country, and at the same time have numbers who would have the most accurate and judicious evangelical preachers to insist a great deal more upon doing, and less upon believing, Mark x. 17-23, for what reasons you will perceive, I am afraid your words will be misrepresented by them, and a sense put upon your expressions, which you were far from intending. I expect a mighty clamour by the Seceders, if the book shall fall into their hands. All I shall say about what is expressed by you, page 78, line 32, &c. is, that I have frequently heard it taught by those accounted the most orthodox, that the believer was bound to trust in the Lord, in the very worst frame he could be in, and that the exercise of faith was the way to be delivered from darkness, deadness, backsliding, &c. It is impossible one should err, who follows the course prescribed by the Lord in his word. I suppose no person is bound or allowed to defer believing one single moment, because he finds himself in a bad situation, because the Spirit breathes not on him, or he finds not actual influence from heaven communicated to him at that season, rendering him capable or meet for it; for this reason, that not our ability or fitness, but the Lord's command, is the rule of duty, &c. It merits consideration, whether the believer should ever doubt of his state, on any account whatever; because doubting, as opposed to believing, is absolutely sinful. I know the opposite has been prescribed, when the saint is plunged in prevailing iniquity; but does not doubting strengthen corruption? is not unbelief the leading sin, as faith is the leading grace?

Page 258, (Note,) you cite as an authority Mr. Stoddard, affirming, 'One way of sin is exception enough against men's salvation, though their temptations be great.' I well remember the singularly judicious Dr. Owen somewhere says to this effect, 'Prevalence of a particular sin over a person for a considerable time, shows him to be no saint, except when under the power of a strong temptation.' I would suppose such texts as Isaiah lxiv. 6, page 65, 3, &c. warranted the Doctor to assert as he did. It is, I own, no small difficulty to steer the middle course, betwixt affording hypocrites ground unwarrantably to presume on the one hand, and wounding the Lord's dear children on the other; and all the little knowledge of the Scriptures I would hope the Lord has given me, makes me think Mr. Shepherd, good and great man as he was, verged not a little to the last extreme, with whom, if I mistake not, Mr. Stoddard symbolizes in the above assertion; for such as I have mentioned, I apprehend is the drift and tendency of Mr. Shepherd's principles. In some instances, daily experience and observation confirm me still more, that we should be very cautious and modest when asserting on that head, and should take care to go no further in the matter, than we have plain Scripture to bear us out. The consideration, that indwelling sin sometimes certainly gets such ascendant, that the new creature is, for the time the Lord seems meet, as fire buried under ashes, undiscerned and inactive, lays foundation, in my humble apprehension, for saying somewhat stronger on that point, than I would choose to utter in public teaching; and how long a saint may have been in the case now hinted, I suppose it belongs not to us precisely to determine.

Page 259, you say, 'Nor can a true saint ever fall away, so that it shall come to this, that ordinarily there shall be no remarkable difference in his walk and behaviour since his conversion, from what was before.' I do not remember that the Scripture anywhere mentions, that David or Solomon were sanctified from the womb. I think the contrary may be presumed; and it is evident for a considerable time, with the first ordinarily, and for a long time, in the case of the latter ordinarily, there was a remarkable difference for the worse, in the walk and behaviour of both of them, when we are sure they were saints, from what it appears it had been in their younger years. Besides,

let us suppose a person of a good natural disposition, bred up in aversion to all vicious practices, by a religious education and example, and virtuous inclination thus cultivated in him, 2 Peter ii. 20. and he is converted when come to maturity, and afterwards corruption in him meets with peculiar temptations; I doubt much if there would be a remarkable difference betwixt his then conversation and walk, and that in unregeneracy. The contrary I think is found in experience, and the principles laid down leave room to suppose it.

I own in what I have above said I have perhaps gone further than becomes a man of my standing in writing to one of Mr. Edwards's experience, and am heartily sorry my first letter to you is in such a strain, and on such a subject. But love to you, dear Sir, and concern lest you should be thought to patronize what I am sure you do not, and to oppose what are your real sentiments, made me write with such freedom, and break over restraints, which modesty, decency, &c. should otherwise have laid me under, that you might have an opportunity to know in what light these things I mention to you appear to some who are your real friends in this country. A valuable minister, in looking into what is noticed in pages 78 and 79, said to me; it would be right some should write you about it; and I take this first opportunity, that you may have access to judge of the matter, and what it may be proper for you to do or not to do in it.

I will expect an answer with your convenience. I hope you will deal freely with me; for I can say, I would sit down and learn at your feet, dear Sir, accounting myself as a child in knowledge of the Scriptures, when compared with others I will not name, and the longer I live I see the greater advantage in improvements of that kind. Conceal nothing that you think will tend to put me right if you find my views are not just. I proposed in the beginning of this letter to trouble you with some questions or doubts, and shall mention one or two at present. What should one do who is incessantly harassed by Satan; can by no means keep him out of his mind; has used all means prescribed in Scripture and suggested by divines for resistance known to him, in vain; it may be for a long time has cried to Christ, but he hears not, seems not to regard him; all his efforts are swallowed up in the deluge of the foe; do what he will, seems to gain no ground against the powers of darkness; is apt to dread he shall sink under the load, and never shall be delivered in this world? What would you advise such a person to do? What construction, think you, should be put on the sovereign conduct and dispensation of Heaven toward him? I have occasion to be conversant about this case practically demonstrated, of many years continuance, without interruption; and will therefore be glad to have your mind about it in a particular manner, and as much at large as you conveniently can. It is said, all things work for good, &c. As degrees of glory will be in proportion to those of grace, how can it be made appear it is for one's good what sometimes happens to saints, their being permitted to fall under backslidings and spiritual decays, and to die in that state, perhaps after continuing in it a considerable while, and when their situation has been attended with the melancholy circumstances and consequences that sometimes have place in that state of matters? The solution of this I would gladly receive from you.

Are the works of the great Mr. Boston known in your country, viz. the Fourfold State of Man, View of the Covenant of Grace, and a Discourse on Afflictions, and Church Communion, &c. If not, inform me by your letter. I have now need to own my fault in troubling you with so long a letter, and so I shall end," &c.

Letter from Mr. Edwards to Mr. M'Culloch, of Cambuslang.

“To the Rev. Mr. M’Culloch.

*Northampton, Jan. 21, 1747.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

The time seems long to me since I have received a letter from you; I have had two letters from each of my other correspondents in Scotland since I have had any from you. Our correspondence has been to me very pleasant, and I am very loth it should fail.

Great changes have been, dear Sir, since I have had a letter from you, and God has done great things, both in Scotland and America; though not of the same nature, with those that were wrought some years ago, by the outpourings of his Spirit, yet those wherein his providence is on many accounts exceedingly remarkable: in Scotland, in the suppression of the late rebellion; and in America, in our preservation from the great French armada, from Brest, and their utter disappointment and confusion, by the immediate and wonderful hand of Heaven against them, without any interposition of any arm of flesh. The nearest akin to God’s wonderful works of old, in the defence of his people in Moses’s, Joshua’s, and Hezekiah’s time, perhaps of any that have been in these latter ages of the world. I have been writing some account of it to Mr. M’Laurin; but since then I have seen a thanksgiving sermon of Mr. Prince’s, preached on that occasion; in which is a much more distinct, particular, and (I suppose) exact account of the matter (which sermon you will doubtless see). Though there is something that I observed in my letter to Mr. M’Laurin, of the coming of that fleet, its being overruled for our preservation, in this part of the land where I dwell, when eminently exposed, and when we have all reason to think our enemies in Canada had formed designs against us, that Mr. Prince does not mention.

In my last letter to you, I wrote you some thoughts and notions I had entertained, concerning the pouring out of the sixth vial on the river Euphrates, and the approach of the happy day of the church’s prosperity and glory, and the utter destruction of antichrist, and other enemies of the church, so often spoken of in the Holy Scriptures: I signified it as what appeared to me probable, that one main thing intended by the drying up the river Euphrates, was the drying up the temporal supplies and income of the antichristian church and kingdom; and suggested it to consideration whether God, appearing so wonderfully for the taking Cape Breton, and the American fishery, thereon depending, out of the hands of the French, and thereby drying up so great a fountain of the wealth of the kingdom of France, might not be looked upon as one effect of the sixth vial. I would now also propose it to be considered, whether God’s so extraordinarily appearing to baffle the great attempt of the French nation, to repossess themselves of this place, be not some confirmation of it; and whether or no the almost ruining the French East India trade, by the dreadful hand of Heaven, in burying their stores at Port L’Orient, and the taking so many of their ships by Commodore Barnet, and also the taking so many of their South Sea ships, vastly rich, and several other things of like nature, that might be mentioned, may not probably be further effects of this vial. But whatever be thought of these particular events, and the application of the prophecies to them; yet it appears to me, that God’s late dealings, both with Great Britain and the American plantations, if they be duly considered, as they are in themselves and circumstances, afford just reason to hope that a day is approaching for the peculiar triumphs of divine mercy and sovereign grace, over all the unworthiness, and most aggravated provocations of men. If it be considered what God’s past dealings

have been with England and Scotland for two centuries past, what obligations he has laid those nations under, and particularly the mercies bestowed more lately; and we then well consider the kind, manner, and degree, of the provocations and wickedness of those nations, and yet that God so spares them, and has of late so remarkably delivered them, when so exposed to deserved destruction: and if it be also considered what God's dealings have been with this land, on its first settlement, and from its beginning hitherto, and how long we have been revolting and growing worse, and what great mercy he has lately granted us, on the late remarkable striving of his Spirit with us, and how his Spirit has been treated, his mercy and grace despised, and bitterly opposed, how greatly we have backslidden, what a degree of stupidity we are sunk into, and how full the land has been of such kinds of wickedness, as have approached so near to the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, and how obstinate we are still in our wickedness, without the least appearances of repentance or reformation; and it be then considered how God has of late made his arm bare, in almost miraculous dispensations of his providence, in our behalf, to succeed us against our enemies, and defend us from them:—I say, if these things be considered, it appears evident to me, not only that God's mercies are infinitely above the mercies of men; but also that he has, in these things, gone quite out of the usual course of his providence and manner of dealings with his professing people, and I confess, it gives me great hope that God's appointed time is approaching, for the triumphs and displays of his infinite, sovereign grace, beyond all that ever has been before, from the beginning of the world; at least I think there is much in these things, considered together with other remarkable things God has lately done, to encourage and animate God's people unitedly to cry to God, that he would appear for the bringing on those glorious effects of his mercy, so often foretold to be in the latter days; and particularly to continue that concert for prayer, set on foot in Scotland, and which it is now proposed to continue seven years longer. My wife and children join with me in respectful, cordial salutations to you and yours.

That we may be remembered in your prayers, is the request, dear Sir, of your affectionate brother,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

To the letter from Mr. Gillespie, Mr. Edwards returned the following answer.

*“Northampton, Sept. 4, 1747.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I received your letter of Nov. 24, 1746, though very long after it was written. I thank you for it, and for your proposing a correspondence. Such an offer I shall gladly embrace, and esteem it a great privilege, more especially from the character I have received of you from Mr. Abercrombie, who I perceive was intimately acquainted with you.

As to the objections you make against some things contained in my work on Religious Affections, I am sorry you did not read the book through before you made them; if you had, perhaps the difficulties would not have appeared quite so great. As to what is contained in the 78th and 79th pages, I suppose there is not the least difference of opinion between you and me, unless it be concerning the signification and propriety of expressions. I am fully of your mind, and always was without the least doubt of it;

‘That every one, both saint and sinner, is indispensably bound, at all seasons, by the Divine authority, to believe instantly on the Lord Jesus; and that the command of the Lord, 1 John iii. 23. that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, as it is a prescription of the moral law, no less binds the sinner to immediate performance, than the commandment not to kill, to keep the sabbath day, or any other duty, as to the present performance of which, in way of duty, all agree the sinner is bound; and that men are bound to trust the divine faithfulness, be their case with respect to light and darkness, sight, &c. what it will; and that no situation they can be in, looses them from obligation to glorify the Lord at all seasons, and to expect the fulfilment of his words; and that the sinner who is without spiritual light or sight is bound to believe, and that it is a duty at that very time incumbent on him to believe.’ But I conceive that there is a great deal of difference between these two things, viz. its being the duty of a man, who is without spiritual light or sight, to believe, and its being his duty to believe without spiritual light or sight, or to believe while he yet remains without spiritual light or sight. Just the same difference, which there is between these two things, viz. its being his duty who has no faith to believe, and its being his duty to believe without faith, or to believe without believing. I trust none will assert the latter, because of the contradiction which it implies. As it is not proper to say, it is a man’s duty to believe without faith, because it implies a contradiction; so I think it equally improper to say, it is a man’s duty to believe without those things which are essentially implied in faith, because that also implies a contradiction. But a spiritual sight of Christ, or knowledge of Christ, is essentially implied in the very nature and notion of faith; and therefore it is absurd to talk of believing on Christ, without spiritual light or sight. It is the duty of a man, who is without those things which essentially belong to faith, to believe; and it is the duty of a man, who is without those things which essentially belong to love, to love God; because it is an indispensable obligation that lies on men at all times, and in all circumstances, to love God: but yet it is not a duty to love God without loving him, or continuing without those things which essentially belong to his love. It is the duty of those who have no sense of the loveliness of God and have no esteem of him, to love him, and they are not in the least excused, by the want of this sense and esteem in not loving him one moment; but yet it would be properly nonsense to say it is their duty to love him, without any sense of his loveliness, or esteem of him. It is indeed their duty this moment to come out of their disesteem, and stupid wicked insensibility of his loveliness, and to love him. I made the distinction (I thought) very plainly, in the midst of those sentences you quote as exceptionable. I say expressly, p. 74, ‘It is truly the duty of those who are in darkness, to come out of darkness into light and believe; but, that they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual light or sight, is an anti-scriptural and absurd doctrine.’ The misunderstanding between us, dear Sir, I suppose to be in the different application of the particle without, in my use of it, and your understanding of it, or what we understand as spoken of and supposed in the expression, without spiritual light or sight. As I use it, I apply it to the act of believing, and I suppose it to be very absurd to talk of an act of faith without spiritual light or sight, wherein I suppose you will allow me to be in the right. As you understand it, it is applied to duty or obligation, and you suppose it to be not at all absurd, to talk of an obligation to believe without spiritual light or sight, but that the obligation remains full, where there is no spiritual light or sight, wherein I allow you are in the right. I think, Sir, if you read what I have said in my book on this head again, it will be exceedingly apparent to you, that it is thus that I apply the preposition without, and not as you before understood it. I thought I had very plainly manifested, that what I meant by being in dark-

ness was being in spiritual blindness, and so in a dead, stupid, and unchristian frame, and not what is commonly called being without the light of God's countenance, under the hidings of his face. Great numbers in this country proceed on the supposition, in their opinions and practice, that there really is such a manner of believing, such a kind of faith as this, viz. a confident believing and firm trusting in God in the dark, in the sense just mentioned, which is the subject matter of Divine prescription, and which many actually have. Indeed there are innumerable instances of such as are apparently in a most negligent, apostate, and every way unchristian and wicked frame; who yet, encouraged by this principle, retain a strong confidence of their piety, and imagine that herein they do their duty and glorify God, under the notion of trusting God in the dark, and hoping against hope, and not relying on their own righteousness; and they suppose it would show a legal spirit to do otherwise. I thought it would be manifest to every reader that I was arguing against such persons as these.

You say, 'It merits consideration, whether the believer should ever doubt of his state, on any account whatever, because doubting, as opposed to believing, is absolutely sinful.' Here, Sir, you seem to suppose that a person's doubting of his own good estate, is the proper opposite of faith; and these and some other expressions in your letter seem to suppose that doubting of one's good estate, and unbelief, are the same thing; and so, that confidence in one's good estate, and faith, are the same thing. This, I acknowledge, I do not understand; I do not suppose faith, and a person's believing that he has faith, to be the same thing. Nor do I take unbelief, or being without faith, and doubting whether he has it, to be the same thing, but entirely different. I should have been glad either that you had taken a little more notice of what I say on this head, p. 79, 80, or that you had said something to convince me that I am wrong in this point. The exercise of faith is doubtless the way to be delivered from darkness, deadness, backsliding, &c. or rather is the deliverance; as forsaking sin is the way to deliverance from sin, and is the deliverance itself. The exercise of grace is doubtless the way to deliverance from a graceless frame, which consists in the want of the exercise of grace. But as to what you say, or seem to intimate, that a person's being confident of his own good estate, is the way to be delivered from darkness, deadness, backsliding, and prevailing iniquity; I think, whoever supposes this to be God's method of delivering his saints, when sunk into an evil, careless, carnal, and unchristian frame, first to assure them of their good estate and his favour, while they yet remain in such a frame, and to make that the means of their deliverance, does surely mistake God's method of dealing with such persons. Among all the multitudes I have had opportunity to observe, I never knew one dealt with after this manner. I have known many brought back from great declension, who appeared to me to be real saints; but it was in a way very different from this. In the first place, conscience has been awakened, and they have been brought into distressing fears of the wrath of God. Thus they have become the subjects of a new work of humiliation, and have been led deeply to feel that they deserve his wrath, even while they have feared it, before God has delivered them from their apprehensions, and comforted them with a renewed sense of his favour.

As to what I say of the necessity of universal obedience, or of one way of known sin, (i.e. so as properly to be said to be the way and manner of the man,) being exception enough against a man's salvation; I should have known better what to have said further about it, if you had briefly shown how the passages of Scripture which I mention, and the arguments which I deduce from them, are insufficient for the proof of this point. I confess they appear to me to approve it as fully, as any thing concerning the necessary qualifications of a Christian can be proved from Scripture.

You object against my saying, p. 259, 'Nor can a true saint ever fall away to such a degree, that ordinarily there shall be no remarkable difference between his behaviour, after his conversion, and before.' This, I think, implies no more than that his behaviour, in similar circumstances, and under similar trials, will have a remarkable difference. As to the instances of David and Solomon, I am not aware that the Scriptures give us any where so full a history of their behaviour before their conversion, as to enable us to compare it with their subsequent life. These examples are uncertain. But I think those doctrines of the Scriptures are not uncertain, which I mention in the passage you cite, to prove that converts are new men, new creatures, that they are renewed not only within but without, that old things are passed away and all things become new, that they walk in newness of life, that the members of their bodies are new, that whereas they before were the servants of sin, and yielded their members servants of iniquity, now they yield them servants of righteousness unto holiness.

As to the doubts and cases of difficulty you mention, I think it needless for a divine of your character, to apply for the solution of them to one, who ought rather to take the attitude of a learner. However, since you are pleased to insist on my giving my mind upon them, I would observe, with regard to the first case you mention, that of a person incessantly harassed by Satan, &c. you do not point out the nature of the temptations with which he is harassed; and without this, I think it impossible to give proper advice and directions concerning it. Satan is to be resisted in a very different manner, in different kinds of onsets. When persons are harassed with those strange, horrid impressions, to which persons afflicted with hypochondria are often subject, he is to be resisted in a very different manner, from what is proper in cases of violent temptation to gratify some worldly lust. In the former case, I should by no means advise men to resist the devil by entering the lists with him, and engaging in a violent struggle with the grand adversary; but rather by diverting the mind from his frightful suggestions, by going on stedfastly and diligently in the ordinary course of duty, without allowing themselves time and leisure to attend to his sophistry, and by committing themselves to God in prayer. That is the best way of resisting the devil, which crosses his design most; and he more effectually disappoints him in such cases, who treats him with neglect, than he who engages in a direct conflict, and tries his strength and skill with him, in a violent dispute or combat. The latter course rather gives him an advantage; and if he can get persons thus engaged in a violent struggle, he gains a great point. He knows that hypochondriacal persons are not qualified to maintain it. By this he diverts him from the ordinary course of duty; and having gained his attention to what he says, he has opportunity to use all his craft and subtlety. By such a struggle he raises a deeper melancholy, weakens the mind still more, gets the unhappy man faster and faster in his snares, and increases his anxiety of mind; which is the very thing by which he mainly accomplishes all his purposes with such persons.

As to the difficulty of verifying Rom. viii. 28. 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God,' in the case of a Christian who falls under backsliding and spiritual decays; it is not perfectly obvious how this is to be interpreted, and how far it may hence be inferred, that the temptations of Christians from Satan and an evil world, and their declensions and sins, shall surely work for their good. However, since you desire my thoughts, I will endeavour to express them.

Two things may be laid down, as certain and indubitable, concerning this doctrine of the apostle.

First. The meaning cannot be that God's actual dispensations towards each Christian are the best for him of all that are possible; or that all things which are ordered for him, or done with respect to him, are in all respects better for him than any thing

which God could have ordered or done, issuing in the highest good and happiness to which he can possibly be brought; for that implies that God will confer on every one of his elect as much happiness as he can confer, in the utmost exercise of his omnipotence; and this sets aside all those different degrees of grace and holiness here, and glory hereafter, which he bestows according to his sovereign pleasure.

All things work together for good to the saints; all may have a concurring tendency to their happiness, and may finally issue in it, and yet not tend to, or issue in, the highest possible degree of happiness. There is a certain measure of holiness and happiness, to which each one of the elect is eternally appointed, and all things that relate to him work together to bring to pass this appointed measure of good. The text and context speak of God's eternal purpose of good to the elect, predestinating them to a conformity to his Son in holiness and happiness; and the implicit reasoning of the apostle leads us to suppose that all things will purely concur to bring to effect God's eternal purpose. Hence from his reasoning it may be inferred, that all things will tend to, and work together to accomplish, that degree of good which God has purposed to bestow upon them, and not any more. Indeed it would be in itself unreasonable to suppose any thing else; for as God is the supreme orderer of all things, doubtless all things shall be so ordered, that with one consent they shall help to bring to pass his ends and purposes; but surely not to bring to pass what he does not aim at, and never intended. God, in his government of the world, is carrying on his own designs in every thing; but he is not carrying on that which is not his design, and therefore there is no need of supposing, that all the circumstances, means, and advantages of every saint, are the best in every respect that God could have ordered for him, or that there could have been no circumstances or means of which he could have been the subject, which would with God's usual blessing have issued in his greater good. Every Christian is a living stone, that, in this present state of preparation, is fitting for the place appointed for him in the heavenly temple. In this sense all things undoubtedly work together for good to every one who is called according to God's promise. He is, all the while he lives in this world, by all the dispensations of Providence towards him, fitting for the particular mansion in glory which is appointed and prepared for him.

Secondly. When it is said, that 'all things work together for good to them that love God,' it cannot be intended that all things, both positive and negative, are best for them; in other words, that not only every positive thing, of which Christians are the subjects, or in which they are concerned, will work for their good, but also, that when any thing is absent or withheld from them by God in his providence, that absence or withholding is also for their good, in such a sense, as to be better for them than the presence or bestowment would have been; for this would have the same absurd consequence which was mentioned before, viz. That God makes every Christian as happy as he possibly can make him. And if so, it would follow that God's withholding from his people greater degrees of the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, is for their good, and that it is best for them to live and die with so small a measure of piety as they actually possess, which is the same as to say, that it is for their good to have no more good, or that it is for their happiness to have no more happiness here and hereafter. If we carefully examine the apostle's discourse in Rom. viii, it will be apparent that his words imply no such thing. All God's creatures, and all that he does in disposing of them, is for the good of the Christian; but it will not thence follow, that all God's forbearing to do is also for his good, or that it is best for him that God does no more for him.

Hence, with regard to the position, that the sins and temptations of Christians are for their good; I suppose the following things to be true:



1. That all things, whatsoever, are for their good, things negative as well as positive, in this sense, that God intends that some benefit to them shall arise from every thing, so that somewhat of the grace and love of God will hereafter be seen to have been exercised towards them in every thing. At the same time, the sovereignty of God will also be seen, with regard to the measure of the good or benefit aimed at, in that some other things, if God had seen cause to order them, would have produced a higher benefit. And with regard to negative disposals—consisting, not in God's doing but forbearing to do, not in giving, but withholding—some benefit, in some respect or other, will ever accrue to them, even from these; though sometimes the benefit will not be equal to the benefit withheld, if it had been bestowed. As for instance, when a Christian lives and dies comparatively low in grace; some good improvement shall be made even of this, in his eternal state, whereby he shall receive a real benefit, though the benefit shall not be equal to the benefit of a higher degree of holiness, if God had bestowed it.

2. God carries on a design of love to his people, and to each individual Christian, not only in all things of which they are the subjects while they live, but also in all his works and dispensations, and in all his acts from eternity to eternity.

3. That the sin, in general, of Christians, is for their good, in this respect, viz. that through the sovereign grace and infinite wisdom of God, the fact that they have been sinful fallen creatures, and not from the beginning perfectly innocent and holy as the elect angels, will issue in a high advancement of their eternal happiness; and that they shall obtain some additional good, on occasion of all the sin of which they have been the subjects, or have committed, beyond what they would have had if they never had been fallen creatures.

4. The sin of Christians cannot in this sense be for their good, that it should finally be best for them, that while they lived in this world, their restoration and recovery from the corruption to which they became subject by the fall, was no greater, that the mortification of sin, and spiritual vivification of the soul, was carried on to no higher degree, that they were so deficient in love to God, love to men, humility, and heavenly-mindedness, that they did so few good works, and consequently, that in general, they had so much sin, and so little holiness; for in proportion as one of these is more, the other will be less, as infallibly, as darkness is more or less, in proportion to the diminution or increase of light. It cannot finally be better for Christians, that in general, while they live, they had so much sin of heart and life, rather than more holiness of heart and life; because the reward of all at last will be according to their works. He that sowed sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that sowed bountifully shall reap also bountifully; and he that builds wood, hay, and stubble, shall finally suffer loss, and have a less reward, than if he had built gold, silver, and precious stones, though he himself shall be saved. But notwithstanding this,

5. The sins and falls of Christians may be for their good, and for the better, in this respect, that the issue may be better than if the temptation had not happened, and so the occasion not given, either for the sin of yielding to the temptation, or the virtue of overcoming it: and yet not in this respect, (with regard to their sins or falls in general,) that it should be better for them in the issue, that they have yielded to the temptation offered, than if they had overcome. For the fewer victories they obtain over temptation, the fewer are their good works, and particularly of that kind of good works to which a distinguished reward is promised in Rev. ii. and Rev. iii. and in many other parts of Scripture. The word of God represents the work of a Christian in this world as a warfare, and it is evident in the Scriptures, that he who acquits himself as the best soldier, shall win the greatest prize. Therefore, when Christians are brought into back-

slidings and decays, by being overcome by temptations, the issue of their backslidings may be some good to them, beyond what they would have received if the temptations had never existed; and yet their backslidings in general may be a great loss to them in this respect, that they shall have much less reward, than if the temptations had been overcome, and they had persevered in spiritual vigour and diligence. But yet this don't hinder, but that,

6. It may be so ordered by a sovereign and all-wise God, that the falls and backslidings of Christians, through their being overcome by temptations in some particular instances, may prove best for them, not only because the issue may be greater good to them, than they would have received if the temptation had not happened, but even greater in that instance, than if the temptation had been overcome. It may be so ordered, that their being overcome by that temptation, shall be the occasion of their having greater strength, and on the whole, obtaining more and greater victories, than if they had not fallen in that instance. But this is no where promised, nor can it be so, that, in the general, it should prove better for them that they were foiled so much, and did overcome so little, in the course of their lives, and that finally their decay is so great, or their progress so small. From these things it appears,

7. That the saying of the apostle, all thing work together for good to them that love God, though it be fulfilled in some respects to all Christians, at all times and in all circumstances, yet it is fulfilled more especially and eminently to Christians continuing in the exercise of love to God, not falling from the exercises, or failing in the fruits of divine love in times of trial. Then it is, that temptations, enemies, and suffering, will be best for them, working that which is most for their good every way; and they shall be more than conquerors over tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword, Rom. viii. 35-37.

8. As God is carrying on a design of love to each individual Christian, in all his works and dispensations whatsoever, so the particular design of love to them which he is carrying on, is to fit them for and bring them to their appointed place in the heavenly temple, or to that identical degree of happiness and glory in heaven, which his eternal love designed for them, and no other. For God's design of love or of happiness to them, is only just what it is, and is not different from itself; and to fulfil this particular design of love, every thing which God does, or in any respect disposes, whether it be positive, privative, or negative, contributes; because, doubtless, every thing which God does, or in any respect offers, tends to fulfill his aims and designs. Therefore, undoubtedly,

9. All the while the Christian lives in the world, he is preparing for his appointed mansion in glory, and fitting for his place in the heavenly building. All his temptations, though they may occasion, for the present, great spiritual injuries, yet at last shall be an occasion of his being more fitted for his place in glory. Hence we may determine, that however the Christian may die in some respects under the decay of spiritual comfort, and of some religious affections, yet every Christian dies at that time when his habitual fitness for his place in the heavenly temple is most complete, because otherwise, all things which happen to him while he lives, would not work together to fit him for that place.

10. God brings his people, at the end of their lives, to this greatest fitness for their place in heaven, not by diminishing holiness in their hearts, but by increasing it, and carrying on the work of grace in their souls. If it be not so, that cannot be true, that where God has begun a good work he will perform it, or carry it on to the day of Christ; for if they die with a less degree of holiness than they had before, then it ceases to be carried on before the day of Christ comes. If holiness finally decreases,

then Satan so far finally obtains the victory. He finally prevails to diminish the fire in the smoking flax; and then how is that promise verified, that God will not quench the smoking flax, till he bring forth judgment unto victory? So that it must needs be, that although Christians may die under decay, in some respects, yet they never die under a real habitual decay of the work of grace in general. If they fall, they shall rise again before they die, and rise higher than before, if not in joy, and some other affections, yet in greater degrees of spiritual knowledge, self-abasement, trust in God, and solidity and ripeness of grace.

If these things which have been observed are true, then we may infer from them these corollaries.

1. That notwithstanding the truth of the apostle's declaration in Rom. viii. 28. Christians have cause to lament their leanness and unfruitfulness, and the fact that they are guilty of so much sin, not only as it is to the dishonour of God, but also as it is likely to redound to their own eternal loss and damage.

2. That nothing can be inferred from this promise, which is calculated to set aside or make void the influence of motives to earnest endeavours to avoid all sin, to increase in holiness, and abound in good works, from an aim at a high and eminent degree of glory and happiness in a future world.

3. That though it is to the eternal damage of Christians, ordinarily, when they yield to and are overcome by temptations; yet Satan and the other enemies of Christians, from whom these temptations come, are always wholly disappointed in the temptation, and baffled in their design to hurt them, inasmuch as the temptation and the sin which it occasions, are for the saints' good, and they receive a greater benefit in the issue, than if the temptation had not been, and yet less than if the temptation had been overcome.

As to Mr. Boston's View of the Covenant of Grace, I have had some opportunity to examine it, and I confess I do not understand the scheme of thought presented in that book. I have read his Fourfold State of Man, and liked it exceedingly well. I think, in that, he shows himself to be a truly great divine.

Hoping that you will accept my letter with candour, and remember me in your prayers, I subscribe myself

Your affectionate and obliged  
brother and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

In October, 1744, a number of ministers in Scotland, among whom, I believe, were all the correspondents of Mr. Edwards in that country, thinking that the state of the church and the world called loudly for united extraordinary prayer to God, that he would deliver the nations from their miseries, and fill the earth with his glory; proposed that Christians universally should, for the two years then next ensuing, set apart a portion of time, on Saturday evening and sabbath morning, every week, to be spent in prayer for this purpose; and that they should still more solemnly devote the first Tuesday in the last month of each quarter of the year, to be spent either in private, social, or public prayer to God, for the Your affectionate and obliged bestowment of those blessings on the world. Mr. Edwards not only welcomed the proposal as soon as he received it, but did all in his power to promote its general acceptance by the American churches; and the following letter, alluding to a more particular account of

the subject in one to Mr. M'Laurin, which I have not been able to procure, will in some measure apprize the reader of the efforts which he made for this purpose.

“To the Rev. William M'Culloch

*Northampton, Sept. 23, 1747.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your letter of March 12, 1747, which I suppose lay a long while at Mr. Prince's in Boston, before I received it, through Mr. Prince's forgetfulness. It seems he had forgotten that he had any such letter; and when I sent a messenger to his house, on purpose to inquire whether I had any letter lodged there for me from Scotland, he told him no; when I suppose this letter had been long in his house: and I should probably never have had it at last, had not one of my daughters had occasion to go to Boston, who made a visit at the house, and made a more full inquiry.

I am sorry to hear of your affliction, through your indisposition that you speak of, and desire to be thankful to the God of all mercy for his goodness, in restoring you again to health.

I have, in my letter to Mr. M'Laurin, given a particular account of what I know, concerning the propagation of the Concert for United Prayer, in America; which you will doubtless have opportunity to see. The propagation of it is but slow; but yet so many do fall in with it, and there is that prospect of its being further spread, that it is a great encouragement to me. I earnestly hope, that they, that have begun extraordinary prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit of God, and the coming of Christ's kingdom, will not fail, or grow dull and lifeless, in such an affair, but rather that they will increase more and more in their fervency. I have taken a great deal of pains to promote this concert here in America, and shall not cease to do so, if God spares my life, as I have opportunity, in all ways that I can devise. I have written largely on the subject, insisting on persuasions, and answering objections; and what I have written is gone to the press. The undertaker for the publication encourages me that it shall speedily be printed. I have sent to Mr. M'Laurin a particular account of it.

You desire to hear how it was with the people of New England, when we were threatened with an invasion by the French fleet, the last summer. As to the particular circumstances of that wonderful deliverance, the fullest and best account I have ever seen of it, is in Mr. Prince's Thanksgiving Sermon on that occasion; which, in all probability, you have seen long before this time. Nor need you be informed by me, of the repeated mercy of God to us, in confounding our enemies in their renewed attempt this year, by delivering up their fleet, in its way hither, into the hands of the English. In all probability, that fleet was intended for the execution of a very extensive design, against the English colonies, in conjunction with the French forces in Canada. For there was an army lay waiting at Nova Scotia, which, on the news of the sailing of their fleet, immediately left the country, and returned to Canada, over the lake Champlain, towards New England and New York; and they, or a part of them, attacked Fort Saratoga, in New York government, and killed or took about fifty men that were drawn out of the fort; but desisted from any further attempts, about the time we may suppose they received the news of the defeat of their fleet. And very soon after they received this news in Canada, the French there released most of our captives, and sent one ship loaded with them, to the number of about one hundred and seventy, to Boston, and another ship with about sixty, if I remember right, to Louisburg. The reasons

that induced them so to do, are not known, and can only be guessed at by us; but, by their doing it very soon after they received the news of the loss of their fleet, it looks as though that had great influence in the affair. New England has had many other surprising deliverances from the French and Indians; some of which I have given a particular account of, in my letter to Mr. M'Laurin; which it would be needless for me to repeat, seeing you have such frequent opportunities with him. These deliverances are very wonderful and affecting; our enemies own that the heavens are on our side, and fight for us; but there are no such effects of these mercies upon us that are the subjects of them, as God requires, and most justly expects. The mercies are acknowledged in words, but we are not led to repentance by them; there appears no such thing as any reformation or revival of religion in the land. God's so wonderfully protecting and delivering a people, whose provocations have been so great, and who do so continue in apostasy and provocation, is very marvellous; and I can think of no account that can be given of it, so probable as this, that God has a design of mercy to the rising generation, and that there are a great number of the elect among our children, born and unborn, and that for these elect's sake, God will not suffer us to be destroyed, having a design to bring forth a seed of the posterity of this people, to inherit and dwell in this land, that shall be a holy seed, and a generation of his servants. And so that those words are applicable to us, Isa. lxv. 8, 9. 'Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.' I am full of apprehensions, that God has no design of mercy to those that were left unconverted, of the generation that were on the stage, in the time of the late extraordinary religious commotion, and striving of God's Spirit; unless it be perhaps a small gleanings from among them. But it may be, when their little ones, the generation that was then in their childhood, are brought fully on the stage of action, God will abundantly pour out his Spirit, and revive and carry on his work, here and elsewhere in the christian world.\*[\* It was postponed to the time of the children of the generation here referred to.]

I thank you for taking the pains of writing to me your thoughts of the forty-two months of the treading down of the holy city, which are new and entertaining. The chief objection against what you propose, that I can think of, is, that the forty-two months of the treading down the holy city, seems to be the same period with the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, mentioned in the very next verse, in immediate connexion with this; and that the same with the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of the woman's being in the wilderness, chap. xii. 6; and that the same with the time, times, and an half of the woman's being in the wilderness, v. 14; and that the same with the time, times, and an half of the reign of the little horn, Dan. vii. 25; and with the forty-two months of the reign of the beast, Rev. xiii. 5; and that this evidently signifies the duration of the reign of antichrist; which is a thing entirely diverse from the sum of the times of the city of Jerusalem's being under the dominion of pagans, Saracens, Persians, and Turks, as you represent. However, it is possible that what you mention may be one way wherein that prophecy, Rev. xi. 2. may be fulfilled. For God's word is oftentimes fulfilled in various ways: as one way, wherein the prophetic representation of the beast with the seven heads is fulfilled, is in the seven successive forms of government that idolatrous Rome is under; and another way that it was fulfilled, was by Rome's being built on seven hills. One way that the seventy years captivity of the Jews was fulfilled, was in its being seventy years from Jehoiachim's captivity to Cyrus's de-

cree; and another way that it was fulfilled, was in its being seventy years from Zedekiah's captivity to Darius's decree, Ezra vi; and another way that it was fulfilled, was in its being seventy years from the last carrying away of all, Jer. lli. 30, to the finishing and dedication of the temple. But I expect no certainty as to these things, or any of the various conjectures concerning the time of the calling of the Jews, and the fall of the kingdom of the beast, till time and fulfilment shall decide the matter. However, I cannot think otherwise, than that we have a great deal of reason to suppose, that the beginning of that glorious work of God's Spirit, which, before it is finished, shall accomplish these things, is not very far off; and there is very much in the word of God, and in the present aspects of Divine Providence, to encourage us greatly in our begun concert for extraordinary united prayer for the coming of Christ's kingdom. Let us therefore go on with what we have begun in that respect, and continue instant in prayer, with all perseverance, and increase more and more in faith and fervency; and not keep silence, nor give God any rest, till he establish, and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

And remember in your prayers, dear Sir,  
Yours, in great esteem and affection,

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

The continuation of this concert for united and extraordinary prayer was proposed in a Memorial from Scotland, dated August 26, 1746, signed by twelve clergymen of that country, and circulated soon after in all the American colonies. To secure the general adoption of the proposed measure, Mr. Edwards first preached to his people a series of sermons in its favour, and then published them in the form of a treatise, with the title, "An Humble Attempt to promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union among God's People, in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion, and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture Promises, and Prophecies concerning the Last Time." This work was immediately republished in England and Scotland, and extensively circulated in both countries, as well as in America, and had great influence in securing the general adoption of the measures proposed—a measure which was pursued for more than half a century by many of the American churches, and only discontinued on the adoption of a more frequent concert—the monthly concert—for united and extraordinary prayer, for the same great object, proposed at an association of the ministers of the Baptist churches, in the counties of Northampton, Leicester, &c. held at Nottingham in 1784, and observed the first Monday evening of each month; and now extensively adopted throughout the christian world.

In the course of this treatise, Mr. Edwards was led, in answering objections, to examine an interpretation of prophecy, until then most generally if not universally received: viz. That the kingdom of Christ could not come, until there had previously been a time of most extreme calamity to the church of God, and prevalence of her antichristian enemies against her, as represented in Rev. xi, by the slaying of the witnesses. Some years before this, Mr. Edwards had examined the Apocalypse with great care, in connexion with the prophecy of Daniel; in order to satisfy himself whether the slaying of the witnesses was to be regarded as past or future. This he did with his pen in his hand; and a brief abstract of his views on this point, is found in the answers to the 4th and 5th objections in the Humble Attempt. The views of prophecy, here presented by Mr. Edwards, were, I believe, at the time wholly new to the christian world,

and were at first regarded by many as doubtful if not erroneous; but have since produced the general conviction that the downfall of popery and the ultimate extension of the kingdom of Christ, are far less distant than has been supposed—a conviction remarkably supported by the whole series of providential dispensations. And there can be no doubt that this conviction has been a prime cause of the present concentrated movement of the whole church of God, to hasten forward the reign of the Messiah. As long as it was the commonly received opinion of Christians that the church was yet destined to experience far more severe and overwhelming calamities, than any she had hitherto known—calamities amounting to an almost total extinction—before the time of her final prosperity; the efforts and the prayers of Christians for the arrival of that period of prosperity were chiefly prevented: inasmuch as it was, in effect, to labour and pray for the almost total extinction of the church of Christ, during a period of indefinite extent, as well as to labour and pray, if speedy success should crown their efforts, for the destruction, if not of their own lives, yet of those of their children and immediate descendants. In the sections referred to, he endeavours to show, and by arguments which are yet unanswered, that the severest trials announced in prophecy against the church of God were already past, that her warfare was even then almost accomplished, and that the day of her redemption was drawing nigh. By establishing this point; and by presenting the arguments in a manner so clear and convincing, as wholly to supersede the necessity of any subsequent treatise on the subject; the work in question, through the Divine blessing, has exerted an influence, singularly powerful, in rousing the church of Christ to that series of efforts which is to result in her final victory.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

First published 1834

CHAPTER XV.

ARRIVAL OF DAVID BRAINERD AT NORTHAMPTON—HIS SICKNESS AND DEATH AT THE HOUSE OF MR. EDWARDS—HIS PAPERS—DEATH OF JERUSHA, THE SECOND DAUGHTER OF MR. E.—HER CHARACTER—CORRESPONDENCE OF MR. E. WITH REV. JOHN ERSKINE—ABSTRACT OF MR. E. 'S FIRST LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE—PLAN CONCEIVED OF THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL—DEATH OF COL. STODDARD—KINDNESS OF MR. ERSKINE—LETTER OF MR. E. TO HIM—SECOND LETTER FROM MR. GILLESPIE—LETTER TO MR. M'CULLOCH—LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE—LETTER FROM MR. WILLI-SON—LIFE AND DIARY OF BRAINERD—LETTERS TO MESSRS. ERSKINE, M'CULLOCH, AND ROBE—ORDINATION OF REV. JOB STRONG—ANECDOTE OF REV. MR. MOODY—LETTER OF MR. E. TO HIS DAUGHTER MARY—SECOND LETTER TO MR. GILLESPIE.

THE reader will recollect, that while Mr. Edwards was at New-Haven, in September, 1743, he formed an acquaintance with DAVID BRAINERD, then a missionary to the Indians at *Kaunaumee*\* [\*Kannaumee was an Indian settlement, about five miles N. W. from New Lebanon, on the main road from that village to Albany. The place is now called Brainerd's Bridge, and is a village of a few houses, on the Kayaderosseras creek, where that road crosses it. It was thus named, not after the missionary, but after a relative of his of the name of Brainerd, who some years since planted himself in this spot, and built the bridge across the creek, now a toll bridge. The mountain, about a mile N. W. of the bridge, still bears the name of Kaunaumee. The creek winds beautifully in the valley beneath, and forms a delightful meadow. In 1823, I found an aged negro on the spot, about one hundred years of age, who had passed his life in the vicinity. He was about twenty-one years old when Brainerd resided at Kaunaumee, but never saw him, or hillock on the left of the road, and on the W. or N. W. side of the creek immediately after passing the bridge; and that the Indian settlement was down in the meadow, at some distance below the bridge. On following the stream, I discovered an old Indian orchard, the trees of an Indian burying ground, and the ruins of several buildings of long standing. He also informed me, that the Indians had often told him, that Mr. Brainerd was "a very holy man," and that he resided at Kaunaumee but a short time.], and became his counsellor at a most interesting period of his life. In March 1747, Brainerd, in consequence of extreme ill health, took leave of his Indians in New Jersey, and in April came into New England; when he was invited by Mr. Edwards to take up his abode in his own house. He came there on the 28th of May, apparently very much improved in health, cheerful in his spirits, and free from melancholy, yet at that time probably in a confirmed consumption. Mr. Edwards had now an opportunity of becoming most inti-



mately acquainted with him, and regarded his residence under his roof as a peculiar blessing to himself and his family. "We enjoyed," he observes, "not only the benefit of his conversation, but had the comfort and advantage of having him pray in the family from time to time." He was at this time very feeble in health; but in consequence of the advice of his physician, he left Northampton for Boston, on the 9th of June, in company with the second daughter of Mr. Edwards. They arrived on the evening of the 12th, among the family relatives of Mr. Edwards in Boston, and for a few days the health of Brainerd appeared much amended; but a relapse on the 18th convinced his friends that his recovery was hopeless. Contrary to their expectations, however, he so far revived, that on the 20th of July they were able to leave Boston, in company with his brother, Mr. Israel Brainerd, and on the 25th they reached Northampton. Here his health continued gradually to decline, until early in October it was obvious that he would not long survive. "On the morning of Lord's day, Oct. 4," says Mr. Edwards, "as my daughter Jerusha, who chiefly attended him, came into the room, he looked on her very pleasantly, and said, 'Dear Jerusha, are you willing to part with me?—I am quite willing to part with you: I am willing to part with all my friends: though if I thought I should not see you and be happy with you in another world, I could not bear to part with you. But we shall spend a happy eternity together.'" He died on Friday, Oct. 9, 1747, and on the Monday following, Mr. Edwards preached the sermon at his funeral, from 2 Cor. v. 8. entitled, "True Saints when absent from the Body are present with the Lord;" which was published in the December following.

Brainerd, after destroying the early part of his Diary, left the residue in the hands of Mr. Edwards, to dispose of as he thought best. Mr. Edwards concluded to publish it, in connexion with a brief Memoir of his life.

In the ensuing February, Jerusha, the second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, was removed by death. Her father, in a note to the Memoirs of Brainerd, thus alludes to this distressing event. "Since this, it has pleased a holy and sovereign God, to take away this my dear child by death, on the 14th of February, next following, after a short illness of five days, in the 18th year of her age. She was a person of much the same spirit with Brainerd. She had constantly taken care of and attended him in his sickness, for nineteen weeks before his death; devoting herself to it with great delight, because she looked on him as an eminent servant of Jesus Christ. In this time, he had much conversation with her on the things of religion; and, in his dying state, often expressed to us, her parents, his great satisfaction concerning her true piety, and his confidence that he should meet her in heaven, and his high opinion of her not only as a real Christian, but as a very eminent saint: one whose soul was uncommonly fed and entertained with things which pertain to the most spiritual, experimental, and distinguishing parts of religion: and one, who, by the temper of her mind, was fitted to deny herself for God, and to do good, beyond any young woman whatsoever whom he knew. She had manifested a heart uncommonly devoted to God in the course of her life, many years before her death; and said on her death-bed, that she had not seen one minute, for several years, wherein she desired to live one minute longer, for the sake of any other good in life, but doing good, living to God, and doing what might be for his glory."

In the course of the year 1747, an epistolary correspondence was commenced between Mr. Edwards and the Rev. John Arsine of Kirkintilloch, af-

terwards the Rev. Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh, which was continued to the close of Mr. Edwards's life. This gentleman, possessing superior talents, and having every advantage of birth, fortune, and education, made choice of the clerical profession, in opposition to the prevailing wishes of his family; and in May, 1744, took charge of the parish of Kirkintilloch near Glasgow. In 1753, he was translated to a parish in the borough of Culross, and, in the autumn of 1758, to one of the parishes in Edinburgh. Distinguished alike for his learning and piety, for his honourable and munificent spirit, and for his firm attachment to evangelical religion, he adorned every station which he filled by a faithful and conscientious discharge of its various duties—private, social, and public;—enjoyed the high respect of the wise and good, not only in Great Britain, but extensively in both continents; and died in 1803, in his 82d year, having been the correspondent, successively, of President Edwards, of his son Dr. Edwards, president of Union College, and of his grandson President Dwight, for the period of fifty-six years.

Mr. Erskine began the correspondence with Mr. Edwards early in 1747, through the intervention of Mr. M'Laurin of Glasgow, by sending him the "Remains of Mr. Hall"—a memoir, written by himself, of a most respectable and beloved fellow-student in theology, a young gentleman of uncommon promise. I have none of the letters of Mr. Erskine to Mr. Edwards, and not having been able to procure the first letter of Mr. Edwards to Mr. Erskine, written in the summer of 1747, must be indebted for the following account of it to the "Life of Dr. Erskine," by the Hon. and Rev. Sir H. M. Wellwood.—"On this occasion Mr. Edwards expressed, with great tenderness and delicacy, his sympathy with one, who had lost his most intimate and estimable friend in the prime of life, the companion of his youth, and, for a considerable time before his death, the delightful and affectionate associate of his studies and of his piety.

"In a postscript to this letter, he mentioned his book on Religious Affections, then just published, and at the same time sent his correspondent a copy of it in a book of which it is not too much to say, that it is not only worthy of the talents and sincerity of its author, but that while it shows that he was neither forward nor rash in estimating striking or sudden impressions of religion, it contains more sound instruction on its particular subject, and lays down more intelligible and definite rules to distinguish true from false religion, and to ascertain by distinct characters the genuine spirit of vital piety, separated from all fanatical delusions, than any other book which has yet been given to the world.

"In the same postscript to Mr. Edwards's first letter to Dr. Erskine, he gave him a general sketch of a plan which he had then formed, and which he afterwards executed with so much ability in his book on the Freedom of the Will;—a book which, whether his opinions be questioned or adopted, has certainly given him an eminent station both among philosophers and divines. 'I have thought,' he says, 'of writing something particularly and largely on the Arminian controversy in distinct discourses on the various points in dispute, to be published successively, beginning first with a discourse concerning the Freedom of the Will, and Moral Agency; endeavouring fully and thoroughly to state and discuss those points of liberty and necessity, moral and physical inability, efficacious grace, and the ground of virtue and vice, reward and pun-

ishment, blame and praise, with regard to the dispositions and actions of reasonable creatures.’

“Such was the first idea of a work from which Mr. Edwards afterwards derived his chief celebrity as an author; but a considerable time intervened before he found it possible to make any progress in his design.”

The death of Col. Stoddard, which occurred at Boston, on the 19th of June this year, was a loss severely felt, not only by Mr. Edwards and the people of Northampton, but by the county and the province at large. He was eminently distinguished for his strength of understanding and energy of character, and had for a long period unrivalled influence in the council of the province. He was also a man of decided piety, and a uniform friend and supporter of sound morals and evangelical religion. Mr. Edwards preached a sermon on his death from Ezek. xix. 12. which was immediately published.

Early in the next year Mr. Edwards received from Mr. Erskine a number of books which he valued very highly, as containing the ablest exhibition and defence of the system of doctrines usually styled Arminianism, which had at that time appeared before the public. In the following letter he acknowledges the kindness of his correspondent, and at the same time alludes to the decease of his daughter.

“To the Rev. John Erskine

*Northampton, Aug. 31, 1748*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I, this summer, received your kind letter of Feb. 9, 1748, with your most acceptable present of Taylor on Original Sin, and his Key to the Apostolic Writings, with his Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans; together with your Sermons and Answer to Doct. Campbell. I had your Sermons before, sent either by you or Mr. M'Laurin. I am exceedingly glad of those two books of Taylor's. I had before borrowed and read Taylor on Original Sin; but am very glad to have one of my own; if you had not sent it, I intended to have sought opportunity to buy it. The other book, his Paraphrase, &c. I had not heard of; if I had I should not have been easy till I had seen it, and been possessed of it. These books, if I should live, may probably be of great use to me. Such kindness from you was unexpected. I hoped to receive a letter from you, which alone I should have received as a special favour.

I have for the present been diverted from the design I hinted to you, of publishing something against some of the Arminian tenets, by something else that Divine Providence unexpectedly laid in my way, and seemed to render unavoidable, viz. publishing Mr. Brainerd's Life, of which the enclosed paper of proposals give some account.

It might be of particular advantage to me, here in this remote part of the world, to be better informed what books there are that are published on the other side of the Atlantic; and especially if there be any thing that comes out that is very remarkable. I have seen many notable things that have been written in this country against the truth, but nothing very notable on our side of the controversies of the present day, at least of the Arminian controversy. You would much oblige me, if you would inform me what are the best books that have lately been written in defence of Calvinism.

I have herewith sent the two books of Mr. Stoddard's you desired. The lesser of the two was my own; and though I have no other, yet you have laid me under such obligations that I am glad I have it to send to you. The other I procured of one of my neighbours.

I have lately heard some things that have excited hope in me, that God was about to cause there to be a turn in England, with regard to the state of religion there for the better; particularly what we have heard, that one Mr. West, a clerk of the privy council, has written in defence of Christianity, though once a notorious deist; and also what Mr. Littleton, a member of the house of commons, has written. I should be glad if you would inform me more particularly in your next concerning this affair, and what the present state of infidelity in Great Britain is.

It has pleased God, since I wrote my last to you, sorely to afflict this family, by taking away by death, the last February, my second daughter, in the eighteenth year of her age; a very pleasant and useful member of this family, and one that was esteemed the flower of the family. Herein we have a great loss; but the remembrance of the remarkable appearances of piety in her, from her childhood, in life, and also at her death, are very comfortable to us, and give us great reason to mingle thanksgiving with our mourning. I desire your prayers, dear Sir, that God would make up our great loss to us in himself.

Please to accept of one of my sermons on Mr. Brainerd's death, and also one of my sermons on Mr. Buell's instalment. I desire that for the future your letters to me may be directed to be left with Mr. Edward Bromfield, merchant in Boston. My wife joins with me in respectful and affectionate salutations to you and Mrs. Erskine. De-siring that we may meet often at the throne of grace in supplications for each other,

I am, dear brother, your obliged friend,  
Fellow labourer, and humble servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

P.S. I desired Mr. Prince to send to you one of my books on the subject of the concert for prayer for a general revival of religion the last year; and he engaged to do it; but I perceive he forgot it, and it was long neglected. But I have since taken some further care to have the book conveyed; so that I hope that ere this time you have received it.

In the conclusion of your letter of Feb. 9, you mention a design of writing to me again by a ship that was to sail the next month for Boston. That letter I have not received."

Mr. Gillespie, imagining that the difficulties which he had stated in his former letter, were not satisfactorily cleared up in the answer of Mr. Edwards, addressed to him the following reply.

Letter from Mr. Gillespie.

*"Sept. 19, 1748.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I had the favour of yours in spring last, for which I heartily thank you. I did not want inclination to make you a return long ago, as I prize your correspondence, but some things concurred that effectually prevented me, which has given me concern.

It was my desire to be informed, and my inclination to make you understand, how some passages in your book on Religious Affections did appear to me and some others, your real friends and well-wishers in this country, that determined me to presume to offer you some few remarks on the passages mentioned in my former letter; and desire of further information engages me now, with all respect, to make some observations upon some things in your letter. I hope you will pardon my freedom, and bear with me in it, and set me right wherein you may find me to misapprehend your meaning, or to mistake in any other respect.

You say, 'You conceive that there is a great difference between these two things, viz. its being a man's duty, who is without spiritual light or sight, to believe; and its being his duty to believe without spiritual light or sight, or to believe while he yet re-mains without spiritual light or sight: it is not proper to say, it is a man's duty to believe without faith,' &c. Now, dear Sir, the difference here, I am not able to conceive; for all are bound to believe the divine testimony and to trust in Christ, which you acknowledge; and the want of spiritual light or sight does not loose from the obligation one is laid under by the divine command to believe instantly on Christ, and at all season, as his circumstances shall require, nor does it excuse him in any degree for not believing. I own that a person who has no spiritual light or sight cannot eventually believe, if by light or sight is meant the influence or grace of the Spirit, by which one's mind is irradiated to take up the object and grounds of faith, so as to be made to have a spiritual sight of Christ, and to act that grace; yet still, even when one wants this, it is his duty, and he is bound to believe, for we know it is a maxim, 'ability is not the rule of duty.' I also acknowledge, that no person who is, and always has been, without spiritual light or sight, is bound, nor is it his duty, to believe that he has actually believed, or to conclude he is really a partaker of the faith of God's elect. I have some apprehension this is all you meant by the expressions I have noticed, and the reasoning in consequence of them; or else certainly different ideas are affixed to words with you and among us. There is indeed a great deal of difference betwixt its being one's duty to believe, or to act faith, and its being his duty to believe he has believed, or has acted divine faith; i.e. you say you apply the particle without, respecting spiritual light or sight, to the act of believing, by which I suppose you intend, 'all should believe, though none do really believe, without spiritual light or sight;' in which I entirely agree with you. The word duty indeed, which you use when treating that matter, is ordinarily supposed to signify the obligation the person is under by the divine authority to believe, as applied to the matter of faith, and not to the act of faith put forth in consequence of such obligation. Had I not supposed you plainly meant by the expressions I quoted from the book, the duty or obligation to believe, and not an act of faith exerted, I should have made no remarks on them. It is indeed as absurd for one to conclude he has really believed without spiritual light or sight, as to say one should believe he had believed, without those things that are essentially implied in faith. But I must differ from you in thinking it is not very proper to say, it is a man's duty to believe without faith, i.e. while he yet

remains without spiritual light or sight, or to put forth an act of faith on the Saviour, however void of spiritual light or sight; for if this was not the truth, the finally impenitent sinner could not be condemned for unbelief, as the Holy Ghost declares he will be, John iii. 19, 20, 24, and that notwithstanding the power of the Spirit of faith must make him believe. I should be glad to know the precise idea you affix to the words faith and believing. I do not remember a person's reflecting on his act of faith, any where in Scripture termed believing. You remark, 'That I seem to suppose that a person's doubting of his good estate is the proper opposite of faith;' and I own, as it is a believer's duty to expect salvation through Christ, which, in other words, is to believe his good estate, Acts. xv. 11. Gal. ii. 20. Eph. ii. 4. Job xix. 25, doubting of it must be his sin, an effect of unbelief, a part of it, and thus the proper opposite of faith, considered in its full compass and latitude. Thus once doubting of his good estate by a true believer, and unbelief in one branch of it, or one part and manner of its acting, are the same thing. Faith and unbelief are opposed in Scripture, and what is the opposite of one ingredient in unbelief must be faith in one part of it,—one thing that belongs to its exercise. A person's believing is owned to be his indispensable duty, and this comprehends or supposes his being confident of his good estate, and is properly divine faith, because it has the divine testimony now cited, on which it bottoms, Jer. iii. 19. The Lord says, 'Thou shalt call me, My father, and shalt not turn away from me;' which is evidently faith, and no less manifestly belief of one's good estate, or being confident of it, because the expression must denote the continued exercise of faith, in not turning away from the Lord. Crying Abba Father, Rom. viii. 15, is faith in the Lord as one's father, which must have a being confident of one's good estate inseparable from it, or rather en-wrapped in it. I suppose what I have mentioned is very consistent with what you say, 'That faith, and persons believing that they have faith, are not the same;' for one's believing that he has faith, simply and by itself, has for its object the man's inward frame, or the actings and exercises of his spirit, and not a divine testimony. This is not divine faith; but, as I have laid the matter, a being confident of one's good estate has for its foundation the word of God, Heb. xiii. 5., &c. ultimately,—at least; to be sure this is one way in which faith is acted, or one thing in its exercise. I am far from thinking unbelief, or being without faith, and doubting whether they have faith, to be the same thing in an unconverted sinner, whom your words, 'being without faith,' must mean, and therein we entirely agree. But I must think, as to the believer, his doubting whether or not he has faith, is sinful, because it is belying the Holy Ghost, denying his work in him, so there is no sin to which that doubting can so properly be reduced as unbelief. You know, dear Sir, doubting and believing are opposed in Scripture, Matt. xiv. 31, Matt. xxi. 21, Mark xi. 23, and I cannot exclude from the idea of doubting, a questioning the truth and reality of a work of grace on one's soul; for the Holy Ghost requires us to believe the reality of his work in us, in all its parts, just as it is, and never would allow us, much less call us to sin, or to believe a falsehood, that one is void of grace, when he has it, that good might come of it, i.e. that the person might be awakened from security, &c. 1 John iii. 3. 'Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, as he is pure;' I think intimates, that in proportion to the degree of one's hope, that the Lord is his Father, will be his aim after sanctification, and his attainment of it; if so, to renounce this hope, to throw it up at any season, on any account, must be

unlawful; whence I infer, for the believer to doubt of his gracious state, to call it in question for any reason whatever, so as to raze it, it is simply sinful, 1 John ii. 12, 15. 'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you, viz. Love not the world.' Here forgiveness of sin is used as a motive or incitement not to love the world; and this reasoning of the apostle would lose all its force, were it incumbent on a believer, at some seasons, to think he was not within the bond of the new covenant,—he is bound ever to hold that conclusion fixed. The exhortation, not to cast away one's confidence, certainly comprehends a call to persevere in believing in our interest in the Lord, and to practise it at all seasons, Heb. x. 35. Job's friends endeavoured to make him question, whether the root of the matter was in him, and to conclude that he was a hypocrite. He resolved, though the Lord should slay him, he would trust in him, chap. xiii. 15 being confident of his own good estate, chap. xxvii. 3, 5. 'All the while my breath is in me;' and ver. 5, 'Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me;' and we see, from the whole tenor of his book, what there he re-solved, he actually did practise; he never entertained the thought of supposing the Lord was not his God, notwithstanding the grievous eruptions of iniquity in him, in quarrelling with the sovereignty of God, &c. And in the end, the Lord condemned his friends for speaking of him 'the things that were not right,' and pronounced that Job, his servant, had said of him the thing 'that is right,' Job iv. 1, from which, it is to be presumed, he was approved in guarding against razing his state\*. Also, 2 Cor. i. 12, what the apostle terms there, 'his rejoicing,' was what supposed his being confident of his good estate, that he was participant of a principle of grace, which made him capable of acting, as he did, with godly sincerity. All which, with other considerations, do satisfy me, that a believer never should raze his state on any account whatever; and that, as has been mentioned, doubting of his gracious state is sinful, one way of unbelief, its acting in him, though not the direct and immediate opposite of that acting of faith by which a person renounces his own righteousness and closes with Christ, yet the opposite of the posterior exercise of faith in him, and upon the promise, in certain respects. Your book is now lent, and therefore I cannot take notice, as you wish and I incline, of what you say on this head, p. 80, 81. more particularly than I have done. However, I have, I think, touched the precise point in difference between us.

You observe, I seem to intimate, 'A person's being confident of his own good estate is the way to be delivered from darkness, deadness, backsliding, and prevailing iniquity.' And you add, that 'you think whoever supposes this to be God's method of delivering his saints, when sunk into an evil, careless, carnal, and unchristian frame, first to assure them of their good estate and his favour, while they yet remain in such a frame, and so to make that the means of their deliverance, does surely mistake God's method of dealing with such persons.' Here I think you represent the case too strong; for the words in my letter to which you refer, were, 'I have heard it taught that the believer was bound to trust in the Lord in the very worst frame he could be in, and that the exercise of faith was the way to be delivered from darkness, deadness, backsliding,' &c. And afterwards, I said, when questioning whether the believer should ever doubt of his estate on any account whatever, 'I know the opposite has been pre-scribed; when the saint is plunged in the mire of prevailing iniquity.' Now, as a believer may be thus plunged, and yet sin at that instant be his grief and burden, Rom. vii. 24, and he may have the hope and expectation of

being relieved from it even then, Psalm lxxv. 3, I do not think my words convey the idea you affix to them. Also you will observe, I do not say, 'that a person's being confident of his own good estate is the way to be delivered from,' &c. but 'that the believer was bound to trust the Lord in the worst frame,' &c. This I mention, precisely to state my words, and they are, I think, very defensible; for the believer is called 'to trust in the Lord for ever,' Isa. xxvi. 4, . If so, when in the situation mentioned; for this is a trusting in the Lord as one's God. The woman with the issue of blood, her touching Christ, and the success, is, I suppose, a call and encouragement to touch him by faith, for having the worst soul-maladies healed, Mark v. 25, . Trusting in the Lord for needful blessings, in the situation mentioned, gives him the glory of his faithfulness, and engages him to act in the believer's behalf; thus to do, it is both duty and interest. Jonah, when in a course of grievous rebellion, and under awful chastisement for it, when perhaps he had actually disclaimed interest in the Lord, or was in danger of it, said, 'he would look again toward the Lord's holy temple,' chap. ii. 4, evidently in exercise of faith in the Lord as his God, the Lord assuring him of his good estate and his favour, by the operation of the Spirit causing him so to act, and to be conscious of it; and, verse 7, 'when my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.' Here is my assertion exemplified in practice, by a believer, I may venture to say, in an evil frame, when the Spirit breathed upon him. Though a prophet, he deliberately disobeyed the express instructions of his Lord, chap. i. 2, 3, and in a careless frame, for he slept securely in the sides of the ship, during a tempest raised for his sake, and when the heathen mariners every one called upon his god, chap. i. 5, 6, So far was he from dreading, as he had reason to do, that the Lord would plead a controversy with him for the part he acted, that dismal security, awful carelessness, and a carnal frame had seized him; for he declared to the Lord, that he said to him in his country, he would repent of the evil he had said he would do to the Ninevites, if they turned from their evil way, and assigned that for the reason why he fled to Tarshish, chap. iv. 2, ; and thus would rather that the Lord should want the honour, that would redound to his name by the repentance, though only outward, of the Ninevites, than that the whole city should be destroyed, one of the largest the sun shone upon, and the most populous, and that himself should lose the honour and comfort of being the instrument of its preservation, than that he should fall under the imputation of being a false prophet, for which there would yet have been no foundation. Horrid carnality this! for as it was dreadful selfishness, it may, in that view, be termed carnality,—astonishing pride! this 'filthiness of the spirit' is worse than that of the flesh; and, all circumstances of his conduct considered, he was not only in an ungodly frame, but in an inhumane one, and he sinned presumptuously in one of the highest degrees, we may suppose, in which it is possible for a believer so to act; notwithstanding it appears the happy turn was begun in him, under the influence of the Spirit, by renewing his faith in the Lord as his God, and being confident of his good estate; upon which he prayed, as already mentioned, and was heard by his God, see verses 7, 8, was delivered out of his then dismal and dangerous circumstances, chap. ii. 12, —Thus I have done more than I was bound to do, and have proved the point, not only in the manner in which I have expressed it, but in the strong light your words, a comment on mine, had set it; for one plain scripture instance, such certainly as that I have given, is



sufficient, as agreed, to prove any thing. It is so far from being a mistaking of God's method of dealing with such persons, as you suggest, (pardon me, dear Sir,) to say, that it is 'the Lord's method of delivering his saints when in a backsliding condition, first to assure them of their good estate and his favour, and so to make that the means of their deliverance;' that I give you the words of the Holy Ghost for it is as express and full as any thing possibly can be, Jer. iii. 12, 13, 14, ; verse 14, 'Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you.' This was, to be sure, the Lord's intimating the new covenant relation in which he stood to the spiritual Israel among them; and verse 22 of that chapter, the Lord says, 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings;' and in the close of the verse, we have the Lord's thus assuring them of their good estate and his favour, shown to be the effectual mean of the backsliding being healed: 'Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.' Hos. xiv. 4, 'O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.' Here the first words of the Lord's message to his spiritual Israel, are, that 'the Lord was their God,' and the expression, 'fallen by iniquity,' conveys a very strong idea, when applied to a believer, perhaps as strong, as is comprehended in your words, 'evil, &c. frame;' and I must think this verse is so expressed to work on holy ingenuousness in them, for its revival when under the ashes of corruption. It would perhaps be no difficult matter to multiply scripture testimonies of such kind; but these adduced are, I think, full proof of the point, for confirmation of which they are brought. The love of Christ constrains the believer to return from folly, as well as to other things in other respects, 2 Cor. v. 14, . I might argue here from the efficacy of the love of God apprehended, the genius of the new creature, and nature in believers, and a variety of other topics, but choose, without expatiating, to confine myself to precise scripture testimonies. As to what you say, that 'among all the multitudes you have had opportunity to observe, you never knew one dealt with in this manner, but have known many brought back from great declensions, that appeared to be true saints, but it was in a very diverse way from this: first conscience awakened; they brought into great fear of the wrath of God; his favour hid; the subjects of a kind of new work of humiliation; brought to great sense of deserving God's wrath, while they yet feared it, before God had delivered them from apprehension of it, and comforted with a renewed sense of his favour.' All I observe upon this is, that the way I have laid down, is obviously that which the Lord declares in his word, he takes, for bringing back his people from declensions, and thus that in it mercy is to be expected, whatever the Lord may be pleased to do in sovereignty, and he will not be limited; also, persons do not perceive every thing that passes within them, far less are they capable to give a full distinct account of every thing of each kind. Experiences of Christians are to be brought to the touch-stone of the infallible bar, and to stand or fall by it; the Bible is not to be brought to their test, and judged of by them. I own we may mistake the sense of Scripture, but it is so obvious in the passages I have quoted, that I cannot see how it can be misapprehended.

I cannot say any thing now, about the other remarks I made on your book, touched on in your letter, because I have not now the book to look into. I understand the passages about prevalence of sin, so as to denominate a person not in a gracious state, better, by what you have wrote; and, if any difficulty

shall remain after comparing your book and letter, I may come to propose it to you afterwards.

What you wrote about the case of temptation was very agreeable, and I thank you for it. I shall now state the case more plainly, because I want much your further thoughts upon it. It is precisely this. A person finds himself beset by evil angels, what if I remember right Voetius terms *obsessio*, and one in that situation *obsessus*; they incessantly break into his body and mind, sometimes by vain, at other seasons by vile thoughts, now by the thoughts of a business neglected, which was a seasonable thing to be done, then by a scripture text, or an engaging thought of some spiritual truth, when entrance is not to be had another way, and by a variety of other methods. They do all they can, perpetually to tease, defile, and discourage; he is conscious of the whole transaction, and finds his spirit broken by it, and goes not about to reason with Satan, knows the expediency of this course, is aware Satan wants no better, than that he pray much and long against his temptations, and so wont pray himself out of breath, by his instigation; is convinced the remedy is to get them kept out of body and mind; trusts, in dependence on the Lord, to the use of medical, moral, and religious means for that end, because experience shows all of them are expedient and advantageous in their place; but all is in vain, no relief for him, relish of divine things wore off the mind, no comfort, is rendered callous by cruel constant buffetings, he cries, but the Lord hears not. By what I understand, this is a just representation of the case, and will lead you to the knowledge of other circumstances in it. What would you advise such a person to do? How shall he recover savour of spiritual truths and objects?

I wondered you said nothing in your letter, about what I mentioned in mine, respecting supposed immediate revelations of facts and future events, as special favours conferred on some special favourites of heaven. I give in to your sentiments on that point, expressed in the three treatises you have published, and greatly like what Mr. Brainerd said on the subject, as mentioned, I think, by you, in the funeral sermon on him, which I perused with a great deal of pleasure; and shall now mention some things, said in favour of that principle, of which people are very tenacious, that I may have your answers to them, which will be a singular favour done me, for certain reasons: for example, John xvi. 13, is affirmed to be an express promise of such a thing:—it is urged, the thing is not contrary to Scripture, and therefore, may be;—it is urged, John xiii. 24-27, is an example of it, an intimation what the Lord will do in such kind when it pleaseth him, till the end of time. It is pretended, and indeed this is the strength of the cause, that the thing is a matter of fact, has nothing to do with the Bible, therefore nothing about it is to be expected in Scripture, and simply to deny it in all cases, is daringly to limit the power of God. The Lord has not said he will not grant it, and how dare any say it cannot be? It is reasoned, there are numbers of well attested instances of the thing in different ages and places, facts are stubborn things, and to deny them all is shocking, an overturning of all moral evidence. It is insisted on, that the thing has been formerly; it is confessed, and why may it not be now? We are told, a considerable time before a thing happened, that it has been impressed on the mind in all its circumstances, which exactly happened in every point; if when asked, what one can say to this, he says, perhaps it was from Satan, to this it is answered, does he know future contingent events? The reply is at hand, it is not above him to figure a thing on the fancy long before, which he is resolved

by some means to bring about; but to all this it is answered by advocates for immediate revelations, such reasoning tends to sap one of the main pillars of evidence of the divinity of the scripture prophecies.

I have, by what I remember, given you the force of the argument, to establish what has had, I too well know, very bad effects, as commonly managed, in Britain, as well as in New England; a history of instances of them would not be without its use, and materials for it are not wanting. I will long much to see what you say in way of reply to all this. I am sure you cannot employ time better than in framing it. I should have mentioned that the authority of eminent divines is brought to bear upon them, whose stomachs stand at swallowing things, like additions to the Bible,—Mr. Fleming, in the Fulfilling of the Scriptures, Dr. Goodwin, &c. But on this, it has been pleasantly observed, that the authority of the worthies in the eleventh of the Hebrews, would have done a good deal better. I have some apprehension this is a point of truth, which the Lord is to clear up in this age.

I have read your Humble Attempt, and with much satisfaction; was charmed with the scriptures of the latter day of glory set in one point of light. I do think humbly your observations on Lowman have great strength of reason. The killing of the witnesses, as yet to come, has been to me a grievous temptation; for which reason, I peruse with peculiar pleasure what you say on this subject; but if you answer the objection, 'It would appear that the seventh trumpet is to sound soon after the resurrection of the witnesses, and the kingdoms of the world, &c. but that has not happened, therefore the witnesses are not killed;' I say, if this you answer, I have forgot.

I should have also mentioned, that it seems evident, the doctrine of immediate revelations must be simply denied as unscriptural, and thus well-founded in no case; or it must be allowed in its full compass, and latitude, let the consequences of it be what they will, for if the thing is allowed possible, reasonings about its effects will not conclude nor avail; I can see no middle way between the two things. That principle taken for granted by almost all, in all times past, is, as I mentioned in my last letter, to me a surprising thing.

Mr. Whitefield arrived at Edinburgh Wednesday last, and was to preach on Thurs-day evening; but as I am fifteen miles from that city, of which two miles by sea, I have not yet heard of the effects of his preaching, or the number of the audiences; I wish they may be as frequent as when he was last here. May Divine power specially attend his ministrations! We need it much, as we are generally fallen under great deadness. I believe he will find use for all his prudence and patience in dealing with us, for different reasons. With great pleasure, friends to vital religion, and to him, are informed he is to make no collections at this time! I was glad to hear you write, that he laboured with success in New England, in rectifying mistakes he had favoured, about intimations made by the Lord to his people, &c. and heartily wish he may be directed to apply an antidote here, where it is also needed.

I have tired you with a long epistle, and shall therefore now break off. What you was pleased to favour me with, upon the difficulty started from Rom. viii. 28, was very acceptable, and I thank you much for it. I will expect a letter from you the first opportunity after this comes to hand; and in it all the news of New England, particularly some account of the state of religion with you. It gives me pleasure to think, I may write you my sentiments upon every thing without reserve. Please make my affectionate compliments to my friend

Mr. Abercrombie, when you see him, or write to him, and tell him, I remember I am in his debt for a letter. I hope the ship I am informed of, for carrying this, is not sailed, and therefore it will not be so long in coming to your hand, after being writ, as my last.

I am, &c.”

Letter to Mr. M’CULLOCH.

“To the Rev. Mr. M’CULLOCH.

*Northampton, Oct. 7, 1748.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your letter of Feb. 19, 1748, which I received the week before last. I had also, long before that, received the letter you speak of, which you wrote the spring before, dated March 12, 1747, which I wrote an answer to, and sent it to Mr. Prince of Boston, and committed it to his care; and am very sorry that you never received it. I am far from being weary of our correspondence. I ever looked on myself as greatly honoured and obliged by you, in your beginning this correspondence; and have found it pleasant and profitable; and particularly your last letter, that I have but now received, has been very agreeable and entertaining; especially on account of the good news it contains. I cannot but think many things mentioned in your letter, and the letters of my other correspondents in Scotland, which came with yours, are great things, worthy to be greatly taken notice of, and to be an occasion of much rejoicing and praise to all that love Zion: viz. The remarkable change in one of the clerks of the privy council; God’s stirring up him and Mr. Littleton to write in defence of Christianity; the good effect of this among men of figure and character; the good disposition of the king, and the Prince and Princess of Wales; the late awakening of two of the princesses, Amelia and Caroline, and the hopeful conversion of one or both of them; the hopeful, real piety of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and his good disposition to-wards experimental religion and the dissenters; several of the clergy of the church of England lately appearing to preach the doctrines of grace; several of the magistrates, in various towns in England, exerting themselves with uncommon zeal to put the laws in execution against vice; and the eminent piety of the Prince of Orange, now the stadtholder of the Seven United Provinces. These things (at least some of them) are great in themselves, and are of that nature that they have a most promising aspect on the interests of Zion, and appear to be happy presages and forerunners of yet better and greater things that are coming. They look as if the tide was turning, and glorious things approaching, by the revolution of the wheel of God’s providence. I think we, and all others, who have lately united by explicit agreement in extraordinary prayer for a general revival of religion and the coming of Christ’s kingdom, may, without presumption, be greatly encouraged and animated in the duty we have engaged in, by the appearance of such a dawning of light from such great darkness; and should be ungrateful if we did not acknowledge God’s great goodness in these things, and faith-fulness in fulfilling the promises of his word; such as these in particular, ‘If any two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing you

shall ask, it shall be done of my Father which is in heaven;' and, 'Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.' I have already communicated these things to some belonging to this town, and other places; some have appeared much affected with them; and one that belongs to another town, has taken extracts of these passages. I design, God willing, to communicate these things to my congregation, before the next quarterly day for prayer, and also to the neighbouring ministers, who, according to our stated agreement, will be met together on that day, to spend the former part of the day in prayer among ourselves, and the latter part in public services in one of our congregations; and shall also probably communicate these things to some of my correspondents in New Jersey and elsewhere, and I cannot but think they will tend to do a great deal of good, in various respects; and particularly will tend to promote the Concert for Prayer, in these parts of the world. I desired Mr. Prince of Boston to send you one of my books on the Concert, soon after it was published; who engaged to do it; but long forgot it, as I perceived afterwards to my surprise; but since that more thorough care has been taken about that matter; and I hope you, and each of my other correspondents in Scotland, have before now received one of those books.

I thank you, dear Sir, for sending me your thoughts on some things in the prophecies of the Revelation of St. John, and for being at so much trouble as to send it twice (supposing the first letter had miscarried.) This I take as a particular mark of respect, for which I am obliged to you. I received, as I said before, your former letter, (which contained the same observations,) and sent an answer to it, wherein I gave you my thoughts, such as they were, on those subjects. But if you have received my book on United Prayer, &c. therein you have seen more fully my thoughts on some things in the Revelation, that have a near relation to the same matter that you write about; the substance of which I before had written to you in a large letter, desiring your opinion of what I wrote.

The letter I think you received, by some intimations contained in yours of March 12, 1747. But you was not pleased to favour me with any thing at all of your thoughts of what I had so largely communicated to you, to that end, that I might have your opinion. But I am not the less willing again to communicate my thoughts on your re-marks.

As to what you observe concerning the number six hundred and sixty-six, and that number being found in the name of the present king of France; it is indeed something remarkable, that that number should be found both in his Latin and French names, as you observe; and I do not know but that the omniscient Spirit of God (who doubtless in his predictions has sometimes his eye on several things in which he knows they will be fulfilled) might have some respect to his name in the prophecy; but I can hardly think that this individual king of France, or any other particular prince in Europe, is what is chiefly intended by the beast, so largely described in the 13th chapter of Revelation, whose number is said to be six hundred and sixty-six. Of all the conjectures concerning the number of the beast, that I have lit on in my small reading, that of Mr. Potter's seems to me the most ingenious, who supposes the true meaning is to be found by extracting the root of the number. But after all, I have ever suspected that the thing chiefly aimed at by the Holy Spirit, was never yet found out, and that the discovery is reserved for later times. Yet one reason why Mr. Potter's conjecture does not fully satisfy me, is, the difficulty without

adjusting the fractions in the root, when extracted. With respect to your very ingenious conjectures, concerning the period of forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, of the outer court and holy city's being trodden under-foot of the Gentiles; you know, Sir, that that forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, spoken of Rev. xi. 2, has been universally understood, as being the very same period with the 1260 days of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, spoken of in the next verse; and the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of the woman's being led in the wilderness, chap. xiii. 6. and the time, times, and half a time, of her being nourished in the wilderness from the face of the serpent, ver. 14, and the forty-two months of the continuance of the beast, chap. xiii. 5, But it does not appear to me probable that these forty-two months of the continuance of the beast, means the sum of the diverse periods in which the plat of ground, whereon the ancient literal Jerusalem stood, was under the dominion of the Romans, Saracens, Persians, and Turks; but the space of time during which the reign of antichrist or the popish hierarchy continues; and as to the particular time of the downfall of antichrist, you see my reasons in the forementioned pamphlet, why I think it certain that it will not be known till it be accomplished: I cannot but think that the Scripture is plain in that matter, and that it does, in effect, require us to rest satisfied in ignorance till the time of the end comes.

However, I should be very foolish, if I were dogmatical in my thoughts concerning the interpretation of the prophecies: especially in opposition to those who have had so much more opportunity to be well acquainted with things of this nature. But since you have insisted on my thoughts, I conclude you will not be displeased that I have mentioned them, though not altogether agreeable to yours. I am nevertheless greatly obliged to you for your condescension in communicating your thoughts to me. If we do not exactly agree in our thoughts about these things, yet in our prayers for the accomplishment of these glorious events in God's time, and for God's gracious presence with us, and his assistance in endeavours to promote his kingdom and interests, in the mean time, we may be entirely agreed and united. That we may be so, is the earnest desire of, dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother and servant,  
in our common Lord,

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

In perusing the following letter, while the reader will deeply regret the loss of that from Mr. Erskine to which it is an answer, he will feel a lively interest in the mass of religious intelligence which it contains, as well as in the interesting development which it gives of the character of Governor Belcher.

"To the Rev. Mr. Erskine.

*Northampton, Oct. 14, 1748.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

A little while ago I wrote a letter to you, wherein I acknowledged the receipt of your letter, and the books that came with it, viz. Taylor on Original Sin; and on the Romans: with your sermons, and Answer to Mr. Campbell; for which most acceptable presents I would most heartily and renewedly thank you.

I sent my letter to Boston, together with one of Mr. Stoddard's Benefit of the Gospel to the Wounded in Spirit, and his Nature of Saving Conversion, with a sermon on Mr. Brainerd's death, and some account of a history of his life now in the press, to be sent to Scotland by the first opportunity; whether there has been any opportunity or no, I cannot tell. I have very lately received another letter from you, dated April 4, 1748, which was indeed exceedingly acceptable, by reason of the remarkable and joyful accounts it contains of things, that have a blessed aspect on the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world: such as the good effects of the writings of Mr. West and Mr. Littleton on some at court, and the religious concern in Mr. Randy's and Mr. Gray's parishes, the hopeful true piety of the Archbishop of Canterbury; this and the king's disposition, not only to tolerate but comprehend the dissenters; and their indifference with respect to the liturgy, ceremonies, and episcopal ordination; the piety of the prince who is now advanced to the stadtholdership, and has it established in his family for ever; the awakening of the Princess Caroline; and the good disposition of the Princess of Wales. I think it very fit that those, who have lately entered into an union of extraordinary prayer for the coming of Christ's kingdom and the prosperity of Zion, should inform one another of things which they know of, that pertain to the prosperity of Zion, and whereby their prayers are in some degree answered; that they may be united in joy and thanksgiving, as well as in supplication; and that they may be encouraged and animated in their prayers for the future, and engaged to continue instant therein with all perseverance. I think these things forementioned, which you have sent me an account of, are worthy greatly to be observed, by those that are united in the Concert for Prayer, for their comfort, praise, and encouragement. I intend to communicate these things to my own people, before the next quarterly season for prayer, and to the neighbouring ministers, who are united in this affair; and also to my correspondents in this province, and other provinces of America. I doubt not but they will have a happy tendency and influence in many respects. I hope, dear Sir, you will continue still to give me particular information of things that appear, relative to the state of Zion and the interests of religion, in Great Britain or other parts of Europe. In so doing, you will not only inform me, but I shall industriously communicate any important informations of that kind, and spread them amongst God's people in this part of the world; and shall endeavour to my utmost to make such a use of them, as shall tend most to promote the interest of religion. And among other things I should be glad to be informed of any books that come out, remarkably tending either to the illustration or defence of that truth, or the promoting the power of godliness, or in any respect peculiarly tending to advance true religion.

I have given an account of some things, which have a favourable aspect on the interests of religion, in these American parts of the world, in my letters to Mr. Robe, and Mr. M'Laurin, sent with this; which you will have opportunity to see.

In your last letter you desired to be particularly informed of the present state of New Jersey college, and of things remarkable of a religious nature respecting the Indians. As to the former, viz. the state of New Jersey college: by the last accounts I had, it was in somewhat of an unsettled state. Governor Belcher had a mind to give them a new charter, that he thought would be more for the benefit of the society. Accordingly a draft of a new charter was drawn; wherein it was proposed to make considerable alteration in the corporation of trustees; to leave out some of the former trustees; and that the governor, for the time being, should be a trustee, and three or four of the council of that province. Those two things made considerable uneasiness, viz. leaving out some of the former trustees, and making it a part of the constitution that the governor and so many of the council should be members of the corporation. Some feared that this would not be for the health of the society; because the men in chief authority in that province have, for the most part been men of no religion, and many of them open and professed contemners of it. How this matter has been settled, or whether these difficulties are got over, I have not been informed. As to Governor Belcher himself, he appears thoroughly engaged to promote virtue and vital religion in those parts, which already has had some good effects; vice and open profaneness, by the means, is become less fashionable among the great men, and virtue and religion more creditable. The disposition of Governor Belcher may in some measure be seen, by the following extract of a letter from him, in answer to one I wrote to him on a special occasion.

‘Burlington, New Jersey, Feb. 5, 1748.

You will, Sir, be sure of me as a friend and father to the missionaries this way, and of all my might and encouragement for spreading the everlasting gospel of God our Saviour, in all parts and places where God shall honour me with any power or influence.

As to myself, Sir, it is impossible to express the warm sentiments of my heart, for the mercies without number with which I have been loaded, by the God who has fed me all my life long to this day; and my reflection upon his goodness covers me with shame and blushing, for I know my utter unworthiness, and that I am less than the least of all his mercies. I would therefore abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. You are sensible, my good friend, that governors stand in a glaring light, and their conduct is narrowly watched by friends and enemies: the one often unreasonably applaud them, while the other perhaps too justly censure them. Yet in this I am not anxious; but to approve myself to the Searcher of hearts, from whose mouth I must hear pronounced, at the great and general audit, those joyful words, Enter thou, &c.—or that terrible sentence, Depart from me, &c. Join with me then in thankfulness to God, for all the blessings and talents he has entrusted me with, and in prayer that I may employ them to his honour and glory, to the good of the people over whom he hath placed me, and so to the comfort of my own soul: that I may always remember that he ruleth over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God.’

In another letter which I have received, dated Burlington, N. J. May 31, 1748, he says as follows.



‘I will prostrate myself before my God and Saviour, and on the bended knees of my soul, (abhorring myself in every view,) I will beg for a measure of divine grace and wisdom; that so I may be honoured, in being an instrument of advancing the kingdom of the blessed Jesus in this world, and in that way be bringing forth fruit in old age [he was 66 years old, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of January last.]. I bless God, my heavenly Father, that I am not ashamed of the cross of Christ; and I humbly ask the assistance of sovereign grace, that, in times of temptation, I may never be a shame to it, I mean that my conversation may always be such as becometh the gospel of Christ. And I tell you again, that all such as minister at the altar, and in the course of their ministry approve themselves faithful to the great Head of the church, will not only find my countenance and protection, but my love and esteem.

‘As to our embryo college, it is a noble design; and if God pleases, may prove an extensive blessing. I have adopted it for a daughter, and hope it may in time become an Alma Mater, to this and the neighbouring provinces. I am getting the best advice and assistance I can in the draught of a charter, which I intend to give to our infant college, and I thank you, Sir, for all the kind hints you have given me, for the service of this excellent undertaking: and as St. Luke says of Mary, She kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart; so you may depend, what you have said about the college will not be lost with me; but, as far as God shall enable me, I shall exert and lay out myself in every way to bring it to maturity, and then to advance its future welfare and prosperity; for this I believe will be acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; a relish for true religion and piety, being great strangers to this part of America. The accounts I receive from time to time, give me too much reason to fear that Arminianism, Arianism, and even Socinianism, in destruction to the doctrines of free grace, are daily propagated in the New England colleges. How horribly and how wickedly, are these poisonous notions rooting out those noble pious principles, on which our excellent ancestors founded those seminaries! and how base a return is it of the present generation, to that God, who is constantly surrounding them with good-ness and mercy! and how offensive is it in the eyes of that God, who is jealous of his glory, and will take vengeance on his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies! And from these things I am led to thank you for your book, wrote in consequence of the Memorial from Scotland, for promoting a Concert in Prayer. I am much pleased with this proposal and imitation to all good Christians, and with your arguments to encourage and corroborate the design. The two missionaries you mention, Messrs. Spencer and Strong, I am told are present at Boston. I have once and again desired Mr. Brainerd to assure them of my kindness and respect. But their affairs have not yet led them this way. I rejoice in their being appointed to carry the gospel, in its purity, to the Six Nations; and when Mr. Brainerd and they proceed to Susquehannah, they shall have all my assistance and encouragement; by letters to the king’s governors where they may pass, and my letters to the sachem or chief of those Indians.’

With regard to the missionaries, Governor Belcher mentions: ‘The commissioners in Boston, of the corporation in London, for the propagation of the gospel among the Indians in New England and parts adjacent, a little before Mr. David Brainerd went to Boston, the summer before his death, had received a sum of money from the estate left by the famous Dr. Williams, for the maintenance of two missionaries among the Six Nations: and having enter-

tained a very great esteem of Mr. Brainerd, from the opportunity they had of acquaintance with him while in Boston, the committee entrusted to him the affair of finding and recommending the persons proper to be employed in this business.' Accordingly he, after much deliberation, recommended one Mr. Spencer, belonging to Haddam, his native town; and Mr. Strong, belonging to this town, Northampton; who are undoubtedly well qualified persons, of good abilities and learning, and of pious dispositions. The commissioners, on his recommendation, accepted these persons; and after Mr. Brainerd's death, sent to them; and they went down to Boston, and accepted the mission. But the commissioners did not think proper immediately to send them forth among the Six Nations; but ordered them to go and live, during the winter, in New Jersey with Mr. John Brainerd, among the christian Indians, there to follow their studies, and get acquaintance with the manners and customs of Indians; and in the spring to go with Mr. Brainerd to Susquehannah, to instruct the Indians on that river, before they went to the Six Nations. Accordingly they went and lived in New Jersey; but were discouraged as to their intended journey to Susquehannah; for they understood that the Susquehannah Indians greatly objected against entertaining missionaries, without the consent of the Six Nations, (to whom they are subject, and of whom they stand in great fear,) and insisted that the missionaries should go to the Six Nations first. Therefore, in the spring, Messrs. Spencer and Strong returned to Boston, for new orders from the commissioners; who saw cause to order them to come and live at my house, till the time of an appointed interview of the governors of Boston and New York with the chiefs of the Six Nations, at Albany, in the latter part of the summer; when it was proposed that some, that should go to Albany with Gov. Shirley, should, on the behalf of the commissioners, treat with the Six Nations concerning their receiving missionaries. Messrs. Spencer and Strong did accordingly; they lived with me in the summer, and went to Albany at the time of the treaty; and the nation of the Oneidas, in particular, were dealt with concerning receiving these missionaries; who appeared free and forward in the matter. Messrs. Spencer and Strong, at that time, got some acquaintance with the chiefs of the tribe; who appeared fond of them, and very desirous of their going with them. But the grand difficulty then in the way, was the want of an interpreter; which occasioned their not going with the Indians at that time, but returning again to New England. Mr. Strong, also, was taken much out of health, which discouraged him from entertaining any thoughts of throwing himself into the fatigues and hardships of their undertaking, till the next spring. But the difficulty of the want of an interpreter is now got over; a very good one has been found; and Mr. Spencer was ordained on the 14th of the last month, and is gone with the interpreter, to go to the country of the Oneidas, about 170 miles beyond Albany, and about 130 miles distant from all settlements of the white people.

It is a thing, that has a favourable aspect on the design of propagating the gospel among the Indians, that many of late have been remarkably spirited to promote it, and liberally to open their hands in order to it. Mr. Brainerd's going to Boston before his death, and people there having some acquaintance with him, and with his labours and success among the Indians, gave occasion to a considerable number in Boston, men of good substance and of the best character, and some of them principal men in the town, to form themselves into a charitable society, that by their joint endeavours and contributions, they

might promote the instruction and spiritual good of the Indians; who have done some very liberal things for the Indians in New Jersey, and also for the Six Nations. The people of Northampton have also had their hearts remarkably opened, to contribute to the maintenance of Mr. Spencer's interpreter; and one individual at Springfield, has been moved to devote a considerable part of his estate, to promote the propagation of the gospel among the Six Nations.

As to my writing against Arminianism; I have hitherto been remarkably hindered; so that probably it will be a considerable time before I shall have any thing ready for the press; but do intend, God allowing and assisting, to prosecute that design: and I desire your prayers for the Divine assistance in it. The books you sent me, will be a great help to me; I would on no account have been without them.

I condole with you and Mrs. Erskine, on the loss of your noble and excellent father; which is doubtless a great loss to the church of God. But the glorious King of Zion, who was dead, is alive, and lives for evermore, and can raise up others in exalted stations to favour Zion; and seems to be so doing at this day, by things you give an account of in your letter. I have been the subject of an afflictive dispensation of late, tending to teach me how to sympathize with the afflicted; which I think I mentioned in my last letter to you, viz. the death of my second daughter, the last February.

Please to present my most affectionate and respectful salutations to your dear con-sort. That I and mine may be remembered in your and her prayers, is the request of

Your affectionate and obliged  
Friend and brother,

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

Letter from Mr. Willison to Mr. Edwards.

"To the Rev. Mr. Edwards.

*Dundee, March 17, 1749.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

I thank you for yours of October last, with your two sermons, which Mr. M'Laurin sent me; which two sermons give me cause to sing of mercy as well as of judgment, that as on shining and successful youth is laid aside from labouring in the gospel, another is sent forth to it. Indeed, worthy Mr. Brainerd was one among a thousand, for carrying the gospel among the heathen, as appears by the account you give of him in your sermon, and by his Journals which have been published here, and prefaced by Dr. Doddridge, and dedicated by him to the Society at Edinburgh. We must be silent; seeing He who hath removed him is holy, just, and wise. We must also lay our hands on our mouths, with respect to the loss of our great and eminent men, such as Dr. Watts, Dr. Colman, Mr. Cowper, and others. But O, it is no loss to be absent from the body, to them who are present with the Lord. Great need have we to cry to the Lord of the vineyard, to send forth others in their room: it is easy for him to do it, from places we little expect. These are hopeful and promising ac-

counts, which you have from your correspondents in Scotland, mentioned in your letter. May they all hold true, and be the forerunners of greater things, and the dawnings of the glory of the latter days. I may add to them, the rising of a burning and shining light of a church of England minister, in Dr. Doddridge's neighbourhood, viz. Mr. Hervey; for he dates his writings from Weston Favel, near Northampton. He has lately published two volumes of Meditations on all kinds of subjects, in a most orthodox, Calvinistic, and evangelical strain, in which he takes all kinds of occasions of exalting and commending his glorious Master, Christ, in a most rhetorical way, and in a style I think inimitable, and in the most moving expressions, so that it is not easy to read him without tears. He freely taxes his brethren of that church, for departing from the doctrines of grace, and of justification by imputed righteousness, &c. which were taught by the Reformers, and their own articles and homilies. And notwithstanding this uncommon freedom, which he uses with his brethren, great men, &c. never had any books such a run in England, as his; for in a year and a half's time, or thereabouts, there are five editions of them published at London, and still they are greedily bought and read, especially by persons of distinction; the style being a little too high and poetical for the vulgar. His name is James Hervey, A. B. Some say he is of noble descent, from the Earl of Bristol; but I am not sure of this. It is thought he is the man that Dr. Doddridge points at, in the life of Col. Gardiner, pages 37, 38. It looks well, that so many in England should become fond of sound evangelical writings. No doubt the books may have reached Boston by this time. Let us therefore still wait and pray in hope. I should be glad to do any thing in my power, for promoting the Concert for United Prayer, and oh that it were spread both far and near; it would be a token of a general revival of religion to be fast approaching. I know nothing that hath a greater tendency to promote the aforesaid happy Concert, than the book you lately published about it (a copy whereof you sent me, for which I humbly thank you.) I wish it were universally spread, for I both love and admire the performance upon subjects so uncommon. I approve your remarks on Mr. Lowman. His reason for beginning the antichrist's reign so late as the year 756, is weak, viz. because then King Pepin invested the pope in his temporal dominion over that province in Italy, called St. Peter's Patrimony—when it is evident that the pope had usurped his tyrannical dominion over Christ's church long before, which is the main ground of his being called antichrist; yea, the pope's usurped power was greater before King Pepin's time, than it is at this day—as for instance, in Pope Symmachus' time, anno 501; in Pope Hormisdas' time, anno 516; in Pope Boniface 3d's time, anno 606; in Pope Constantine's time, anno 713. Yea, Mr. Lowman himself gives a dreadful instance of the pope's tyranny and usurpation, both over the church and the emperor, in page 97 of his book, which happened anno 726, thirty years before he begins antichrist's reign; when Pope Gregory 2d excommunicated the Emperor Leo, for ordering images to be removed out of the churches, and forbad obedience or paying of taxes to him. Was not antichrist's reign far advanced by that time? And we have several instances of the pope's tyranny, similar to this, recorded by historians, before that which Mr. Lowman mentions; which more directly denominate him antichrist, than his temporal doings in Italy. We see how easy it is for the best writers to slip into mistakes and wrong schemes. I agree with you, that antichrist's fall will be gradual, in the way you explain it.

I am sorry to hear of Arminianism growing in New England. But I rejoice to hear of Gov. Belcher's zeal for religion in New Jersey; may the Lord spare him and bless him. As also I am glad to hear of the hopeful prospect of the gospel's growing among the Six Nations of Indians; and of such a youth as Mr. Spencer being sent among them: may the Lord prosper him as he did Mr. Brainerd. I sympathize with you under that affliction of your daughter's death; but it is comfortable she was helped so to live and die, as to afford such grounds of hope concerning her. And though she was the flower of your family, yet the remembering of the gracious hand, that painted the flower, will engage your worthy spouse and you to a becoming silence, like Aaron. As he will do what he will, let us join and say always, Let his will be done. I would fain be at this in my own case: may the Lord help me to more of christian submission and resignation. I am now entered into the 69th year of my age, and fallen under several distresses, whereby I have been shaken over the grave these many months past, and am laid aside from preaching. May the Lord assist me in my preparation for the dissolution of this tabernacle. I find it no easy matter to die, and to die in faith, and to die like Simeon with Jesus in his arms. I very much need your prayers for me. I am glad to hear, dear brother, that your parents are both alive, and that they hold the abilities of both body and mind so remarkably at so great an age; and particularly that your father, at seventy-nine years of age, and now near eighty, performs the whole of his ministerial work so constantly, without feeling it burdensome, and was able to travel forty miles to see you: his is indeed a wonder of his age, and would be reckoned so in this country, where few ministers come near to that age and vigour. May the Lord still spare him, with your mother, and make them still flourishing in old age; may they be blessed with much of God's precious presence, and with the consolations and fruits of the Spirit, in their aged and declining days. I still kindly remember your worthy spouse and children remaining, and pray they may long be continued for comforts to you, and you continued for a blessing to them, to your flock, and to many others, as you already have been.

I remain, Rev. and dear brother,  
Your most affectionate brother, and serv't  
In our Lord,  
J. WILLISON."

"P.S. The Rev. Mr. Whitefield came to Scotland in September last, and preached about two months in and about Edinburgh and Glasgow. But some brethren who employed him, being challenged for it in synods and presbyteries, and debates arising thereupon, Mr. Whitefield returned to London. To give a view of the substance of these debates, and what passed thereupon in the synod of Glasgow, I have sent you herewith a printed pamphlet containing the same, with two other books, as a small acknowledgment of your favours."

The three following letters went in the same packet to Scotland. The religious intelligence, which they communicated, will be found highly interesting at the present day. In the first of the three, is the earliest allusion, on the part of Mr. Edwards, which I have met with, to a most painful subject; the mention of which I have purposely forborne, that all which relates to it may be presented together.

Letter to Mr. Erskine.

*“Northampton, May 20, 1749.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

The day before yesterday, I received your letter of February 14th, with a packet, containing the pamphlets you mention in your letter; for which I am greatly obliged to you. I have not yet had opportunity to read these books, but promise myself much entertainment by them, from the occasions on which they were written, and the subject they are upon. The last letter I received from you before this, was dated April 6, 1748, so that I suppose the two letters you say you wrote to me, since those which I acknowledge the receipt of, have miscarried, which I much regret, as I much value what comes from your hand.

In one of your last letters which came to hand, you desire to be particularly informed concerning the state of religion, in these parts of the world, and particularly concerning the mission to the Indians, and the infant college in New Jersey. As to the affair of preaching the gospel to the Indians, Mr. Spencer went, the last fall, far into the western wilderness; to the Oneidas, one of the tribes of Indians called the Six Nations, living on Susquehannah river, towards the head of the river; to a place called by the Indians Onohohquauga, about 180 miles south-west from Albany on Hudson's river, where he continued through the winter; and went through many difficulties and hardships, with little or no success, through the failing of his interpreter; who was a woman that had formerly been a captive among the Caghnewauga Indians in Canady, who speak the same language with those Oneidas, excepting some small variation of dialect. She went with her husband, an Englishman, and is one of the people we here call Separatists; who showed the spirit he was of there in that wilderness, beyond what was known before. He differed with and opposed Mr. Spencer in his measures, and had an ill influence on his wife; who I fear was very unfaithful, refusing to interpret for Mr. Spencer more than one discourse in a week, a sermon upon the sabbath; and utterly declined assisting him in discoursing and conversing with the Indians in the week time. And her interpretations on the sabbath were performed very unfaith-fully, as at last appeared. So that Mr. Spencer came away in discouragement in the spring, and returned to Boston, and gave the corporation there, who employed him, an account of his unexpected difficulties and disappointments; and became obliged to them to wait three months, to see if they could procure a fellow missionary, and an-other interpreter, to go with him to the Indians; which I believe is not much expected. If these are not obtained within the limited time, Mr. Spencer is free from any further engagements to them. Mr. Spencer is now preaching at Elizabeth-town in New Jersey, in the pulpit of the late Mr. Dickinson; and I believe is likely to settle there. He is a person of very promising qualifications: and will hopefully in some measure make up the great loss that people have sustained by the death of their former pastor.

As to the mission in New Jersey, we have from time to time had comfortable ac-counts of it; and Mr. John Brainerd, who has the care of the congregation of christian Indians there, was about three weeks ago at my house; and informed me of the in-crease of his congregation, and of their being added to from time to time by the coming Indians from distant places, and settling in

the Indian town at Cranberry, for the sake of hearing the gospel; and of something of a work of awakening being all along carried on among the Indians to this day; and of some of the new comers being awakened; and of there being instances, from time to time, of hopeful conversion among them; and of a general good and pious behaviour of the professing Indians. But he gave an account also of some trouble the Indians meet with, from some of the white people; and particularly from Mr. Maurice, the chief justice of the province, a professed deist; who is suing them for their lands under pretext of a will, made by their former king; which was undoubtedly forged. However, he is a man of such craft and influence, that it is not known how the matter will issue.

I have heard nothing new that is very remarkable concerning the college in New Jersey. It is in its infancy; there has been considerable difficulty about settling their charter. Gov. Belcher, who gave the charter, is willing to encourage and promote the college to his utmost; but differs in his opinion concerning the constitution, which will tend most to its prosperity, from some of the principal ministers that have been concerned in founding the society. He insists upon it that the governor, for the time being, and four of his Majesty's council for the province, should always be of the corporation of trustees; and that the governor should always be the president of the corporation. The ministers are all very willing that the present governor, who is a religious man, should be in this standing; but their difficulty is with respect to future governors, who they suppose are as likely to be men of no religion, and deists, as otherwise. However, so the matter is settled, to the great uneasiness of Mr. Gilbert Tennent in particular, who it is feared will have no further concern with the college on this account. Mr. Burr, the president of the college, is a man of religion and singular learning, and I hope the college will flourish under his care.

I have taken a great deal of pains in communicating to others, in various parts, the pleasing accounts you and my other correspondents in Scotland gave me last year of things of promising aspect on the interest of religion, on your side of the ocean: which have been very affecting to pious ministers and people in New England, and also in the provinces of New York and New Jersey; and hope some considerable good has been done by such tidings; particularly in animating many in the duty of extraordinary united prayer for a general revival of religion, and promoting the Concert for Prayer proposed from Scotland; which prevails more and more in these parts of the world; which, together with some other things in some places, are cause of thankfulness, and bode well to the interests of Zion, (of which I have given a more particular account in my letters to Mr. M'Laurin, Mr. Robe, and Mr. M'Culloch, sent with this,) though it be in general a very dead time as to religion, and a time of the prevailing of all manner of iniquity.

I shall send orders to Boston, that one of my books on Mr. Brainerd's life may be sent to you with this letter; if any of them are ready, as I hope they are, or will be very speedily.

I have nothing very comfortable to inform you of concerning the present state of religion in this place. A very great difficulty has arisen between my people, relating to qualifications for communion at the Lord's table. My honoured grandfather Stoddard, my predecessor in the ministry over this church, strenuously maintained the Lord's supper to be a converting ordinance; and urged all to come, who were not of scandalous life, though they knew them-

selves to be unconverted. I formerly conformed to his practice; but I have had difficulties with respect to it, which have been long increasing; till I dared no longer to proceed in the former way; which has occasioned great uneasiness among my people, and has filled all the country with noise, which has obliged me to write something on the subject, which is now in the press. I know not but this affair will issue in a separation between me and my people. I desire your prayers, that God would guide me in every step of this affair. My wife joins with me in respectful salutations to you and your consort.

I am, dear Sir, your obliged and affectionate  
Brother and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

Letter to Mr. M’Culloch

*“Northampton, May 23, 1749.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

The last letter I received from you was dated Feb. 10, 1748, to which I wrote an answer the latter end of last summer; which I suppose you received, because I perceive by letters sent me this spring, by some others of my correspondents, your neighbours, they had received letters I sent to them at the same time, and in the same packet. Your letters to me have been very acceptable; I should be glad to receive them oftener.

The letter I last received from you, and others that came with it, were peculiarly agreeable, on account of the good news they contained concerning Messrs. West and Littleton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, some in the royal family, the stadtholder, &c. These things I have taken a great deal of pains to communicate to others; and they have been very entertaining, and I hope profitable to many. I was at the pains to extract from all the letters I received at that time, those things which appeared with a favourable aspect on the interest of religion in the world, and to draw various copies to send to different parts, to such as I supposed would be most likely to be entertained and improved by them, and to do good with them; and I believe they have been of great benefit, particularly to excite and encourage God’s people, in the great duty of praying for the coming of Christ’s kingdom, and to promote extraordinary united prayer, in the method proposed in the Memorial from Scotland. I read these articles of good news to my own congregation, and also to the association of ministers to which I belong, when met on one of the quarterly seasons for prayer; and read them occasionally to many others; and sent a copy of one of the forementioned abstracts to Connecticut, which was carried into various parts of that government, and shown to several ministers there. I sent one to Mr. Hall of Sutton, a pious minister about the middle of this province; who, according to my desire, communicated it to other ministers, and I suppose to his people. I sent a copy to Mr. Rogers of Kittery, I suppose about seventy miles to the eastward of Boston; who in reply wrote to me, and in his letter says as follows: ‘Yours of the 22d Dec. came not to my hand till the 19th of this; with which I was well pleased, and had some sweet sense of the sover-



eign free grace of God in the instances you mentioned, with some going forth of heart after further displays of it, in the mighty and noble of our nation, and the great ones of our own country; and indeed, that the kingdom of our exalted Redeemer might prevail in all the world. And, dear Sir, I am full in the belief, that so many of the Lord's people agreeing upon a time to unite in prayer for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, and the coming of the Redeemer's kingdom, is from the Lord; and cannot but hope the day draws near, when he will pour out water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; as also, that all his ministers and people, who are engaged in so delightful a work, for so noble an end, will give him no rest, till he shall make his Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a name and a praise in the earth.'

I sent another copy into New Jersey to Mr. John Brainerd, missionary to the Indians there, with a desire that he would communicate it to others as he thought would be most serviceable.

He writes in answer, March 4, 1748, as follows: 'I received yours of Jan. 12, on sabbath morning Feb. 5, and desire to acknowledge your kindness with much thank-fulness and gratitude. It was a great resuscitant, as well as encouragement, to me; and I trust, has been so to many others, in these parts, who are concerned for the prosperity of Zion. The next Tuesday after, (as perhaps, Sir, you may remember,) was the quarterly day appointed for extraordinary prayer; upon which I called my people together, and gave them information of the most notable things contained in your letter. And since I have endeavoured to communicate the same to several of my neighbouring ministers, and sundry private Christians, as I had opportunity. I have also thought it my duty to send an extract, or rather a copy of it, to Gov. Belcher. I have likewise (for want of time to transcribe) sent the original to Philadelphia by a careful hand, that the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent might have the perusal of it; where a copy was taken, and the original safely returned to me again. I cannot but hope that this letter, as it contains many things wherein the power and goodness of God do appear in a most conspicuous manner, will be greatly serviceable in stirring up the people of God in these parts, and encouraging their hearts to seek his face and favour, and to cry mightily to him, for the further outpouring of a gracious Spirit upon his church in the world. For my part, I think the remarkable things which your letter contains, might be sufficient to put new life into any one who is not past feeling; and as a means to excite a spirit of prayer and praise, in all those who are not buried in ignorance, or under the power of a lethargic stupor. And it is looked upon, by those whom I have had opportunity to converse with, whether ministers or private Christians, that what God has done is matter of great thankfulness and praise, and might well encourage his people to lift up the hand of prayer, and be instant therein.'

Mr. Davenport, minister of a church in Elizabeth-town in New Jersey, writes thus upon it, in a letter dated April 1, 1749: 'I thank you for sending your letter to our Brainerd open, that I might see it, which I took a copy of; and have found it again and again refreshing and animating. I read it to the ministers who met at my house for prayer, on the first Tuesday of February, and sent it afterwards to Long Island: Mr. Rivel took a copy of it, and read it in his congregation on the Island.'

I hope, dear Sir, these things will encourage you to continue your correspondence, and to go on to give me information of whatever appears in your parts of the world favourable to the interests of the kingdom of Christ. It will

not only be entertaining to me; but I shall endeavour, whenever I receive such tidings, to communicate it for the entertainment and profit of God's people, as I have opportunity. I must refer you, dear Sir, to my letters to other correspondents in your neighbourhood, for other particulars relating to the state of religion in these parts of the world. And hope, when you are before the throne of grace, you will not forget

Your very affectionate friend,  
And brother and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

Letter to Mr. Robe.

*"Northampton, May 23, 1749.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Mr. M'Laurin, in a letter I received from him the last week, dated March 10th, 1749, informs me of a letter you had written to me, sent to him; which he had taken care of. This letter, by some means or other, has failed, and has never reached me. I intend to make inquiry after it, to see if it has not been left at Boston, and forgotten to be sent. I have reason to hope (though I have not received your letter) that you and your family are well, because Mr. M'Laurin and Mr. Erskine (the only correspondents from whom I have received letters this time) inform me of nothing to the contrary.

As to the present state of religion in these parts of the world, it is in the general very dark and melancholy. But yet there are some things which appear comfortable and hopeful; particularly, the Concert for extraordinary Prayer for the coming of Christ's kingdom, is spreading and prevailing—and we hear of awakenings and revivals of religion in some places. We have had accounts, from time to time, of religion's being in a flourishing state, in the Indian congregation in New Jersey, under the care of Mr. John Brainerd; of the congregation's increasing, by the access of Indians from distant parts; of a work of awakening carried on among the unconverted, and additions made to the number of the hopefully converted, and the christian behaviour of professors there. Mr. Brainerd was at my house a little while ago, and represented this to be the present state of things in that congregation. I had a letter from Mr. Davenport, (who is settled now as a minister over a congregation belonging to Elizabethtown, in New Jersey,) dated April 1, 1749, wherein he says as follows: 'Mr. Lewis told me, that there has been a remarkable work of conviction prevailing in his place, ever since last December. I think he spoke of about forty under soul concern, a considerable number of them under strong convictions, and some hopefully converted. I heard lately a credible account of a remarkable work of conviction and conversion, among whites and negroes, at Hanover in Virginia, under the ministry of Mr. Davies, who is lately settled there, and has the character of a very ingenious and pious young man; whose support, in his preparation for service, Mr. Robinson [This Mr. Robinson was a young minister of eminent gifts and graces; I think, belonging to Pennsylvania, but had some time preached,

with great success, in Virginia, in various parts: but died a few years ago in his youth.] contributed much, if not mostly to; and on his death-bed gave him his books, &c.

Mr. Buell, of East Hampton, on Long Island, was here last week, and gave me an account of a very considerable work of awakening at this time in his congregation, especially among the young people; and also of a yet greater work at Bridgehampton, under the ministry of one Mr. Brown, a very pious and prudent young man, lately settled there. These congregations are both pretty large. He also gave an account of religion's continuing in a very prosperous state at a part of Huntington, another town on Long Island, where there was a great and general awakening, last year.

An association of ministers, between this and Boston, seem of late to have applied themselves somewhat earnestly, to invent means for promoting religion. The following is a copy of something they have agreed upon for this end, as it was sent to me, by a minister that lives that way.

"The sum and substance of the answers, given by the association, to this question, What things shall be done by us, for preventing the awful threatening degeneracy and backsliding in religion, in the present day?

These, we apprehend, may be reduced to the following heads, viz. Those that respect ourselves personally; those which concern the association, as such; and those which relate to our people, in our respective churches and congregations.

I. As to what respects ourselves personally.

1. We ought surely to get a deep and affecting sense of this: Whether there is not in ourselves defection, and great danger of further degeneracy; for otherwise, we shall with little heartiness undertake, or earnestness endeavour after, reformation.

2. We are not to think it amiss, that we ourselves be excited to look, with a proper attention and concern, into our own estate, into our own experiences in the divine life, and into what little proficiency we make, or declension we fall into, ourselves.

3. We must by all means see to it, that we be sound and clear in the great doctrines of the gospel, which are the life of our holy religion; (we here intend, those doctrines which are exhibited in our excellent Westminster Catechism and Confession of Faith;) and that we all boldly and impartially appear in the defence thereof: at the same time we must take heed and beware of the dangerous errors which many have run into; particularly the Arminian and Neonomian on the one hand, and the Antinomian and Enthusiastical on the other.

4. We must be very faithful in every part of our ministerial works, and make conscience to magnify our office. In a particular manner, we must take good heed to our preaching; that it be not only sound, but instructive, savoury, spiritual, very awakening and searching, well adapted to the times and seasons which pass over us; labouring earnestly herein. We must therefore dwell much upon the doctrines of repentance and conversion, the nature, necessity, and evidence thereof; and much urge the duty of self-examination, and open the deceits of the heart; bringing the unconverted under the work of the law, that they may be prepared to embrace the offer of the gospel. Moral duties must be treated of in an evangelical strain; and we must give unto every one his portion, and not shrink from it, under the notion of prudence; particularly, in the important duty of reproofing sinners of all sorts, be they who they will. Again,

we must not be slight in our private conference with souls, and examining candidates for the communion, or other special privileges; and we must carefully and wisely suit our endeavours to the several ages and conditions of persons, the elder and younger; and in a very particular manner, we must set ourselves to promote religion among our young people. And, in a word, we must see whether we are animated to all these things by the grace of God in us.

5. We are impartially to see what evils are to be found among ourselves, and re-move them. Let us be seriously thoughtful, whether (among our defects) we have not been, in some respect or other, the blameable means of discouragement to those who have been under religious concern; or whether we have not given strength and bold-ness to the ungodly, when we have been testifying against the extravagances and disorders of the late times.

6. We must be conscientiously exemplary in our whole behaviour and conversation. It is necessary that we be serious and grave, as what highly becomes gospel bishops. And especially, we must be very watchful over our frame and conduct on the Lord's day. We must therefore look well to our sabbatizing, both at home and abroad, both before our own and other people. Our example is of vast consequence, in magnifying our office before recommended.

7. We ought to stir up the gifts which are in us, and to grow more and more, according to the sacred injunction, 2 Tim. i. 6,

8. We should follow all our endeavours with fervent prayer to God; especially our labours in preaching and teaching: the seed of the word is to be steeped in tears.

## II. As to what concerns the association as such.

1. We must lay aside disquits one with another, and study brotherly love, that it may revive and continue; we must endeavour to be as near as we can of one mind, and go on harmoniously; and then we shall be the more strongly united in all, but especially in our present proceedings. There must be respectful treatment one of another, of the persons and character of one another; and we must be careful of ministerial character; which is of greater consequence than at first sight may appear. And when we have occasion to dispute, let it be under a very strict guard, avoiding all censuring reflections.

2. That we manifest our approbation of the Westminster Assembly's Catechism, as containing an excellent system of divinity; and we purpose to preach agreeably to the doctrines of the Bible exhibited therein.

3. As we must be very careful of our conversation in general as above said; so especially must we be respecting our conduct while together in association.

4. It is proposed that a course of our association be turned into fasts, upon this great account.

5. We agree to be more especially fervent, in continual prayer for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

6. Some special, new, and prudent care must be taken to guard our pulpits.

7. It is proposed, that we agree to endeavour to introduce the public reading of the Holy Scriptures. The manner and time to be left to discretion.

## III. With regard to what may be done among the people we stand related to.

1. We conceive that whatever public exercises are to be agreed on, or whatever concerns the public, the people are to be informed and acquainted with our design. 2. That it be earnestly recommended to the people, to consider the worth of their privileges, and the danger of being deprived of them; which there is, partly by the spreading of evil doctrines among them, and partly by the conduct of too many people to-wards their ministers.

3. Let pragmatistical, factious spirits, fomenting division, be duly frowned upon.

4. We must guard them against the temptations of their several employments, and the special seasons wherein they are most exposed.

5. We must consider what evils there are to be found among them, which do especially need reforming; as the profanation of the Lord's day, which is enough to destroy all religion; tavern-haunting, company-keeping, chambering, uncleanness, profaneness, &c.; and we ought loudly to testify against them. And that what we do may be effectual, let us endeavour to convince their consciences of the evil of sin, and of these sins.—We are not to fail to warn people solemnly against the dreadful guilt of unthankfulness under God's signal mercies, and of incorrigibleness under heavy and sore judgments. Could we in wisdom do it, we should also warn them against their oppressing the Lord's ministers in their maintenance.

6. Let us endeavour to revive good customs and practices among them; particularly, the ancient good practice of catechising, family order, worship, and government, religious societies under good regulation, godly conference and conversation among Christians; and in brief, whatever is laudable and of good tendency.

7. Church discipline should be revived; brotherly watchfulness, and admonition; nor are we to forget to take special care of the children and youths of the flock.

8. We may do well to engage, as far as we are able, all persons of distinction and influence to unite with us in this work of reformation; e.g. justices, school-masters, candidates for the ministry; and especially to assist us by their example.

9. Solemn renewal of covenant hath been advised to, as very useful upon this occasion; (vid. Synod, 1679, for Reformation;) but we leave this to each one's discretion.

Finally, in these things we should think ourselves bound to exert ourselves, and use uncommon fervency, to preserve what remains of religion, and prevent further decay.

October, 1748.

Thus far this association.

The members of this association, as their names were sent to me, are as follows:

The Rev. Messrs. Loring, of Sudbury; Cushing, of Shrewsbury; Parkman, of Westborough; Gardiner, of Stow; Martyn, of Westborough; Stone, of Southborough; Seecomb, of Harvard; Morse, of Shrewsbury; Smith, of Marlborough; Goss, of Boston; Buckminster, of Rutland; Davis, of Holden.

I must refer you, dear Sir, for other particulars relating to the state of religion, in these parts of the world, to my letters to my other correspondents in your neighbourhood.

My wife and family join with me in very affectionate and respectful salutations to you and yours. Desiring an interest in your prayers for us all, and for this part of the Zion of God,

I remain, dear Sir,  
Your affectionate brother,  
And obliged friend and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

In the Memoirs of Brainerd, under the date of Sept. 13, 1747, the reader will find mention of a Mr. Job Strong, a candidate for the ministry, whom Brainerd, immediately before his death, recommended to the commissioners in Boston, as a missionary to the Indians; and in the 4th Reflection on those Memoirs, an interesting letter of his, giving an account of the Indian mission at Bethel, in New Jersey, in Jan. 1748. This young gentleman, having ultimately declined that appointment, accepted proposals of settlement in the ministry, the following year, from a church in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and invited Mr. Edwards to preach the sermon at his ordination, which was appointed for the 28th of June. Mary, the fourth daughter of Mr. Edwards, then a young lady of fifteen, went before her father to Portsmouth, to visit some of the friends of the family in that place. From her I learned the following anecdote.—The Rev. Mr. Moody, of York, a gentleman of unquestioned talents and piety, but perfectly unique in his manners, had agreed, in case of Mr. Edwards’s failure, to be his substitute in preaching the sermon. On the morning of the appointed day, Mr. Edwards not having arrived, the council delayed the ordination as long as they well could, and then proceeded to the church; where Mr. Moody had been regularly appointed to make the introductory prayer, which is the prayer immediately before the sermon. That gentleman, knowing that a numerous and highly respectable audience had been drawn together by a strong desire to hear Mr. Edwards, rose up to pray under the not very pleasant impression, that he must stand in his place; and offered a prayer, which was wholly characteristic of himself, and in some degree also of the times in which he lived. In that part of it, in which it was proper for him to allude to the exercises of the day, he besought the Lord, that they might be suitably humbled under the frown of his providence, in not being permitted to hear on that occasion, a discourse, as they had all fondly expected, from “that eminent servant of God, the Rev. Mr. Edwards, of Northampton;” and proceeded to thank God, for having raised him up, to be such a burning and shining light, for his uncommon piety, for his great excellence as a preacher, for the remarkable success which had attended his ministry, in other congregations as well as his own, for the superior talents and wisdom with which he was endowed as a writer, and for the great amount of good which his works had already done, and still promised to do, to the church and to the world. He then prayed that God would spare his life, and endow him with still higher gifts and graces, and render him still more eminent and useful than he had been; and concluded this part of his prayer, by supplicating the divine blessing on the daughter of Mr.

Edwards, (then in the house,) who, though a very worthy and amiable young lady, was still, as they had reason to believe, without the grace of God, and in an unconverted state; that God would bring her to repentance, and forgive her sins, and not suffer the peculiar privileges which she enjoyed to be the means of a more aggravated condemnation. Mr. Edwards, who travelled on horseback, and had been unexpectedly detained on the road, arrived at the church a short time after the commencement of the exercises, and entered the door just after Mr. Moody began his prayer. Being remarkably still in all his movements, and particularly in the house of God, he ascended the stairs, and entered the pulpit so silently, that Mr. Moody did not hear him; and of course was necessitated, before a very numerous audience, to listen to the very high character given of himself by Mr. Moody. As soon as the prayer was closed, Mr. Moody turned round, and saw Mr. Edwards behind him; and, without leaving his place, gave him his right hand, and addressed him as follows: "Brother Edwards, we are all of us much rejoiced to see you here today, and nobody, probably, as much so as myself; but I wish that you might have got in a little sooner, or a little later, or else that I might have heard you when you came in, and known that you were here. I didn't intend to flatter you to your face; but there's one thing I'll tell you: They say that your wife is a going to heaven by a shorter road than yourself." Mr. Edwards bowed, and after reading the Psalm, went on with the sermon. His text was John xiii. 15, 16, and his subject, "Christ the Example of Ministers." It was soon after published.

To his daughter, who prolonged her visit some time after the return of her father, he addressed, during her visit at Portsmouth, the following letter.

"To Miss Mary Edwards [Afterwards Mrs. Dwight of Northampton], at Portsmouth.

*Northampton, July 26, 1749.*

MY DEAR CHILD,

You may well think it is natural for a parent to be concerned for a child at so great a distance, so far out of view, and so far out of the reach of communication; where, if you should be taken with any dangerous sickness, that should issue in death, you might probably be in your grave before we could hear of your danger. But yet, my greatest concern is not for your health, or temporal welfare, but for the good of your soul. Though you are at so great a distance from us, yet God is every where. You are much out of the reach of our care, but you are every moment in His hands. We have not the comfort of seeing you, but He sees you. His eye is always upon you. And if you may but live sensibly near to God, and have his gracious presence, it is no matter if you are far distant from us. I had rather you should remain hundreds of miles distant from us, and have God near to you by his Spirit, than to have you always with us, and live at a distance from God. And if the next news we should hear of you, should be of your death, though that would be very melancholy; yet, if at the same time we should receive such intelligence concerning you, as should give us the best grounds to hope, that you had died in the Lord, how much more comfortable would this be, though we should have no opportunity to see you, or to take our leave of you in your sickness, than if we should be with you during all its progress, and have much opportunity to attend upon you, and

converse and pray with you, and take an affectionate leave of you, and after all have reason to apprehend, that you died without the grace and favour of God! It is comfortable to have the presence of earthly friends, especially in sickness, and on a death-bed; but the great thing is to have God our friend, and to be united to Christ, who can never die any more, and from whom our own death cannot separate us.

My desire and daily prayer is, that you may, if it may consist with the holy will of God, meet with God where you are, and have much of his divine influences on your heart, wherever you may be; and that, in God's due time, you may be returned to us again, in all respects under the smiles of Heaven, and especially, in prosperous circumstances in your soul, and that you may find us all alive and well. But that is uncertain; for you know what a dying time it has been with us in this town, about this sea-son of the year, in years past. There is not much sickness prevailing among us as yet, but we fear whether mortal sickness is not now commencing. Yesterday, the only remaining son of Mr. C\_\_ died of a fever, and is to be buried today. May God fit us all for his will!

I hope that you will maintain a strict and constant watch over yourself, against all temptations, that you do not forsake and forget God, and particularly, that you do not grow slack in secret religion. Retire often from this vain world, from all its bubbles and empty shadows, and vain amusements, and converse with God alone; and seek effectually for that divine grace and comfort, the least drop of which is worth more than all the riches, gaiety, pleasures, and entertainments of the whole world.

If Mrs. S——, of Boston, or any of that family, should send to you, to invite you to come and remain there, on your return from Portsmouth, until there is opportunity for you to come home, I would have you accept the invitation. I think it probable they will invite you. But if otherwise, I would have you go to Mr. Bromfield's. He and Mrs. B. both told me you should be welcome. After you are come to Boston, I would have you send us word of it by the first opportunity, that we may send for you without delay.

We are all, through the Divine goodness, in a tolerable state of health. The ferment in the town runs very high, concerning my opinion about the sacrament; but I am no more able to foretell the issue, than when I last saw you. But the whole family has indeed much to put us in mind, and make us sensible, of our dependence on the care and kindness of God, and of the vanity of all human dependences; and we are very loudly called upon to seek his face, to trust in him, and walk closely with him. Commending you to the care and special favour of our heavenly Father, I am

Your very affectionate father,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

Your mother and all the family give their love to you."

The following letter of Mr. Edwards to Mr. Gillespie, is in reply to the second letter of that gentleman, written in the autumn of 1748.

*"Northampton, April 2, 1750.*



REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I received your favour of September 19, 1748, the last summer, and would now heartily thank you for it. I suppose it may have come in the same ship with letters I had from my other correspondents in Scotland, which I answered the last summer; but it did not come to hand till a long time after most of the others, and after I had finished and sent away my answers to them, and that opportunity for answering was past. I have had no leisure or opportunity to write any letters to Scotland, from that time till now, by reason of my peculiar and very extraordinary circumstances, on account of the controversy which has arisen between me and my people, concerning the profession which ought to be made by persons who come to christian sacraments; which is likely speedily to issue in a separation between me and my congregation. This controversy, in the progress of it, has proved not only a controversy between me and my people, but between me and a great part of New England; there being many far and near who are warmly engaged in it. This affair has unavoidably engaged my mind, and filled up my time, and taken me off from other things. I need the prayers of my friends, that God would be with me, and direct and assist me in such a time of trial, and mercifully order the issue.

As to the epistolary controversy, dear Sir, between you and me, about faith and doubting, I am sorry it should seem to be greater than it is, through misunderstanding of one another's meaning, and that the real difference between us is so great as it is, in some part of the controversy.

As to the dispute about believing without spiritual light or sight, I thought I expressed my meaning in my last letter very plainly; but I kept no copy, and it might perhaps be owing to my dullness that I thought so. However, I perceive I was not understood. I cannot find out by any thing you say to me on this head, that we really differ in sentiments, but only in words. I acknowledge with you that 'all are bound to believe the divine testimony, and trust in Christ; and that want of spiritual light or sight does not loose from the obligation one is laid under by the divine command, to believe instantly on Christ, and at all seasons, nor excuse him, in any degree, for not believing. Even when one wants the influence and grace of the Spirit, still he is bound to believe.' I think the obligation to believe, lies on a person who is remaining without spiritual light or sight, or even in darkness. No darkness, no blindness, no carnality or stupidity, excuses him a moment for not having as strong and lively a faith and love, as ever was exercised by the apostle Paul, or rather renders it not sinful in him, that he is at that same moment without such a faith and love;—and yet I believe it is absurd, and of a very hurtful consequence, to urge persons to believe in the dark, in the manner, and in the sense, in which many hundreds have done in America, who plainly intend, a believing with such a sort of strong faith or confidence, as is consistent with continuing still, even in the time of these strong acts of faith, without spiritual light, carnal, stupid, careless, and senseless. Their doctrine evidently comes to this, both in sense and effect, that it is a man's duty strongly to believe with a lightless and sightless faith; or to have a confident, although a blind, dark, and stupid faith. Such a faith has indeed been promoted exceedingly by their doctrine, and has prevailed with its dreadful effects, answerable to the nature of the cause. We have had, and have to this day, multitudes of such firm believers whose bold, pre-

sumptuous confidence, attended with a very wicked behaviour, has given the greatest wound to the cause of truth and vital religion, which it has ever suffered in America.

As to what follows in your letter, that a person's believing himself to be in a good estate is properly of the nature of faith; in this there seems to be some real difference between us. But perhaps there would be none, if distinctness were well observed in the use of words. If by a man's believing that he is in a good estate, be meant no more than his believing that he does believe in Christ, does love God, &c. I think there is nothing of the nature of faith in it; because knowing it or believing it, depends on our own immediate sensation or consciousness, and not on divine testimony. True believers, in the hope they entertain of salvation, make use of the following syllogism: Whosoever believes shall be saved: I believe: Therefore, I shall be saved. Assenting to the major proposition,—Whosoever believes shall be saved,—is properly of the nature of faith; because the ground of my assent to that, is divine testimony; but my assent to the minor proposition,—I believe,—is, as I humbly conceive, not of the nature of faith, because that is not grounded on the divine testimony, but on my own consciousness. The testimony, which is the proper ground of faith, is in the word of God, Romans x. 17, 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' There is a testimony given us in the word of God, that 'he that believeth shall be saved.' But there is no testimony in the word of God, that a given individual, in such a town in Scotland, or New England, believes. There is such a proposition in the Scriptures, as that Christ loves those that love him; and this, therefore, every one is bound to believe and affirm: and believing this, on the divine testimony, is properly of the nature of faith, while for any one to doubt it, is properly the heinous sin of unbelief. But there is no such proposition in the Scriptures, nor is it any part of the gospel of Christ, that such an individual person in Northampton loves Christ. If I know that I have complacency in Christ, I know it the same way that I know I have complacency in my wife and children, viz. by the testimony of my own heart, or my inward consciousness. Evangelical faith has the gospel of Christ for its foundation; but the proposition, that I love Christ, is a proposition not contained in the gospel of Christ.

Hence, that we may not dispute in the dark, it is necessary, that we should explain what we mean by a person's believing that he is in a good estate. If thereby we mean only believing the minor of the foregoing syllogism, or similar syllogisms,—I believe; or, I love God;—it is not of the nature of faith. But if by a man's believing himself to be in a good estate, be understood his believing not only the minor but the consequence, therefore I shall be saved, or, therefore God will never leave me nor forsake me; then a man's believing his good estate, partakes of the nature of faith; for these consequences depend on divine testimony in the word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yea, I would observe further, that a man's judging of the faith or love which he actually finds in himself, whether it is that sort of faith or love which he finds to be saving, may depend on his reliance on scripture rules and marks, which are divine testimonies, on which he may be tempted not to rely, from the consideration of his great unworthiness. But his judging that he has those individual inward acts of understanding, and exercises of heart, depends on inward sensations, and not on any testimony of the word of God. The knowing of his present acts depends on immediate consciousness, and the knowing of his past

acts depends on memory. Hence the fulness of my satisfaction, that I now have such an inward act or exercise of mind, depends on the strength of the sensation; and my satisfaction, that I have had them heretofore, depends on the clearness of my memory, and not on the strength of my reliance on any divine testimony. So likewise, my doubting whether I have, or have had, such individual inward acts, is not of itself of the nature of unbelief, though it may arise from unbelief indirectly; because, if I had had more faith, the actings of it would have been more sensible, and the memory of them more clear, and so I should have been better satisfied that I had them.

God appears to have given Abraham's servant a revelation, that the damsel in whom he found certain marks,—her coming to draw water with a pitcher to that well, and her readiness to give him and his camels drink,—should be Isaac's wife; and therefore his assenting to this, was of the nature of faith, having divine testimony for its foundation. But his believing that Rebekah was the damsel who had these individual marks, his knowing that she came to draw water, and that she let down her pitcher, was not of the nature of faith. His knowing this was not from divine testimony, but from the testimony of his own senses. (*Vide Gen. xxiv,* )

You speak of 'a saint's doubting of his good estate, as a part of unbelief, and the opposite of faith, considered in its full compass and latitude, as one branch of unbelief, one ingredient in unbelief; and of assurance of a man's good estate, as one thing that belongs to the exercise of faith.' I do not know whether I take your meaning in these expressions. If you mean, that a person's believing himself to be in a good estate, is one thing which appertains to the essence of saving faith, or that saving faith, in all that belongs to its essence, yea its perfection, cannot be without implying it, I must humbly ask leave to differ from you. That my believing that I am in a good estate, is no part or ingredient in the essence of saving faith, is evident from this, that the essence of saving faith must be complete in me, before it can be true that I am in a good estate. If I have not as yet acted faith, yea if there be any thing wanting in me to make up the essence of saving faith, then I am not as yet in a state of salvation, and therefore can have no ground to believe that I am so. Any thing that belongs to the essence of saving faith is prior, in the order of nature, to a man's being in a state of salvation, because it is saving faith which brings him into such a state. And therefore believing that he is in such a state, cannot be one thing which is essential or necessary, in order to his being in such a state; for that would imply a contradiction. It would be to suppose a man's believing that he is in a good estate, to be prior, in the order of nature, to his being in a good estate. But a thing cannot be both prior and posterior, antecedent and consequent, with respect to the very same thing. The real truth of a proposition is in the order of nature first, before its being believed to be true. But, till a man has already all that belongs to the essence of saving faith, that proposition, that he is in a good estate, is not as yet true. All the propositions contained in the gospel, all divine testimonies that we have in God's word, are true already, are already laid for a foundation for faith, and were laid long ago. But that proposition, I am in a good estate, not being one of them, is not true till I have first believed; and therefore this proposition, as it is not true, cannot be believed to be true, till saving faith be first complete. Therefore the completeness of the act of saving faith will not make it take in a belief of this proposition, nor will the strength or perfection of the act cause it to imply this.

If a man, in his first act of faith, has ever so full a conviction of God's sufficiency and faithfulness, and ever so strong and perfect a reliance on the divine testimony; all will have no tendency to make him believe that this proposition, I am in a good estate, is true, until it is true; which is not the fact, till the first act of faith is complete, and has made it true. A belief of divine testimony, in the first act of faith, may be to an assignable degree of strength and perfection, without believing the proposition, for there is no such divine testimony then extant, nor is there any such truth extant, but in consequence of the first act of faith. Therefore, (as I said,) saving faith may exist, with all that belongs to its essence, and that in the highest perfection, without implying a belief of my own good estate. I do not say that it can exist without having this immediate effect. But it is rather the effect of faith, than a part, branch, or ingredient of faith. So I do not dispute whether a man's doubting of his good estate, may be a consequence of unbelief, and I doubt not but it is in those who are in a good estate; because, if men had the exercise of faith in such a degree as they ought to have, it could not but be very sensible and plain that they had it. But yet I think this doubting of one's good estate, is entirely a different thing from the sin of unbelief it-self, and has nothing of the nature of unbelief in it, i.e. if we take doubting one's good estate in the sense in which I have before explained it, viz. doubting whether I have such individual principles and acts in my soul. Take it in a complex sense, and it may have the sin of unbelief in it; e.g. If, although I doubt not that I have such and such qualifications, I yet doubt of those consequences. for which I have divine testimony or promise; as when a person doubts not that he loves Christ, yet doubts whether he shall receive a crown of life. The doubting of this consequence is properly the sin of unbelief.

You say, dear Sir, 'the Holy Ghost requires us to believe the reality of its works in us in all its parts just as it is;' and a little before, 'the believer's doubting whether or not he has faith, is sinful; because it is belying the Holy Ghost, denying his work in him, so there is no sin to which that doubting can so properly be reduced as unbelief.'

Here I would ask leave thus to express my thoughts, in a diversity from yours. I think, if it be allowed to be sinful for a believer to doubt whether he has faith, that this doubting is not the sin of unbelief on any such account as you mention, viz. as belying or denying any testimony of the Holy Ghost. There is a difference between doubting of the being of some work of the Holy Ghost, and denying the testimony of the Holy Ghost; as there is a difference between doubting concerning some other works of God, and denying the testimony of God. It is the work of God to give a man great natural abilities; and if we suppose that God requires a man thus endowed to believe the reality of his work in all its parts just as it is, and therefore, that it is sinful for him at all to doubt of his natural abilities being just as good as they are; yet this is no belying any testimony of God, though it be doubting of a work of God, and so is diverse from the sin of unbelief. So, if we suppose that a very eminent Christian is to blame, in doubting whether he has so much holiness as he really has; he indeed does not believe the reality of God's work in him, in all its parts just as it is, yet he is not therein guilty of the sin of unbelief, against any testimony of God, any more than the other.

I acknowledge, that for a true saint, in a carnal and careless frame, to doubt of his good state, is sinful, more indirectly, as the cause of it is sinful, viz. the lowness and insensibility of the actings of grace in him, and the prevalence of

carnality and stupidity. 'Tis sinful to be without assurance, or, (as we say,) it is his own fault; he sinfully deprives himself of it, or foregoes it; as a servant's being without his tools is his sin, when he has carelessly lost them, or as it is his sin to be without strength of body, or without the sight of his eyes, when he has deprived himself of these by intemperance. Not that weakness or blindness of body, in their own nature, are sin, for they are qualities of the body, and not of mind, the subject in which sin is inherent. It is indirectly the duty of a true saint always to rejoice in the light of God's countenance, because sin is the cause of his being without this joy at any time; and therefore it was indirectly David's sin that he was not rejoicing in the light of God's countenance, at that very time when he was committing the great iniquities of adultery and murder. But yet it is not directly a believer's duty to rejoice in the light of God's countenance, when God hides his face. But it rather then becomes him to be troubled and to mourn. So there are, perhaps, many other privileges of saints that are their duty indirectly, and the want of them is sinful, not simply, but complexly considered. Of this kind I take the want of assurance of my good estate to be.

I think no words of mine, either in my book or letter, implied that a person's deliverance from a bad frame, does not begin with renewed acts of faith or trusting in God. If they did, they implied what I never intended. Doubtless if a saint comes out of an ill frame, wherein grace is asleep and inactive, it must be by renewed actings of grace. It is very plainly impossible, that grace should begin to cease to be inactive, in any other way than by its beginning to be active. It must begin with the renewed actings of some grace or other; and I know nothing that I have said to the contrary, but that the grace which shall first begin sensibly to revive shall be faith, and that this shall lead the way to the renewed acting of all other graces, and to the further acting of faith itself. But a person's coming out of a carnal, careless, dead frame, by, or in the reviving of, grace in his soul, is quite another thing from a saint's having a strong exercise of faith, or strong hope, or strong exercise of any grace, while yet remaining in a carnal, careless, dead frame; or, in other words, in a frame wherein grace is so far from being in strong exercise, that it is asleep, and in a great measure without exercise.

There is a holy hope, a truly christian hope, of which the Scriptures speak, that is reckoned among the graces of the Spirit. And I think I should never desire or seek any other hope but such an one; for I believe no other hope, has any holy or good tendency. Therefore this hope, this grace of hope alone, can properly be called a duty. But it is just as absurd to talk of the exercises of this holy hope, the strong exercise of this grace of the Spirit, in a carnal, stupid, careless frame, such a frame yet remaining, as it would be to talk of the strong exercises of love to God, or heavenly-mindedness, or any other grace, while remaining in such a frame. It is doubtless proper, earnestly to exhort those who are in such a frame to come out of it, in and by the strong exercise of every grace; but I should not think it proper to press a man earnestly to maintain strong hope, notwithstanding the prevailing and continuance of great carnality and stupidity, which is plainly the case of the people I opposed. For this is plainly to press people to an unholy hope, to a strong hope which is no christian grace, but strong and wicked presumption; and the promoting of this has most evidently been the effect of such a method of dealing with souls in innumerable multitudes of awful instances.

You seem, Sir, to suppose, that God's manner of dealing with his people, while in a secure and careless frame, is first to give assurance of their good state while they remain in such a frame, and to make use of that assurance as a mean to bring them out of such a frame. Here, again, I must beg leave to differ from you, and to think, that none of the instances or texts you adduce from Scripture, do at all prove the point. I think it is his manner, first to awaken their consciences, to bring them to reflect upon themselves, to feel their own calamity which they have brought upon themselves by so departing from God, by which an end is put to their carelessness and security, and again earnestly and carefully to seek God's face before they find him, and before God restores the comfortable and joyful sense of his favour; and I think this is abundantly evident both from Scripture and experience. You much insist on the case of Jonah as a clear instance of the thing you lay down. You observe that he says, chap. ii, 'I said I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again towards thy holy temple.' Ver. 5, 7, 'When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, even into thine holy temple.' You speak of these words as expressing an assurance of his good state and of God's favour; (I will not now dispute whether they do or not;) and you speak of this exercise of assurance, as his practice in an evil frame and in a careless frame; for he slept securely in the sides of the ship, manifesting dismal security, awful carelessness in a carnal frame. That Jonah was in a careless se-cure frame when he was asleep in the sides of the ship, I do not deny. But, my dear Sir, does that prove that he remained still in a careless secure frame, when in his heart he said these things in the belly of the fish; does it prove that he remained careless after he was awakened, and saw the furious storm, and owned it was the fruit of God's anger towards him for his sins; and does it prove, that he still remained careless after the whale had swallowed him, when he seemed to himself to be in the belly of hell, when the water compassed him about, even to the soul, and, as he says, all God's waters and billows passed over him, and he was ready to despair when he went down to the bottoms of the mountains, was ready to think God had cast him out of his sight, and confined him in a prison, that he could never escape, when the earth with her bars was about him for ever, and his soul fainted within him? He was brought into this condition after his sleeping securely in the sides of the ship, before he said, 'I will look again towards thine holy temple,' &c. He was evidently first awakened out of carelessness and security, and brought into distress, before he was comforted.

The other place you also must insist on, concerning the people of Israel, is very similar. Before God comforted them with the testimonies of his favour after their backslidings, he first, by severe chastisements, together with the awakening influences of his Spirit, brought them out of their carelessness and carnal security. It appears by many passages of Scripture, that this was God's way of dealing with that people. In Hos. chap. ii, . we are told that God first 'hedged up her ways with thorns, and made a wall that she could not find her paths. And took away her corn and wine, and wool and flax, destroyed her vines and fig-trees, and caused her mirth to cease.' By this means, he roused her from her security, carelessness, and deep sleep, and brought her to herself, very much as the prodigal son was brought to himself: thus God 'brought her first into the wilderness, before he spake comfortably to her, and opened to her a door of hope.' By her distress he first led her to say, 'I will go and re-turn to

my first husband;' and then when God spake comfortably to her, she called him 'Ishi, my husband;' and God did as it were renewedly betroth her unto him. This passage is parallel with Jer. iii. . They illustrate and explain each other, and show that it was God's way of dealing with his people Israel, after their apostasy, first to awaken them, and under a sense of their sense and misery, to bring them solicitously to seek his face, before he gave them sensible evidence of his favour; and not first to manifest his favour to them, in order to awaken them out of their security. [This is evident by many passages of scripture: as, Lev. xxvi. 40-42. Deut. xxxii. 35-39. 1 Kings viii. 21, 22. chap. i. 4-8. Ezek. xx. 35,36, 37. Hos. v.15. with chap. vi. 1-3. chap. xiv. throughout].

In "Jer. iii.", the prophecy is not concerning the recovery of backsliding saints, or the mystical church, which, though she had corrupted herself, still continued to be figuratively God's wife. It is concerning apostate Israel, who had forsaken and renounced her husband, and gone after other lovers, and whom God had renounced, put away, and given her a bill of divorce; (verse 8, ) so that her recovery could not be, by giving her assurance of her good estate as still remaining his wife, and that God was already married unto her, for that was not true, and is not consistent with the context. And whereas it is said, verse 14, Jer. iii. 14, 'Return, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you, and I will take you one of a city;' I am married, in the Hebrew, is in the preterperfect tense; but you know, Sir, that in the language of prophecy, the preter tense is very commonly put for the future. And whereas it is said, verse 19, 'How shall I put thee among the children? And I said, Thou shalt call me My father;' I acknowledge this expression here, My Father, and in Rom. viii. 15, is the language of faith. It is so two ways: 1st. It is such a language of the soul, as is the immediate effect of a lively faith. I acknowledge that the lively exercises of faith do naturally produce satisfaction of a good state, as their immediate effect. 2d. It is a language which, in another sense, does properly and naturally express the very act of faith itself, yea, the first act of faith in a sinner, before which he never was in a good state. As thus, supposing a man in distress, pursued by his enemies that sought his life, should have the gates of several fortresses set open before him, and should be called to from each of them to fly thither for refuge; and viewing them all, and one appearing strong and safe, but the rest insufficient, he should accept the invitation to that one, and fly thither with this language, 'This is my fortress, this is my refuge. In vain is salvation looked for from others. Behold I come to thee; this is my sure de-fence.' Not that he means that he is already within the fortress, and so in a good estate. But, this is my chosen fortress, in the strength of which I trust, and to which I betake myself for safety. So if a woman were solicited by many lovers, to give herself to them in marriage, and beholding the superiority of one to all the rest, should betake herself to him, with this language, 'This is my husband, behold I come unto thee, thou art my spouse;' not that she means that she is already married to him, but that he is her chosen husband, &c. Thus God offers himself to sinners as their Saviour, their God and Father; and the language of the heart of him who accepts the offer by faith, is, 'Thou art my Saviour; in vain is salvation hoped for from others: thou art my God and Father.' Not that he is already his child, but he chooses him, and comes to him, that he may be one of his children; as in Jer. iii. 19, Israel calls God his Father, as the way to be put among the children, and to be one of them, and not as being one al-ready; and in verses 21, 22, 23, she is not

brought out of a careless and secure state, by knowing that the Lord is her God, but she is first brought to consideration and sense of her sin and misery, weeping and supplications for mercy, and conviction of the vanity of other saviours and refuges, not only before she has the assurance of her good estate, but before she is brought to fly to God for refuge, that she may be in a good estate.

As to the instance of Job, I would only observe, that while in his state of sore affliction, though he had some painful exercises of infirmity and impatience under his extreme trials, yet he was very far from being in such a frame as I intended, when I spoke of a secure, careless, carnal frame. I doubt not, nor did I ever question it, that the saints' hope and knowledge of their good estate, is in many cases of great use to help them against temptation, and the exercises of corruption.

With regard to the case of extraordinary temptations and buffetings of Satan, which you mention, I do not very well know what to say further. I have often found my own insufficiency as a counsellor in cases where melancholy and bodily distemper have so much influence, and give Satan so great advantage, as appears to me in the case you mention. If the Lord do not help, whence should we help? If some christian friends of such afflicted and (as it were) possessed persons, would, from time to time, pray and fast for them, it might be a proper exercise of christian charity, and the like-liest way I know for relief. I kept no copy of my former letter to you, and so do not remember fully what I have already said concerning this case. But this I have often found with such melancholy people, that the greatest difficulty does not lie in giving them good advice, but in persuading them to take it. One thing I think of great importance, which is, that such persons should go on in a steady course of performance of all duties, both of their general and particular calling, without suffering themselves to be diverted from it by any violence of Satan, or specious pretence of his whatsoever, properly ordering, proportioning, and timing, all sorts of duties, duties to God, public, private, and secret, and duties to man, relative duties of business and conversation, family duties, duties of friendship and good neighbourhood, duly proportioning labour and rest, intentness and relaxation, without suffering one duty to crowd out or in-trench upon another. If such persons could be persuaded to this, I think in this way they would be best guarded against the devil, and he would soonest be discouraged, and a good state of body would be most likely to be gained, and persons would act most as if they trusted and rested in God, and would be most in the way of his help and blessing.

With regard to what you write concerning immediate revelations, I have thought of it, and I find I cannot say any thing to purpose, without drawing out this letter to a very extraordinary length, and I am already got to such length, that I had need to ask your excuse. I have written enough to tire your patience.

It has indeed been with great difficulty that I have found time to write much. If you knew my extraordinary circumstances, I doubt not you would excuse my not writing any more. I acknowledge the subject you mention is very important. Probably if God spares my life, and gives me opportunity, I may write largely upon it. I know not how Providence will dispose of me; I am going to be cast on the wide world, with my large family of ten children.—I humbly request your prayers for me under my difficulties and trials.



As to the state of religion in this place and this land, it is at present very sorrowful and dark. But I must, for a more particular account of things, refer you to my letter to Mr. M'Laurin of Glasgow, and Mr. Robe. So, asking a remembrance in your prayers, I must conclude by subscribing myself, with much esteem and respect,

Your obliged brother and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.

by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

First published 1834

CHAPTER XVI.

Commencement of Difficulties at Northampton.

That this world is not a place of rest even to the most excellent of men, is a fact proved by the history of all past ages. How few who have been in prominent situations of usefulness but have experienced a variety of bitter disappointments; which though mysterious in themselves, disgraceful to those who have been the occasions of them, and most distressing to those who have felt their weight, yet have presented to the reflecting mind no unimportant lessons, and have tended to results little anticipated by any party connected with them. Nor should it seem strange to us that neither the world, nor the church of God itself, in its present imperfect state, can be considered as affording a resting-place. All the instruments employed by God in the promotion of his work, have been greatly tried; their labours have been mingled with their tears; and they have not only suffered from their own personal share of human imperfection, but have found in the ignorance, the perverse dispositions, and the unholy practices of others, their sharpest sorrows. They have been grieved by foes, but more injured and vexed by pretended friends. Divine grace has however enabled them honourably to stand amidst these perilous conflicts, and though the storm has fiercely raged around them, they have at length found a calm which can never be endangered; and they place before those who succeed them this grand lesson, that the faithful pursuit of the path of duty, whatever may be its difficulties and trials, will end well; and that this is the only course which can be reviewed with any satisfaction amidst the solemnities of a dying scene.

If any individual might have expected freedom from painful opposition, Mr. Edwards was that person; if unblemished holiness of character, if fervent desires of usefulness in all its varied and delightful forms, and if constant devotedness to every object connected with man's present and eternal good, could have insured uninterrupted satisfaction here, how large was the measure

of enjoyment which would have fallen to the lot of this excellent man! All that he was, and all he had, he was disposed to sacrifice upon the altar of God, and to dedicate to the service of his fellow-creatures. No disposition to spare himself, to exalt himself, or place burdens upon others which he was unwilling to share, could be discovered in him; yet afflictions of no common extent attended him; but still he could say, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Mr. Edwards was for many years unusually happy in the esteem and love of his people; and there was during that period the greatest prospect of his living and dying in the same state of harmony. So admirably was he qualified for the discharge of his official duties, and so faithful in the actual discharge of them, that he was probably the last minister in New England, who would have been thought likely to be opposed and rejected by the people of his charge. His uniform kindness, and that of Mrs. Edwards, had won their affection, and the exemplary piety of both, had secured their confidence; his very able and original exhibitions of truth on the sabbath, had enlightened their understandings and their consciences; his published works had gained him a reputation for powerful talents, both in Europe and America, which left him without a competitor, either in the colonies or the mother country; his labours had been remarkably blessed, he had been the means of gathering one of the largest churches on earth; and of such of the members as had any real evidence of their own piety, the great body ascribed their conversion to his instrumentality. But the event teaches us the instability of all earthly things, and proves how incompetent we are to calculate those consequences, which depend on a cause so uncertain and changeable as the will of man.

In the year 1744, about six years before the final separation, Mr. Edwards was informed, that some young persons in the town, who were members of the church, had licentious books in their possession which they employed to promote obscene conversation among the young people at home. Upon further inquiry, a number of persons testified that they had heard one and another of them, from time to time, talk obscenely; as what they were led to, by reading books of this gross character which they had in circulation among them. On the evidence thus presented to him, Mr. Edwards thought, that the brethren of the church ought to look into the matter; and in order to introduce it to their attention, he preached a sermon from Heb. xii. 15,10. "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." After sermon, he desired the brethren of the church to stop, told them what information he had received, and put the question to them in form, whether the church, on the evidence before them, thought proper to take any measures to examine into the matter? The members of the church, with one consent and with much zeal: manifested it to be their opinion that it ought to be inquired into; and proceeded to choose a number of individuals as a committee of inquiry, to assist their pastor in examining into the affair. After this Mr. Edwards appointed the time for the committee of the church to meet at his house; and then read to the church a catalogue of the names of the young persons, whom he desired to come to his house at the same time. Some of those whose names were thus

read, were the persons accused, and some were witnesses; but through mere forgetfulness or inadvertence on his part, he did not state to the church, in which of these two classes any particular individual was included; or in what character he was requested to meet the committee, whether as one of the accused, or a witness.

When the names were thus published, it appeared that there were but few of the considerable families in the town, to which some of the persons named, either did not belong, or were not nearly related. Many of the church, however, having heard the names read, condemned what they had done, before they got home to their own houses; and whether this disclosure of the names, accompanied with the apprehension, that some of their own connexions were included in the list of offenders, was the occasion of the alteration or not, it is certain that, before the day appointed for the meeting of the committee arrived, a great number of heads of families altered their minds, and declared they did not think proper to proceed as they had begun, and that their children should not be called to an account in such a way for such conduct; and the town was suddenly all in a blaze. This strengthened the hands of the accused : some refused to appear; others who did appear, behaved with a great degree of insolence, and contempt of the authority of the church; and little or nothing could be done further in the affair.

This was the occasion of weakening Mr. Edwards's hands in the work of the ministry, especially among the young people, with whom, by this means, he greatly lost his influence. It seemed in a great measure to put an end to his usefulness at Northampton, and doubtless laid a foundation for his removal, and will help to account for the surprising events which we are about to relate. He certainly had no great visible success after this; the influences of the Holy Spirit were chiefly withheld, and stupidity and worldly-mindedness were greatly increased among them. That great and singular degree of good order, sound morals, and visible religion, which had for years prevailed at Northampton, soon began gradually to decay, and the young people obviously became from that time more dissolute.\*

There was another difficulty of a far more serious nature. The church of Northampton, like the other early churches of New England, was formed on the plan of strict communion: in other words, none were admitted to the Lord's supper, but those who, after due examination, were regarded as regenerate persons. Such was the uniform practice of the church from its formation during the ministry of Mr. Mather, and for a considerable period after the settlement of Mr. Stoddard, the predecessor of Mr. Edwards. Mr. Stoddard publicly avowed a change in his opinions in 1704, when he had been in the ministry at Northampton thirty-two years, and endeavoured at that time to introduce a corresponding change in the practice of the church. He then declared himself, in the language of Dr. Hopkins, to be "of the opinion, that unconverted persons, considered as such, had a right in the sight of God, or by his appointment, to the sacrament of the Lord's supper; that thereby it was their duty to come to that ordinance, though they knew they had no true goodness or evangelical holiness. He maintained that visible Christianity does not consist in a profession, or appearance of that wherein true holiness, or real Christianity, consists; that therefore the profession, which persons make, in order to be received as visible members of Christ's church, ought not to be such as to express or imply a real compliance with, or consent to, the terms of this covenant

of grace, or a hearty embracing of the gospel: so that they who really reject Jesus Christ, and dislike the gospel way of salvation in their hearts, and know that this is true of themselves, may make the profession without lying and hypocrisy," [on the principle that they regard the sacrament as a converting ordinance, and partake of it with the hope of obtaining conversion.] "He formed a short profession for persons to make, in order to be admitted into the church, and to the sacrament, on these terms. Mr. Stoddard's principle at first made a great noise in the country; and he was opposed, as introducing something contrary to the principles and the practice of almost all the churches in New England, and the matter was publicly controverted between him and Dr. Increase Mather of Northampton. However, through Mr. Stoddard's great influence over the people of Northampton, it was introduced there, though not without opposition: by degrees it spread very much among ministers and people in that county, and in other parts of New England."

At the settlement of Mr. Edwards, in 1727, this alteration in the qualifications required for admission into the church had been in operation about twenty-two or three years; a period during which the great body of the members of any church will be changed. This lax plan of admission has no where been adopted by a church, for any considerable length of time, without introducing a large proportion of members who are destitute of piety; and although Mr. Stoddard was in other respects so faithful a minister, and so truly desirous of the conversion and salvation of his people, there can be no doubt that such must have been the result during so long a period in the church at Northampton.

"Mr. Edwards," observes Dr. Hopkins, "had some hesitation about this matter when he first settled at Northampton, but did not receive such a degree of conviction, as to prevent his adopting it with a good conscience, for some years. But at length his doubts increased; which put him upon examining it thoroughly, by searching the Scriptures, and reading such books as were written on the subject. The result was, a full conviction that it was wrong, and that he could not retain the practice with a good conscience. He was fully convinced that to be a visible Christian, was to put on the visibility or appearance of a real Christian; that a profession of Christianity was a profession of that wherein real Christianity consists; and therefore that no person, who rejected Christ in his heart, could make such a profession consistently with truth. And as the ordinance of the Lord's supper was instituted for none but visible professing Christians, that none but those who are real Christians have a right, in the sight of God, to come to that ordinance: and, consequently, that none ought to be admitted thereto, who do not make a profession of real Christianity, and so can be received, in a judgment of charity, as true friends to Jesus Christ.

"When Mr. Edwards's sentiments were generally known in the spring of the year 1749, it gave great offence, and the town was put into a great ferment; and before he was heard in his own defence, or it was known by many what his principles were, the general cry was to have him dismissed, as what would alone satisfy them. This was evident from the whole tenor of their conduct, as they neglected and opposed the most proper means of calmly considering, and so of thoroughly understanding, the matter in dispute, and persisted in a refusal to attend to what Mr. Edwards had to say, in defence of his principles. From the beginning to the end, they opposed the measures, which had the best tendency to compromise and heal the difficulty; and with much zeal pursued

those, which were calculated to make a separation certain and speedy. He thought of preaching on the subject, that they might know what were his sentiments and the grounds of them, (of both which he was sensible that most of them were quite ignorant,) before they took any steps for a separation. But that he might do nothing to increase the tumult, he first proposed the thing to the standing committee of the church; supposing, that if he entered on the subject publicly with their consent, it would prevent the ill consequences, which otherwise he feared would follow. But the most of them strenuously opposed it. Upon which he gave it over for the present, as what, in such circumstances, would rather blow up the fire to a greater height, than answer the good ends proposed.”

Mr. Edwards was sensible that his principles were not understood, but misrepresented through the country; and finding that his people were too warm, calmly to attend to the matter in controversy, he proposed to print what he had to say on the point, as this seemed the only way left him to have a fair hearing. Accordingly his people consented to put off calling a council, till what he should write was published. With this view he began immediately to prepare a statement and defence of his own sentiments, and in the latter part of April, about two months from the time of its commencement, sent it to the press—an instance of rapidity of composition almost unexampled in an individual, who was at once occupied by the duties of an extensive parish, and involved in the embarrassments of a most perplexing controversy. Notwithstanding the efforts of Mr. Edwards, the printing of the work was not completed until August. It was entitled, “An Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God, concerning the Qualifications requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church;” and contains a discussion of the question agitated between himself and his people, “Whether any persons ought to be admitted to full communion in the christian church, but such as, in the eye of a reasonable judgment, are truly Christians?”—a discussion so thorough and conclusive, that it has been the standard work with evangelical divines from that time to the present.

It was a very painful consideration to Mr. Edwards, that, while the circumstances in which he was placed, constrained him to declare his sentiments from the press, the “Appeal to the Learned,” the production of a man so much loved and venerated at Northampton, and so much respected throughout New England, his own colleague too, and his own grandfather, was the work, and the only work of any respectability, on the opposite side of the question, which he should be obliged publicly to examine and refute. But his feelings on this subject he has himself explained. “It is far from a pleasing circumstance of this publication, that it is against what my honoured grandfather strenuously maintained, both from the pulpit and the press. I can truly say, on account of this and some other considerations, it is what I engage in with the greatest reluctance that ever I undertook any public service in my life. But the state of things with me is so ordered by the sovereign disposal of the great Governor of the world, that my doing this appears to me very necessary, and altogether unavoidable. I am conscious that not only is the interest of religion concerned in this affair, but my own reputation, future usefulness, and my very subsistence, all seem to depend on my freely opening and defending myself as to my principles, and agreeable conduct in my pastoral charge, and on my doing it from the press: in which way alone am I able to state, and justify my opinion

to any purpose, before the country, (which is full of noise, misrepresentations, and many censures concerning this affair,) or even before my own people, as all would be fully sensible, if they knew the exact state of the case.—I have been brought to this necessity in Divine Providence, by such a situation of affairs, and coincidence of circumstances and events, as I choose at present to be silent about; and which it is not needful, nor perhaps expedient, for me to publish to the world.”

The people of Northampton manifested great uneasiness in waiting for this publication, before it came out of the press; and when it was published, some of the leading men, afraid of its ultimate effect on the minds of the people, did their utmost to prevent its extensive perusal, and it was read by comparatively a small number. Some of those who read it, of a more cool and dispassionate temper, were led to doubt whether they had not been mistaken.

Mr. Edwards, as Dr. Hopkins observes, being sensible that his treatise had been read but by very few of the people, renewed his proposal to preach upon the subject, and at a meeting of the brethren of the church asked their consent in the following terms: “I desire that the brethren would manifest their consent, that I should declare the reasons of my opinion, relating to full communion in the church, in lectures appointed for that end: not as an act of authority, or as putting the power of declaring the whole counsel of God out of my hands; but for peace sake and to prevent occasion for strife.” This was answered in the negative.—He then proposed that it should be left to a few of the neighbouring ministers, whether it was not, all things considered, reasonable, that he should be heard in this matter from the pulpit, before the affair should be brought to an issue. But this also passed in the negative.

However, having had the advice of the ministers and messengers of the neighbouring churches who met at Northampton, to advise them under their difficulties, he proceeded to appoint a lecture, in order to preach on the subject, proposing to do so weekly till he had finished what he had to say. On Monday there was a society meeting, in which a vote was passed to choose a committee to go to Mr. Edwards, and desire him not to preach lectures on the subject in controversy, according to his declaration and appointment: in consequence of which a committee of three men, chosen for that purpose, waited upon him. However, Mr. Edwards thought proper to proceed according to his proposal, and accordingly preached a number of sermons, till he had finished what he had to say on the subject. These lectures were very thinly attended by his own people; but great numbers of strangers from the neighbouring towns attended them, so many as to make above half the congregation. This was in February and March, 1750.

The calling of a decisive council, to determine the matter of difference, was now more particularly attended to on both sides. Mr. Edwards had before this insisted, from time to time, that they were by no means ripe for such a procedure; as they had not yet given him a fair hearing, whereby perhaps the need of such a council would be superseded. He observed, “That it was exceedingly unbecoming to manage religious affairs of the greatest importance in a ferment and tumult, which ought to be managed with great solemnity, deep humiliation, submission to the awful frowns of Heaven, humble dependence on God, with fervent prayer and supplication to him: that therefore for them to go about such an affair as they did, would be greatly to the dishonour of God and religion; a way in which a people cannot expect a blessing.” Thus

having used all means to bring them to a calm and charitable temper without effect, he consented that a decisive council should be called without any further delay.

But a difficulty attended the choice of a council, which was for some time insuperable. It was agreed, that the council should be mutually chosen, one half by the pastor, and the other half by the church, but the people insisted upon it, that he should be confined to the county for his choice. Mr. Edwards thought this an unreasonable restraint upon him, as it was known that the ministers and churches in that county were almost universally against him in the controversy. He indeed did not suppose that the business of the proposed council would be to determine whether his opinion was right or not; but whether any possible way could be devised for an accommodation between pastor and people, and to use their wisdom and endeavour in order to effect it. And if they found this impracticable, they must determine, whether what ought in justice to be done had already actually been attempted, so that there was nothing further to be demanded by either of the parties concerned, before a separation should take place. And if he was dismissed by them, it would be their business to set forth to the world in what manner, and for what cause, he was dismissed: all which were matters of great importance to him, and required upright and impartial judges. Now considering the great influence a difference in religious opinions has to prejudice men one against another, and the close connexion of the point, in which most of the ministers and churches in the county differed from him, with the matter to be judged of, he did not think they could be reasonably looked upon so impartial judges, as that the matter ought to be left wholly to them. Besides, he thought that the case, being so new and extraordinary, required the ablest judges in the land. For these, and some other reasons which he offered, he insisted upon liberty to go out of the county, for those members of the proposed council in which he was to have a choice. In this the people strenuously and obstinately opposed him. At length they agreed to leave the matter to a council consisting of the ministers and messengers of the five neighbouring churches; who after they had met twice upon it, and had the case largely debated before them, were equally divided, and therefore left the matter undetermined.

However, they were all agreed, that Mr. Edwards ought to have liberty to go out of the county for some of the council. And at the next church meeting, which was on the 26th of March, Mr. Edwards offered to join with them in calling a council, if they would consent that he should choose two of the churches out of the county, in case the council consisted of but ten churches. The church however refused to comply with this, at one meeting after another repeatedly; and proceeded to warn a church meeting and choose a moderator, in order to act without their pastor. But to pass by many particulars, at length, at a meeting of the church, warned by their pastor, May 3rd, they voted their consent to his proposal of going out of the county for two of the churches that should be applied to. And they then proceeded to make choice of the ten ministers and churches of which the council should consist.

#### FOOTNOTE

\* What an awful warning to all professors, and especially to young people! Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! Little do the giddy and the gay think how their levities operate, and what seeds of distress and sorrow for themselves and others. Woe unto you that thus laugh



now, for ye shall mourn and weep! How desirable it should be *penitentially* here, and not *despairingly* hereafter.—DR. WILLIAMS.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER XVII

ACCOUNT OF DIFFICULTIES AT NORTHAMPTON CONTINUED.

On Friday afternoon, June 22nd, 1750, the result of the council, and the protest of the minority, were publicly read to the people assembled in the church. On the next sabbath but one, July 1st, Mr. Edwards delivered to them his Farewell Sermon, which was soon afterwards published, at the request of some of the hearers. This sermon has been extensively and deservedly styled, “the best farewell sermon that was ever written;” and has been the source from which subsequent discourses, on occasions and in circumstances generally similar, have, to a great extent, been substantially derived. Had it been written in the case of an indifferent person, instead of his own, it could not have discovered less of passion or of irritation, or have breathed a more calm and excellent spirit. Instead of indicating anger under a sense of multiplied injuries, it appears in every sentence to have been dictated by meekness and forgiveness. At the same time, it presents an exhibition of the scenes of the last judgment, singularly solemn and awful. Few, indeed, are the compositions which furnish so many or so unequivocal marks of uncommon excellence in their author; and very few are so well adapted to be practically useful to churches and congregations.

The following postscript to the letter to Mr. Gillespie, of April 2, 1750, and the letters of Mr. Erskine and Mr. M’Culloch, all written immediately after the separation of Mr. Edwards from his people, exhibit also, in a very striking manner, the calm and tranquil state of his mind at the time when they were written.

“P. S. July 3, 1750. Having had no leisure to finish the preparation of my letters to Scotland, before this time, by reason of the extraordinary troubles, hurries, and confusions of my unusual circumstances, I can now inform you, that the controversy between me and my people, which I mentioned in the beginning of my letter, has issued in a separation. An ecclesiastical council was called on the affair, who sat here the week before last, and by a majority of one voice determined an immediate separation to be necessary; and accordingly my pastoral relation to my people was dissolved, on June 22nd. If I can

procure the printed accounts from Boston of the proceedings of the council, I will give orders to my friend there, to enclose them with this letter, and direct them to you—I desire your prayers, that I may take a suitable notice of the frowns of Heaven on me and this people, between whom there once existed so great a union, in bringing to pass such a separation between us; that these troubles may be sanctified to me; that God would overrule the event for his own glory (in which doubtless many adversaries will rejoice and triumph); that he would open a door for my future usefulness, provide for me and my numerous family, and take a fatherly care of us in our present unsettled, uncertain circumstances, being cast on the wide world.

J. E.”

“To the Rev. Mr. Erskine.

*Northampton, July 5, 1750.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

I now acknowledge the receipt of three letters from you since I last wrote to you; one of Sept. 12, another of Sept. 20, another of Dec. 22; all of the year 1749. The two first I received in the winter, with Mr. Glass’s Notes on Scripture Texts, Ridgeley on Original Sin, Wheatley’s Schools of the Prophets, Davidson’s Sermon occasioned by the death of Mr. Harrison, and Mr. M’Raile’s Sermon. Your letter written in December, I received a little while ago. I have greatly regretted the want of opportunity to answer you till now; but such have been my extraordinary circumstances, the multitude of distracting troubles and hurries that I have been involved in, (which I cannot easily represent to you,) that I have had no leisure. I have been very uneasy in neglecting to write to my correspondents in Scotland; and about two months ago I set myself to the business, but was soon broken off; and have not been able to return to it again till now. And now, my dear Sir, I thank you for your letters and presents. The books you sent me were entertaining to me, and some of them will be of advantage to me, if God should give me opportunity to prosecute the studies I had begun on the Arminian controversy. There were various things pleasing to me in Glass’s Notes, tending to give some new light into the sense of Scripture. He seems to be a man of ability; though I cannot fall in with all his singularities.

The account you say Mr. Davidson gave of the absurdities of the Moravians, are not very surprising to me. I have seen here in America so much of the tendency and issue of such kind of notions, and such sort of religion, as are in vogue among them, and among others in many respects like them, that I expect no other than that sin, folly, absurdity, and things to the last degree reproachful to Christianity, will for ever be the consequence of such things. It seems to me, that enough and enough of this kind has lately appeared, greatly to awaken the attention of christian divines, and make them suspect that the devil’s devices in the various counterfeits of vital, experimental religion, have

not been sufficiently attended to, and the exact distinctions between the saving operations of the Spirit of God and its false appearances not sufficiently observed. There is something now in the press at Boston, largely handling the subject. I have had opportunity to read the manuscript, and, in my humble opinion, it has a tendency to give as much light in this matter, as any thing that ever I saw. It was written by Mr. Bellamy, minister of Bethlehem, in Connecticut; the minister whom Mr. Brainerd sometimes speaks of as his peculiarly dear and intimate friend (as possibly you may have observed in reading his life). He was of about Mr. Brainerd's age, and it might have been well, if he had had more years over his head. But as he is one of the most intimate friends that I have in the world, and one that I have much acquaintance with, I can say this of him, that he is one of very great experience in religion, as to what has passed between God and his own soul; one of very good natural abilities, of closeness of thought, of extraordinary diligence in his studies, and earnest care exactly to know the truth in these matters. He has long applied his mind to the subject he has wrote upon, and used all possible helps of conversation and reading. And though his style is not such as is like to please the polite world, yet if his youth, and the obscurity of his original, and the place that he lives in, &c. do not prevent his being much taken notice of, I am persuaded his book might serve to give the church of God considerable light as to the nature of true religion, and many important doctrines of Christianity. From the knowledge I have of him, I am fully satisfied that his aim in this publication is not his own fame and reputation in the world; but the glory of God, and the advancement of the kingdom of his Redeemer.

I suspect the follies of some of the Seceders, which you mention in both your letters of Sept. 20, and Dec. 22, arise, in considerable measure, from the same cause with the follies of the Moravians, and the followers of the Wesleys, and many extravagant people in America, viz. false religion, counterfeit conversions, and the want of a genuine renovation of the spirit of their minds. I say, as to many of them, not to condemn all in the gross. The spirit seems to be exactly the same with what appears in many, who apparently, by their own account, have had a false conversion. I am a great enemy to censoriousness, and have opposed it very much in my preaching and writings. But yet I think we should avoid that bastard, mischievous charity, by which Satan keeps men asleep, and hides their eyes from those snares and crafty works of his, which it is of the utmost consequence to the church of God to discern and be aware of; and by which, for want of their being discovered, the devil has often had his greatest advantages against the interest of religion.

The Scriptures often lead us to judge of true religion, and the gracious sincerity of professors, by the genius, the temper, and spirit of their religion: Jam. iii. 17. Eph. v. 9. Gal. v. 19, 25. 1 Cor. xiii. 4. &c. Rom. viii. 9. 1 John iv. 16. John xiii. 35. 1 John ii. 10. 1 John iii. 14, 18, 19, 23, 24. 1 John iv. 7, 1 John v. 12, 13. and very many other places. I have been greatly grieved at a spirit of censoriousness; but yet I heartily wish that some sorts of charity were utterly abolished.

The accounts you give of Archbishop Herring, of the moderate, generous, truly catholic and christian principles appearing in him, and some other of the dignified clergy, and other persons of distinction in the church of England, are very agreeable. It is to be hoped that these things are forerunners of something good and great to be brought to pass for the church of God.

I have seen some accounts in our public prints, published here in America, of those conversions and baptisms in the Russian empire, which you mention in your last letter; and should be glad of further information about that matter. We have had published here, an extract of a letter, written by Dr. Doddridge to Mr. Pearsall of Taunton, in Somersetshire, and transmitted by him to Boston, in a letter to Mr. Prince; giving a surprising account of a very wonderful person, a German by nation, a preacher of the gospel to the Jews, lately in London; whom he (Dr. Doddridge) saw and conversed with, and heard preach (or rather repeat) a sermon there; who had had great success in preaching to those miserable people in Germany, Poland, Holland, Lithuania, Hungary, and other parts; God having so blessed his labours that, in the various parts through which he had travelled, he had been the instrument of the conversion of about six hundred Jews; many of whom are expressing their great concern to bring others of their brethren to the knowledge of the great and blessed Redeemer, and beseeching him to instruct their children, that they may preach Christ also. I should be glad if you hear any thing further of the affair, to be informed of it by you. I think such things may well be improved to animate and encourage those who have engaged in the Concert for Prayer for the reviving of Religion. I rejoice to hear what you write of some appearances of awakening in Mr. Gillies's church in Glasgow, and if it continues should be glad to be informed.

I am very glad to hear of what Mr. M'Laurin informs me of the encouragements likely to be given from Scotland to New Jersey college; a very hopeful society; and I believe what is done for that seminary is doing good in an eminent manner. Mr. M'Laurin tells me of some prospect of your being removed to a congregation in Edinburgh, which I am pleased with, because I hope there you will act in a larger sphere, and will have more opportunity to exert the disposition that appears in you, to promote good public designs for Zion's prosperity.

I thank you for the concern you manifest for me under my difficulties and troubles, by reason of the controversy between me and my people, about the terms of christian communion.

This controversy has now had that issue which I expected; it has ended in a separation between me and my people. Many things have appeared, that have been exceedingly unhappy and uncomfortable in the course of this controversy. The great power of prejudices from education, established custom, and the traditions of ancestors and certain admired teachers, and the exceeding unhappy influence of bigotry, has remarkably appeared in the management of this affair. The spirit, that has actuated and engaged my people in this affair, is evidently the same that has appeared in your own people in their opposition to winter communions, but only risen to a much higher degree; and some of the arguments, that have been greatly insisted on here, have been very much of the same sort with some of those urged by your people in your affair. There have been many things said and done, during our controversy, that I shall not now declare. But would only say in the general, that there has been that prejudice, and spirit of jealousy, and increasing engagedness of spirit and fixedness of resolution, to gain the point in view, viz. my dismissal from my pastoral office over them, upheld and cherished by a persuasion that herein they only stood for the truth, and did their duty, that it has been an exceedingly difficult thing for me to say or do any thing at all in order to their being enlightened, or brought to a more calm and sedate consideration of things, without its being

misinterpreted, and turned to an occasion of increasing jealousy and prejudice; even those things wherein I have yielded most, and done most to gratify the people, and assuage their spirits and win their charity. I have often declared to the people, and gave it to them under my hand, that if, after all proper means used, and regular steps taken, they continued averse to remaining under my ministry, I had no inclination to do any thing, as attempting to oblige them to it. But I looked on myself bound in conscience, before I left them, (as I was afraid they were in the way to ruin,) to do my endeavour, that proper means should be used to bring them to a suitable temper, and so to a capacity of proceeding considerately, and with their eyes open; properly, and calmly, and prayerfully examining the point in controversy, and also weighing the consequences of things. To this end I have insisted much on an impartial council, in which should be some of the elderly ministers of the land, to look fully into our state, and to view it with all its circumstances, with full liberty to give both me and them such advice as they should think requisite and proper. And therefore I insisted, that the council should not wholly consist of ministers and churches that were professedly against me in the point in controversy; and that it should not consist wholly of ministers and churches of this neighbourhood, who were almost altogether in opposition to me; but that some should be brought from abroad. This I also insisted on, as I thought it most likely an impartial council would do me justice, in the public representation they would make of our affairs, in their result. The people insisted that the council should be wholly of the neighbourhood; undoubtedly because they supposed themselves most sure, that their judgment and advice would be favourable and agreeable to them. I stood the more against it, because in this country we have no such thing as appeals from one council to another, from a lesser to a larger; and also, because the neighbouring ministers were all youngish men. These things were long the subject matter of uncomfortable troubles and contests. Many were the proposals I made. At last they complied with this proposal, (after great and long-continued opposition to it,) viz. That I should nominate two churches to be of the council, who were not within the bounds of this county. And so it was agreed that a council of ten churches should be called, mutually chosen; and that two of my half should be called from abroad. I might have observed before, that there was a great and long dispute about the business of the council, or what should be left to them; and particularly, whether it should be left to them, or they should have liberty, to give us what advice they pleased for a remedy from our calamities. This I insisted on, not that I desired that we should bind ourselves beforehand to stand to their advice, let it be what it would; but I thought it absurd to tie up and limit the council, that they should not exercise their own judgment, and give us their advice, according to their own mind. The people were willing the council should make proposals for an accommodation; but that, if they did not like them, the council should be obliged immediately to separate us, and would not have them have any liberty to advise to wait longer, or use any further means for light, or to take any further or other course for a remedy from our calamities. At last a vow was passed in these words,—‘That a council should be called to give us their last advice, for a remedy from the calamities arising from the present unsettled, broken state of the church, by reason of the controversy here subsisting, concerning the qualifications for full communion in the church: and if upon the whole of what they see and find in our circumstances, they judge it best that

pastor and people be immediately separated, that they proceed to dissolve the relation between them.' Accordingly a council was agreed upon, to meet here on this business, on June 19th. I nominated two out of this county; of which Mr. Foxcroft's church in Boston was one. But others were nominated provisionally, in case these should fall. Those that came, were Mr. Hall's church of Sutton, and Mr. Hobby's church in Reading. One of the churches that I nominated within the county, refused to send a delegate, viz. Mr. Billing's church of Cold Spring. However, Mr. Billing himself (though with some difficulty) was admitted into the council. The people, in managing this affair on their side, have made chief use of a young gentleman of liberal education and notable abilities, and a fluent speaker, of about seven or eight and twenty years of age, my grandfather Stoddard's grandson, being my mother's sister's son; a man of lax principles in religion, falling in, in some essential things, with Arminians, and is very open and bold in it. He was improved as one of the agents for the church, and was their chief spokesman before the council. He very strenuously urged before the council the necessity of an immediate separation; and I knowing the church, the most of them, to be inflexibly bent on this event, informed the council that I should not enter into the dispute, but should refer the matter wholly to the council's judgment; I signified, that I had no desire to leave my people, on any other consideration, any other than their aversion to my being their minister any longer; but, they continuing so averse, had no inclination or desire that they should be compelled, but yet should refer myself to their advice. When the church was convened, in order to the council's knowing their minds with respect to my continuance, about twenty-three appeared for it, others staid away, choosing not to act either way; but the generality of the church, which consists of about 230 male members, voted for my dismissal. My dismissal was carried in the council by a majority of one voice. The ministers were equally divided, but of the delegates one more was for it than against it, and it so happened that all those of the council, who came from the churches of the people's choosing, voted for my dismissal; but all those who came from the churches that I chose, were against it, and there happening to be one fewer of these than of the other, by the church of Cold Spring not sending a delegate, (which was through that people's prejudice against my opinion,) the vote was carried that way by the voice of one delegate. However, on the 22d of the last month, the relation between me and this people was dissolved. I suppose that the Result of the Council, and the Protestation of some of the members, are printed in Boston by this time. I shall endeavour to procure one of the printed accounts, to be sent with this letter to you, together with one of my books on the point that has been in controversy between me and my people. Two of the members of the council, who dissented from the Result, yet did not sign the Protestation, viz. Mr. Reynolds and his delegate, which I suppose was owing to Mr. Reynolds's extraordinarily cautious and timorous temper. The last sabbath I preached my farewell sermon. Many in the congregation seemed to be much affected, and some are exceedingly grieved. Some few, I believe, have some relents of heart, that voted me away. But there is no great probability that the leading part of the church will ever change. Beside their own fixedness of resolution, there are many in the neighbouring towns to support their resolution, both in the ministry and civil magistracy; without whose influence I believe the people never would have been so violent as they have been.

I desire that such a time of awful changes, dark clouds, and great frowns of Heaven on me and my people, may be a time of serious consideration, thorough self-reflection and examination, and deep humiliation with me. I desire your fervent prayers for me, and for those who have heretofore been my people. I know not what will become of them. There seems to be the utmost danger, that the younger generation will be carried away with Arminianism as with a flood. The young gentleman I spoke of, is high in their esteem, and is become the most leading man in the town; and is very bold in declaiming and disputing for his opinions; and we have none able to confront and withstand him in dispute; and some of the young people already show a disposition to fall in with his notions. And it is not likely that the people will obtain any young gentleman of Calvinistic sentiments, to settle with them in the ministry, who will have courage and ability to make head against him. And as to the older people, there never appeared so great an indifference among them, about things of this nature. They will at present be much more likely to be thorough in their care to settle a minister of principles contrary to mine, as to terms of communion, than to settle one that is sound in the doctrines of grace. The great concern of the leading part of the town, at present, will probably be, to come off with flying colours, in the issue of the controversy they have had with me, and of what they have done in it; for which they know many condemn them.

An end is put for the present, by these troubles, to the studies I was before engaged in, and my design of writing against Arminianism. I had made considerable preparation, and was deeply engaged in the prosecution of this design, before I was rent off from it by these difficulties, and if ever God should give me opportunity, I would again resume that affair. But I am now, as it were, thrown upon the wide ocean of the world, and know not what will become of me, and my numerous and chargeable family. Nor have I any particular door in view that I depend upon to be opened for my future serviceableness. Most places in New England that want a minister, would not be forward to invite one with so chargeable a family, nor one so far advanced in years—being 46 the 5th day of last October. I am fitted for no other business but study. I should make a poor hand at getting a living by any secular employment. We are in the hands of God, and I bless him, I am not anxious concerning his disposal of us. I hope I shall not distrust him, nor be unwilling to submit to his will. And I have cause of thankfulness, that there seems also to be such a disposition in my family. You are pleased, dear Sir, very kindly to ask me, whether I could sign the Westminster Confession of Faith, and submit to the presbyterian form of church government; and to offer to use your influence to procure a call for me, to some congregation in Scotland. I should be very ungrateful, if I were not thankful for such kindness and friendship. As to my subscribing to the substance of the Westminster Confession, there would be no difficulty; and as to the presbyterian government, I have long been perfectly out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government in this land; and the presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the word of God, and the reason and nature of things; though I cannot say that I think, that the presbyterian government of the church of Scotland is so perfect, that it cannot, in some respects, be mended. But as to my removing, with my numerous family, over the Atlantic, it is, I acknowledge, attended with many difficulties that I shrink at. Among other things, this is very considerable, that it would be on uncertainties, whether my gifts and ad-



ministrations would suit my congregation, that should send for me without trial; and so great a thing as such a removal, had need to be on some certainty as to that matter. If the expectations of a congregation were so great, and they were so confident of my qualifications, as to call me at a venture, having never seen nor heard me; their disappointment might possibly be so much the greater, and they the more uneasy after acquaintance and trial. My own country is not so dear to me, but that, if there were an evident prospect of being more serviceable to Zion's interests elsewhere, I could forsake it. And I think my wife is fully of this disposition.

I forgot to mention, that, in this evil time in Northampton, there are some of the young people under awakenings; and I hope two or three have lately been converted: two very lately, besides two or three hopefully brought home the last year. My wife and family join with me in most respectful and cordial salutations to you, and your consort; and we desire the prayers of you both for us, under our present circumstances. My youngest child but one has long been in a very infirm, afflicted, and decaying state with the rickets, and some other disorders. I desire your prayers for it.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate and obliged

Friend and brother,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

“P. S. For accounts of the state of religion in America, and some reasons of my conduct in this controversy with my people, I must refer you to my letters to Mr. Robe and Mr. M'Laurin.”

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Sereno E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER XVIII.

LETTER TO MR. M'CULLOCH—TO MR. ERSKINE—AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
TROUBLES AT NORTHAMPTON CONCLUDED.

THE correspondence of Mr. Edwards with some eminent ministers in Scotland, already introduced, has probably been found among the most interesting parts of this Memoir; equally creditable to Mr. Edwards, and to the excellent men, whose enlightened minds at once discerned his uncommon worth. The admirers of Mr. Edwards are under the deepest obligations to Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Erskine, whose name so frequently has occurred, as the individual through whose exertions the various works which principally form these volumes were first introduced in this kingdom.—The letters which are found in this chapter will not diminish the interest already felt by the pious and intelligent reader.

“To the Rev. Mr. M'Culloch.

*Northampton, July 6, 1750.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

It is now long since I have received a letter from you: the last was dated March 10, 1749. However, you having heretofore manifested that our correspondence was not unacceptable to you, I would not omit to do my part towards the continuance of it. Perhaps one reason of your neglecting to write, may be the failing of such agreeable matter for correspondence, as we had some years ago, when religion was flourishing in Scotland and America, and we had joyful information to give each other, of things pertaining to the city of our God. It is indeed now a sorrowful time on this side of the ocean. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Multitudes of fair and high professors, in one place and another, have sadly backslidden; sinners are desperately hardened; experimental religion is more than ever out of credit, with the far greater part, and the doctrines of grace, and those principles in religion that do chiefly concern the power of godliness, are far more than ever discarded. Arminianism and Pelagianism have made a strange progress within a few

years. The church of England, in New England, is I suppose treble of what it was seven years ago. Many professors are gone off to great lengths in the enthusiasms and extravagance, in their notions and practices. Great contentions, separations, and confusions, in our religious state, prevail in many parts of the land. Some of our main pillars are broken; one of which was Mr. Webb of Boston, who died in the latter part of last April. Much of the glory of the town of Boston is gone with him; and if the bereavements of that town should be added to, by the death of two or three more of their remaining elder ministers, that place would be in a very sorrowful state indeed, like a city whose walls are broken down, and like a large flock without a shepherd, encompassed with wolves, and many in the midst of it.

These are the dark things that appear. But on the other hand, there are some things that have a different aspect. There have in some places appeared revivals of religion. Some little revivings have been in some places towards Boston. There has been some reformation, not long since, in one of our colleges; and by what I hear there has been much more of this nature in some other parts of the province of New York, near Bedford river; something in several parts of New Jersey, particularly through the labours of Mr. Greenman, a young gentleman educated by the charitable expenses of the pious and eminent Mr. David Brainerd, mentioned in his Life, which I think I sent to you the last summer. And since I last wrote to Scotland, I have had accounts of the prevailing of a religious concern in some parts of Virginia.

And I must not forget to inform you, that, although I think it has of late been the darkest time in Northampton, that ever was since the town stood, yet there have been some overturnings on the minds of some of the young people here, and two or three instances of hopeful conversion the last summer, and as many very lately.

When I speak of its being a dark time here, I have a special reference to the great controversy that has subsisted here, for about a year and a half, between me and my people, about the forms of communion in the visible church; which has even at length issued in a separation between me and my people; for a more particular account of which, I must refer you to my letters to Mr. Robe and Mr. Erskine.—Besides, I shall endeavour to procure the printed copies of the Result of the Council, that sat here the week before last, with the Protestation of some of the members, that these may be sent to you with this letter, together with one of my books, published on the point in debate between me and my people; of which I crave your acceptance.

I am now separated from the people between whom and me there was once the greatest union. Remarkable is the providence of God in this matter. In this event we have a striking instance of the instability and uncertainty of all things here below. The dispensation is indeed awful in many respects, calling for serious reflection and deep humiliation in me and my people. The enemy, far and near, will now triumph; but God can overrule all for his own glory. I have now nothing visible to depend upon for my future usefulness, or the subsistence of my numerous family. But I hope we have an all-sufficient, faithful, covenant God, to depend upon. I desire that I may ever submit to him, walk humbly before him, and put my trust wholly in him. I desire, dear Sir, your prayers for us, under our present circumstances.

I am, Sir, your respectful

and affectionate friend and brother,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

“P.S. My wife and family join with me in cordial salutations to you and yours.”

After Mr. Edwards was dismissed from his people, several months elapsed before he received any proposals of settlement. During this interval, the committee of the church found it very difficult to procure a regular supply of the pulpit. When no other preacher could be procured. Mr. Edwards was for a time applied to by the committee, to preach for them; but always with apparent reluctance, and only for the given sabbath. He alludes to these circumstances in the following letter; in which the reader will find, that he was a decided advocate for the celebration of the Lord’s supper every Lord’s day.

Letter to Mr. Erskine.

*“Northampton, Nov. 15, 1750.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Some time in July last I wrote to you, and ordered one of my books on the Qualifications for Communion in the Church, to be sent to you from Boston, with the letter. In my letter I informed you of what had come to pass, in the issue of the late controversy between me and my people, in the dissolution of my pastoral relation to them; and ordered the printed Result of the Ecclesiastical Council, that sat upon our affairs, and the Protest against the said Result, to be put up with the letter; and also, at the same time, sent letters to my other correspondents in Scotland, with the books, &c. I have as yet had no call to any stated business elsewhere in the ministry; there has been some prospect of my having invitations to one or two places. The people of Northampton are hitherto destitute of a minister. They have exerted themselves very much, to obtain some candidate to come and preach to them on probation, and have sent to many different places; but have hitherto been disappointed, and seem to be very much nonplussed. But the major part of them seem to continue without any relenting or misgiving of heart, concerning what has been done; at least the major part of the leading men in the congregation. But there is a number whose hearts are broken at what has come to pass; and I believe are more deeply affected than ever they were at any temporal bereavement. It is thus with one of the principal men in the parish, viz. Col. Dwight; and another of our principal men, viz. Dr. Mather, adheres very much to me; and there are more women of this sort, than men; and I doubt not but there is a number, who in their hearts are with me, who durst not appear, by reason of the great resolution, and high hand, with which things are carried in the opposition, by the prevailing part. Such is the state of things among us, that a person cannot appear on my side, without greatly exposing himself to the resentments of his friends and neighbours, and being the object of much odium. The committee, that have the care of supplying the pulpit, have asked me to preach, the greater part of the time since my dismissal, when I have been at home; but it has seemed to be with much reluctance that they have come to me, and only be-

cause they could not get the pulpit supplied otherwise; and they have asked me only from sabbath to sabbath. In the mean time, they have taken much pains to get somebody else to preach to them.

Since I wrote to you in July last, I received your letter, dated the 30th of April last, with your generous and acceptable presents of Fraser's Treatise of Justifying Faith, Mr. Crawford's Manual against Infidelity, Mr. Randal's Letters on Frequent Communicating, Mr. Blair's Sermon before the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge, with an account of the Society, and the Bishop of London's Letters to the Cities of London and Westminster. The view the last mentioned gives of the wickedness of those cities, is very affecting; and the patience of God towards such cities, so full of wickedness, so heinous and horrid in its kinds, and attended with such aggravations, is very astonishing. That those cities and the nation, and indeed Christendom in general, are come to such a pass as they are, seems to me to argue that some very remarkable dispensation of Divine Providence is nigh, either of mercy or of judgment, or perhaps both; of mercy to an elect number, and great wrath and vengeance towards others; and that those very things you take notice of in Isaiah are approaching, appear to me very probable. However, I cannot but think, that, at such a day, all such as truly love Zion, and lament the wickedness that prevails in the earth, are very loudly called upon to united and earnest prayer to God, to arise and plead his own cause, that he would make bare his arm, that that may bring salvation; that now when the enemy comes in as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord may lift up a standard against him. When the church of Christ is like the ship, wherein Christ and his disciples were, when it was tossed with a dreadful tempest, and even covered with waves, and Christ was asleep; certainly it becomes Christians (though not with doubting and unbelief) to call on their Redeemer, that he would awake out of sleep, and rebuke the winds and waves. There are some things that afford a degree of comfort and hope, in this dark day, respecting the state of Zion. I cannot but rejoice at some things which I have seen, that have been lately published in England, and the reception they have met with in so corrupt a time and nation. Some things of Dr. Doddridge's, (who seems to have his heart truly engaged for the interests of religion,) particularly his Rise and Progress, and Col. Gardiner's Life, and also Mr. Hervey's Meditations. And I confess it is a thing that gives me much hope, that there are so many on this side the ocean united in the Concert for Prayer, proposed from Scotland; of which I may give a more particular account in a letter to Mr. M'Laurin, which I intend shall be sent with this. I had lately a letter from Governor Belcher, and in the postscript he sent me the following extract of a letter he had lately received from Dr. Doddridge. 'Nor did I ever know a finer class of young preachers, for its number, than that which God has given me this year, to send out into the churches. Yet are not all the supplies, here as elsewhere, adequate to their necessities; but I hope God will prosper the schemes we are forming for their assistance. I bless God, that in these middle parts of our island, peace and truth prevail in sweet harmony; and I think God is reviving our cause, or rather his own, sensibly, though in a gentle and almost unobserved manner.'

This which the Doctor speaks of, I hope is a revival of religion; though many things, in many places, have been boasted of as glorious revivals, which have been but counterparts of religion; so it has been with many things that were intermingled with and followed our late happy revival. There have been

in New England, within these eight years past, many hundreds, if not thousands, of instances very much like that of the boy at Tiptry Heath, mentioned by Mr. Davidson, as you give account in your letter. We ought not only to praise God for every thing that appears favourable to the interests of religion, and to pray earnestly for a general revival, but also to use means that are proper in order to it; and one proper means must be allowed to be, a due administration of Christ's ordinances: one instance of which is that, which you and Mr. Randal have been striving for; viz. a restoring the primitive practice of frequent communicating. I should much wonder (had it not been for what I have myself lately seen of the force of bigotry and prejudice, arising from education and custom) how such arguments and persuasions, as Mr. Randal uses, could be withstood; but however they may be resisted for the present, yet I hope those who have begun will continue to plead the cause of Christ's institutions; and whatever opposition is made, I should think it would be best for them to plead nothing at all short of Christ's institutions, viz. the administration of the Lord's supper every Lord's day:—it must come to that at last; and why should Christ's ministers and people, by resting in a partial reformation, lay a foundation for a new struggle, an uncomfortable labour and conflict, in some future generation, in order to a full restoration of the primitive practice.

I should be greatly gratified, dear Sir, by the continuance of your correspondence, and by being informed by you of the state of things, relating to the interests of religion in Europe, and especially in Great Britain; and particularly whether the affair of a comprehension is like to go on, or whether the test act is like to be taken off, or if there be any thing else done, or published, in England or Scotland, that remarkably affects the interests of religion.

I have, with this letter, sent Mr. Bellamy's True Religion Delineated, with a Sermon of mine at Mr. Strong's ordination; of which I ask your acceptance, as a small testimony of gratitude for your numerous favours to me. I ask a constant remembrance in your prayers, that I may have the presence of God under my unusual trials, and that I may make a good improvement of all God's dealings with me. My wife joins with me in most cordial salutations to you and Mrs. Erskine.

I am, dear Sir,  
                     your affectionate and obliged  
                                     friend and brother,  
 "Mr. Erskine."      JONATHAN EDWARDS."

"At length," observes Dr. Hopkins, "a great uneasiness was manifested, by many of the people of Northampton, that Mr. Edwards should preach there at all. Upon which the committee for supplying the pulpit called the town together, to know their minds with respect to that matter, when they voted, That it was not agreeable to their minds that he should preach among them. Accordingly, while Mr. Edwards was in the town, and they had no other minister to preach to them, they carried on public worship among themselves, and without any preaching, rather than invite him.\* [\*This vote appears to have been passed in the latter part of November, a few weeks before Mr. Edwards received proposals of settlement, which he ultimately accepted.]

"Every one must be sensible," remarks Dr. Hopkins, who was himself an occasional eye-witness of these scenes, "that this was a great trial to Mr. Ed-

wards. He had been nearly twenty-four years among that people; and his labours had been, to all appearance, from time to time greatly blessed among them: and a great number looked on him as their spiritual father, who had been the happy instrument of turning them from darkness to light, and plucking them as brands out of the burning. And they had from time to time professed that they looked upon it as one of their greatest privileges to have such a minister, and manifested their great love and esteem of him, to such a degree, that, (as saint Paul says of the Galatians,) “if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes, and given them to him.” And they had a great interest in his affection: he had borne them on his heart, and carried them in his bosom for many years; exercising a tender concern and love for them: for their good he was always writing, contriving, labouring; for them he had poured out ten thousand fervent prayers; in their good he had rejoiced as one that findeth great spoil; and they were dear to him above any other people under heaven.—Now to have this people turn against him, and thrust him out from among them, stopping their ears, and running upon him with furious zeal, not allowing him to defend himself by giving him a fair hearing; and even refusing so much as to hear him preach; many of them surmising and publicly speaking many ill things as to his ends and designs! Surely this must come very near to him, and try his spirit. The words of the psalmist seem applicable to this case: “It was not an enemy that reproached me, that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou—my guide and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.” Let us therefore now behold the man!—The calm sedateness of his mind; his meekness and humility in great and violent opposition, and injurious treatment: his resolution and steady conduct through all this dark and terrible storm; were truly wonderful, and cannot be set in so beautiful and affecting a light by any description, as they appeared in to his friends, who were eye-witnesses.

“Mr. Edwards had a numerous and chargeable family, and little or no income, exclusive of his salary; and considering how far he was advanced in years; the general disposition of people, who want a minister, to prefer a young man, who has never been settled, to one who has been dismissed from his people; and what misrepresentations were made of his principles through the country; it looked to him not at all probable, that he should ever have opportunity to be settled again in the work of the ministry, if he was dismissed from Northampton: and he was not inclined, or able, to take any other course, or go into any other business to get a living: so that beggary as well as disgrace stared him full in the face, if he persisted in his principles. When he was fixed in his principles, and before they were publicly known, he told some of his friends, that if he discovered and persisted in them, it would most likely issue in his dismissal and disgrace; and the ruin of himself and family, as to their temporal interests. He therefore first sat down and counted the cost, and deliberately took up the cross, when it was set before him in its full weight and magnitude; and in direct opposition to all worldly views and motives. And therefore his conduct, in these circumstances, was a remarkable exercise and discovery of his conscientiousness; and of his readiness to deny himself, and to forsake all that he had, to follow Christ.—A man must have a considerable degree of the spirit of a martyr, to go on with the steadfastness and resolution

with which he did. He ventured wherever truth and duty appeared to lead him, unmoved at the threatening dangers on every side.

“However, God did not forsake him. As he gave him those inward supports, by which he was able in patience to possess his soul, and courageously row on in the storm, in the face of boisterous winds beating hard upon him, and in the midst of gaping waves threatening to swallow him up; so he soon appeared for him in his providence, even beyond all his expectations. His correspondents, and other friends in Scotland, hearing of his dismissal, and fearing it might be the means of bringing him into worldly straits, generously contributed a considerable sum, and sent it over to him.

“And God did not leave him without tender and valuable friends at Northampton. For a small number of his people, who opposed his dismissal from the beginning, and some, who acted on neither side, but after his dismissal adhered to him, under the influence of their great esteem and love of Mr. Edwards, were willing, and thought themselves able, to maintain him: and insisted upon it, that it was his duty to stay among them, as a distinct and separate congregation from the body of the town who had rejected him.

“Mr. Edwards could not see it to be his duty to remain among them, as this would probably be a means of perpetuating an unhappy division in the town; and there was to him no prospect of doing the good there, which would counterbalance the evil. However, that he might do all he could to satisfy his tender and afflicted friends, he consented to ask the advice of an ecclesiastical council. Accordingly a council was called, and met at Northampton on the 15th of May, 1751.—The town on this occasion was put into a great tumult. They, who were active in the dismissal of Mr. Edwards, supposed, though without any good ground, that he was contriving with his friends again to introduce himself at Northampton.” A meeting of the church was summoned, and a committee of the church appointed; who, in the name of the church, drew up a remonstrance against the proceedings of the council, and laid it before that body. The character of this instrument may be learned, from the subsequent confession of one of the committee of the church that signed it, who was principally concerned in drawing it up, and very active in bringing the church to accept of it, and to vote that it should be presented to the council. To use his own language, it was “every where interlarded with unchristian bitterness, and sarcastical and unmannerly insinuations. It contained divers direct, grievous, and criminal charges and allegations against Mr. Edwards, which, I have since good reason to suppose, were all founded on jealous and uncharitable mistakes, and so were really gross slanders; also many heavy and reproachful charges upon divers of Mr. Edwards’s adherents, and some severe censures of them all indiscriminately; all of which, if not wholly false and groundless, yet were altogether unnecessary, and therefore highly criminal. Indeed I am fully convinced that the whole of that composure, excepting the small part of it relating to the expediency of Mr. Edwards’s resettlement at Northampton, was totally unchristian,—a scandalous, abusive, injurious libel against Mr. Edwards and his particular friends, especially the former, and highly provoking and detestable in the sight of God; for which I am heartily sorry and ashamed; and pray I may remember it, with deep abasement and penitence, all my days.” After this remonstrance of the church had been read before the council, they immediately invited the committee, by whom it was signed, to come forward, and prove the numerous allegations and insinuations which it contained; but



they refused to appear and support any of their charges, or so much as to give the gentlemen of the council any opportunity to confer with them, about the affair depending, though it was diligently sought; and though, by presenting the remonstrance, they had virtually given the council jurisdiction, as to the charges it contained, yet they utterly refused to acknowledge them to be an ecclesiastical council. The council then invited the church, as a body, to a friendly conference, to see if some measures could not be devised for the removal of the difficulties, in which the ecclesiastical affairs of the town were involved; but although this was earnestly and repeatedly moved for, on the part of the council, it was repeatedly and finally denied on the part of the church.

The council having heard what Mr. Edwards, and those who adhered to him, had to say, advised, agreeably to the judgment of Mr. Edwards, that he should leave Northampton, and accept of the invitations which he had received, to take charge of the Indian mission, as well as of the church and congregation, at Stockbridge; of which a more particular account will be given.

As a proper close to this melancholy story, and to confirm and illustrate what has been related, the following letter from Joseph Hawley, Esq. to the Rev. Mr. Hall, of Sutton, published in a weekly newspaper in Boston, May 9, 1760, is here inserted. This gentleman was a near kinsman of Mr. Edwards,\* though his active opponent; he was a lawyer of distinguished talents and eloquence.

“To the Rev. Mr. Hall, of Sutton.

*Northampton, May 9, 1760.*

REV. SIR,

I have often wished that every member of the two ecclesiastical councils, that formerly sat in Northampton, upon the unhappy differences, between our former most worthy and reverend pastor, Mr. Jonathan Edwards, and the church here, whereof you were a member; I say, Sir, I have often wished every one of them truly knew my real sense of my own conduct in the affair, that the one and the other of the said councils are privy to. As I have long apprehended it to be my duty, not only to humble myself before God, for what was unchristian and sinful in my conduct before the said councils, but also to confess my faults to them, and take shame to myself before them; so I have often studied with myself, in what manner it was practicable for me to do it. When I understood that you, Sir, and Mr. Eaton, were to be at Cold-Spring at the time of the late council, I resolved to improve the opportunity, fully to open my mind there to you and him thereon; and thought that probably some method might be then thought of, in which my reflections on myself, touching the matters above hinted at, might be communicated to most, if not all, the gentlemen aforesaid, who did not reside in this county. But you know, Sir, how difficult it was for us to converse together by ourselves, when at Cold-Spring, without giving umbrage to that people; I therefore proposed writing to you upon the matters, winch I had then opportunity only most summarily to suggest; which you, Sir, signified would be agreeable to you. I therefore now undertake what I then proposed, in which I humbly ask the divine aid; and that I may be made

most freely willing, fully to confess my sin and guilt to you and the world, in those instances, which I have reason to suppose fell under your notice, as they were public and notorious transactions, and on account whereof, therefore, you, Sir, and all others who had knowledge thereof, had just cause to be offended at me.

And in the first place, Sir, I apprehend that, with the church and people of Northampton, I sinned and erred exceedingly, in consenting and labouring, that there should be so early a dismissal of Mr. Edwards from his pastoral relation to us, even upon the supposition that he was really in a mistake in the disputed point; not only because the dispute was upon matters so very disputable in themselves, and at the greatest remove from fundamental, but because Mr. Edwards so long had approved himself a most faithful and painful pastor to the said church. He also changed his sentiments, in that point, wholly from a tender regard to what appeared to him to be truth; and had made known his sentiments with great moderation, and upon great deliberation, against all worldly motives, from mere fidelity to his great Master, and a tender regard to the souls of his flock, as he had the highest reason to judge. These considerations now seem to me sufficient; and would (if we had been of a right spirit) have greatly endeared him to his people, and made us to the last degree reluctant to part with him, and disposed us to the exercise of the greatest candour, gentleness, and moderation. How much of the reverse whereof appeared in us I need not tell you, Sir, who were an eye-witness of our temper and conduct.

And, although it does not become me to pronounce decisively, on a point so disputable, as was then in dispute; yet I beg leave to say, that I really apprehend, that it is of the highest moment to the body of this church, and to me in particular, most solicitously to inquire, whether, like the Pharisees and lawyers in John Baptist's time, we did not reject the counsel of God against ourselves, in rejecting Mr. Edwards and his doctrine, which was the ground of his dismissal. And I humbly conceive, that it highly imports us all of this church, most seriously and impartially to examine what that most worthy and able divine published, about that time, in support of the same, whereby he being dead yet speaketh. But there were three things, Sir, especially, in my own particular conduct before the first council, which have been justly matter of great grief and much trouble to me, almost ever since; *viz.*

In the first place, I confess, Sir, that I acted very immodestly and abusively to you, as well as injuriously to the church and myself, when with much zeal and unbecoming assurance, I moved the council that they would interpose to silence and stop you, in an address you were making one morning to the people, wherein you were, if I do not forget, briefly exhorting them to a tender remembrance of the former affection and harmony, that had long subsisted between them and their reverend pastor, and the great comfort and profit which they apprehended that they had received from his ministry; for which, Sir, I heartily ask your forgiveness; and I think, that we ought, instead of opposing an exhortation of that nature, to have received it with all thankfulness.

Another particular of my conduct before that council, which I now apprehend was criminal, and was owing to the want of that tender affection, and reverend respect and esteem for Mr. Edwards, which he had highly merited of me, was my strenuously opposing the adjournment of the matters submitted to that council for about two months; for which I declare myself unfeignedly

sorry; and I with shame remember, that I did it in a peremptory, decisive, vehement, and very immodest manner.

But, Sir, the most criminal part of my conduct at that time, that I am conscious of, was my exhibiting to that council a set of arguments in writing, the drift whereof was to prove the reasonableness and necessity of Mr. Edwards's dismissal, in case no accommodation was then effected with mutual consent; which writing, by clear implication, contained some severe, uncharitable, and, if I remember right, groundless and slanderous imputations on Mr. Edwards, expressed in bitter language. And although the original draft thereof was not done by me, yet I foolishly and sinfully consented to copy it; and, as agent for the church, to read it, and deliver it to the council; which I could never have done, if I had not had a wicked relish for perverse things: which conduct of mine I confess was very sinful, and highly provoking to God; for which I am ashamed, confounded, and have nothing to answer.

As to the church's remonstrance, as it was called, which their committee preferred to the last of the said councils; (to all which I was consenting, and in the composing whereof I was very active, as also in bringing the church to their vote upon it;) I would, in the first place, only observe, that I do not remember any thing, in that small part of it, which was plainly discursive of the expediency of Mr. Edwards's re-settlement here, as pastor to a part of the church, which was very exceptionable. But as to all the residue, which was much the greatest part thereof, (and I am not certain that any part was wholly free,) it was every where interlarded with unchristian bitterness, sarcastical and unmannerly insinuations. It contained divers direct, grievous, and criminal charges and allegations against Mr. Edwards, which, I have since good reason to suppose, were all founded on jealous and uncharitable mistakes, and so were really gross slanders; also many heavy and reproachful charges upon divers of Mr. Edwards's adherents, and some severe censures of them all indiscriminately; all of which, if not wholly false and groundless, were altogether unnecessary, and therefore highly criminal. Indeed, I am fully convinced, that the whole of that composure, excepting the small part thereof above mentioned, was totally unchristian—a scandalous, abusive, injurious libel, against Mr. Edwards and his particular friends, especially the former, and highly provoking and detestable in the sight of God; for which I am heartily sorry and ashamed; and pray that I may remember it with deep abasement and penitence all my days. Nor do I now think, that the church's conduct in refusing to appear, and attend before that council, to support the charges and allegations in the said remonstrance against Mr. Edwards and the said brethren, which they demanded, was ever vindicated, by all the subtle answers that were given to the said demand; nor do I think that our conduct in that instance was capable of a defence. For it appears to me, that, by making such charges against them before the said council, we necessarily so far gave that council jurisdiction; and I own with sorrow and regret, that I zealously endeavoured, that the church should perseveringly refuse to appear before the said council, for the purpose aforesaid; which I humbly pray God to forgive.

Another part of my conduct, Sir, of which I have long repented, and for which I hereby declare my hearty sorrow, was my obstinate opposition to the last council's having any conference with the church; which the said council earnestly and repeatedly moved for, and which the church, as you know, finally denied. I think it discovered a great deal of pride and vain sufficiency in

the church, and showed them to be very opinionative, especially the chief sticklers, one of whom I was; and think it was running a most presumptuous risk, and acting the part of proud scorers, for us to refuse hearing, and candidly and seriously considering, what that council could say or oppose to us; among whom, there were divers justly in great reputation for grace and wisdom.

In these instances, Sir, of my conduct, and in others, (to which you were not privy,) in the course of that most melancholy contention with Mr. Edwards, I now see that I was very much influenced by vast pride, self-sufficiency, ambition, and vanity. I appear to myself vile, and doubtless much more so to others, who are more impartial; and do, in the review thereof, abhor myself, and repent sorely: and if my own heart condemns me, it behoves me solemnly to remember, that God is greater and knoweth all things. I hereby own, Sir, that such treatment of Mr. Edwards, wherein I was so deeply concerned and active, was particularly and very aggravatedly sinful and ungrateful in me, because I was not only under the common obligations of each individual of the society to him, as a most able, diligent, and faithful pastor; but I had also received many instances of his tenderness, goodness, and generosity to me as a young kinsman, whom he was disposed to treat in a most friendly manner.

Indeed, Sir, I must own, that, by my conduct in consulting and acting against Mr. Edwards, within the time of our most unhappy disputes with him, and especially in and about that abominable ‘remonstrance,’ I have so far symbolized with Balaam, Ahitophel, and Judas, that I am confounded and filled with terror, oftentimes, when I attend to the most painful similitude. And I freely confess, that, on account of my conduct above mentioned, I have the greatest reason to tremble at those most solemn and awful words of our Saviour, Matt. xviii. 6. ‘Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea;’ and those in Luke x. 16. ‘He that despiseth you, despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me;’ and I am most sorely sensible that nothing but that infinite grace and mercy, which saved some of the betrayers and murderers of our blessed Lord, and the persecutors of his martyrs, can pardon me; in which alone I hope for pardon, for the sake of Christ, whose blood, blessed be God, cleanseth from all sin. On the whole, Sir, I am convinced, that I have the greatest reason to say as David, ‘Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions; wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin: for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities; create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me; cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit. (Ps. li. 1-3, 9-12.)

And I humbly apprehend, that it greatly concerns the church of Northampton most seriously to examine, whether the many hard speeches, spoken by many particular members against their former pastor, some of which the church really countenanced, (and especially those spoken by the church as a body, in that most vile ‘remonstrance,’) are not so odious and ungodly, as to be utterly incapable of defence; whether the said church were not guilty of a

great sin, in being so willing and disposed, for so slight a cause, to part with so faithful and godly a minister as Mr. Edwards was; and whether ever God will hold us guiltless, till we cry to him for Christ's sake to pardon and save us from that judgment, which such ungodly deeds deserve. And I most heartily wish and pray, that the town and church of Northampton would seriously and carefully examine, Whether they have not abundant cause to judge, that they are now lying under great guilt in the sight of God; and whether those of us, who were concerned in that most awful contention with Mr. Edwards, can ever more reasonably expect God's favour and blessing, till our eyes are opened, and we become thoroughly convinced that we have greatly provoked the Most High, and have been injurious to one of the best of men; and until we shall be thoroughly convinced, that we have dreadfully persecuted Christ, by persecuting and vexing that just man, and servant of Christ; until we shall be humble as in the dust on account of it, and till we openly, in full terms, and without baulking the matter, confess the same before the world, and most humbly and earnestly seek forgiveness of God, and do what we can to honour the memory of Mr. Edwards, and clear it of all the aspersions which we unjustly cast upon him; since God has been pleased to put it beyond our power to ask his forgiveness. Such terms, I am persuaded, the great and righteous God will hold us to, and that it will be vain for us to hope to escape with impunity in any other way. This I am convinced of with regard to myself, and this way I most solemnly propose to take myself (if God in his mercy shall give me opportunity); that so, by making free confession to God and man of my sin and guilt, and publicly taking shame to myself, I may give glory to the God of Israel, and do what in me lies to clear the memory of that venerable man from the wrongs and injuries I was so active in bringing on his reputation and character; and I thank God, that he has been pleased to spare my life to this time, and am sorry that I have delayed the affair so long. Although I made the substance of almost all the foregoing reflections in writing, but not exactly in the same manner, to Mr. Edwards and the brethren who adhered to him, in Mr. Edwards's life, and before he removed from Stockbridge, and I have reason to believe that he, from his great candour and charity, heartily forgave me and prayed for me; yet, because that was not generally known, I look on myself obliged to take further steps; for while I kept silence my bones waxed old, &c. For all these my great sins, therefore, in the first place, I humbly and most earnestly ask forgiveness of God; in the next place, of the relatives and near friends of Mr. Edwards. I also ask the forgiveness of all those, who were called Mr. Edwards's adherents; and of all the members of the ecclesiastical councils above mentioned; and lastly, of all christian people, who have had any knowledge of these matters.

I have no desire, Sir, that you should make any secret of this letter; but that you would communicate the same to whom you shall judge proper: and I purpose, if God shall give me opportunity, to procure it to be published in some one of the public newspapers; for I cannot devise any other way of making known my sentiments of the foregoing matters to all who ought to be acquainted therewith, and therefore I think I ought to do it, whatever remarks I may foresee will be made thereon. Probably, when it comes out, some of my acquaintance will pronounce me quite overrun with vapours; others will be furnished with matter for mirth and pleasantry; others will cursorily pass it over, as relating to matters quite stale; but some, I am persuaded, will rejoice

to see me brought to a sense of my sin and duty; and I myself shall be conscious, that I have done something of what the nature of the case admits, towards undoing what is, and long has been, to my greatest remorse and trouble, that it was ever done.

Sir, I desire that none would entertain a thought, from my having spoken respectfully of Mr. Edwards, that I am disaffected to our present pastor; for the very reverse is true; and I have a reverend esteem, real value, and hearty affection for him; and bless God, that he has, notwithstanding all our former unworthiness, given us one to succeed Mr. Edwards, who, as I have reason to hope, is truly faithful.

I conclude this long letter, by heartily desiring your prayers, that my repentance of my sins above mentioned may be unfeigned and genuine, and such as God in infinite mercy, for Christ's sake, will accept; and I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Sir, your real, though very unworthy friend,  
and obedient servant,  
JOSEPH HAWLEY.”

On the whole it is evident, that while the dismissal of Mr. Edwards was, in itself considered, an event greatly to be regretted, it was at the same time, in every part of it, most honourable to himself, and proved in its ultimate consequences an essential blessing to the church of God. Probably no one event, of apparently malignant aspect, ever did so much towards reforming the churches of New England. Many difficult subjects of theology, also, needed at that time to be thoroughly examined and illustrated; and to this end, some individual of expanded views and profound penetration, as well as of correct faith and elevated piety, was to be found, who could give the strength of his talents and his time to these investigations. The providence of God had selected Mr. Edwards for this important office; but so numerous and engrossing were the duties of the ministry at Northampton, that, had he remained there, he could not have fulfilled it but in part. To give him abundant opportunity and advantage for the work assigned him, he was taken from that busy field at the best time of life, when his powers had gained their greatest energy, when the field of thought and inquiry had been already extensively surveyed, and when the labours of the pulpit were fully provided for and anticipated; and was transferred to the retirement and leisure of a remote frontier village. There he prepared, within a little period, four of the ablest and most valuable works which the church of Christ has in its possession.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Sereno E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER XIX.

PROPOSALS FROM STOCKBRIDGE, AND FROM THE COMMISSIONERS—VISIT TO  
STOCKBRIDGE—INDIAN MISSION—HOUSATONNUCKS—MOHAWKS—  
DISSENSIONS OF ENGLISH INHABITANTS—MR. HOLLIS'S MUNIFICENCE.

EARLY in December, 1750, Mr. Edwards received proposals from the church and congregation at Stockbridge, to become their minister; and about the same time, similar proposals from the commissioners, at Boston, of the "Society in London, for Propagating the Gospel in New England, and the Parts adjacent," to become the missionary of the Housatonnucks, or River Indians, a tribe at that time located in Stockbridge and its immediate vicinity. Before deciding on these proposals, he went to Stockbridge, in the beginning of January, 1751, and continued there during the remainder of the winter, and the early part of the spring, preaching both to the English inhabitants, and, by the aid of an interpreter, to the Indians. Soon after his return, he accepted of the invitation both of the commissioners and of the people of Stockbridge.

The Indian mission at Stockbridge commenced in 1735; when the Rev. John Sergeant was ordained their missionary. He continued to reside there until his death, July 27th, 1749. His Indian congregation, originally about fifty in number, gradually increased, by accessions from the neighbouring settlements on the Housatonnuck river, to the number of two hundred and fifty—the actual number in 1751 Mr. Sergeant devoted much of his time to the study of their language; (the Moheekanneew; the common language of all the Indians in New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, except the Iraquois.) yet, at the close of his life, he had not made such progress, that he could preach in it, or even pray in it, except by a form. He ultimately regretted the time and labour thus lost, and expressed the conviction, that it would be far better for his successor not to learn the language, but to preach by an interpreter, and to teach the children of the Indians the English language, by the aid of schoolmasters. Very little success appears to have attended his labours, either among the Indians or the English congregation.

A school was established, for the instruction of the Indian children, at the commencement of the mission, and placed under the care of Timothy Woodbridge, Esq. one of the original settlers of Stockbridge, and characterized by

Mr. Edwards, as “a man of very good abilities, of a manly, honest, and generous disposition, and as having, by his upright conduct and agreeable manners, secured the affections and confidence of the Indians.” He was supported by the government of the province, and devoted himself faithfully to the business of instructing the Indian children; yet for a long period, like Mr. Sergeant, he had to lament that so little success attended his labours. This was owing to various causes. The Indians lived in a village by themselves, at a small distance from the English settlement. Their children lived at home with their parents, and not in a boarding-school, and of course made little or no progress in the English language; and they had no books in their own. The English traders sold large quantities of ardent spirits to the Indians, and in this way constantly counteracted the efforts made to do them good. There were also unfortunate dissensions among the people of Stockbridge. The settlement of the town was begun, with a direct reference to the intellectual and moral improvement of the Indians, in the immediate vicinity. The lands of the Indians, comprising a very extensive tract, were secured to them; and important privileges were granted to the families of the original settlers, by the provincial legislature, with reference to this very object. Unfortunately, one of the most wealthy of those settlers appears to have removed to Stockbridge, with the design of amassing a still larger fortune by his intercourse with the Indian settlement. With this view, he formed a large trading establishment in the neighbourhood. From his wealth and his locality, affairs of some moment, relating to the Indians at Stockbridge, were on various occasions intrusted to his management; in one of which Mr. Woodbridge regarded him as doing so great and palpable an injury, both to the Indians and the province, that, taking it in connexion with the general tenor of his conduct, he felt himself bound to prevent, as far as lay in his power, all intercourse between him and the Indian settlement, as well as all influence which he might attempt to exert over the affairs of the Indians. In return, he endeavoured, in the first instance, to prevent the Indians from sending their children to the school, and to render those parents who actually sent them dissatisfied with Mr. Woodbridge; and at length to procure the dismissal of that gentleman from his appointment. This controversy was of long continuance, and affected the whole settlement. The result was, that although he amassed considerable wealth, he entirely lost the confidence of the Indians; and so completely alienated the minds of the English inhabitants, that every family in the place, his own excepted, sided with his antagonist. This controversy, for a long time, had a most inauspicious effect on the school of Mr. Woodbridge and on the mission of Mr. Sergeant.

In 1739, Mr. Sergeant, despairing of any considerable success under the existing plan of instruction, attempted the establishment of an Indian boarding-school, to be kept at the expense of the English. He proposed, that the children should live in the family of their instructor, and learn the English language; and that their time should be divided between work and study, under different masters. For some time, he made but little progress in raising funds for this purpose, but at length was aided in his design, by the benevolence of the Rev. Isaac Hollis, a clergyman near London, who most generously offered to defray the expense of the board, clothing, and instruction of twelve Indian children. At this time no boarding-house was built; and for a long period, Mr. Serjeant found it impossible to procure a person duly qualified to take charge of the school. To begin the work, however, Mr. Serjeant hired as a temporary



teacher, until a competent one could be procured, a Capt. Martin Kellogg, an illiterate man, originally a farmer, and subsequently a soldier, about sixty years of age, very lame, and wholly unaccustomed to the business of instruction. His sister, Mrs. Ashley, the wife of a Capt. Ashley, of Suffield, who had been taken prisoner, when a child, by the Iroquois, and perfectly understood their language, was the interpreter of the English at Stockbridge; and her brother having come to reside there, in consequence of having no regular business, was employed temporarily by Mr. Sergeant, for the want of a better instructor, because he was on the spot. A school had just been commenced under his auspices, (not however as a boarding-school, as no house could be procured for the purpose,) when the French war of 1744 broke it up; and Capt. Kellogg, that he might continue to receive the money of Mr. Hollis, carried several of the Indian boys to Newington, in Connecticut, where he had previously resided.

After the close of the war, in 1748, Mr. Sergeant began the erection of a house for a boarding-school. He also wrote a letter to the nation of the Mohawks, then residing on the Mohawk river, about forty miles west of Albany, inviting them to bring their children to Stockbridge for instruction. But he did not live to see either of these designs accomplished. At his death, in 1749, several Indian boys were left in the hands of Capt. Kellogg, who in the autumn of 1750, not having heard from Mr. Hollis for a considerable period, and supposing him to be dead, dismissed them for a time, and gave up his attempt to form a school.

In consequence of the letter of Mr. Sergeant to the Mohawk tribe, which had been accompanied by a very kind invitation from the Housatonnuck Indians, offering them a portion of their lands for a place of settlement, if they would come and reside in Stockbridge, about twenty of them, old and young, came to that place in 1750, a short time before the removal of Mr. Edwards and his family. The provincial legislature, learning this fact, made provision for the support and maintenance of the children, and Capt. Kellogg, unfortunately, was employed as the instructor. He never established a regular school, however, but taught the boys occasionally, and incidentally, and employed them chiefly in cultivating his own lands. He was then 65 years of age.

Near the close of Mr. Sergeant's life, the school for the Housatonnuck children, under Mr. Woodbridge, became much more flourishing. His salary was increased, the number of his pupils augmented, and himself left to act with less restraint. The Indians also became less inclined to intemperance. The influence of the ——family was likewise extinct; the English inhabitants having to a man taken the opposite side in the controversy; and the Indians regarding Mr. Woodbridge as their best friend, and his opponent as their worst enemy. Mr. Woodbridge was also, at this period, able to avail himself of the assistance of a young Housatonnuck, educated by himself, of the name of John Wontanonpequunnonnt, a man of uncommon talents and attainments, as well as of sincere piety; who appears to have been raised up by Providence, that he might become the interpreter of Mr. Edwards, in preaching to his countrymen.

Mr. Hollis, having heard of the arrival of the Mohawks at Stockbridge, and supposing that a regular boarding-school was established under the care of Capt. Kellogg, wrote to him to increase the number of the children to twenty-four, who were to be maintained and instructed at his expense. During the winter of 1750-51, the number of Mohawks, who came to reside at Stock-

bridge, was increased to about ninety; among whom were Hendrick, and Nicholas, and seven others of their chiefs.

Such was the state of things at Stockbridge, and such the state of the Indian mission, and of the Indian schools, when Mr. Edwards was invited to remove to that place. The —— family at first exerted their whole influence, to prevent his receiving an invitation from the people at Stockbridge; but, finding that the church and parish (themselves excepted) were unanimous in giving the invitation, and very anxious that he should accept it, that there was no chance of producing a change in the minds of the commissioners in Boston, and that continued opposition must terminate in their own utter discomfiture, they changed their course, and professed to be highly gratified that he was coming among them.

After his return to Northampton, in the spring of 1751, Mr. Edwards, before coming to a final decision, paid a visit to his Excellency Sir William Pepperell, at Kittery, to learn the actual views of the government, with regard to the Indian establishment at Stockbridge; and having received satisfactory assurances on this subject, he soon after announced to the people of Stockbridge, and to the commissioners in Boston, his acceptance of their respective invitations. In the third week of June, he went again to Stockbridge, and remained there during the greater part of the ensuing month.

While at Stockbridge, he addressed the following letter to the Rev. Mr. Erskine.

*“Stockbridge, June 28, 1751.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

I have lately received the ‘Treatise on the Restoration of the Jews,’ and a pamphlet entitled, ‘A Serious Address to the Church of Scotland,’ and a ‘Sermon on the Qualifications of the Teachers of Christianity,’ preached by you before the Synod, with Glass’s Notes on Scripture Texts, No. 5. These pamphlets were enclosed in a wrapper, superscribed by your hand. There was also in the packet, a brief advertisement concerning one of the pamphlets, written in your hand, though without any date or name, or any letter in the packet. But yet, I conclude these pamphlets were sent by you, and accordingly I now thank you for them. Your discourse on the Qualifications of Teachers of Christianity, is a very acceptable present. Glass’s Notes on Scripture Texts contain some things that are very curious, and discover close study, and a critical genius. The Treatise on the Restoration of the Jews, if written by a christian divine, is a strange and unaccountable thing; by reason of there being nothing at all said, or hinted, about the Jews’ conversion to the Christian faith, or so much as one mention of Jesus Christ; and his supporting that the prophecies of Ezekiel are to be literally fulfilled, in the building of such a temple and city as is there described, and the springing of such a river from the threshold of the temple, and its running into the east sea, and the Jews offering sacrifices, and observing other rites spoken of in Ezekiel; and that the Messiah is yet to come, and to reign in Jerusalem as a temporal prince, &c. And I am wholly at a loss, as to the author’s real design, whether it was, to promote Judaism, or deism, or only to amuse his readers. Since I received these pamphlets, I have received

letters from all my other correspondents in Scotland; but none from you. Mr. M'Laurin speaks of your writing, or designing to write; but suggests that possibly your letter would not arrive so soon as the rest; so that I hope I shall yet, ere long, receive a letter from you. The letters I have received from my other correspondents, make mention of a great revival of religion in Guelderland, and Mr. M'Laurin has sent me printed accounts of it, published, as I understand, by Mr. Gillies, his son-in-law, being extracts of letters from Holland. I had some notice of it before, in a letter from Mr. Davenport, who, for the most part, resides in New Jersey. The account he wrote, was brought over from Holland by a young Dutch minister, whose name is John Frielinghausen, born in New Jersey, second son to an eminent Dutch minister there. His elder brother is settled at Albany, and by all accounts, is an able and faithful minister. This second son has been in Holland two years, I suppose to perfect his education in one of their universities, where his brother at Albany had his education. He came over into America the last summer, having just been married and ordained in Holland, in order to take the pastoral charge of some of the places that had been under his father's care.

The accounts Mr. Davenport gives from him, are not so particular, as those that are published by Mr. Gillies. But there is one material and important circumstance, which he mentions, not taken notice of in the accounts from Scotland, viz. that the stadtholder was much pleased with the work.

At the same time, that we rejoice in that glorious work, and praise God for it, it concerns us carefully to pray, that God's ministers and people there may be directed in such a state of things, wherein wisdom and great discretion are so exceedingly needed, and great care and skill, to distinguish between true and false religion; between those inward experiences, which are from the saving influence of the Spirit of God, and those that are from Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light. Without this, it may be expected, that the great deceiver will gradually insinuate himself; acting under disguise, he will pretend to be a zealous assistant in building the temple, yea, the chief architect, when his real design will be, to bring all to the ground, and to build Babel, instead of the temple of God, finally to the great reproach and grief of all true friends of religion, and the haughty triumph of its adversaries. If I may be allowed my conjecture in this affair, there lies the greatest danger of the people in Guelderland, who are concerned in this work. I wish they had all the benefit of the late experience of this part of the church of God, here in America. Mr. M'Laurin informs me, dear Sir, that you have a correspondence in the Netherlands; and, as you know something of the calamities we have suffered from this quarter, I wish you would give them some kind admonitions. They will need all the warnings that can be given them. For the temptation to religious people, in such a state of things, to countenance the glaring, shining counterparts of religion, without distinguishing them from the reality, what is true and genuine, is so strong, that they are very hardly indeed restrained from it. They will at last find the consequences not to be good, of an abundant declaring and proclaiming their experience, on all occasions, and before all companies, if they get into that way, as they will be very likely to do, without special caution in their guides. I am not so much concerned about any danger, the interest of the revival of religion in Guelderland may be in, from violent open opposition, as from the secret, subtle, undiscerned guile of the old serpent. I perceive, pious ministers in the Netherlands are concerned to obtain attestations to the

good abiding effect of the awakenings in Scotland and America. I think it is fit they should know the very truth of the case, and that things should be represented neither better nor worse than they are. If they should be represented worse, that would give encouragement to unreasonable opposers; if better, that might prevent a most necessary caution, of the true friends of the awakening. There are, undoubtedly, very many instances in New England, in the whole, of the perseverance of such, as were thought to have received the saving benefits of the late revival of religion; and of their continuing to walk in newness of life, and as becomes saints; instances, which are incontestable, and which men must be most obstinately blind not to see; but I believe the proportion here is not so great as in Scotland. I cannot say, that the greater part of supposed converts give reason, by their conversation, to suppose that they are true converts. The proportion may, perhaps, be more truly represented, by the proportion of the blossoms on a tree which abide and come to mature fruit, to the whole number of blossoms in the spring.

In the forementioned letter, which I lately received from Mr. Davenport, he mentions some degrees of awakening in some places of New Jersey. The following are extracts from his letter. 'I returned last month from Cape May, where I had been labouring some time, with little or no success, as to the unregenerate; except somewhat encouraging, the last day of my preaching among them. Yet, blessed be God, I hear of the success of several ministers in the Jerseys, and the revival of religion in some places; though it is very dull times in most. Mr. Reed of Boundbrook, has, I hear, some encouragement, by reason of a few in that place being under conviction. Mr. Kennedy, who is likely to settle at Baskingridge, I hear, has still more encouragement; and Mr. John Frielinghausen more yet, among the Dutch. He is the second son of the Mr. Frielinghausen, mentioned in your narrative, who died a few years ago. This second son came over from Holland, where he had been two years, and was ordained a little before he came over, the last summer. Pious ministers among the Dutch, this way, I think increase faster of late, than among other people. I was at the house of such an one, Mr. Varbryk, as I came along in this journey; who was ordained last fall, about five miles beyond Dobbs's Ferry, in New York government. Mr. William Tennent told me, that Mr. John Light, a pious young Dutch minister in New Jersey, was translating the accounts from Holland into English. Mr. Brainerd has had some special success lately, through mercy; so that nine or ten Indians appear to be under conviction, as he tells me; and about twelve of the white people near them, that used to be stupid like the very heathen; and many others more thoughtful and serious. Mr. Sacket has lately been favoured with peculiar success, in reducing a number drawn away and infected by the separatists; and some endeavours I have used since that, and with him, have, I trust, not been altogether in vain. The good Lord grant, that false religion may cease, and true religion prevail through the earth!' This letter of Mr. Davenport was dated April 26, 1751.

The Dutch people in the provinces of New York and New Jersey, have been famed for being generally exceedingly ignorant, stupid, and profane, little better than the savages of our American deserts. But it is remarkable, that things should now begin to appear more hopeful among them, about the same time that religion is reviving among the Dutch in their mother country; and certainly the revivals of religion which have very lately appeared, especially among the Dutch in Europe, do verify God's holy word, which not only gives

such great encouragement to those who have engaged in the Concert for United Prayer, begun in Scotland, to go forward, but binds it strongly upon them so to do; and shows that it will be an aggravated fault, if, after God does such glorious things so soon after we have begun in an extraordinary manner to ask them, we should grow cold and slack, and begin to faint. And I think what God has now done, may well cause those, who seemed at first, with some zeal, to engage in the affair, but have grown careless about it, and have left off, to reflect on themselves with blushing and confusion. What if you, dear Sir, and other ministers in Scotland, who have been engaged in this affair, should now take occasion to inform ministers in the Netherlands of it, and move them to come into it, and join with us, in our united and extraordinary prayers, for an universal revival of religion?

As to my present circumstances, I came the last week to this place, having undertaken the business of a missionary to the Indians here; having been chosen the pastor of this church, and chosen missionary by the commissioners for Indian affairs in Boston. My instalment is appointed to be on the second Thursday in the next month.\* I don't expect to get ready to remove my family till winter. But I must refer you, dear Sir, to my letters to Mr. M'Laurin and Mr. Robe, for a more full account of my circumstances, and of the things which have passed relating to them. I have, with this, sent you the Gazette, containing the Result of the late Council at Northampton, and intend to order one of my Farewell Sermons to be put up for you. My family were in their usual state of health when I left them, excepting my youngest child, who had something like an intermitting fever.

Please to present my cordial respects, and christian love, to your dear consort, and remember me in your prayers, with regard to the trials and changes I am called to pass through, and the new important business I have undertaken.

I am, dear Sir, your most  
united and obliged friend and brother,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS."

From Mr. Gillespie he received, about this period, a letter most grateful to his own feelings, expressing a lively and affectionate sympathy in his afflictions, as well as surprise and astonishment at the conduct of the people of Northampton. Mr. Edwards, in his reply, communicates a series of facts respecting them, which not only were adapted at the time to remove these impressions of his friend; but will be found, also, to contain a most important and salutary lesson of instruction, to every minister and every church. The solemn caution of the apostle, in 1 Cor. iii. 10–15., to every minister, to take care how he builds up the temple of God, of which Jesus Christ is the foundation—a caution, which refers not only to the nature of the doctrines which he teaches, but also, and even more especially, (as will be obvious from verses 16 and 17.) to the character of the members whom he adds to the church of Christ, which is the temple of God;—is here enforced most solemnly, by arguments derived from experience.

"To the Rev. Thomas Gillespie, Carnock.  
*Stockbridge, July 1, 1751.*

REV. AND VERY DEAR SIR,

I am very greatly obliged to you for your most kind, affectionate, comfortable, and profitable letter of Feb. 2, 1751. I thank you, dear Sir, for your sympathy with me, under my troubles, so amply testified, and the many suitable and proper considerations you suggest me, for my comfort and improvement. May God enable me to make a right improvement of them.

It is not to be wondered at, dear Sir, that you are shocked and surprised at what has happened between me and the people of Northampton. It is surprising to all impartial and considerate persons that live near, and have the greatest advantage to know the circumstances of the affair, and the things that preceded the event, and made way for it. But no wonder if it be much more so to strangers at a distance. I doubt not, but that God intends his own glory, and the safety and prosperity of Zion, and the advancement of the interests of religion, in the issue of this event.

But it is best, that the true state of the case should be known, and that it should be viewed as it is, in order to receiving that instruction which Divine Providence holds forth in it, and in order to proper reflections and right improvement.

As there is a difference among particular persons, as to their natural temper, so there is some difference of this kind to be observed in different countries, and also in different cities and towns. The people of Northampton have, ever since I can remember, been famed for a high-spirited people, and of a difficult and turbulent temper. However, though in some respects they have been a stiff-necked people, yet God has been pleased, in times past, to bestow many distinguishing favours upon them. The town has stood now near one hundred years. Their first minister, Mr. Eleazar Mather, brother to Dr. Increase Mather of Boston, and Mr. Samuel Mather of Dublin, Ireland; was a very eminent man of God. After him came Mr. Stoddard, my grandfather, a very great man, of strong powers of mind, of great grace and great authority, of a masterly countenance, speech, and behaviour. He had much success in his ministry; there being many seasons in his day, of general awakening among his people. He continued in the ministry, at Northampton, about sixty years. But God was pleased, in some respects, especially, to manifest his power in the weakness of his successor; there having been a more remarkable awakening, since his death, than ever had been till then, in that town: although since that, also, a greater declension, and more awful departures from God, in some respects, than ever before; and so the last minister has had more to humble him, than either of his predecessors. May the effect be answerable to God's just expectations.

The people have, from the beginning, been well instructed; having had a name, for a long time, for a very knowing people; and many have appeared among them, persons of good abilities; and many, born in the town, have been promoted to places of public trust: they have been a people distinguished on this account. These things have been manifestly abused to nourish the pride of their natural temper, which had made them more difficult and unmanageable. There were some mighty contests and controversies among them, in Mr. Stoddard's day; which were managed with great heat and violence: some great quarrels in the church, wherein Mr. Stoddard, great as his authority was, knew not what to do with them. In one ecclesiastical controversy in Mr. Stoddard's

day, wherein the church was divided into two parties, the heat of spirit was raised to such a degree, that it came to hard blows. A member of one party met the head of the opposite party, and assaulted him, and beat him unmercifully. In latter times, the people have had more to feed their pride. They have grown a much greater and more wealthy people than formerly, and are become more extensively famous in the world, as a people that have excelled in gifts and grace, and had God extraordinarily among them; which has insensibly engendered and nourished spiritual pride, that grand inlet of the devil in the hearts of men, and avenue of all manner of mischief among a professing people. Spiritual pride is a most monstrous thing. If it be not discerned, and vigorously opposed, in the beginning, it very often soon raises persons above their teachers, and supposed spiritual fathers, and sets them out of the reach of all rule and instruction, as I have seen in innumerable instances. And there is this inconvenience, attending the publishing of narratives of a work of God among a people, (such is the corruption that is in the hearts of men, and even of good men,) that there is great danger of their making it an occasion of spiritual pride. There is great reason to think that the Northampton people have provoked God greatly against them, by trusting in their privileges and attainments. And the consequences may well be a warning to all God's people, far and near, that hear of them.

Another thing, which probably has contributed in some measure to the unhappiness of the people's manners, was, that Mr. Stoddard, though an eminently holy man, was naturally of a dogmatical temper; and the people being brought up under him, and with a high veneration for him, were naturally led to imitate him. Especially their officers and leading men, seemed to think it an excellency, to be like him in this respect.

It has been a very great wound to the church of Northampton, that there has been for forty or fifty years, a sort of settled division of the people into two parties, somewhat like the Court and Country party, in England (if I may compare small things with great). There have been some of the chief men in the town, of chief authority and wealth, that have been great proprietors of their lands, who have had one party with them. And the other party, which has commonly been the greatest, have been of those, who have been jealous of them, apt to envy them, and afraid of their having too much power and influence in town and church. This has been a foundation of innumerable contentions among the people, from time to time, which have been exceedingly grievous to me, and by which doubtless God has been dreadfully provoked, and his Spirit grieved and quenched, and much confusion and many evil works have been introduced.

Another thing, that evidently has contributed to our calamities, is, that the people had got so established in certain wrong notions and ways in religion, which I found them in, and could never beat them out of. Particularly; it was too much their method to lay almost all the stress of their hopes in religion, on the particular shape and method of their first work; i.e. the first work of the Spirit of God on their hearts, in their conviction and conversion; and to look but little at the abiding sense and temper of their hearts, and the course of their exercises, and trials of grace, for evidences of their good estate. Nor had they learned, and many of them never could be made to learn, to distinguish between impressions on the imagination, and lively spiritual experience; and when I came among them, I found it to be too much a custom among them

without discretion, or distinction of occasions, places, or companies, to declare and publish their own experiences; and oftentimes to do it in a light manner, without any air of solemnity. This custom has not a little contributed to spiritual pride and many other evils. When I first settled among the people, being young and of little experience, I was not thoroughly aware of the ill consequences of such a custom, and so allowed or at least did not testify against it, as I ought to have done.

And here I desire it may be observed, that I would be far from so laying all the blame of the sorrowful things, that have come to pass, to the people, as to suppose that I have no cause of self-reflection and humiliation before God, on this occasion. I am sensible that it becomes me to look on what has lately happened, as an awful frown of heaven on me, as well as on the people. God knows the sinfulness of my heart, and the great and sinful deficiencies and offences; which I have been guilty of, in the course of my ministry at Northampton. I desire that God would discover them to me more and more, and that now he would effectually humble me, and mortify my pride and self-confidence, and empty me entirely of myself, and make me to know how that I deserve to be cast away, as an abominable branch, and as a vessel wherein is no pleasure; and, if it may consist with his holy will, that he would sanctify me, and make me a vessel more meet for my Master's use; and yet improve me as an instrument of his glory, and the good of the souls of mankind.

One thing, that has contributed to bring things to such a pass at Northampton, was my youth, and want of more judgment and experience, in the time of that extraordinary awakening, about sixteen years ago.\* Instead of a youth, there was want of a giant, in judgment and discretion, among a people in such an extraordinary state of things. In some respects, doubtless, my confidence in myself was a great injury to me; but in other respects my diffidence of myself injured me. It was such, that I durst not act my own judgment, and had no strength to oppose received notions, and established customs, and to testify boldly against some glaring false appearances, and counterfeits of religion, till it was too late. And by this means, as well as others, many things got footing, which have proved a dreadful source of spiritual pride, and other things that are exceedingly contrary to true Christianity. If I had had more experience, and ripeness of judgment and courage, I should have guided my people in a better manner, and should have guarded them better from Satan's devices, and prevented the spiritual calamity of many souls, and perhaps the eternal ruin of some of them; and have done what would have tended to lengthen out the tranquillity of the town.

However, doubtless at that time, there was a very glorious work of God wrought in Northampton, and there were numerous instances of saving conversion; though undoubtedly many were deceived, and deceived others; and the number of true converts was not so great as was then imagined. Many may be ready, from things that are lately come to pass, to determine, that all Northampton religion is come to nothing; and that all the famed awakenings, and revivals of religion in that place, prove to be nothing but strange tides of a melancholy and whimsical humour. But they would draw no such conclusion, if they exactly knew the true state of the case, and would judge of it with full calmness and impartiality of mind.

There are many things to be considered in the case of Northampton:



1. That many of those, who have been most violently engaged, and have chiefly led and excited others in it, though they have been leading men in the town, and have been esteemed considerable for their knowledge, estate, and age, and have been professors of religion, yet have not been the most famed for piety.

2. The leading men, who have been the most engaged in this matter, who have taken vast pains to stir up others that are inferior, have had this great advantage in their hands, that the controversy was a religious controversy; that that, which I opposed, was what they always had supposed to be a part of divine truth, a precious and important doctrine of the word of God; and, that the cause of my opposers was the cause of God. This has led the more ignorant and less considerate people to look on their zeal against me as virtue, and to christen even their passions and bitterness in such a cause with sanctified names, and to let them loose, and prosecute the views of their bitterness and violence without a check of conscience.

3. They have also had the great advantage of the vast veneration the people had for Mr. Stoddard's memory; which was such, that many looked on him almost as a sort of deity. They were all, (i.e. except the young people,) born and brought up under his ministry, and had been used from their infancy to esteem his sayings all as oracles. And he, they knew, maintained that doctrine which I oppose, with great positiveness and zeal, and opposed the contrary, which I maintain, as an exceedingly pernicious doctrine. Under these circumstances, I naturally appear as a dangerous opposer of the cause of God, and my teaching and insisting on the doctrine, which Mr. Stoddard opposed, appears to them a sort of horrid profaneness.

4. Crafty designing men have abundantly filled the ears of the more ignorant with suggestions, that my opinion tends to overthrow all religion, and to ruin the present and future generations, and to make all heathens, shutting them out of the church of Christ.

5. Not only many of the leading men of Northampton have used their utmost endeavours, to engage the minds of the common people in this controversy, but they have also been put forward, by the neighbouring ministers all round. My opposers have also been assisted and edged on by some at a great distance, persons of note; and some great men in civil authority have had a great hand in it.

6. It is to be considered, that the contrary opinion to mine, had not only long been established in Northampton without so much as one opposer to it; but it had also been fully and quietly established, for a long time, in all the neighbouring churches and congregations, and in all the country round, even to a great distance; so that my opinion when first broached, appeared to the people exceedingly singular. Their views being very narrow, it appeared to them, that all the world, almost, was against me. And my most crafty opposers improved this advantage, and abundantly represented me as all alone in my opinion.

7. Many of the people, who at length came to have their spirits much raised, and were brought to join in violent measures, yet came slowly into it, after being long practised with, and indefatigable endeavours used, to engage and influence them.

8. There are about twenty heads of families, besides others, women and young people, who ever appeared openly against the proceedings of the town,

and many others have appeared friendly to me. And there is not a little reason to think, that there are many more, especially women and youths, that would appear so, if they dare. For a person, by appearing my friend at Northampton, even so much so as openly to discountenance my being turned out of the pulpit, exposes himself to the immediate persecution of his neighbours, and perhaps of his nearest friends. I mean, he falls under their great resentment, loses all their friendship, and is every where the object of reproach.

9. It is to be considered, that these things have happened when God is greatly withdrawn, and religion was very low, not only at Northampton, but all over New England.

10. I believe the devil is greatly alarmed, by the opposition made to the lax doctrine of admission to the christian church, and to the corresponding practice, which had been so long established at Northampton, and so extensively in the country; in which he found his account, and hoped for more important consequences, and more agreeable to him. And God, for wise ends, has suffered him to exert himself, in an extraordinary manner, in opposition; as God ordinarily does, when truth is in the birth.

But I am drawn out to an unexpected length in my observations on these things, and have not left myself room, nor time, for some other things, that I would willingly write, and must therefore refer you to my letters to my other correspondents in Scotland; particularly, Mr. M'Laurin, Mr. Robe, Mr. M'Culloch, and Mr. Erskine. To some of them, I have sent a particular account of my present circumstances, and of things which have lately passed, relating to them. I would only say in general, that I have had a call to settle in Stockbridge, a place in the western borders of New England, next to the province of New York, about thirty-six miles from Albany, and about forty miles from Northampton, the place where Mr. Sergeant was minister and missionary to the Indians. I am both called by the church here, constituted partly of Indians and partly of English, and am appointed missionary to the Indians, by the commissioners of Indian affairs, in Boston; agreeably to what you suggest in your letter, as though you had been able to foresee future events, when you say,—"Perhaps you are to be employed where the gospel has been little understood or attended to." I suppose this place will, for the future, be the place of my ordinary abode, though it will be some months before I can remove my family. I have no leisure, at present, to write on the subject you speak of, viz. Impressions, and supposed immediate revelations, though I own the vast importance of the subject. I had begun to write something against the Arminians, before the late controversy; and now lately, Mr. Williams has written a book, in answer to mine on that subject; which I think myself obliged to answer, if God give me opportunity.

I have much to teach me to behave like a pilgrim and stranger in the earth. But in the midst of troubles and difficulties, I receive many mercies. Particularly, I have great reason, with abundant thankfulness, to take notice of the great kindness of my friends in Scotland. Blessed be God, who never forsakes those that trust in him; and never wants instruments, for the conveyance of his goodness and liberality to those who suffer in his cause!

I shall take care, that there be conveyed, with this letter, to you, one of my Farewell Sermons, and the Result of the Council that sat at Northampton the last May. Remember me, dear Sir, at the throne of grace, with regard to all my trials; and with regard to my new circumstances, and the important service I

have undertaken in this place;—and please, in your next, to inform me, what family you have, and of their state.

I am, dear Sir, your most  
affectionate friend and brother,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

The following letter of Mr. Edwards to the Rev. Isaac Hollis, the patron of one of the Indian schools at Stockbridge, will explain some of the difficulties to which they were subjected.

“To Mr. Hollis.

*Stockbridge, July 2, 1751.*

REV. AND HONOURED SIR,

Having seen your late letter to Mr. Prince of Boston, and another to Capt. Kellogg, received this summer, and having lately been appointed missionary to the Indians in this place, I thought myself obliged to take the first opportunity to write to you, who have exerted yourself, in so extraordinary a manner, to promote our interests here, to serve which I am now devoted; partly to offer you my thanks for what you have done, and have lately offered to do, with so fervent and enlarged a heart, and bountiful a hand, for the advancement and enlargement of Christ’s kingdom of grace among this poor people, and the eternal welfare of their souls; which may well excite the joy and admiration of all good Christians, the thanks of all who make the interests of Zion their own, and especially of him who has the souls of the Indians committed to his own more immediate care.

I write, also, partly to inform you of what I have had opportunity to observe, of the state of things here, relating to the affair of the instruction of the Indians, which you have a right to know; it being an affair in which you have been pleased so greatly to interest yourself, and which depends so much on the effects of your most generous christian beneficence. I have had considerable opportunity to observe the state of things; for though it is but about a month since I came here, after I had undertaken the work of the ministry here, as the stated missionary, yet I had been here before, two months in the winter, and then spent much time with the Indians, particularly with the Mohawks under the care of Capt. Kellogg.

There are here two schools for the instruction of Indian children: one under the care of Mr. Timothy Woodbridge, which began soon after Mr. Sergeant began to preach to these Indians,—this school consists wholly of the proper Housatonnuck Indians; the other, under the care of Capt. Kellogg, which he began with the Housatonnucks, on the plan which Mr. Sergeant projected; but, in the changeable unsettled state, in which things have been since Mr. Sergeant’s death, it has been altered from that form, and the Housatonnuck boys have left it, and it now consists wholly of Mohawk children, which have been brought down hither by their parents, from their own proper country, about eighty miles, to this end, that they might be taught to read, and write, and be instructed in the christian religion.

There are some things, which give a hopeful prospect with regard to these Mohawk Indians; particularly the forward inclination of the children and their aptness to learn. But that, which has evidently been the greatest defect from the beginning in the method of instruction here, is, that no more proper and effectual measures have been taken, to bring the children that are here to the knowledge of the English tongue. For want of this, all the labour and cost, which have been expended in schools here, for about fourteen years, have been consequently to but little effect or benefit. When the children are taught to read, many of them, for want of the English language, know nothing of what they read; their books being all in English. They merely learn to make such and such sounds, on the sight of such and such marks, but know not the meaning of the words, and so have neither profit nor pleasure in reading, and will therefore be apt soon to lose even what they have learned, having no benefit or entertainment in the use of it.

It is on many other accounts of great importance, that they should be brought to know the English language. This would greatly tend to forward their instruction; their own barbarous languages being exceedingly barren, and very unfit to express moral and divine things. It would likewise open their minds, and, by means of their acquaintance and conversation with the English, would tend to advance them in knowledge and civilization. Some pains has been taken to teach the children the English tongue, but nothing very considerable has been accomplished. And I can think of but two ways in which it can be effected:—either by introducing a number of English children into the schools, to learn with them, and be their mates; or by distributing the Indian children into English families, to live there a year or two, where they must be allowed to speak the English and nothing else, and then return into the Indian schools, to perfect them in reading and writing, and the knowledge of the principles of religion, and all other useful knowledge. The latter, if their parents can be persuaded to consent to it, as probably they may, will be much the most effectual.

I would therefore, Sir, humbly propose, that some such method should be taken with regard to the children, who have the benefit of your liberality; and that part of your benefaction should be expended in this way, under the care of prudent and faithful trustees; for, in order to the business being managed thoroughly in future, a great deal of care and activity will be necessary, vastly more than the schoolmaster can have leisure for. There are many things pertaining to the regulation of the affairs of the instruction of the Indian children, which seem greatly to require the care of a number of persons, who shall be intrusted to dispose things according to the best of their discretion; sending from time to time a particular and exact account of the manner in which they have laid out your money.

I thought myself obliged to give you these intimations; you being at a great distance, and not capable of knowing the exact state of things, any otherwise, than by the information of those who are on the spot; and it being fit that you should know those circumstances, which are of so much importance to the affair, that, without a proper regard to them, the great expense which you incur, is liable to be in a great measure in vain.

I humbly request your prayers to the Fountain of all light and grace, for his guidance and assistance in this important service, which I have lately undertaken in this place.

I am, Honoured Sir,  
Your most humble servant,  
And affectionate brother in the gospel ministry,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

A conference was appointed to be held at Albany, the last week in June, 1751, between the commissioners of the governments of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, and the chiefs of the Iroquois, or Six Nations, for the purpose of making a treaty. The commissioners of Massachusetts were directed to pass through Stockbridge, on their way to Albany, for the purpose of conferring with the Mohawks already there, about their settlement in New England. On their arrival they found that Hendrick, and almost all the heads of families, on account of their disgust at the neglect of their children, on the part of Capt. Kellogg, had returned to their own country. In consequence of this, they requested Mr. Edwards to go to Albany, and be present at the conference; whither he accordingly went the first week in July. In an interview with Hendrick and Nicholas, he endeavoured to persuade them to influence as many of the Mohawk chiefs, as possible, to go to Stockbridge, and there treat of their removal to New England. This being urged upon them afterwards, by the commissioners of Massachusetts, was agreed to by them and the other chiefs; and a conference appointed to be held at Stockbridge in August. Mr. Edwards then returned to Stockbridge, and in the latter part of July, to his family in Northampton.

The first week in August, he removed his family and effects from Northampton to Stockbridge; and on Thursday, Aug. 8th, was regularly installed as the minister of the congregation in that place, and inducted into the office of missionary to the Indians residing in its vicinity. His salary was derived from three sources: from the parish of Stockbridge; from the Society in London, for Propagating the Gospel in New England, and the Parts adjacent, whose missionary he was, through their commissioners at Boston; and from the legislature of the colony, as a part of the annual fund devoted to the civilization of the Indians. This latter sum was paid, of course, to the individual, who held the office of minister and missionary at Stockbridge, although the government had no voice in his appointment.

On Tuesday, Aug. 13th, the chiefs of the Mohawks came from their two principal settlements to Stockbridge, and met the commissioners of the province. The chiefs expressed a very strong desire that their children might be instructed; but objected to the removal to Stockbridge, on the ground that the affairs of the Mohawks there were left in the utmost confusion, that no regular school was established, and no thorough means taken for the education of their children. After reminding the commissioners how often the English had failed to fulfil their promises, and disappointed the hopes which they had encouraged them to entertain, they requested them to promise nothing, but what the government would certainly perform. The commissioners agreed among themselves, that in consequence of the utter incompetency of Capt. Kellogg, another instructor, a man of learning and skill, must be procured for the Mohawk school; and promised the chiefs that a regular school should be established for their children, and a competent instructor speedily procured. After this, the

chiefs declared their acceptance of the proposals made to them, of sending their children to Stockbridge for instruction, and of coming, a number of them, to reside there; and tendered a belt of wampum to the commissioners, in confirmation of the agreement, which was accepted. On Thursday, Aug. 22, the council was dissolved, and the chiefs went home.

The Mohawks at this time discovered a very strong desire to promote the education of their children, and an unusual willingness to receive religious instruction; as did also a part of the tribe of the Oneiyutas, or Oneidas, residing at Onohohquauga, or Onohquauga, a settlement on the Susquehannah. The French having been apprized of the efforts making by the English, in behalf of the Mohawks, were busily occupied in seducing them, and the other tribes of the Iroquois, to emigrate into Canada; and were actually erecting a chain of forts extending from Canada through New York, Pennsylvania, and the wilderness beyond to the Mississippi. Mr. Edwards, believing that if the utmost good faith was not kept with the Mohawks the whole plan of instructing them would be defeated, and regarding the period as a most critical one for the welfare of the British colonies, addressed a letter on the subject of the Indians, to the Hon. Thomas Hubbard, Speaker of the House of Assembly. In this letter he gave an account of the council held with the chiefs of the Mohawks, at Stockbridge, and their agreement to encourage the education of their children at that place; mentioned the interest felt in the subject by the Mohawks and the Oneiyutas, and by some of the Tuscaroras; stated the vast importance of the existing crisis, for securing the friendship of the Six Nations; recited the machinations of the French, to seduce them from the English interest, and their hostile movements in the west; pointed out the religious and literary instruction of the Indians as the only means of securing their attachment to the British cause; and detailed the measures necessary to be pursued at Stockbridge, to promote these great objects.

When Mr. Edwards had removed his family to Stockbridge, he found himself exceedingly embarrassed, from the difficulty of procuring the land necessary for his own immediate accommodation. When the town was first settled, it was granted to the Housatonnucks, except six portions, to the late missionary, the school-master, and four other settlers. These portions were now distributed among fourteen proprietors, and could be purchased only at a very high price. He therefore presented a petition to the General Court, at their session in October, 1751, asking leave to purchase the necessary lands, for his own accommodation—a homestead in the centre of the town, and a piece of wood-land in the outskirts. The legislature granted him leave to purchase the homesteads, and recommended to the English inhabitants, to provide the necessary wood-land for their minister.

On the tract of land, which he purchased, near the centre of the town, Mr. Edwards, soon after, erected a commodious dwelling, which is still standing.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER XX.

LETTER TO SIR W. PEPPERELL—LETTER TO LADY PEPPERELL—LETTER TO HIS FATHER—ARRIVAL OF MR. HAWLEY—INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN ESTABLISHMENT—SCHEMES OF ITS ENEMIES—FIRM STAND TAKEN BY MR. EDWARDS—LETTER TO MR. OLIVER—LETTER TO COMMISSIONERS—DIFFICULTIES TO THE MISSION—ANSWER TO MR. WILLIAMS—LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTHAMPTON—MARRIAGE OF MR. AND MRS. BURR—LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE—LETTER TO MR. HOLLIS—LETTER TO MR. HUBBARD.

THE Indian establishment at Stockbridge, being gradually more and more known, excited more and more the attention, and interest, of the benevolent of England. Among these, Joshua Paine, Esq. of London, addressed a letter to Sir William Pepperell, the governor of the province; requesting the information, as to the proper plan of a school for Indian girls at that place. An extract from that letter was forwarded to Mr. Edwards from Sir William, through the secretary of the commissioners, with a request that he would write to Sir William on the subject. He accordingly addressed to him the following letter.

*“Stockbridge, Nov. 28, 1751.*

HONOURED SIR,

WHEN I had the opportunity the last spring of waiting on your Excellency at your seat at Kittery, and was there gratified and honoured by the kind and hospitable entertainment of your house, I was favoured with some conversation with you, concerning the affairs of the Indians at Stockbridge, and the business of the mission here, to which I had then been invited. And you were then pleased generously to assure me of your good offices, in affording me any assistance in this employment, which you could render me, through your acquaintance and correspondence in London.

I have lately been favoured with a letter from the Hon. Andrew Oliver, of Boston, wherein he was pleased to send me an extract of a letter to you from Joshua Paine, Esq. of London, concerning a proper plan of a school for Indian girls in this place, and to propose to me to write to you on the subject of the said extract. This encourages me to hope that a letter from me, on this subject, to your Excellency will be kindly received.

With this hope, I would take leave to say, that I think that, as the boarding-schools here are now in their commencement, and are yet to receive their form and character, and that among a people hitherto unaccustomed to any method of instruction whatever, it is a great pity but that the method actually adopted should be free from the gross defects of the ordinary method of teaching among the English.

One of these grand defects, as I humbly conceive, is this, that children are habituated to learning without understanding. In the common method of teaching, so far as my observation extends, children, when they are taught to read, are so much accustomed to reading, without any kind of knowledge of the meaning of what they read, that they continue reading without understanding, even a long time after they are capable of understanding, were it not for a habit of making such and such sounds, on the sight of such and such letters, with a perfect inattentiveness to any meaning. In like manner they are taught their catechism, saying over the words by rote, which they began to say, before they were capable of easily and readily comprehending them. Being long habituated to make sounds without connecting any ideas with them, they so continue, until they come to be capable of well understanding the words, and would perhaps have the ideas, properly signified by the words, naturally excited in their minds on hearing the words, were it not for an habitual hearing and speaking them without any ideas; so that, if the question were put in phraseology somewhat new, to which they have not been accustomed, they would not know what to answer. Thus it happens to children, even with regard to the plainest printed catechisms, even those which have been contrived with great care and art, so that they might be adapted to the lowest capacities.

I should therefore think that, in these boarding-schools, the children should never read a lesson, without the master or mistress taking care, that the child be made to attend to, and understand, the meaning of the words and sentences which it reads; at least after the child begins to read without spelling, and perhaps in some degree before. And the child should be taught to understand things, as well as words. After it begins to read in a Psalter, Testament, or Bible, not only the words and phrases should be explained, but the things which the lesson treats of should be, in a familiar manner, opened to the child's understanding; and the master or mistress should enter into conversation with the child about them. Familiar questions should be put to the child about the subjects of the lesson; and the child should be encouraged, and drawn on, to speak freely, and in his turn also to ask questions, for the resolution of his own doubts.

Many advantages would arise from this method. By this means, the child's learning will be rendered pleasant, entertaining, and profitable, as his mind will gradually open and expand with knowledge, and his capacity for reasoning be improved. His lesson will cease to be a dull, wearisome task, without any suitable pleasure or benefit. This will be a rational way of teaching. Assisting the child's reason enables him to see the use, and end, and benefit of reading, at the same time that he takes pains from day to day to read. It is the way also to accustom the child from its infancy to think and reflect, and to beget in it an early taste for knowledge, and a regularly increasing appetite for it.

So also, with regard to the method of catechizing children; beside obliging them to give the answers in the printed catechism, or in any stated form of words, questions should be asked them from time to time, in the same familiar



manner, as they are asked questions commonly about their ordinary affairs, with familiar instructions, explanations, and rehearsals of things, intermixed; and if it be possible, the child should be led, by wise and skilful management, into the habit of conversation on divine things, and should gradually be divested of that shyness and backwardness, usually discovered in children, to converse on such topics with their superiors. And when the printed catechisms are used, as I am far from thinking they ought to be entirely neglected, care should be taken, that the child should attend to the meaning of the words, and be able to understand them; to this end, not only explaining the words and sentences, but also from time to time varying the phraseology, putting the question in different words of the same sense, and also intermixing with the questions and answers, whether printed or not, some improvement or application, in counsels and warnings given to them, founded on the answers that have been given.

Beside the things already mentioned, there are other things, which, as it appears to me, ought to be done, with regard to the education of children in general, wherein the common methods of instruction in New England are grossly defective. The teacher, in familiar discourses, might, in a little time, give the children a short general scheme of the scriptural history, beginning with the creation of the world, and descending through the various periods of that history, informing them of the larger divisions, and more important events of the story, and giving them some idea of their connexion one with another;—first, of the history of the Old Testament, and then of the New. And when the children had in their heads this general scheme, then the teacher might, at certain times, entertain them, in like familiar discourse, with the particular stories of the Scriptures, sometimes with one story, and then with another, before they can obtain the knowledge of them themselves, by reading; for example, at one time the story of the creation, at another time the story of the flood, then the dispersion of the nations, the calling of Abraham, the story of Joseph, the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt: and in the New Testament, the birth of Christ, some of the chief acts of his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, the effusion of the Holy Spirit at the day of Pentecost, and some of the chief of the acts of the apostles; withal, pointing out to them the place which each event has in the general scheme, and the connexion it has with other main parts of it. The teacher, in a familiar manner, should apply the events of the story discoursed upon, with the design of informing the child's understanding, influencing his heart, and directing his practice. A child, who is able to read his Bible, might be set to read a particular scriptural history, sometimes one, and sometimes another, diligently observing it, and examining for himself all that is said concerning it. And when he has done, he might be called to the master or mistress, and inquired of, concerning the particulars of the history, to see that he has paid attention, and is able to give a good account of it.

And I can see no good reason, why children in general, beside the scriptural history, should not, in a like familiar manner of conversation, be taught something of the great successive changes and events, in the Jewish nation, and the world at large, which connect the history of the Old and New Testaments. Thus, they might be informed, in short, of the manner in which the four great monarchies succeeded each other, the persecutions which the Jews suffered from Antiochus Epiphanes, and the principal changes which happened to

their church and state, before the coming of Christ. And they might be shown, how such and such events were a fulfilment of such and such prophecies. And when they learn the history of the New Testament, they might, with much profit and entertainment, have pointed out to them many plain prophecies of the Old Testament, which have their fulfilment in him. And I can see no good reason, why children cannot, or may not, be taught something in general of ecclesiastical history, and be informed how things, with regard to the state of religion and the church of God, have gone on, as to some of the main events, from the time when the scriptural history ended, to the present time; and how given prophecies of the Scriptures have been fulfilled in some of these events; or why they may not be told, what may yet be expected to come to pass according to the scriptural prophecies, from this time, to the end of the world.

It appears to me obvious, also, that, in connexion with all this, they should be taught somewhat relating to the chronology of events, which would make the story so much the more distinct and entertaining. Thus, they may be taught how long it was from the creation of the world to the coming of Christ; how long from the creation to the flood; how long from the flood to the calling of Abraham, &c.; how long David lived before Christ; how long before the captivity in Babylon; how long the captivity, before Christ, &c.; how long since the birth of Christ; how old he was when he began to preach, and when he was crucified; how long after his resurrection, before he ascended; how long, also, after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, until Babylon was destroyed by Cyrus; how long after the Persian empire, before that empire was overthrown by Alexander; when was the great oppression of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes; when Judea was conquered by the Romans; how long after Christ's resurrection before the destruction of Jerusalem; and how long before the empire became christian; how long after Christ before the popes claimed such and such powers; when the worship of images was introduced; how long before the Reformation, &c. &c. All children are capable of being informed, and having an idea of these things, and can much more easily learn them, if endeavours were used to that end, than many things which they do learn.

And with like ease, and with equal benefit, they might be taught some of the main things in geography: which way the land of Canaan lies from this; how far it is; which way Egypt lay from Canaan: which way Babylon lay from Jerusalem, and how far; which way Padan-Aram was from Canaan; where Rome lay from Jerusalem; where Antioch, &c. &c. And I cannot but think it might be a pretty easy thing, if proper means were taken, to teach children to spell well, and girls as well as boys. I should think it may be worth the while, on various accounts, to teach them to write, and also to teach them a little arithmetic, some of the first and plainest rules. Or, if it be judged, that it is needless to teach all the children all these things, some difference might be made in children of different genius, and children of the best genius might be taught more things than others. And all would serve, the more speedily and effectually, to change the taste of Indians, and to bring them off from their barbarism and brutality, to a relish for those things which belong to civilization and refinement.

Another thing, which properly belongs to a christian education, and which would be unusually popular with them, and which would in several respects have a powerful influence, in promoting the great end in view, of leading them to renounce the coarseness, and filth, and degradation, of savage life, for

cleanliness, refinement, and good morals, is teaching them to sing. Music, especially sacred music, has a powerful efficacy to soften the heart into tenderness, to harmonize the affections, and to give the mind a relish for objects of a superior character.

In order to promote the salvation of the children, which is the main design of the whole Indian establishment at this place, I think that, beside their attending public worship on the sabbath, and the daily worship of the family, and catechizing in the school, and frequent counsels and warnings given them, when all together, by their teachers; each child should, from time to time, be dealt with singly, particularly, and closely, about the state and concerns of his soul; and particular care should be taken to teach and direct each child, concerning the duty of secret prayer, and the duty pressed and enforced on every one; and care should be taken, that all may have proper opportunity and convenience for it.

I need say nothing concerning buildings, lodgings, household stuff, cattle, servants, husbandry instruments, and utensils for the children's work; as it is agreed on all hands, that these are necessary; and the providing of them will doubtless be left to the care and discretion of the trustees that shall be appointed.

But I would beg leave to say further, with regard to methods to forward the proficiency of the children in their learning, that I cannot but think measures might be devised, greatly to encourage and animate them in it, and excite a laudable ambition to excel. One thing I have thought of, which, as appears to me, might have a happy tendency this way, in each of the boarding-schools: at certain periods, there should be a sort of public examination in the school, on a day appointed for the purpose, which shall be attended by all the trustees, and all in the town who are in any respect connected with Indian affairs, and some of the neighbouring ministers, and gentlemen and ladies; and also that the chiefs of the Indians be invited to attend; at which there shall be a public trial of the proficiency which each one has made, in the various branches which have been taught, as in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, knowledge in the principles of religion, knowledge of church history, &c.; and that a premium shall be given to such as are found to excel, which may be done in something that will very much please Indian children, with but little expense. And likewise, that the works of the children be then produced, to be judged of, that it may be determined who has made the greatest proficiency in learning to sew, to spin, to knit, &c.; and that a reward be given to such as have excelled. And perhaps, also, that a reward be then given to such, as, by the testimony of their teachers and governors, have excelled in virtue or diligence, in care to speak the truth, in strictly observing the sabbath, in good manners, in respect to their superiors, &c. And that, in the day of public trial, there be somewhat of an entertainment made for the members of the school, and those who are invited to attend. This not only might tend greatly to stimulate the children in their learning, but would be very pleasing and animating to the tribes of Indians, and would have great influence in rendering them very favourably disposed to the affairs of the schools.

But your Excellency will easily see that, in order to the practicableness of these things, in any tolerable degree and manner, it is necessary that the children should be taught the English tongue; and indeed this is of the most absolute necessity, on almost every account. The Indian languages are extremely

barbarous and barren, and very ill fitted for communicating things moral and divine, or even things speculative and abstract. In short, they are wholly unfit for a people possessed of civilization, knowledge, and refinement.

Besides, without their learning English, their learning to read will be in vain; for the Indians have not the Bible, nor any other book, in their own language. Without this, their teachers cannot converse with them, and so can have no advantage to instruct them. Hence, all possible means must be used, in the first place, to introduce the English tongue among the children. To this end, much pains should be taken to teach them the English name for every thing, and English words that signify such and such actions; and an interpreter might be used for a while, to interpret their lessons to them, and to teach them to construe them, or turn them into Indian. And a number of English children might be put into the school with the Indian children. But the most effectual method of all would be, to put out some of the Indian children, first, into some good English families, one at a place, to live there a year or two, before they are brought into the school; which would not only be above all others the most successful method, but would be absolutely necessary, at least at first; but truly a great deal of care must be taken to find good places for them, and to look well to them, and to see that they are well taken care of, in the families to which they are sent. It is probable, that the parents of the children might, with proper endeavours, be persuaded to such a measure.

But it will doubtless be very easily and quickly determined, by your Excellency, that, if such methods as those which have been mentioned, or any like them, or indeed any other effectual measures, are taken, it will be absolutely necessary that the school should be under the constant care and inspection of trustees, who live upon the spot, or very near at hand. It will be in vain for any to expect that any woman can look after such a school, and provide for and govern so large a family, and take care continually to order and regulate so many and great affairs pertaining to it, within doors and without, without much assistance of some always at hand, who are able and faithful, and are interested and duly empowered. If she has under her a second, or a kind of usher, and has servants of both sexes, yet still she will be under the necessity of having some superior assistance. And as to the precise method of teaching, and regulating the discipline of the school and family, it must be left very much to their discretion: for experience alone can certainly determine the fittest methods of ordering such an establishment, so new and untried, though very probable conjectures may be made. And experience will doubtless direct to some new measures, which cannot now be thought of. Hoping that your Excellency will excuse the particularity and minuteness into which I have unintentionally been led on a subject about which I cannot but feel the deepest interest,

I remain,

With very high respect,

Your most humble servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

In the package to Sir William, Mr. Edwards, in consequence of her own request, forwarded to Lady Pepperell, who was then in very deep affliction,

the following letter; which will probably be regarded as one of the happiest specimens of christian sympathy and condolence, to be found in epistolary writing.

“To Lady Pepperell.

*Stockbridge, Nov. 28, 1751*

MADAM,

When I was at your house in Kittery, the last spring, among other instances of your kind and condescending treatment to me, was this, that, when I had some conversation with Sir William, concerning Stockbridge and the affairs of the Indians, and he generously offered me any assistance, in the business of my mission here, which his acquaintance and correspondence in London enabled him to afford me, and proposed my writing to him on our affairs; you were also pleased to invite me to write to you at the same time. If I should neglect to do as you then proposed, I should fail not only of discharging my duty, but of doing myself a great honour. But as I am well assured, even from the small acquaintance I had with you, that a letter of mere compliments would not be agreeable to a lady of your disposition and feelings, especially under your present melancholy circumstances; so the writing of such a letter is very far from my intention or inclination.

When I saw the evidences of your deep sorrow, under the awful frown of Heaven in the death of your only son, it made an impression on my mind not easily forgotten; and when you spoke of my writing to you, I soon determined what should be the subject of my letter. It was that which appeared to me to be the most proper subject of contemplation for one in your circumstances; that, which I thought, above all others, would furnish you a proper and sufficient source of consolation, under your heavy affliction; and this was the Lord Jesus Christ:—particularly the amiableness of his character, which renders him worthy that we should love him, and take him for our only portion, our rest, hope, and joy; and his great and unparalleled love towards us.—And I have been of the same mind ever since; being determined, if God favoured me with an opportunity to write to your Ladyship, that those things should be the subject of my letter. For what other subject is so well calculated to prove a balm to the wounded spirit.

Let us then, dear Madam, contemplate the loveliness of our blessed Redeemer, which entitles him to our highest love; and, when clearly seen, leads us to find a sweet complacency and satisfaction of soul in him, of whatever else we are deprived. The Scriptures assure us that He, who came into the world in our nature, and freely laid down his life for us, was truly possessed of all the fulness of the Godhead, of his infinite greatness, majesty, and glory, his infinite wisdom, purity, and holiness, his infinite righteousness and goodness. He is called ‘the brightness of God’s glory, and the express image of his person.’ He is the Image, the Expression, of infinite beauty; in the contemplation of which, God the Father had all his unspeakable happiness from eternity. That eternal and unspeakable happiness of the Deity is represented as a kind of social happiness, in the society of the persons of the Trinity; ‘Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before

him.' This glorious Person came down from heaven to be 'the Light of the world,' that by him the beauty of the Deity might shine forth, in the brightest and fullest manner, to the children of men.

Infinite Wisdom also has contrived that we should behold the glory of the Deity, in the face of Jesus Christ, to the greatest advantage, in such a manner as should be best adapted to the capacity of poor feeble man; in such a manner, too, as is best fitted to engage our attention, and allure our hearts, as well as to inspire us with the most perfect complacency and delight. For Christ having, by his incarnation, come down from his infinite exaltation above us, has become one of our kinsmen and brothers. And his glory shining upon us through his human nature, the manifestation is wonderfully adapted to the strength of the human vision; so that, though it appears in all its effulgence, it is yet attempered to our sight. He is indeed possessed of infinite majesty, to inspire us with reverence and adoration; yet that majesty need not terrify us, for we behold it blended with humility, meekness, and sweet condescension. We may feel the most profound reverence and self-abasement, and yet our hearts be drawn forth sweetly and powerfully into an intimacy the most free, confidential, and delightful. The dread, so naturally inspired by his greatness, is dispelled by the contemplation of his gentleness and humility; while the familiarity, which might otherwise arise from the view of the loveliness of his character merely, is ever prevented by the consciousness of his infinite majesty and glory; and the sight of all his perfections united fills us with sweet surprise and humble confidence, with reverential love and delightful adoration.

This glory of Christ is properly, and in the highest sense, divine. He shines in all the brightness of glory that is inherent in the Deity. Such is the exceeding brightness of this Sun of righteousness, that, in comparison of it, the light of the natural sun is as darkness; and hence, when he shall appear in his glory, the brightness of the sun shall disappear, as the brightness of the little stars do when the sun rises. So says the prophet Isaiah, 'Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun shall be ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and before his ancients gloriously.' Isa. xxiv. 23. But, although his light is thus bright, and his beams go forth with infinite strength; yet, as they proceed from the Lamb of God, and shine through his meek and lowly human nature, they are supremely soft and mild, and, instead of dazzling and overpowering our feeble sight, like a smooth ointment or a gentle eye-salve, are vivifying and healing. Thus on them, who fear God's name, 'the Sun of righteousness arises, with healing in his beams,' Mal. iv. 2. It is like the light of the morning, a morning without clouds, as the dew on the grass, under whose influence the souls of his people are as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain. Thus are the beams of his beauty and brightness fitted for the support and reviving of the afflicted. He heals the broken in spirit, and bindeth up their wounds. When the spirits of his people are cut down by the scythe, he comes down upon them, in a sweet and heavenly influence, like rain on the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth. (Psal. lxxii. 6)

But especially are the beams of Christ's glory infinitely softened and sweetened by his love to men, the love that passeth knowledge. The glory of his person consists, pre-eminently, in that infinite goodness and grace, of which he made so wonderful a manifestation, in his love to us. The apostle

John tells us, that God is light; (1 John i. 5.) and again, that God is love; (1 John iv. 8.) and the light of his glory is an infinitely sweet light, because it is the light of love. But especially does it appear so, in the person of our Redeemer, who was infinitely the most wonderful example of love that was ever witnessed. All the perfections of the Deity have their highest manifestation in the work of redemption, vastly more than in the work of creation. In other works, we see him indirectly; but here, we see the immediate glory of his face. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) In his other works, we behold him at a distance; but in this, we come near, and behold the infinite treasures of his heart. (Eph. iii. 8, 9, 10.) It is a work of love to us, and a work of which Christ is the author. His loveliness, and his love, have both their greatest and most affecting manifestation in those sufferings, which he endured for us at his death. Therein, above all, appeared his holiness, his love to God, and his hatred of sin, in that, when he desired to save sinners, rather than that a sensible testimony should not be seen against sin, and the justice of God be vindicated, he chose to become obedient unto death; even the death of the cross. Thus, in the same act, he manifests, in the highest conceivable degree, his infinite hatred of sin, and his infinite love to sinners. His holiness appeared like a fire, burning with infinite vehemence against sin; at the same time, that his love to sinners appeared like a sweet flame, burning with an infinite fervency of benevolence. It is the glory and beauty of his love to us, polluted sinners, that it is an infinitely pure love; and it is the peculiar sweetness and endearment of his holiness, that it has its most glorious manifestation in such an act of love to us. All the excellencies of Christ, both divine and human, have their highest manifestation in this wonderful act of his love to men—his offering up himself a sacrifice for us, under these extreme sufferings. Herein have abounded toward us the riches of his grace, in all wisdom and prudence. (Eph. i. 8.) Herein appears his perfect justice. Herein, too, was the great display of his humility, in being willing to descend so low for us. In his last sufferings, appeared his obedience to God, his submission to his disposing will, his patience, and his meekness, when he went as a lamb to the slaughter, and opened not his mouth, but in a prayer that God would forgive his crucifiers. And how affecting this manifestation of his excellency and amiableness to our minds, when it chiefly shines forth in such an act of love to us.

The love of Christ to men, in another way, sweetens and endears all his excellencies and virtues; as it has brought him in to so near a relation to us, as our friend, our elder brother, and our redeemer; and has brought us into an union so strict with him, that we are his friends, yea, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (Eph. v. 30.)

We see then, dear Madam, how rich and how adequate is the provision, which God has made for our consolation, in all our afflictions, in giving us a Redeemer of such glory, and such love; especially, when it is considered, what were the ends of this great manifestation of beauty and love in his death. He suffered, that we might be delivered. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, to take away the sting of sorrow, and to impart everlasting consolation. He was oppressed and afflicted, that we might be supported. He was overwhelmed in the darkness of death, that we might have the light of life. He was cast into the furnace of God's wrath, that we might drink of the rivers of his pleasures. His soul was overwhelmed with a flood of sorrow, that our hearts might be overwhelmed with a flood of eternal joy.

We may also well remember, in what circumstances our Redeemer now is. He was dead; but he is alive, and he lives for evermore. Death may deprive us of our friends here, but it cannot deprive us of this our best Friend. We have this best of friends, this mighty Redeemer, to go to, in all our afflictions; and he is not one who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He has suffered far greater sorrows than we have ever suffered; and if we are actually united to him, the union can never be broken, but will continue when we die, and when heaven and earth are dissolved.

Therefore, in this we may be confident, though the earth be removed, in him we shall triumph with everlasting joy. Now, when storms and tempests arise, we may resort to him, who is a hiding-place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest. When we thirst, we may come to him, who is as rivers of water in a dry place. When we are weary, we may go to him, who is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Having found him, who is as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, we may sit under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit will be sweet to our taste. Christ said to his disciples, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace! If we are united to him, we shall be like a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out its roots by the river, that shall not see when heat cometh, but its leaf shall ever be green, and it shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall it cease from yielding fruit. He will now be our light in darkness; our morning-star, shining as the sure harbinger of approaching day. In a little time, he will arise on our souls, as the sun in his glory; and our sun shall no more go down, and there shall be no interposing cloud—no veil on his face, or on our hearts; but the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and our Redeemer our glory.

That this glorious Redeemer would manifest his glory and love to your mind, and apply what little I have said on this subject to your consolation, in all your afflictions, and abundantly reward your kindness and generosity to me while I was at Kittery, is the fervent prayer, Madam, of

Your Ladyship's most obliged  
and affectionate friend,  
and most humble servant,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS."

The repeated afflictions of a widowed sister, in the beginning of the next year, occasioned the following letter to his father, containing some allusions to the state and circumstances of his own family.

"To the Reverend Timothy Edwards, East Windsor.

*Stockbridge. Jan 27. 1752.*

HONoured SIR,

We have lately heard the sorrowful tidings of the death of two of sister Backus's<sup>1</sup> children, as we are informed, both at your house; which is the occasion of cousin Eunice returning from Stockbridge at this time; she having a



desire to see her mother and surviving sisters at Windsor, on this melancholy occasion. We are much affected with sister's great and heavy afflictions, and lament the death of two such likely, promising children, in their early youth. It is my earnest desire, that it may be sanctified to us of this family. I desire your prayers, that it may be so; particularly to those that are young in the family; that they may be awakened by it to diligent preparation for death; and that we all may take notice of our distinguished mercies, with a becoming thankfulness to God. I look upon it as a great favour of Heaven, that you, my parents, are still preserved in the land of the living, to so great an age. I hope, by the leave of Divine Providence, to make you and sister Backus a visit in the spring. We are, through mercy, in our ordinary state of health, except that little Betty don't seem of late to be so well as she was in the summer. If she lives till spring, I believe we must be obliged to come again to the use of the cold bath with her. My wife and children are well pleased with our present situation. They like the place far better than they expected. Here, at present, we live in peace; which has of long time been an unusual thing with us. The Indians seem much pleased with my family, especially my wife. They are generally more sober and serious than they used to be. Beside the Stockbridge Indians, here are above sixty of the Six Nations, who live here for the sake of instruction. Twenty are lately come to dwell here, who came from about two hundred miles beyond Albany. We expect our son and daughter Parsons will remove hither in a short time. Many of their goods are already brought up.

[After alluding to the indigent circumstances of his sister Mrs. Backus and her family, and mentioning that himself and Mrs. Edwards had done every thing for his niece which was in their power, he proceeds.]

I hope some of her friends will be kind to her in this respect. There are perhaps none of her uncles but are much better able to help her than I am at this time; who, by reason of lately marrying two children, and the charge of buying, building, and removing, am, I suppose, about £2000 in debt, in this province money<sup>2</sup>. I should be glad if sister Mary would suggest it to brother Ellsworth to do something for her. If she don't care to do it in her own name, let her do it in mine, as doing the errand from me. Please to give my duty to my mother, and my love to sister Mary. My wife is at this moment from home. My children give their duty to their grandparents, and aunts, and love and affectionate condolence to their mournful surviving cousins

I am, honoured Sir,  
Your dutiful son,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS"

The allusion to his pecuniary circumstances, made by Mr. Edwards in the preceding letter, requires explanation. What was the actual amount of his salary at Northampton, I have not been able to ascertain; but he speaks of it, in one of his letters, as "the largest salary of any country minister in New England." Soon after his settlement there, he purchased a valuable homestead, with the requisite lands for pasturage and fuel, and erected a commodious dwelling-house. These, by the strictest economy, had all been paid for before his dismissal. It was several years, however, after his removal to Stockbridge, before he could sell his property at Northampton. In the mean time, he

was under the necessity of purchasing another homestead, and of erecting another dwelling-house at Stockbridge. The debt thus incurred, added to the expense of removing his family, subjected them for a time to very serious pecuniary embarrassments; and his daughters, who had received not only an enlightened, but a polished education, readily lent their aid, to relieve the family from the existing pressure. For this purpose, they occupied their leisure in making lace and embroidering, in tambouring and other ornamental work, and in making and painting fans; all of which, in the existing state of the country, found a ready market at Boston:<sup>3</sup> At length, the sale of his property in Northampton relieved him from debt, and placed his family in more pleasant circumstances.

On the 5th of February, O. S. Mr. Gideon Hawley, a young gentleman of a liberal education, and of great prudence, firmness, and integrity, arrived at Stockbridge. He had been appointed, by the commissioners, the schoolmaster of the Mohawk and other Iroquois children, and entered immediately on the duties of his office. He was ordained as a minister and missionary, July 31, 1734, N. S. Mr. Edwards found him a most faithful and useful coadjutor. He also occasionally preached to the Iroquois, as did Mr. Edwards once every sabbath.

Soon after the removal of Mr. Edwards to Stockbridge, in consequence of the misunderstandings and jealousies, subsisting between some of the principal English inhabitants of the town, and the confusion in which he saw the Indian affairs involved, he was led, in a letter to the Hon. Mr. Hubbard, of Aug. 31, 1751, to recommend the appointment of two or more trustees, "men perfectly impartial, no way interested in, related to, or engaged with, the contending parties." The absolute necessity of this step to the welfare of the mission, and of the Indian schools, soon became apparent<sup>4</sup>. In consequence of the increasing importance of the Indian establishment at Stockbridge, and the increasing attention of the public to the mission and the schools, the benefactions of the legislature and of individuals, were increasing, and still likely to increase. By the augmented numbers of the Housatonnucks, and the accession of a Mohawk colony, it had become the principal mission of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in New England, and appeared destined to receive the chief amount of its revenue; Mr. Hollis had increased his annual stipend to £160, stg.; Mr. Paine was proposing to support a female boarding-school; the legislature of the province had just voted £500, provincial currency, for the school-house, and would probably aid in the support of the mistress; an adequate support was now given to the instructor of the Housatonnuck school; an annual stipend was given to the Housatonnucks, to be expended at Stockbridge for their benefit; a similar stipend was to be paid for the Mohawks, if they removed in considerable numbers to Stockbridge; a school, to be supported by the colony, for the education of their children, was not only pledged, but actually begun; and hopes were indulged that the yearly stipend of £500, stg. granted by the king, to the Mohawks, might be expended under the direction of an agent, residing at Stockbridge, and not as before at Albany. It needed no great discernment to discover, that the amount of these numerous items must be great; and the bare possibility of engrossing the agency, through which this large aggregate must pass, and of turning it into a source of great private emolument, might easily excite the strong cupidity of individuals, and lead them to resort to every measure in their power, to secure that emolument to

themselves. The opponent of Mr. Woodbridge, (whose influence in the town, and with the Indians, had been long chiefly extinct,) in consequence of the strong recommendation, given of him, by his nephew, while in London, to the directors of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in New England, had been appointed one of the board of commissioners of that society; as had the nephew himself, another of the same board; one of his family, through the same recommendation, had been conditionally nominated as the teacher of the female school;<sup>5</sup> one of the trustees of the Indian establishment was about to connect himself with the family; and, if the nomination should be confirmed, it was his intention to remove to Stockbridge, in order to take a superintendence of Indian affairs, which, in the absence of his colleagues, would be sole and exclusive. So fair was the prospect at this time, in the view of these individuals, of engrossing the profit and the direction of the whole establishment in their own hands, that they threw off their wonted caution, and made known their purpose of removing every obstacle in the way of their designs.

Mr. Edwards well knew, that the influence of these individuals was most formidable: two of them being now members of the board of commissioners, on which, as Indian missionary, he was dependent; one of them being one of the trustees for the Indians at Stockbridge; one of them being personally acquainted with the directors in London; and two of them having considerable influence with the principal men in the provincial government. Yet he saw, just as dearly, that, if their plans succeeded, the funds appropriated to the literary and moral improvement of the Indians, would be perverted to the purpose of individual aggrandizement. In such a state of things, he was not at a loss as to his own duty. The question, whether the individual nominated by the board of directors in London, as the teacher of the female school, should be appointed, having been thus submitted, for final decision, to the board of commissioners in Boston; their secretary wrote to Mr. Edwards, for an explicit statement of the facts relating to, the subject. Thus called upon, he did not hesitate to present the whole case, in a reply to the secretary, bearing date Feb. 18, 1752.

In this letter, after stating it to be absolutely necessary, that his correspondent should be let into some of the secrets of the affairs of Stockbridge, and after alluding to his having, on account of the controversy there subsisting, recommended, formerly, the appointment of two or more impartial trustees, no way interested in, or related to, the contending parties," to inspect those affairs; he states, among other things, the following particulars:—When he recommended the appointment of these trustees, he little suspected, that one of them would prove the furthest of any person whatever, from possessing the indispensable qualification of impartiality, in consequence of his being about to become the son-in-law of one of the contending parties.—The preceding year, a very formal pacification took place, between Mr. Woodbridge and his opponent, with solemn promises made by the latter, that he would thenceforward live peacefully with Mr. W, and no more speak ill of him, nor in any wise molest him. But the proposed alliance, the nomination of one of his family as teacher of the female school, and the appointment of himself and his nephew to the board of commissioners, had so elated him, that those promises appeared to be wholly forgotten. A sudden and strange alteration had also appeared, in the temper and conduct of his intended son-in-law, who, in the absence of his colleagues, claimed the sole management of all Indian affairs, so

that nothing was done but he was the doer of it.—The Indians had a most unfavourable opinion of the opponent of Mr. Woodbridge, and the deepest prejudice against him, in consequence of his having often molested them, with respect to their lands, and other affairs, and, as they thought, having done very unjustly by them. This prejudice was extended to the family; and that to such a degree, that, after offering to feed and clothe such of their children, as should be sent to the school, attempted to be established, only four could be procured, three Housatonnucks and one Mohawk; and the parents of these four complained loudly of the treatment of their children. Whether this prejudice was well or ill founded, it was too deep to be eradicated.—Very improper use had been made of the money given by Mr. Hollis. He had made large remittances, and to no good purpose; and was kept in entire ignorance, as to the actual state of things at Stockbridge. The individual who received his money, and boarded, and professed to instruct the children, had never established a regular school, and had never kept any regular accounts of his expenditures. No government was maintained, little attention paid to the manners of the children, and all was suffered to go on in wildness, filth, and confusion, to the great offence of such as visited the place. The generous design of Mr. Hollis had been totally defeated, and the large sum of money he had given, had been wholly lost, and worse than lost. The same boys, without this additional expense, would have been far better instructed and governed at the school of Mr. Woodbridge. There, they would have been taught reading, cleanliness, good manners and good morals; all of which had been wholly neglected, on the part of their professed instructor, who had himself been absent from Stockbridge for a long period.—This irregularity, and disorderly management, led the Mohawks to take all their children away from him, after the arrival of Mr. Hawley, and to place them under the care of the latter. Yet the former, wishing some pretext for drawing the money of Mr. Hollis, and not being able to procure any of the Indian boys to form a school, went regularly into the school kept by Mr. Hawley, and proceeded to treat the boys as if they were under his own care; alleging, that he was the superintendent of the male school.—No one had been more open and abundant, in speaking of his uselessness, his exceeding unfitness for the business of an instructor, and the disorder and filthiness in which things were kept under his care, or in declaring, that it was high time that he was dismissed from the employment, than the resident trustee; but, in consequence of his new connexion, he had suddenly changed his mind, and now declared, that he must be retained.—A similar change had taken place in his treatment of Mr. Edwards. For many years he had constantly professed the highest respect for him, far beyond what the latter could, with any modesty, expect. He had often expressed a higher esteem of him than of any minister in New England, as well as a very strong desire of living under his ministry. Yet, although Mr. Edwards had never had a word of difference with him, or his new connexions, his whole conduct was suddenly and entirely changed, and he had sided with them, in all their measures of opposition and violence.

Very singular management had been used, with respect to Mr. Hawley. Before his arrival, dark representations were carried to him,—misrepresentations of the actual state of things at Stockbridge.—to discourage him from accepting his appointment. Soon after his arrival, it was openly given out, that he would soon be removed. Had it not been for his firmness, prudence, and steadiness of temper, he would have been laid under great and

permanent disadvantages. The resident trustee had warned him not to depend on Mr. Edwards, and challenged to himself the whole authority of directing the school, and the affairs of the Indians.—When the society in London recommended the proposed teacher of the female school, they could not have been aware, that her nearest kinsmen were to be the committee to examine her accounts. But the actual state of things was soon to be still more preposterous. She being the mistress, her nearest relatives were to be her council, and her husband the sole committee to examine her accounts, and make report to the legislature.

Mr. Edwards then adds, “I write these things, honoured Sir, because I am satisfied you have not heretofore been enlightened, in the true state of things, as you ought to have been. It was my knowledge of some of these matters, though but little in comparison, which occasioned me, when last in Boston, so earnestly to press the commissioners frequently to visit this place. I have been slow to speak. My disposition has been entirely to suppress what I knew, that would be to the disadvantage of any of the people here. But I dare not hold my peace any longer. You doubtless will own, Sir, that it is but doing you justice, for somebody or other to let you know the true state of things, in a matter of such vast importance, which is under your care, and which you being at so great a distance never can know, but by the information of some that live here; and I know of no one from whom you can more reasonably expect it, than from the missionary you have sent here, to have the special care of the interests of religion among the Indians. I did not intend to interfere with the affair of the teacher of the female school, or to say any thing that should tend to hinder it; and therefore avoided every thing of that nature, in my letter to Sir William Pepperell. But being now questioned again by the honourable commissioners, and the tendency of the measure more and more appearing, I thought that this was the time when God called on me to speak, and that if I should hold my peace now, I should perhaps lay a foundation for great uneasiness to my conscience all my life after; when I might deeply lament the continued consequences of my silence, and when it would be too late to speak.”

The next day Mr. Edwards addressed a letter to the commissioners in Boston, in which, after announcing the arrival of Mr. Hawley, and the high gratification of the Mohawks at the establishment of a regular school for their boys, he states the number of his scholars to be at that time thirty-six, mentions his happy qualifications as an instructor, and in compliance with their request gives, very summarily, his own views respecting a proper teacher for the female boarding-school.

During the spring of 1752, the state of affairs in Stockbridge, instead of improving, only grew worse. The interference of the former school-master with the school of Mr. Hawley, produced so much confusion, that, in the latter part of April, one half of the Mohawks left Stockbridge in utter disgust with him and his friends, and fully resolved never to return. A few days after their departure an intimate friend of the former school-master and his associates, visiting the male Mohawk school, under the care of Mr. Hawley, struck a child of the chief sachem at the Onohquaugas on the head with his cane, without any manner of provocation. The mother of this child was a woman of remarkable piety. This unhappy occurrence excited the universal indignation of the remaining Iroquois; and they appeared resolved, all of them, to pack up their effects immediately, and be gone. Mr. Hawley and the interpreter, finding it

impossible to calm them, came to Mr. Edwards for advice, but he, having been often blamed for, interfering with the affairs of the Iroquois, and told that, in doing so, he meddled with that which was none of his business, referred them to the resident trustee; advising them to represent the whole affair to him, that he might use proper means to prevent the fatal consequences which were feared. Their doing so was, however, regarded as the result of a disposition to find fault with him and his friends. The chiefs of the Onohquaugas, finding no redress, went to Mr. Edwards to make their complaint for this violent assault. There they found the aggressor; who, in order to pacify them, was persuaded to pay them a sum of money. The resident trustee, angry at what had occurred, went to the boarding-school, and proceeded to abuse Mr. Hawley in the presence of the whole school, in a very fervid manner; telling him that he was a man of no judgment, and of no prudence, and that he was unfit for the business he was in; and continued this abuse for three hours together. As his conversation was very loud, the Iroquois heard it, and came to the spot, expressing their fears for the personal safety of Mr. Hawley, to whom they had become much attached. Apprehending that, in consequence of this violence, he might be induced to leave Stockbridge, they declared, in a body, that, if he went away, they would go also. By these occurrences, the Indian were as effectually alienated from the resident trustee, as they had previously been from his new friends.

In consequence of these unhappy measures, and of a settled determination, on his part, to take, in the absence of his colleagues, the whole management of Indian affairs on himself; they also were disgusted. One of them relinquished all connexion with the business, and ceased to visit Stockbridge altogether. The other openly announced his entire discouragement, and declared that he would do his utmost to induce the government to withdraw their support from the establishment of the Iroquois. This led to an attempt to procure the dismissal of the latter, and the appointment of a connexion of the resident trustee; which however proved unsuccessful. At the same time, it was publicly and repeatedly announced, that Mr. Edwards himself would be removed from his mission; and, as soon after appeared, a vigorous attempt was actually made to accomplish this object.<sup>6</sup>

Having stated these facts in a letter to the secretary of the commissioners, of May, 1752, Mr. Edwards proceeds,—“But still I think there is no necessity of the Iroquois establishment being broken up, unless its enemies are resolved to have it so. The dependence of the establishment, as to continuance and prosperity, is chiefly on the Onohquaugas, who are much the best disposed of any of the Iroquois, and most likely to come in considerable numbers. They have not been here so long as the others, to see so much to discourage them, and they alone are willing to settle at the Hop-lands. The affair is not at all desperate as to them, nor as to some of the Mohawks, if there be a speedy alteration. But if the two individuals, who challenge to themselves the whole direction of the affairs of the Iroquois, continue here, there is no hope of the continuance of Mr. Hawley, or of Mr. Ashley and his wife. They will not continue under one whom they regard as so despotic an inspector. And there will be no way to retain any of the Indians, unless it be some who are entirely mercenary, who may be persuaded to stay for the sake of the presents that are made them, and to be maintained and live here in mere idleness. This, it is

now very apparent, is all that moves many of the Conneenchees, in being and continuing here”

“The resident trustee<sup>7</sup> has plainly discovered many designs, tending to bring money into his own pocket: viz. a design of taking care of Mr. Hollis’s boys himself; a design of being steward of both boarding-schools, by which he will have the opportunity of supplying the Indians out of his own shop, and of getting his pay from the British funds; a design of introducing his son, as the master of the boarding-school, under the idea of a present supply, another proper person not appearing; and an expectation of diverting the king’s bounty, of £500 sterling, to the Six Nations, from New York. The former school-master has given hints of an agreement, between himself and him, to resign the care of Mr. Hollis’s scholars to him, when things are ripe for it, he providing for their maintenance, and taking care of their instruction by his son. Beside these things, his wife is to be mistress of the female school; and two of their sons to be maintained and educated at the public expense, and two of their girls, in like manner, to be maintained in the female school; and one of his family to be his wife’s usher; and his servants to be paid for, under the character of servants employed in the affairs of the female school; and the house for the boarding-school set on his wife’s land; and then the farm to be bought by the country for the school, with the advantage of selling it at a high rate; and yet the family in a great measure to be maintained on the produce of it; beside the advantage of carrying on a trade, both with the Stockbridge Indians and the Mohawks. A man had need to have a great stock of assuredness, to urge a public affair, under so manifold temptations of private interest.”

The time of Mr. Edwards had been so much occupied by his removal from Northampton, the comfortable establishment of his family at Stockbridge, the ordinary duties of his parish and his mission, the claims of the Mohawks, the concerns of the various Indian schools, and the unhappy contentions of the whites; that he had, at first, no leisure to attend to the Reply of Mr. Williams. In the latter part of the spring, however, he began an answer to that gentleman, which he sent to the press the beginning of July,<sup>8</sup> with the following title “Misrepresentations Corrected, and Truth Vindicated, in a Reply to the Rev Mr. Solomon Williams’s Book, entitled, *The True State of the Question, concerning the Qualifications necessary to Lawful Communion in the Christian Sacraments.*” It was read with deep interest by both parties, was admitted by both to be a triumphant answer to the “True State of the Question,” and, taken in connexion with the “Humble Attempt,” was regarded by the friends of strict communion, at that time, as it has ever since been, as an unanswerable defence of their system. If the opposers of that system have not so regarded it, they have not publicly avowed the opposite opinion; as no attempt to answer it has hitherto appeared. Mr. Williams is said to have asked the advice of some of his friends, among the clergy, whether he had better commence a reply; but, finding that no one would encourage him to an attempt, which must end in reiterated defeat, he is reported to have sat down in mortified silence.

Appended to this publication was a letter from Mr. Edwards to his late flock at Northampton. They had published Mr. Williams’s pamphlet at their own expense, and distributed it to every family in the town. That pamphlet, though so unsuccessful an attempt to answer Mr. Edwards, was yet filled with

many lax and sceptical notions, derived from the writings of Dr. Taylor of Norwich, and apparently adopted by Mr. Williams, in the existing emergency, though in direct opposition, not only to Mr. Stoddard, whom he professed at once to venerate and defend, but to his own former publications. Though Mr. Edwards knew that the work of Mr. W. must soon go to its proper place, yet he also knew the state of fervid excitement in which his former congregation had long been; that they had printed and dispersed the pamphlet of Mr. W., (even without knowing its contents,) as an answer to his own treatise, and thus, in a sense, had adopted it before the world as their own work. These circumstances led him to fear, that the fatal errors abounding in the work of Mr. Williams might, at a period when the principles of Dr. Taylor of Norwich were gaining many converts in the colonies, mislead many, especially of the young, among his former people. To save them from this danger, he addressed to them an affectionate and truly pastoral letter, which will be found at the close of the Answer to Mr. Williams.<sup>9</sup>

On the 29th of June, 1752, Mr. Edwards married his third daughter, ESTHER, to the Rev AARON BURR, of Newark, president of the college of New Jersey, then established in that town, and a few years afterwards removed to Princeton.

In the following letter to Mr. Erskine, which is rich in intelligence, as well as thought, the reader will find one fact not generally known,—that Mr. Edwards, in the latter part of the summer of 1751, was applied to, with much earnestness, by some parish in Virginia, to go and settle with them in the ministry. They offered him a handsome support, and sent a messenger with the offer, but his instalment at Stockbridge had taken place before his arrival.

“To the Rev. John Erskine.

*Stockbridge, July 7, 1752*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

The last spring I received a letter from you, dated, at the beginning, July 17, and at the end, Sept. 5, 1751 and the week before last I received another letter, dated Feb 11, 1752, with a packet, containing Arnauld de la fréquente Communion, Goodwin’s Sermon at the Ordination of Mr. Pickering; Mr. Jarvis’s Sermon on Methods for reviving Religion; Reasons of Dissent from the Sentence of the General Assembly; Edwards on Christ, God-man; Mr. Hartley’s Sermon, Parish on the Assembly’s Catechism; and Dr Gill’s Sermon on Isaiah xi. 12. I heartily thank you for these letters and pamphlets. Arnauld on frequent Communion will not be very profitable to me, by reason of my not understanding the French. But several of the rest have been very agreeable to me. That letter which you mention in your last, dated Feb. 11, as sent about a twelve-month before, containing some Remarks on the Decay of the Power of the Papal Clergy, and an Abstract of Venema’s Reasonings to prove that Judas was not present at the Lord’s Supper, I never received, and regret it much that I missed it, and request that you would still send me those Remarks on the Decay of the Papal Clergy.

I am obliged to you for the particular information you have given me, concerning Mr. Adam of Falkirk’s affair. Though it is a pity so deserving a person



should suffer at all from his brethren, only for not acting contrary to his conscience; yet it is a matter of thankfulness, that the Assembly of the year 51 showed so much better temper than that of the preceding year. I shall be glad to hear concerning the temper and conduct of the Assembly of this present year, 1752.

I am sorry to learn, that there is so much reason to fear, that the revival of religion in the Netherlands will be hindered, and brought under a cloud, through the prevailing of imprudences. It is what I was afraid I should hear. I should be glad to see the Pastoral Letter you mention against Fanaticism, though written by one disaffected to the revival. I wish I could see a History of Enthusiasm through all ages written by some good hand, a hearty friend of vital religion, a person of accurate judgment, and large acquaintance with ecclesiastical history. Such a history, well written, might doubtless be exceedingly useful and instructive, and of great benefit to the church of God; especially, if there were united with it a proper account and history of true religion. I should therefore choose, that the work should be a history of true, vital, and experimental religion, and enthusiasm: bringing down the history from age to age, judiciously and clearly making the distinction between one and the other; observing the difference of source, progress, and issue; properly pointing out the limits, and doing justice to each, in every age, and at each remarkable period. I don't know that there is any such thing extant, or any thing that would, in any good measure, answer the same purpose. If there be, I should be glad to hear of it.

I thank you for the account you give me of Mr. Taylor's writings, and of the things which he is doing to propagate his opinions. It now appears to be a remarkable time in the Christian world; perhaps such an one, as never has been before: things are going down-hill so fast, and truth and religion, both of heart and practice, are departing by such swift steps, that I think it must needs be, that a crisis is not very far off, and what will then appear, I will not pretend to determine.

The last week I sent away my answer to Mr. Williams. If I live till it is published, I will endeavour to send one to you, and some other friends in Scotland. I hope now, in a short time, to be at leisure to resume my design, of writing something on the Arminian controversy. I have no thought of going through with all parts of the controversy at once, but the subject which I intended, God willing, first to write something upon, was Free-will and Moral Agency; endeavouring, with as much exactness as I am able, to consider the nature of that freedom of moral agents, which makes them the proper subjects of moral government, moral precepts, councils, calls, motives, persuasions, promises and threatenings, praise and blame, rewards and punishments: strictly examining the modern notions of these things, endeavouring to demonstrate their most palpable inconsistency and absurdity; endeavouring also to bring the late great objections and outcries against Calvinistic divinity, from these topics, to the test of the strictest reasoning; and particularly that great objection, in which the modern writers have so much gloried, so long triumphed, with so great a degree of insult towards the most excellent divines, and in effect against the gospel of Jesus Christ:—viz. That the Calvinistic notions of God's moral government are contrary to the common sense of mankind. In this Essay, I propose to take particular notice of the writings of Dr. Whitby, and Mr. Chubb, and the writings of some others, who, though not

properly Pelagians, nor Arminians, yet in their notions of the freedom of the will, have, in the main, gone into the same scheme. But, if I live to prosecute my design, I shall send you a more particular account of my plan after it is perfected.

I suppose there has been a trial before now, whether a national collection can be obtained in Scotland, for New Jersey college: unless it has been thought prudent, by such as are friends of the affair, to put it off a year longer; as some things I have seen seem to argue. There was a design of Mr. Pemberton's going to England and Scotland. He was desired by the trustees, and it was his settled purpose, to have gone the last year; but his people, and his colleague, Mr. Cummings, hindered it. His intention of going occasioned great uneasiness among his people, and created some dissatisfaction towards him, in the minds of some of them. Since that President Burr has been desired to go, by the unanimous voice of the trustees. Nevertheless. I believe there is little probability of his consenting to it; partly, on the account of his having lately entered into a married state. On the 29th of last month, he was married to my third daughter.

What you write of the appointment of a gentleman, to the office of lieut. governour, of Virginia, who is a friend of religion, is an event that the friends of religion in America have great reason to rejoice in; by reason of the late revival of religion in that province, and the opposition that has been made against it, and the great endeavours to crush it, by many of the chief men of the province. Mr. Davies, in a letter I lately received from him, dated March 2, 1752, mentions the same thing. His words are, 'we have a new governor; who is a candid, condescending gentleman. And, as he has been educated in the church of Scotland, he has a respect for the Presbyterians; which I hope is a happy omen.' I was in the latter part of the last summer applied to, with much earnestness and importunity, by some of the people of Virginia, to come and settle among them, in the work of the ministry; who subscribed handsomely for my encouragement and support, and sent a messenger to me with their request and subscriptions; but I was installed at Stockbridge before the messenger came I have written some account of the state of things at Stockbridge to Mr. M'Laurin; which you doubtless will have opportunity to see.

July 24. The people of Northampton are still destitute of a minister, and in broken, sorrowful circumstances. They had the last winter Mr. Farrand, a young gentleman from New Jersey college, but contended much about him, so that he has left them They are now in a state of contention; my warmest opposers are quarrelling among themselves. I hear they have lately sent for a young preacher, a Mr. Green of Barnstable, who is soon expected; but I know nothing of his character.

Another minister has lately been dismissed from his people, on the same account that I was dismissed from Northampton: viz. Mr. Billings of Cold Spring. Many of the Cold Spring people were originally of Northampton, were educated in the principles, and have followed the example, of the people there.

I heartily thank you for the accounts you have from time to time sent me of new books, that are published in Great Britain. I desire you would continue such a favour. I am fond of knowing how things are going on in the literary world.

Mr. John Wright, a member of New Jersey college; who is to take the degree of Bachelor of Arts, the next September; is now at my house. He was

born in Scotland; has lived in Virginia; is a friend and acquaintance of Mr. Davies; has a great interest in the esteem of the religious people of Virginia, and is peculiarly esteemed by President Burr, has been admitted to special intimacy with him; and is a person of very good character for his understanding, prudence, and piety. He has a desire to have a correspondence with some divine of his native country, and has chosen you for his correspondent, if he may be admitted to such a favour. He intends to send you a letter with this; of which I would ask a favourable reception, as he has laid me under some special obligations.

My wife joins with me in affectionate salutations to you, and Mrs. Erskine. Hoping that we shall continue to remember each other at the throne of grace, I am,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obliged

Brother and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

Soon after he had entered on the mission at Stockbridge, Mr. Edwards addressed the Rev. Mr. Hollis, by letter, concerning the Indian schools, and the state of the mission at large. The observations of a year had now brought him far more intimately acquainted with the actual state of things, and particularly, with the manner in which the annual benefactions of that gentleman had been expended; and he felt himself bound, at whatever hazard, to make the facts known. In doing this, he presented him, in a letter bearing date July 17, 1752, with a succinct and well drawn history of the mission, and stated, in general terms, the unhappy disagreement subsisting among the English inhabitants of Stockbridge, as well as various other circumstances of malignant aspect, which threatened ruin to the mission, and to the Indian schools. Want of room forbids its insertion. With this letter, he forwarded to Mr. Hollis a certificate, from a large number of the most respectable people of the town, stating the actual conduct of his agent, or instructor, the condition of the Indian boys, and the manner in which his benefactions had been perverted.

The firm and undeviating course of conduct pursued by Mr. Edwards, with regard to the Indian schools, and the general concerns of the mission, at length convinced the resident trustee, and his new friends, that they had nothing to hope from any compliances on his part. They resolved, therefore, if possible, to effect his removal from Stockbridge. With this view, that gentleman repaired to Boston, and endeavoured, in conversation, not only with the commissioners, but with some of the principal men in the government, (and among others, with the secretary of the province,) to produce in their minds very unfavourable impressions concerning him particularly, that he was a man of an unyielding character, and unwilling to be reconciled to those from whom he had differed; and that, by this course, he was likely to ruin the Indian mission. The friends of Mr. Edwards, in Boston, giving him timely notice of this attempt; he addressed a letter to the Hon. Mr. Willard, in his own defence, bearing date July 17, 1752; in which he so effectually refuted these representations, that the influence of that gentleman was permanently secured, in favour of the mission, and its real friends.

## FOOTNOTES

1 Mrs. Backus, the fifth sister of Mr. Edwards, was now a widow. Her husband, the Rev. Simon Backus of Newington, (Wethersfield,) was designated by the Connecticut legislature, as chaplain to the troops sent to Louisburgh in 1746, to prevent its recapture by the French. He died there soon after his arrival. The vessel, containing his effects, and a considerable sum contributed by the gentlemen of the army for his family, was cast away on its return; and the family were left in very indigent circumstances

2 I suppose that this means £2000 *old tenor*, as it was then called; the value of which continually varied, but has been commonly estimated at 6s. 8d. sterling to the pound.

3 So severe was this pressure, for a considerable time, that Mr. Edwards found himself necessitated to practise the most rigid economy, in every thing—even in the article of paper. Much of what he now wrote, for his own use, was written on the margins of useless pamphlets, the covers of letters, and the remnants of the silk paper used in making fans.

4 A representation having been made to the legislature, in pursuance of this recommendation, three trustees or commissioners were appointed in behalf of the province.

5 That is, provided the commissioners, in Boston, approved of the appointment.

6 With reluctance I have yielded to the necessity of this minuteness of detail; but the fact, that Mr. Edwards had no very marked success in his Stockbridge mission, cannot otherwise be adequately explained; and the failure of the Iroquois establishment at Stockbridge cannot otherwise be accounted for, happily the Indians at that place, like all other Indians in the vicinity of the whites, were exposed to the impositions, the seductions, and the oppressions, of their civilized neighbours. In these counteracting causes, both the friends and the enemies of Indian missions may learn, why it is so difficult to reform and christianize savages.

7 I have regarded the use of the *antonomasia* as correct in this and some other quotations.

8 It was not published until November.

9 This excellent letter, omitted here for want of room, will be found in vol. i. pp. 529-531, and should be read in this place.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER XXI.

VOTE OF THANKS OF COMMISSIONERS—SERMON AT NEWARK—MEASURES OF THE ENEMIES OF THE MISSION DEFEATED—LETTER TO MR. OLIVER—FREEDOM OF THE WILL—LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE—DEPOSITION OF MR. GILLESPIE—LETTER TO DO—LETTER TO MR. M'CULLOCH—REPORT OF INDIAN AGENT—REPLY OF MR. EDWARDS—FURTHER DEFEAT OF THE ENEMIES OF THE MISSION.

On the 29th of June, the secretary of the commissioners in Boston forwarded, by their direction, to Mr. Edwards and Mr. Hawley, an official expression of the approbation, entertained by that board, of the firmness and integrity manifested by them, in their conduct relative to the Stockbridge mission [The copy designed for Mr. Hawley was enclosed in the letter to Mr. Edwards. Probably a similar vote was forwarded *directly* to Mr. Woodbridge, as that gentleman always enjoyed their fullest confidence]. The commissioners knew of the attempt made, to shake their own confidence, and that of the public, in their agents in that mission; and doubtless intended, by this prompt and unequivocal act of justice, at once to sustain the hearts of these gentlemen, under their severe trials, and to make it manifest to all men, that, notwithstanding that attempt, they continued to repose in them an undiminished confidence. In his reply, bearing date Aug. 27, 1752, Mr. Edwards, after returning his thanks to those gentlemen, for this very decisive expression of their favourable opinion, made to their secretary his regular report of the state of the mission.

After observing, that the people of the town, both English and Indians, notwithstanding repeated and vigorous efforts to break up their union, and, particularly, to excite a disaffection in them towards their ministers, were all happily united in opinion and affection, except one individual and his family; he mentions the alliance of the resident trustee with his family, which took place soon after the arrival at Stockbridge of his nephew from Connecticut. The latter gentleman soon called on Mr. Edwards, and, after alluding to the fact, that he was opposed to the appointment of his cousin, as superintendent of the female boarding-school, insisted, as a member of the society in London, and of the board of commissioners, on knowing his reasons, and, at the same time, offered to be the instrument of settling the differences subsisting at

Stockbridge. Mr. Edwards, preferring to answer this demand by letter, declined to make a representation of the case before him, but offered to join with him, in an earnest representation to the board of commissioners, that they would appoint a committee, to come on the spot, to inquire into the existing difficulties; on the ground, that it was more proper to have such a committee, as judges or mediators, than an individual, who was very nearly related to the family chiefly interested in these contentions; and proposed, that the commissioners, by their committee, should be desired to look into the management of the affairs at Stockbridge, from the beginning, by all the living inhabitants and residents of the town, who had had any hand in them, in any respect; declaring himself ready to open himself with freedom before such a committee.—His correspondent, in reply, declined this proposal, reasserted his right to know the objections to the proposed teacher of the boarding-school, and intimated the regret which he should feel, if obliged to inform the society in London of the existing state of things at Stockbridge.—Mr. Edwards, in his answer, insisted anew on his former proposal, of referring the case to the commissioners, declared himself not satisfied, that his correspondent, acting singly, had authority to demand the reasons of his judgment, as to the teacher of the female school, whatever the society in London, or their commissioners in Boston, acting as a body, might have; and concluded, by referring himself again to the commissioners, who were his constituents, and who had, a little before, informed him, that they looked upon their agents as accountable to them only.

The arrival of this gentleman, and the assurances he gave them of his influence with the society in London, revived for a time the drooping courage of his friends, particularly of the resident trustee, and of the agent of Mr. Hollis, who had, just before that event, resolved on removing from Stockbridge.—Having thus alluded to the mischievous consequences growing out of this unhappy state of things, Mr. Edwards proceeds,—“Thus things go on, in a state of confusion, of which those at a distance can scarcely have any idea. In the mean time, the affair of the Six Nations is languishing to death. The affair of the Mohawks is, I fear, past recovery, and in a manner dead. They seem to be discouraged, are most of them gone, and I do not expect will come up again; unless it be to get presents, and satisfy their hunger, in the present time of great scarcity in their own country. They have apparently very much given up the idea of coming hither for instruction. The Onohquaugas have not been here so long, to be discouraged by our management. But if things go on in this manner, it may be expected that they will be discouraged also. The management of things has a great while been in wrong hands. They ought to be conducted exclusively by the commissioners, who have had the care of Stockbridge affairs; but here are others, who seem to aim to engross all to themselves, to be indefatigably active in prosecuting their particular designs, and impatient of every thing that stands in their way.

Very much depends on the appointment of a teacher of the female school. If that affair is settled to their minds, their influence here is well established. They are sensible that affairs depend very much on this simple point, and therefore this is the point they drive at with all their might. The wisdom of the commissioners will easily discover that this is the juncture, in which the foundation is to be laid of the future state of things in Stockbridge; of their prosperity or adversity; and perhaps with no opportunity of future redress. I look upon myself as called upon to speak somewhat freely at such a juncture; and there-

fore I hope my so doing will be candidly interpreted by the commissioners. I do not think that our affairs will ever prosper, if they must be under the bands of the resident trustee and his friends."

In the month of September, Mr. Edwards went into New Jersey, and, on the 28th of that month, preached a sermon from James ii. 19. before the synod at Newark, entitled, "True Grace distinguished from the Experience of Devils," which was published at their request. It is a clear, condensed, and powerful exhibition of the differences between real religion and its counterfeits, and will be found eminently useful, as a criterion of Christian character.

In the unhappy controversy, between Mr. Woodbridge and his opponent, perhaps no one circumstance had been more mortifying to the latter, or had had a more direct tendency to defeat all his measures, than the fact, that the white inhabitants of the town, (his own immediate family connexions excepted,) as well as the Indians of both nations, were, to a man, opposed to himself, and friendly to his antagonist. This rendered his daily life uncomfortable; it discouraged every attempt to forward his plans at the public meetings of the town; and when any point in controversy was to be decided, or any measure attempted, at Boston, he found that Mr. Woodbridge had a host of substantial witnesses on the spot, who gave in their testimony without fear. In this way, hitherto, every important design had been frustrated.

The winter, that was approaching, was regarded by both parties as a most important and interesting period; during which, in all probability, the affairs of the mission, and of the town, would be brought to a crisis. Those opposed to Mr. Woodbridge, were not ignorant, that, if Mr. Edwards were continued as the missionary at Stockbridge, such was his influence at Boston, and his general weight of character, there was too much probability, that Mr. Woodbridge would be continued the school-master of the Housatonnucks, and Mr. Hawley of the Iroquois. In that case, there was but little chance of the female school being placed in the desired hands; if that faded, the stewardship of all the schools would fail; and then the whole system of measures, apparently so happily conceived, would be defeated. But if Mr. Edwards could be removed from Stockbridge, the removal of Mr. Woodbridge would be attended with less difficulty; that of Mr. Hawley, a young man, would follow of course, which would make way for the son of the resident trustee: these changes would almost necessarily insure the female school, as well as the stewardship and agency, in the family; and then the other objects in view could scarcely fail to be accomplished. As so much depended on the fact, whether Mr. Edwards was continued at Stockbridge, or not; there seemed to be held out, to minds capable of being influenced by them, very strong inducements to make one vigorous effort to effect his removal. This was accordingly resolved on, and, by some of the persons concerned, incautiously proclaimed.

One of the steps taken to accomplish this so desired object, is mentioned in the following letter. Whether it was one of the measures concerted, or was the self-suggested plan of the individual, who attempted to execute it, does not certainly appear. Could he have succeeded, could the English inhabitants of the town have been changed, and a new set of inhabitants have been introduced, all of them his adherents; no event probably would have so much furthered the objects in view. The almost utter impossibility of its success, connected with its total and immediate discomfiture, rendered the attempt su-

premely ridiculous, and covered the individual making it, and his party, with confusion.

"To Andrew Oliver, Esquire.

*Stockbridge, Oct. 1752.*

SIR,

Since my letter of Aug. 27, various things have occurred among us, of which it may not be improper to inform you. It seems as though there was a resolution, in the people on the hill, to carry their schemes into effect, though the earth should be removed for it. The opponent of Mr. Woodbridge has lately made a vigorous and vehement attempt, suddenly to change the English inhabitants of the town, by buying out, at once, the old inhabitants in general. To thus end, he arose very early in the morning, and went out before day, and called some of them out of their beds, offering to buy their farms. In this manner, he went from one to another, until he had been to almost all the inhabitants in that forenoon; offering very high prices, and cash in hand; vehemently pressing that the bargain should be immediately closed, and the writings drawn, and the affair completed, without delay; urging it most pressingly on each one. One of the inhabitants completed and finished the affair with him. Some others came to a verbal agreement, on conditions. But, notwithstanding the great and extraordinary vigour, with which this matter was carried on, yet the design was discovered, before it could be completed, and so disappointed; and then his friends, and he himself too, were glad to lay this conduct to distraction.

A scheme is plainly laid, entirely to thrust Mr. Hawley out of the schools; let his friends and constituents do what they will to prevent it. The resident trustee has told Mr. Hawley, that it is the design of Mr. Hollis's former school-master, to set up a distinct independent school, under another teacher, whom he shall provide to keep the school on Mr. Hollis's behalf, and that he intends to take up all boys who come, to board them and clothe them well, better than heretofore. Probably he presumes, that the clothing and presents that will be offered, will tempt them all to subject themselves to himself, rather than to Mr. Hawley.

I have lately been a journey to Newark, in New Jersey, where I saw Mr. Hazzard, a merchant in New York, who told me that he, the last June, received and answered two bills from him, drawn on Mr. Hollis, of £80 sterling apiece. By this, it appears, that he has drawn full pay from Mr. Hollis, for the two years past, as much as he had in the preceding years, without clothing the boys in the least, imposing on Mr. Hollis, in an almost unprecedented manner, considering the greatness of the injury, the plainness of the case, and the obstinacy with which he has proceeded to such a step, after this part of the country had been, so long a time, so full of objections to his being here at Mr. Hollis's expense, without being engaged in the business to which Mr. Hollis appointed him, and for which he agreed to send him his money. In the beginning of the year before last, he professedly threw up Mr. Hollis's school, and dismissed all his boys, supposing that Mr. Hollis was dead; it having been long since he heard any thing from him. In what he did afterwards, in teaching the Mo-



hawks, he did not pretend to proceed on Mr. Hollis's plan, or with any expectation of any pay from him. And he never pretended to take up any boys on Mr. Hollis's account, till about a year afterwards, viz. The last autumn after he had received a letter from Mr. Hollis; and it is but little he has done since. The charge he has been at, in clothing the boys, is but a trifle. He has never really kept any school at all, though sometimes he has pretended to teach some children to read, in a most confused manner. But, through a great part of the last year, he has not done even that. He has been absent, at least one third of the year, and the greater part of the time that he has been here, he has not had so much as the shadow of a school, nor been in any business whatsoever.

I some time ago wrote a letter to Mr. Hollis, giving him some account of the state of his affairs here, accompanied with letters from some of the inhabitants of Stockbridge. I desired Mr. Prince to show those letters to some of the commissioners.

One of the trustees has lately been here, but staid only two or three days. While he was here, there was little else but altercation, and warm contest, between his colleague and him, concerning the mode of managing affairs, and concerning the female school. And he is gone away entirely discouraged, with a resolution to have no more to do with the affairs of Stockbridge, which, he says, are blown up already. If it be not altogether so, yet I think it is high time the honourable commissioners had full information of the state of things among us. We have long waited for an opportunity to send, but none has presented. Mr. Hawley meets with many things to discourage him; his circumstances here are very difficult and precarious; he greatly needs the advice of the commissioners; he has a strong inclination to see the commissioners himself, and to confer with them, freely and fully, about the affairs in which he is concerned, and it appears to me necessary that he should do this, both for the public interest, and on his own account. He is kept out of business, and probably very good business, in which he might settle elsewhere, and I do not wonder that he is uneasy, and thinks it necessary to talk with the commissioners. We have had thoughts of his staying, until Mr. Woodbridge went to the general court, the necessity of whose going appears more and more apparent; but the court being prorogued, and we not knowing for how long a time and the important matters of intelligence to the commissioners, and to Mr. Hollis, having been so long delayed for want of opportunity, which so much require their speedy notice; our calamities also continuing, and growing worse and worse; and it being now a time, wherein most of the Mohawks are gone, and so a time in which Mr. Hawley can be absent, with far less inconvenience than some time hence, when many of the Mohawks are expected down, in consequence of the want of provisions in their own country; and considering that probably the commissioners might have a more free opportunity to hear and consider Mr. Hawley's representations now, than in the time of the sitting of the court, and likewise, that it might be some convenience to the commissioners, to have notice of the state of our affairs, so as to ripen their thoughts with regard to them, before the sitting of the court;—I say, considering these things, it was thought advisable for Mr. Hawley not to delay his journey. That the Most High would give wisdom, and counsel, and success to the commissioners, in their consultations on our affairs, and direct and aid those who are here employed, in so important a service, is the humble and earnest prayer of

Their most obedient servant,

From these scenes of unsuccessful intrigue, and disappointed avarice, all notice of which, could the life of Mr. Edwards, as a missionary at Stockbridge, have been fairly exhibited without thus detailing them, would have been most gladly dispensed with; the reader will turn with pleasure, even for a short interval, to communications prompted by friendship, and relating to the more general interests of the church.

Some years before this, through the kindness of Mr. Erskine, he had received the writings of some of the more considerable Arminian writers, particularly of Dr. Taylor of Norwich, and Dr. Turnbull; which, with of Dr. Whitby and those of Chubb and Tindal, already in his possession, furnished him with the means of examining their whole system. This examination he commenced, in form, a considerable time before he left Northampton; and in the summer of 1747, as we have already seen, he announced, in his first letter to Mr. Erskine, the general plan of a Discourse on the Freedom of the Will, and Moral Agency. This subject drew his attention, even while he was a member of college; and, from an investigation of the nature of Power, to which he was led by reading the article, in the Essay on the Human Understanding, relating to that subject, he derived the all-important principle, that men, in a proper sense, may be said to have power to abstain from sin, and to repent, to do good works, and to live holily; because it depends on their will.—After Mr. Edwards had thus announced his plan, his attention was necessarily diverted from its execution, during his residence in Northampton, by the controversy respecting the Qualifications for Communion, his Treatise on that subject, and the many perplexities and embarrassments, which terminated in his dismissal. His removal from Northampton, the establishment of his family at Stockbridge, the Answer to Mr. Williams and his ordinary duties as minister and missionary, and the unhappy controversy subsisting respecting the mission, engrossed his whole time, until July, 1752. In August following, he entered upon the work, and pursued it a short time; but the violence of that controversy, and the attempts of the party hostile to Mr. Woodbridge, to force him from Stockbridge, compelled him to intermit his labours. Some of these circumstances are alluded to, in the following letter to Mr. Erskine, in which the reader will also find some interesting details, relative to the Dutch church, and to the state of religion in New Jersey.

*“Stockbridge, November 23, N. S. 1752.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

In August last I wrote to you, and sent away the letter, (with letters to some of my other correspondents,) to Boston, to be conveyed to Scotland. Therein I acknowledged the receipt of two letters from you, one of July 17, 1751: another of Feb. 11, 1752; with the pamphlets, put with the last letter, and now acknowledge the receipt of another letter from you of May 14, 1752; and the pamphlets you sent with the last. The letter I received the latter end of September: the pamphlets I did not receive till very lately: they were forgotten by Mr. Prince. The Treatise against Fanaticism I shall have no benefit from, because I am not acquainted with the French language. What the Jewish convert has published of his conversion, &c is very agreeable. And I now heartily

thank you for this letter and packet. I am very glad to see what you write concerning the state of religion in the Netherlands. But I believe there is more of a mixture of what is bad with the good, that appears in that land, than Mr. Kennedy, and many other ministers there, are aware of, and that they will find, that the consequences of their not carefully and critically distinguishing between the good and bad, and guarding with the utmost caution and diligence against the latter, will prove worse than they now conceive of. By your account, it is now exactly with Mr. Kennedy, as it was with many pious ministers in America, in the time of the great religious moving here. They looked upon critical inquiries, into the difference between true grace and its counterfeits, or at least a being very busy in such inquiries, and spending time in them, to be impertinent and unseasonable; tending rather to damp the work of the Spirit of God, than promote it; diverting their own minds, and the minds of others, as they supposed, from that to which God, at such an extraordinary time, did loudly call them more especially to attend. The cry was, O, there is no danger, if we are but lively in religion, and full of God's Spirit, and live by faith, of being misled! If we do but follow God, there is no danger if being led wrong! 'Tis the cold, carnal and lifeless, that are most likely to be blind, and walk in darkness. Let us press forward, and not stay and hinder, the good work, by standing and spending time in these criticisms and carnal reasoning! &c. &c. This was the language of many, till they ran on deep into the wilderness, and were taught by the briers and thorns of the wilderness. However, 'tis no wonder that divines in Europe will not lay very much weight on the admonitions they receive from so obscure a part of the world. Other parts of the church of God must be taught as we have been; and when they see and feel, then they will believe. Not that I apprehend there is in any measure so much enthusiasm and disorder, mixed with the work in Holland, as was in many parts of America, in the time of the last revival of religion here. But yet I believe the work must be more pure, and the people more thoroughly guarded from his wiles, who beguiled Eve through his subtlety, and who corrupts the minds of zealous people from the simplicity that is in Christ, before the work goes on to a general conquest, and is maintained in its power and glory for a great length of time. But God will have his own way — 'Who, being his counsellor, hath taught Him?' We must expect confusion and uproar, before we have that abundance of peace and truth, which the Scriptures speak of: many must run to and fro, and knowledge will be increased.

The Dutch ministers in America, whom you mention, whom I have acquaintance with, are some of the younger ministers, and such as were born in America, though several of them have had part of their education in Holland. I have not acquaintance enough with them, to know their sentiments, particularly, about those corrupt mixtures above mentioned, and the care which is to be used in guarding against them. However, 'tis not very likely, if some of them should write to their brethren in Holland, that their letters would have more influence upon them than letters from you, and some others of the ministers of Scotland. Nevertheless, there is a prospect, that there will in time be very happy effects of the growing acquaintance and union, there is between a very considerable number of very hopeful and pious Dutch ministers, in the province of New York and New Jersey, and many English and Scotch ministers in America. The number of well disposed Dutch ministers in these provinces, has of late remarkably increased; so that I think when they meet to-

gether in their Cœtus, they make the major part. Some of the elder ministers seem to be of quite contrary sentiment and disposition, not appearing friendly, as the others, to what they esteem the power of religion, nor approving of awakening, searching, strict, and experimental preaching; which has occasioned various contests among them. However, the stricter sort being the prevailing part, are like to carry the day.

The Dutch churches in these provinces have hitherto been so dependent on the Classis in Holland, that, whenever any among them have been educated for the ministry, and any churches have been desirous of their administrations, they could not receive their orders on this side of the water, but have been obliged to go to Holland for ordination; which has been a great encumbrance, that has attended the settlement of ministers among them, and has undoubtedly been one occasion of such multitudes of the Dutch being wholly without ministers. Application was made not long since, through the influence of the forementioned serious young ministers, (as I take it,) by the Cœtus here, to the Classis in Holland, for their consent, that they might unite themselves to the Presbyterian synod of New York, which now consists of English and Scotch. But the success of their application was prevented, by a letter written by one of the elder ministers, remonstrating against it, very falsely representing the New York synod, as no proper Presbyterian synod, but rather a company of independents. On which, the Classis of Holland advised them, by no means, to unite themselves with that synod.

The last September I went a journey into New Jersey, and had opportunity, in my journey, of seeing some of these young ministers, and conversing with them on the subject. They seem resolved, by some means or other, to disengage themselves and their churches from the forementioned great encumbrance, of being obliged to cross the ocean for the ordination of every minister. I was much gratified, during the little opportunity I had, to observe the agreeable disposition of these ministers.

There were, also, many other things I had opportunity to observe in those parts, which were very agreeable. I was there, at the time of the public commencement in the college, and the time of the meeting of the trustees of the college, the time of the meeting of the correspondents of the society for propagating Christian knowledge, and the time of the meeting of the New York synod; so that I had opportunity to converse with ministers from Long Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The college is in flourishing circumstances; increases apace; and is happily regulated. The trustees seem engaged to their utmost to promote learning, virtue, and true religion, in it; and none more so than Governor Belcher; who is the president of the trustees, and was at the commencement, and at the trustees' meeting. But they very much want further supplies, for the convenient support of the college. I had considerable opportunity to converse with Governor Belcher, and was several times at his house at Elizabeth-town. He labours under many of the infirmities of age, but savours much of a spirit of religion, and seems very desirous of doing all the good he can, while he lives. The New York synod is in flourishing circumstances: much more so than the Philadelphia synod. They have the greatest body of ministers now, and increase much faster than the other. They are in higher credit with the people in almost all parts, and are chiefly sought to for supplies by distant congregations.

With respect to the proceedings of the correspondents, they have dismissed Mr. Horton from his mission on Long-Island, and he is about to settle in a congregation in New Jersey. He was dismissed by reason of his very much failing of employment: many of the clans of Indians, he used to preach to, having dwindled away, by death or dispersion, and there being but little prospect of success among others that remain, and some being so situated, that they may conveniently be taken care of by other ministers. The correspondents have it in their view to employ the money, by which he used to be supported, to support a mission among the Six Nations; after they have found a suitable person to undertake the business of such a mission, and he is fitted for it by learning the language. They used endeavours to obtain a suitable person for the business, in New Jersey; but, meeting with no success, they voted to empower Mr. Bellamy, Mr. Hopkins of Sheffield, and myself; to procure a suitable person, if we can find such an one, in New England, for the present, to come and live at Stockbridge, to be here learning the Mohawk language with Mr. Hawley, our school-master for the Mohawk; to fit him for the mission. Persons proper to be employed, and such as may be obtained, are very scarce; and 'tis doubtful whether we shall be able to obtain one.

There is a very dark cloud, that at present attends the affair, relating to the Indians at Stockbridge, occasioned very much by one of the agents of the province, (who lives at Stockbridge,) pursuing measures very contrary to the measures of the commissioners of the society in London. The opposition is maintained, not with a small degree of stiffness and resolution; and the contest is become so great that it has brought things into very great confusion. This gentleman is a man of some role; and his wife's relations earnestly engage with him, and many of them are persons of considerable figure in the country. The commissioners all very much dislike his conduct. This contest occasions no misunderstandings among the people in Stockbridge, in general: all, excepting those nearly related to the family, both English and Indians, are happily united to me and my family. It would be very tedious for me to write, and for you to read, all the particulars of this uncomfortable affair. The commissioners are exerting themselves to relieve us of this calamity; and it is probable they will be successful.

I thank you for the account you give of some valuable books published: I desire you would continue to favour me in this manner. I began the last August to write a little on the Arminian controversy, but was soon broke off: and such have been my extraordinary avocations and hinderances, that I have not had time to set pen to paper about this matter since. But I hope that God, in his providence, will favour me with opportunity to prosecute the design. And I desire your prayers, that God would assist me in it, and in all the work I am called to, and enable me to conduct my life to his glory and acceptance, under all difficulties and trials.

My wife joins with me in most hearty and affectionate salutation to you, and Mrs. Erskine.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obliged

Brother and servant.

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

"P. S. I propose with this, to send you Mr. Hobart's second address to the members of the episcopal church in New England, and my answer to Mr. Williams, which I would desire you to give your neighbours, my correspondents, opportunity to read, if they desire it."

The correspondence of Mr. Edwards and the Rev. Thomas Gillespie of Carnock, in Scotland, has already interested the attention of the reader. This gentleman was born in 1708, pursued his theological studies under Dr. Doddridge, and was ordained and settled in the parish of Carnock, in 1741. He was a faithful and indefatigable minister.—"I never (says Dr. Erskine, who was several months his stated hearer at Carnock, and often heard his occasional efforts in other places) sat under a minister better calculated to awaken the thoughtless and secure, to caution convinced sinners against what would stifle their convictions and prevent their issuing in conversion, and to point out the differences between vital Christianity and specious, counterfeit appearances of it."—His popularity and usefulness were very great, not only in his own parish, but in Edinburgh and the west of Scotland. In 1752 an event occurred, which forms an era in the ecclesiastical history of that country. The Rev. Andrew Richardson of Broughton was presented to the charge of the town of Inverkeithing, by the lay patron of the parish—the individual who had that living in his gift.—The inhabitants refused to receive him as their minister. The case was appealed from court to court, until the General Assembly, in May, 1752, directed the presbytery of Dunfermline to admit Mr. R. to the charge of Inverkeithing, and appointed Mr. Gillespie to preside on the occasion. Mr. Gillespie, and several others in the presbytery, had conscientious scruples on the subject of lay patronage, and fully believed that no one, on the principles of the gospel, could have any right to place a clergyman over a parish but the people themselves. [Lay patronage was wholly rejected by the Scotch reformers, and was not introduced by law until 1711. For a long period, the law was regarded as a public grievance, but is now submitted to.] He therefore, and those who thought with him, declined obedience to the mandate: and while they were subjected to various ecclesiastical censures, he was deposed from the ministry, and removed from the parish of Carnock. When called to the bar to receive his sentence, he replied, "Moderator, I receive this sentence of the General Assembly with reverence and awe. But I rejoice that it is given to me, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on his name, but to suffer for his sake"

For about a year he preached to his people out of doors, hoping that the sentence would be reversed; at the close of which, a church having been purchased for him in Dunfermline, a short distance from Carnock, he preached there, as an independent, about six years, unconnected with any associate in the ministry. In 1758 he united with the Rev. Thomas Boston, Jr., and formed a new establishment, called, The Presbytery of Relief; to which some dissenting ministers of England soon acceded. The congregations at present connected with them, and known, as an ecclesiastical body, by the name of the relief, are 65 in number, are found in all the principal towns, and many of the country parishes, of Scotland, and are computed to consist of towards 60,000 individuals ["Mr. Gillespie died, Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1774, in serenity of mind, and good hope through grace."]. They provide ministers for the inhabitants of those parishes, which do not submit to ministers introduced by lay patronage; and readily ad-

mit to ministerial and church communion, evangelical ministers of the church of Scotland, and of the church of England.

The correspondents of Mr. Edwards had forwarded to him various publications relative to the deposition of Mr. Gillespie; and the views which he formed with regard to it, as expressed in the following letter, while they must, at the time, have been consoling and supporting to the excellent man to whom they were sent, will also probably harmonize with those of every reader of these pages.

"To the Rev. Thomas Gillespie, Carnock.

*Stockbridge, Nov. 24, 1752.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

In letters and pamphlets lately forwarded to me, by some of my correspondents in Scotland, I have received the affecting and surprising account of your deposition, for not assisting in the settlement of Mr. Richardson, at Inverkeithing. The circumstances of which affair seem to be such, as abundantly manifest your cause to be good; at the same time that they plainly show the persecuting spirit with which you have been proceeded against. It is strange, that a protestant church should condemn and depose one of her ministers, for conscientiously declining to act in a forced settlement of a minister, over a congregation that have not chosen him as their pastor, but are utterly averse to his administrations, at least as to a stated attendance upon them. It is to be wondered at, that such a church, at this time of day, after the cause of liberty in matters of conscience has been so abundantly defended, should arrogate to herself such a kind of authority over the consciences of both ministers and people, and use it in such a manner, by such severity, to establish that, which is not only contrary to the liberty of Christians, wherewith Christ has made them free; but so directly contrary to her own professed principles, acts, and resolutions, entered on public record. The several steps of this proceeding, and some singular measures taken, and the hastiness and vehemence of the proceeding, are such, as savour very strongly of the very spirit of persecution, and must be greatly to the dishonour of the church of Scotland; and are such, as will naturally engage the friends of God's people, abroad in the world, in your favour, as suffering very injuriously. It is wonderful, that a church, which has itself suffered so much by persecution, should be guilty of so much persecution. This proceeding gives reason to suspect, that the church of Scotland, which was once so famous, is not what it once was. It appears probable to me, at this distance, that there is something else at the bottom, besides a zeal to uphold the authority of the church. Perhaps many of the clergy of the church of Scotland have their minds secretly infected with those lax principles of the new divinity, and have imbibed the liberal doctrines, as they are accounted, which are so much in vogue at the present day, and so contrary to the strict, mysterious; spiritual, soul-humbling principles of our forefathers. I have observed, that these modern fashionable opinions, however called noble and liberal, are commonly attended, not only with a haughty contempt, but an inward malignant bitterness of heart, towards all the zealous professors and defenders of the contrary spiritual principles, that do so nearly concern the vitals of religion, and the power of experimental godliness. This, be sure, has been the case in this land. I have known many gentlemen, (especially in the ministry,)

tainted with these liberal principles; who, though none seem to be such warm advocates as they, for liberty and freedom of thought, or condemn a narrow and persecuting spirit so much as they; yet, in the course of things, have made it manifest, that they themselves had no small share of a persecuting spirit. They were, indeed, against any body's restraining their liberties, and pretending to control them in their thinking and professing as they please; and that is what they mean, truly, when they plead for liberty. But they have that inward enmity of spirit towards those others mentioned, that, if they see an opportunity to persecute them under some good cloak, and with some false pretext, they will eagerly embrace it, and proceed with great severity and vehemence. Thus far, perhaps, if the truth were known, it would appear, that some of your most strenuous persecutors hate you much more for something else, than they do for your not obeying the orders of the general assembly. I do not pretend to know how the case is. I only speak from what I have seen and found, here in America, in cases somewhat similar. However, it is beyond doubt, that this proceeding will stand on the records of future time, for the lasting reproach of your persecutors; and your conduct, for which you have suffered, will be to your lasting honour in the church of God. And what is much more, that, which has been condemned in you by man, and for which you have suffered from him, is doubtless approved by God, and I trust you will have a glorious reward from him. For the cause you suffer in, is the cause of God; and if God be for us, who can be against us? If he justifies, what need we care who condemns? Not only is the mercy of God, dear brother, manifested, in its being granted you to suffer for his sake, but his mercy is to be taken notice of, in many of the circumstances of this suffering. Particularly, that he has excited so many to appear for you: that you had the major part of the presbytery, which you belong to, with you in the affair, though God has honoured you above all the rest, in calling you to suffer for his name: that the major part of the commission of the General Assembly did in effect approve of the conduct of the presbytery, judging it no censurable fault: that no greater part of the Assembly had a hand in your deposition: that so many of God's, people have, on this occasion, very boldly appeared to befriend you, as suffering in a righteous cause, openly condemning the conduct of your most bitter prosecutors, and testifying an abhorrence of their conduct: and that many have appeared, liberally to contribute to your outward support; so that, by what I understand, you are likely to be no loser in that respect; by which, your enemies will, perhaps, be entirely disappointed. And, above all, that you have been enabled, through the whole of this affair, to conduct yourself with so much Christian meekness, decency, humility, proper deference to authority, and composure and fortitude of mind; which is an evident token that God will appear for you, and also, that he will appear against your enemies. When I received your kind letter, soon after my dismissal from Northampton, so full of expressions of sympathy towards me under what I suffered, I little thought of your being brought so soon under sufferings so similar. But, seeing God has so ordered it in his providence, my prayer and hope is, that he would abundantly reward your sympathy in my case. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'

As to myself, I still meet with difficulties in my new station, which arrive partly from private views (as it is to be feared) of some particular persons of some note and distinction, who are concerned with the affair of the Mohawks here, and partly from the same spirit and the same persons, and others nearly



related to them, who fomented the contention with me at Northampton. However, all the people, both Indians and English, except the very few of the above-mentioned connexion, are firmly united to me: and the commissioners in Boston, who are my constituents, and from whom I have my support, are altogether on my side; and are endeavouring to the utmost to remove the difficulties that attend our affairs, by which the cause of religion here, especially among the Mohawks, suffers much more than I do, or am like to do, in my personal and temporal interests. These difficulties which have arisen, have, indeed, almost brought the Mohawk affair to ruin, which the last year was attended with so glorious a prospect. It would be very tedious to relate the particulars of this unhappy affair. I think that God, by these sufferings, calls me to expect no other than to meet with difficulties and trials while in this world. And what am I better than my fathers, that I should expect to fare better in the world, than the generality of Christ's followers in all past generations. May all our trials be for our justification, and our being more and more meet for our Master's use, and prepared to enter into the joy of our Lord, in a world where all tears shall be wiped from the eyes of God's people. Let us, dear Sir, earnestly pray one for another, that it may be thus with us; and that, however we may be called to labour and to suffer, we may see peace on God's Israel, and hereafter eternally glory and triumph with his inheritance. God has of late mercifully preserved my wife and youngest daughter, in time of very sore and dangerous sickness, and restored them again. My eldest daughter has also been sick, and is restored in a considerable degree.

The Northampton people remain in sorrowful circumstances, destitute of a settled minister, and without any prospect of a settlement; having met with many disappointments. But all don't as yet seem to be effectual, to bring them to a suitable temper of mind. I much desire to hear from you, and to be informed of your present circumstances.

I am, dear Sir,  
 Your affectionate brother in the gospel,  
 brother in the gospel,  
 JONATHAN EDWARDS."

With the preceding letter was sent the following to Mr. M'Culloch.

*"Stockbridge, Nov 24, 1752.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your letter of March 3, 1752, which I received this fall. I thank you for your friendly and instructive observations, on God's dealings with me and my family. Though God's dispensations towards me, have been attended with some distinguishing trials, yet the end of the Lord has been very gracious. He has ever manifested himself very pitiful and of tender mercy, in the midst of difficulties we have met with, in merciful circumstances with which they have been attended, and also in the event of them. Our circumstances, here at Stockbridge, are in many respects comfortable. We here live in peace and friendship, with the generality of the people. But we are not without our difficulties and troubles here. The Indian affair, which the last

year was attended with so pleasing and glorious a prospect, has since been unspeakably embarrassed, through the particular schemes of certain individuals, who are opposed, in their counsels and measures, to the commissioners of the Society in London, and are, to their utmost, striving to accomplish their designs in opposition to them; and in this great contest I am looked on as a person not a little obnoxious. They belong to a family of some note, who vigorously abetted and set forward my opposers at Northampton, and were a chief occasion of my removal from that town; to whom my settlement at Stockbridge was very grievous; who now take occasion to exert themselves to the utmost to weaken my interest and influence: and I have all reason to think, would, if it were possible, undermine me, and procure my removal far hence. Many endeavours have been used to disaffect my people towards me, but all in vain. They are all firmly united to me, excepting the forementioned family. Endeavours have been used, also, to disaffect some of the commissioners; but wholly in vain. They seem to have their eyes very wide open, as to their particular designs and schemes, and the true spring of their opposition. We hope for an end of this lamentable contest before long. But its effects hitherto have been very sorrowful, especially with regard to the Mohawks. Some other things have happened, which have much prejudiced the cause of religion among the Indians; and among other things, the discovery of the famous Tartarian root, described in Chambers's dictionary, called Ginseng, which was found in our woods the last summer, and is since found in the woods in many of these western parts of New England, and in the country of the Six Nations. The traders in Albany have been eager to purchase all that they could, of this root, to send to England; where they make great profit by it. This has occasioned our Indians of all sorts, young and old, to spend abundance of time in wandering about the woods, and sometimes to a great distance, in the neglect of public worship, and of their husbandry; and also in going much to Albany, to sell their roots, (which proves worse to them than their going into the woods,) where they are always much in the way of temptation and drunkenness; especially when they have money in their pockets. The consequence has been that many of them have laid out their money, which they have got for their roots of Ginseng, for rum; wherewith they have intoxicated themselves.

God has been very gracious to my family of late, when some of them have been visited with sore sickness. My wife has lately been very dangerously sick, so as to be brought to the very brink of the grave. She had very little expectation of life, but seemed to be assisted to an unweaned resignation to the Divine will, and an unshaken peace and joy in God, in the expectation of a speedy departure. But God was pleased to preserve her, and mercifully to restore her to a pretty good state of health. My youngest daughter also, who has been a very infirm child, was brought nigh unto death by a sore fit of sickness, and is now also restored to her former state. My daughter Parsons, my eldest daughter, who with her husband has removed from Northampton, and dwells in Stockbridge, has also very lately been very sick, but is in a considerable measure restored. My daughter Esther's marriage with President Burr, of Newark, seems to be very much to the satisfaction of ministers and people in those parts, and also of our friends in Boston, and other parts of New England.

As to the state of religion in America, I have but little to write that is comfortable; but there seems to be better appearances in some other colonies than in New England. When I was lately in New Jersey, in the time of the synod

there, I was informed of some small movings and revivals in some places on Long-Island and New Jersey. I there had the comfort of a short interview with Mr. Davies of Virginia, and was much pleased with him and his conversation. He appears to be a man of very solid understanding, discreet in his behaviour, and polished and gentlemanly in his manners, as well as fervent and zealous in religion. He gave an account of the probability of the settlement of a Mr. Todd, a young man of good learning and of a pious disposition, in a part of Virginia near to him. Mr. Davies represented before the synod, the great necessities of the people in the back parts of Virginia, where multitudes were remarkably awakened and reformed several years ago, and ever since have been thirsting after the ordinances of God. The people are chiefly from Ireland, of Scotch extraction. The synod appointed two men to go down and preach among these people; viz. Mr. Henry, a Scotchman, who has lately taken a degree at New Jersey college, and Mr. Greenman, the young man who was educated at the charge of Mr. David Brainerd.

The people of Northampton are in sorrowful circumstances, are still destitute of a minister, and have met with a long series of disappointments in their attempts for a resettlement of the ministry among them. My opposers have had warm contentions among themselves, Of late, they have been wholly destitute of anybody to preach steadily among them. They sometimes meet to read and pray among themselves, and at other times set travellers or transient persons to preach, that are hardly fit to be employed.

My wife joins with me in most respectful salutations to you and yours. Desiring your prayers, that God would be with us in all our wanderings through the wilderness of this world,

I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate brother,

In the labours of the gospel,

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

The chagrin and mortification, and entire loss of influence and respect, consequent upon the indiscreet attempt to force Mr. Edwards from Stockbridge, by buying out all the English inhabitants, and upon its utter discomfiture, had, in its connexion with the infirmities of age, such an effect upon the individual who made it, that he was soon after induced to part with his property in that town, and remove to a distance. His children, though somewhat disheartened by so untoward an event, and now assured that if help came to them, it could not come from Stockbridge, appear however to have resolved, that they would not lose all their labour, and all their hope; without a struggle. The commissioners in Boston, of the Society in London, were now to a man firmly opposed to them, and resolved to resist them to the utmost. But their kinsman who was a member of the Society in London, was well acquainted with its board of directors, and had written to them in behalf of his cousin. He had also applied to Mr. Hollis, to secure to her husband the management of his benefactions. The latter gentleman also, and the brother of the former, had considerable influence at Boston, and this influence had now been exerted for a considerable period, to procure the removal of Mr. Edwards. At the opening of the general court, in the autumn, all the influence and all the efforts of the family, and its friends, were brought to bear on this one point; and representa-

tions most unfavourable to the character and qualifications of Mr. E. were made to many of the principal men of the province. The Annual Report of the resident trustee was drawn up with a direct and immediate reference to this subject, and was read to the legislature, when Mr. Edwards knew nothing of its contents, and when, being at the distance of one hundred and fifty miles, he of course could not at once answer it. Mr. Woodbridge, however, was on the spot, as were the honourable commissioners of the Society in London, and they made such counteracting statements, as the circumstances rendered proper. Of this Report we shall take notice further on.

While Mr. Woodbridge was at Boston, he was informed, and that too most incautiously, by the son of his opponent, who went thither in company with his brother-in-law, the author of the Report, that the latter had solicited his Excellency, Sir William Pepperell, governor of the province, to write to England, and to use his influence, with the corporation in London, that Mr. Edwards might be removed from the office of missionary; and that Sir William had engaged to do it. On this information, coming so directly, Mr. Edwards felt himself bound, from a regard to his own reputation, and to the welfare of his family, to address Sir William on the subject; which he did in a letter, bearing date January 30, 1753 [This letter is too long for insertion]. In this letter, after reciting the preceding facts, as his apology for writing it, and mentioning the great disadvantage under which he lay, in attempting to defend himself, at such a distance, when he did not know what had been said to his prejudice, he states, among other things, the following: That, since the revival of religion in 1734, the family, with which the writer of the Report was now connected, had discovered an unceasing hostility towards himself, and his own family, notwithstanding the best endeavours he could use to remove it; that they deeply engaged themselves in the controversy at Northampton, on the side of his opposers, upholding, directing, and animating them, in all their measures; that two of them, especially, had been the confidential advisers of the opposition, in procuring his dismissal; that when his removal to Stockbridge was proposed, the whole family, there and elsewhere, opposed it, with great vehemence, though, when they saw an entire union and universal engagedness in all the rest of the inhabitants, both English and Indians, for his settlement there, and that there was no hope of preventing it, they appeared as though their minds were changed;—that the author of the Report, during the whole controversy at Northampton, in direct opposition to the family, with which he was now connected, had remained his zealous friend and advocate; that he warmly advocated his removal to Stockbridge, and expressed a strong desire of living under his ministry; (for the evidence of which facts, he refers Sir William to two of the most respectable gentlemen in the province;) that this confidential friendship lasted until his connexion with that family, and then was suddenly changed, first into secret, and afterwards into open opposition; that he had personally blamed him for preaching to the Mohawks, as intermeddling with what was none of his business, although Mr. E. produced the note of the commissioners, expressly desiring him to preach to the Mohawks, until a distinct missionary was appointed over them; that the reason, openly assigned for the very great resentment of the author of the Report, and that of his friends, against Mr. Edwards, was, his having opposed the appointment of the wife of that gentleman, as teacher of the female school, although he neither said nor did any thing respecting it, until his opinion was expressly desired in writing by

the commissioners, and then, that he opposed it on the ground, that it was impossible for an individual, who had the care of two numerous families of children, to instruct and govern the children of an Indian school;—and that, as to his qualifications for the business of a missionary, his communicative faculty, &c which were now denied, he could only appeal to those, who had the best opportunity of judging, from their own experience,—particularly, to every man, woman, and child, in Stockbridge, that had any understanding, both English and Indians, except the families of the opponent of Mr. Woodbridge, and of the author of the Report. Mr. Edwards then adds, "Now, Sir, I humbly request, that, if you had resolved on endeavouring to have me removed from my present employment here, you would once more take the matter into your impartial consideration. And I would pray you to consider, Sir, what disadvantages I am under; not knowing what has been said of me in conversation; not knowing, therefore, the accusation, or what to answer to. The ruin of my usefulness, and the ruin of my family, which has greatly suffered in years past, for righteousness sake, are not indeed things of equal consideration with the public good. Yet, certainly, I should first have an equal, impartial, and candid hearing, before I am executed for the public good. I must leave the matter, dear Sir, to your justice and Christian prudence; committing the affair to Him, who knows all the injuries I have suffered, and how wrongfully I now suffer, and who is the Great Protector of the innocent and oppressed; beseeching him to guide you in your determination, and mercifully to order the end."

In the month of February, 1753, the building erected for the instruction of the Mohawk boys, usually denominated the boarding-school, took fire in a way unknown, and, with considerable furniture in it, was reduced to ashes. Mr. Hawley had furnished a chamber in the building, and resided in it. By this calamity, he lost his clothing, books, and furniture. It was supposed, with some grounds, to have been set on fire by design; and its destruction was, for the time, a very serious interruption to the labours of Mr. Hawley.

The Report of the Indian agent was read early in the session. It contained various insinuations and charges, of a general nature, against Mr. Edwards. Other charges were busily circulated among the members, with the hope of procuring his removal. But it was well understood, that Mr. Edwards was at a great distance, and had had no notice of these charges. He had likewise a character for integrity, too well established, to be shaken by general insinuations, or covert attacks. Mr. Woodbridge, and the commissioners, were also on the spot, and took care that the real state of things should be made known, and the conduct of Mr. Edwards adequately defended. So effectually and satisfactorily was this done, that, when Mr. Edwards received a copy of the Report by Mr. Woodbridge, he appears also to have been apprized, by his friends in Boston, that the design of his enemies, in this attack, had been completely frustrated. What these insinuations and charges were, we learn from his letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, written for the purpose of being communicated, if he thought necessary, to the legislature. It deserves here to be mentioned, as a singular and very kind dispensation of Providence, that the author of the Report had, some time before, addressed a letter to Mr. Edwards, while he was his friend, and when he hoped for his co-operation; particularly, in the appointment of his son as school-master to the Mohawks; in which he had either furnished the means of contradicting the statements made in the Report, or had expressly requested Mr. Edwards to do the very things, which he

now complained of, and made the ground of complaint. Of this letter Mr. Edwards enclosed a copy; offering to forward the original, if desired, and, at the same time, to substantiate every part of his own statement, by numerous witnesses, of the most unexceptionable character.

From his letter to the Speaker, it appears, that the writer of the Report charged him—with introducing Mr. Hawley into the school;—with introducing a master, in his absence, and when there was reason to expect his return;—with doing this, when he had been at the expense of a journey of his son of 260 miles, to procure Mr. Hawley as master of the boys;—with introducing Mr. Ashley, the interpreter, as assistant instructor;—and with opposing the appointment of his wife, as teacher of the female school;—and that he also alleged, that the school was in very desirable circumstances, until Mr. Hawley took it, and that it then declined;—that the Mohawks had been discouraged, through the conduct of the agents of the mission;—and that Mr. Edwards was not qualified for his office, because, on account of his age, he could not learn the language of the Indians.

To these charges Mr. Edwards replied,—that he introduced Mr. Hawley, because he was directed so to do, by the letter of the commissioners, of Dec. 31, 1751,—that he introduced a master, in the absence of the author of the Report, for two reasons, 1. Because he knew not when he was to return; and, 2. Because the author of the Report, himself, in a letter sent him by his son, requested him, at that very time, to introduce a master into the school; of which letter he enclosed a copy, with the offer of forwarding the original, if desired;—that, when the author of the Report sent his son on the specified journey, it was not to procure Mr. Hawley to be a master for the boys, but it was, that the son himself might be the master; for evidence of which, appeal is also made to the copy of the same letter;—that, as to the appointment of teacher of the female school, he said nothing about it, until expressly requested to give his opinion by the commissioners;—that so far was the school from being in desirable circumstances, before the introduction of Mr. Hawley, that the author of the Report had, himself, represented it as having been, until that time, in most lamentable circumstances, in the very letter of which he enclosed a copy, in which he requested Mr. Edwards to introduce his son into the school, in the room of the former master;—that the school continued to flourish under Mr. Hawley, until his opposers used their utmost endeavours to destroy it; for evidence of which, he offers the testimony of the substantial inhabitants of the town;—that Hendrick, and the other chiefs, and the Mohawks generally, had expressly assigned their dissatisfaction with the conduct of these individuals, as the reason of their leaving Stockbridge, for evidence of which, he offers the same testimony;—and, as to his learning the Housatonnuck language, that the author of the Report knew how the case would be, before he recommended him to the office of missionary; and that Mr. Sergeant, after fourteen years study, had never been able to preach in it, nor even to pray in it except by a form, and had often expressed the opinion, previous to his death, that his successor ought not to trouble himself in learning the language. He then requests, that the Speaker would communicate his letter to the Assembly, and prays that honourable body, if they proposed to take any order on the case, first to give him opportunity to meet his accuser face to face.

I have no means of ascertaining whether the preceding letter was, or was not, read to the legislature. If not, it was because the honourable Speaker, who

was a personal friend of Mr. Edwards, found it to be wholly unnecessary. And it can scarcely be necessary to inform the reader, that the attack, made thus directly upon Mr. Edwards, and indirectly upon all his associates in the mission, not only failed altogether of its intended effect; but, by leading to a development of the mercenary scheme, devised to divert, to the purposes of private emolument, the consecrated charities of the province and of individuals, recoiled with increased violence upon its authors.

Thus far the individuals, opposed to the Stockbridge missionaries, had met with little success to encourage their efforts. They had looked for help to various sources; to the Indians and to the people of Stockbridge, to the commissioners and to the provincial legislature, to Mr. Hollis and to the Society in London; and in every instance, so far as the result was known, they had looked in vain. The Housatonnucks had refused all intercourse with them. From disgust at their management, a part of the Mohawks had actually retired, and the rest were threatening to retire, to their own country. The people of Stockbridge had, to a man, united against them. The commissioners were equally unanimous, in sustaining the individuals whose overthrow they had attempted. And now, before the provincial legislature, they had made their great and united effort, and had failed. In the mean time, Mr. Edwards was even more firmly established as the Indian missionary, and Mr. Woodbridge as the schoolmaster of the Housatonnucks; Mr. Hawley had not been compelled to resign his place to the son of the resident trustee; the female school had not as yet been secured to his wife, and obviously could not now be, unless secured to her in London; and the stewardship of the three schools was not likely to be conferred on himself. Such was the state of things in the spring of 1753. It looked as though the great struggle was over; and that the party, which had hitherto acted on the offensive, would thenceforward be quiet, from a conviction, that every hostile movement must issue in defeat. The result justified this conclusion.

To Mr. Edwards, and his associates in the mission, as well as to their friends, this result must have been in a high degree satisfactory. On his arrival in Stockbridge, he found this controversy waging, and soon discovered that it was a controversy between the friends and enemies of the mission; between those who aimed at the real welfare of the Indians, and those who endeavoured to use them as instruments of their own private emolument; that one party relied on wealth, and office, and influence, to carry its measures; and the other, on personal integrity, a conscientious discharge of duty, and the protection of God. For a time he avoided taking any part in it; and his own temporal comfort, and the welfare of his family, seemed to require, that he should persevere in the same course. But his conscience forbade it. He must either sit quietly by, and see the charities of the province, of the Society in London, and of Mr. Hollis, diverted from their appointed course, to fill the coffers of private avarice; or he must unite with those who were exerting their whole influence to prevent it. In such a state of things, he could not deliberate, and, through the divine blessing, he and his associates were now permitted to see, that they had not toiled and suffered in vain.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Sereno E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER XXII.

LETTER TO HIS ELDEST SON—RETURN OF GREATER PART OF THE MOHAWKS—  
LETTER TO COMMISSIONERS—MISSION OF MR HAWLEY TO ONOHQUAUGA—  
REMAINDER OF MOHAWKS DIRECTED TO RETURN—"FREEDOM OF THE WILL"—  
LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE—PROPOSAL OF SOCIETY IN LONDON—LETTER TO MR.  
GILLESPIE—DESIGN AND CHARACTER OF THE "FREEDOM OF THE WILL"—  
LETTERS FROM MR. HOLLIS—SURRENDER OF MOHAWK SCHOOL TO MR.  
EDWARDS—ENTIRE DEFEAT OF ENEMIES OF MISSION—RETURN OF REMAINING  
MOHAWKS.

EARLY in the ensuing spring, the eldest son of Mr. Edwards, then a lad of fourteen, went to New York, and thence to New Jersey; and on his way was much exposed to the small-pox. On his return to New York, he was seized with a violent fever His father hearing this, and not knowing whether it an ordinary fever, or the small-pox, addressed to him the following letter; which, like all his letters to his children, indicates that his chief anxiety was for their salvation.

"To Master Timothy Edwards, at New York.

*Stockbridge, April, 1753*

MY DEAR CHILD,

Before you will receive this letter, the matter will doubtless be determined, as to your having the small-pox. You will either be sick with that distemper, or will be past danger of having it, from any infection taken in your voyage. But whether you are sick or well, like to die or like to live, I hope you are earnestly seeking your salvation. I am sure there is a great deal of reason it should be so, considering the warnings you have had in word and in providence. That which you met with, in your passage from New York to Newark, which was the occasion of your fever, was indeed a remarkable warning, a dispensation full of instruction, and a very loud call of God to you, to make haste, and not to delay in the great business



of religion. If you now have that distemper, which you have been threatened with, you are separated from your earthly friends, as none of them can come to see you; and if you should die of it, you have already taken a final and everlasting leave of them while you are yet alive, so as not to have the comfort of their presence and immediate care, and never to see them again in the land of the living. And if you have escaped that distemper, it is by a remarkable providence that you are preserved. And your having been so exposed to it must certainly be a loud call of God, not to trust in earthly friends or any thing here below. Young persons are very apt to trust in parents and friends when they think of being on a death-bed. But this providence remarkably teaches you the need of a better Friend, and a better Parent, than earthly parents are; one who is every where present, and all sufficient, that cannot be kept off by infectious distempers, who is able to save from death, or to make happy in death, to save from eternal misery, and to bestow eternal life. It is indeed comfortable, when one is in great pain, and languishing under sore sickness, to have the presence, and kind care, of near and dear earthly friends; but this is a very small thing, in comparison of what it is, to have the presence of a heavenly Father, and a compassionate and almighty Redeemer. In God's favour is life, and his loving-kindness is better than life. Whether you are in sickness or health, you infinitely need this. But you must know, however great need you stand in of it, you do not deserve it: neither is God the more obliged to bestow it upon you, for your standing in need of it, your earnest desiring of it, your crying to him constantly for it from fear of misery, and taking much pains. Till you have savingly believed in Christ, all your desires, and pains, and prayers lay God under no obligation; and, if they were ten thousand times as great as they are, you must still know, that you would be in the hands of a sovereign God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. Indeed, God often hears the poor miserable cries of sinful vile creatures, who have no manner of true regard to Him in their hearts; for he is a God of infinite mercy, and he delights to show mercy for his Son's sake, who is worthy, though you are unworthy, who came to save the sinful and the miserable, yea, some of the chief of sinners. Therefore, there is your only hope, and in him must be your refuge, who invites you to come to him, and says, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' Whatever your circumstances are, it is your duty not to despair, but to hope in infinite mercy, through a Redeemer. For God makes it your duty to pray to him for mercy; which would not be your duty, if it was allowable for you to despair. We are expressly commanded to call upon God in the day of trouble, and when we are afflicted, then to pray. But, if I hear that you have escaped,—either that you have not been sick, or are restored,—though I shall rejoice, and have great cause of thankfulness, yet I shall be concerned for you. If your escape should be followed with carelessness and security, and forgetting the remarkable warning you have had, and God's great mercy in your deliverance, it would in some respects be more awful than sore sickness. It would be very provoking to God, and would probably issue in an increasing hardness of heart; and, it may be, divine vengeance may soon overtake you. I have known various instances of persons being remarkably warned, in providence, by being brought into very dangerous circumstances, and escaping, and afterwards death has soon followed in another way. I earnestly desire, that

God would make you wise to salvation, and that he would be merciful and gracious to you in every respect, according as he knows your circumstances require. And this is the daily prayer of

Your affectionate and tender father,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

“P.S. Your mother and all the family send their love to you, as being tenderly concerned for you.”

At length the event, so long predicted by Mr. Edwards, actually took place. The Mohawks, who had manifested exemplary patience under the vexatious and embarrassments to which they had been subjected by the whites, were at last wearied out; and, in the month of April, the greater part of them relinquished their lands and settlements at Stockbridge, and returned finally to their own country. After a brief allusion to this fact, in a letter to the commissioners, Mr. Edwards communicated to them a variety of interesting intelligence relative to the Iroquois, and to the mission proposed to be established among them

“To the Commissioners in Boston.

*Stockbridge, April 12, 1753.*

GENTLEMEN,

The last Tuesday, about two-thirds of the Mohawks, young and old, went away from Stockbridge, and are never likely to return again. They have long manifested a great uneasiness at the management of affairs here, and at the conduct of those persons on whom their affairs have almost wholly fallen; and have shown themselves very much grieved, that others, who used to be concerned, have been excluded. They have, once and again, represented the grounds of their uneasiness to the provincial agent, but without redress. They have been dissatisfied with his answers, and there has appeared in them a growing dislike of the family, who have lately left their own house, and taken up their constant abode among them, in the female boarding-school.

The correspondents, in New York and New Jersey, of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, have determined, if Providence favours, to settle a mission among the Six Nations. To that end, they have chosen Mr. Gordon, a pious young gentleman, who has lately been a tutor at New Jersey college, to come to Stockbridge, and remain here with Mr. Hawley, to learn the Mohawk language with him, in order to his being fitted for the business. Mr. Gordon is expected here to prosecute this design in the beginning of May.

In addition to this, Mr. Brainerd, the pastor of the Indian congregation at Bethel in New Jersey, who is supported by the correspondents, having met with much trouble from the enemies of religion in those parts; and his Indians being greatly disturbed, with regard to the possession and improvement of their lands;

the correspondents have of late had a disposition, that he, with his school-master and whole congregation, should remove, if a door might be opened, and take up a new settlement, somewhere in the country of the Six Nations. Mr. Hawley has seen Mr. Brainerd, and conversed with him on the subject, this spring. He manifests an inclination to such a removal, and says his Indians will be ready for it. If such a thing as this could be brought to pass, it would probably tend greatly to the introduction of the gospel, and the promotion of the interests of religion, among the Six Nations; as his congregation are, I suppose, the most virtuous and religious collection of Indians in America, and some of them have now been long established in religion and virtue.

According to the best information I can get, of the country of the Six Nations, the most convenient place, to be chosen as the chief seat of missionary operations, is the country about Onohquauga, near the head of the Susquehannah river.

I apprehend, from some things of which Mr. Woodbridge informed me, that the commissioners have had very wrong information concerning the Onohquauga Indians, as though they were a very despicable company, a kind of renegadoes, scarcely to be reckoned as of the Six Nations, living out of the country of those nations. There are, indeed, some here, who have sometimes spoken very contemptuously of them; which seems to have been, not from any manner of ground in fact, or so much as any colour of reason, but merely because these Indians appeared peculiarly attached to Mr. Ashley and his wife, and under their influence. But there are other persons in Stockbridge, who have had as much opportunity to know what is the true state of these people, as they. The Onohquauga Indians, who have been here, are properly, not only of the Six Nations, but of the five nations, who are the original united tribes of the Iroquois. All, but one or two of them, are of the nation of the *Oneiutas*; and they appear not to be looked upon as contemptible, by the rest of the Five Nations, from what was once openly said of them, at a public council, by the sachems of the *Conneenchees*, or proper *Mohawks*, who advised us to treat the *Onohquaugas* with peculiar care and kindness, as excelling their own tribe in religion and virtue; giving at the same time many instances of their virtue. We have found the testimony which they gave of them to be true. They appear to be far the best disposed Indians with which we have had any connexion. They would be inclined to the utmost, to assist, encourage, and strengthen, the hands of missionaries and instructors, should any be sent among them, and to do all they could to forward their success, among themselves, and the other Indians round about.

There seems to be no room for a missionary, in the country of the *Conneenchees*. The Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, have long since taken them under their care, and pretended to support a mission among them. A mission from the commissioners in Boston would not be borne by them, nor by the Dutch, who are always among them. And as to the country of the Quinquas,<sup>1</sup> and the original seat of the *Oneiutas*, they seem not to be convenient places for settling a mission, on two accounts. They are on the road to Oswego, where the Dutch are incessantly passing and repassing with their rum; with which they are continually making them drunk, and would be, in many other respects, a continual hindrance and affliction to a missionary; for they are exceedingly op-

posed to the New England people having any thing to do with the Iroquois. The nation of the *Quinquas*, also, are mostly in the French interest, as well as many of the *Oneiutas*; so that a missionary would there be afflicted, and perhaps in danger, by the French. And it is very evident, that the country of the *Onondagas*, is no country for our missionaries to attempt to establish a mission in. It would be like establishing a mission in Canada; for that nation have entirely gone over to the French interest. They are on the road of the French, as they go up a trading to Mississippi, and their distant settlements, and the nations on the great lakes; and the French have of late built a fort in their country, and have in effect annexed it to Canada. And the country of the *Senecas* will not be much more convenient for the purpose, both by reason of its very good distance, and also because most of the nation are firmly united to the French, who constantly maintain their missionaries among them.

Onohquauga is within the territory of the Five Nations, and not so far from the other settlements, but that it may be convenient for making excursions to the several tribes; as convenient perhaps as any place that can be found. It is, I suppose, as near to the heart of the country as any place, unless *Oneiuta* and *Quinquah*. They are also much out of the way of the French, and considerably out of the way of the Dutch, are in a pleasant fruitful country, surrounded by many settlements of Indians on every side, and where the way is open by an easy passage down the river, which runs through one of the most pleasant and fruitful parts of America, for four or five hundred miles, exceedingly well peopled on both sides, and on its several branches, by Indians. Onohquauga is the road, by which several of the nations pass, as they go to war with the southern nations. And there will be this advantage, which missionaries will have, that the Onohquauga Indians are fast friends to the English; and though some of the Dutch have tried much to disaffect them to the English, their attempts have been in vain. They are very desirous of instruction, and to have the gospel established in their country.

There are several towns of the Onohquaugas; and several missionaries might probably find sufficient employment in those parts. If Mr. Brainerd should settle somewhere in that country, with his Christian Indians, and one or two more missionaries, not at a great distance, they might be under advantage to assist one another; as they will greatly need one another's company and assistance, in so difficult a work, in such a strange distant land. They might be under advantage to consult one another, and to act in concert, and to help one another, in any case of peculiar difficulty. Many English people would be found to go from New England, and settle there; and the greatest difficulty would be, that there would be danger of too many English settlers, and of such as are not fit for the place.

But, in order to accomplish this; especially in order to such a body of new Indians coming from the Jerseys, and settling in the country of the Six Nations; the consent of those nations, or at least of several of them, must be obtained. The method which Mr. Woodbridge, Mr. Hawley, and I, have thought of, which we submit to the wisdom of the commissioners, is this,—that Mr. Woodbridge, and Mr. Ashley and his wife, should go, as speedily as possible, into the country of the *Conneenchees*;—they being the first tribe in honour, though not in numbers;—and there spend some weeks, perhaps a month, among them, to get ac-

quainted with them, and endeavour to gain their approbation of a mission, for settling the gospel in the country of the Six Nations.—Mr. Hawley, in the mean time, to keep Mr. Woodbridge's school. Then, that Mr. Hawley and Mr. Gordon should join them there, and go with them from thence to Onohquauga, and when they have acquainted themselves well with the people, and the state of the country, and find things agreeable, and see a hopeful prospect, then for Mr. Woodbridge to return, and leave Mr. Hawley and Mr. Gordon there, and forthwith send word to Mr. Brainerd, and propose to him to come up, with some of his chief Indians, to see the country. And if, on the observations they make, and the acquaintance they get with the people and country, they think there is an encouraging prospect, then to endeavour to gain a conference with some of the chiefs of the Five Nations, at an appointed time, to know whether they will consent to their coming to settle in their territories. All this will occupy some considerable time; so that, if they can obtain their consent, Mr. Brainerd must return home: and he and his chief Indians must come again to the treaty, at the time and place appointed.

You will easily perceive, Gentlemen, that these things will require time, and that, in order to carry these various measures into effect this year, there will be need of expedition, which may show the reason why we think it necessary, that Mr. Hawley should come to Boston; for, if these things are to be done this year, we had need speedily to know the minds of the commissioners, and therefore that the case would not allow of waiting for, and depending on, uncertain accidental opportunities, of sending to them, and hearing from them. It is also proper, that the commissioners should have opportunity to agree with Mr. Hawley, concerning the reward of his services.

Mr. Brainerd told Mr. Hawley, that, if he removed with his Indians, he should choose to do it speedily; and that, the longer it was delayed, the more difficult it would be, by reason of his building, and the Indians increasing their buildings and improvements at Bethel. Probably, if the removal cannot be brought about the next year, it never will be. And if his Indians remove the next year, it will be necessary that they remove as early as the spring, in order to plant there that year. And if so much needs to be done this summer, it is as much as it will be possible to find time for.

Though we project the measures mentioned above, we are sensible they will be attended with much uncertainty. Man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps. Many are the desires of men's hearts, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. Unthought of difficulties may arise, to confound all our projects; as unforeseen difficulties have dashed all the pleasing hopes we entertained, and the fair prospects we had, concerning the affairs of the Mohawks at Stockbridge, the year before last. And I would humbly propose it for consideration, whether it will not be necessary, to leave these affairs, in some measure at discretion, to be determined as the complicated, uncertain, changing state of things shall require; to save the trouble and expense of frequently going or sending to Boston, for new instructions; and to prevent the disadvantages, under which our affairs may be laid, through the lengthy, uncertain way of sending for and receiving new orders, by occasional opportunities.

There will be a necessity of Mrs. Ashley's going as an interpreter, and of her

husband going with her. He will be qualified to instruct the Indians in their husbandry: having been well instructed in it himself. I believe he will not be very difficult as to his wages, though probably he expects to know what they will be.

I have the honour to be,  
Gentlemen,  
Your obliged and obedient servant,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

During the month of April, Mr. Hawley received a letter from the commissioners, directing him to go to Onohquauga, for the purpose of commencing a new mission at that place. He left Stockbridge May 22d, in company with Mr. Woodbridge, and Mr. and Mrs. Ashley, travelling through the wilderness, and on the 4th of June arrived at the place of their destination. The Indians received the intelligence of their proposed mission with strong expressions of satisfaction. Mr. Woodbridge returned soon after to Stockbridge. Mr. Hawley appears to have remained, with his interpreter; and his labours, as a missionary, were attended with considerable success.

In the course of the summer, not long after the return of the larger part of the Mohawks, from Stockbridge to their own country, a general council of the nation was held, at their principal settlement on the Mohawk; in which, after due examination of the facts, it was decided, that the rest of the Mohawks at Stockbridge, should return early in the spring, as soon as the hunting season was over. Instructions, to this effect, were immediately transmitted, from the chief sachem of the tribe, to the residue of the little colony, and made known to the people of Stockbridge.

About this time, the agent of Mr. Hollis, discouraged, doubtless, by the state of things, as far as it was known, and probably auguring no very favourable result to himself, or his friends, from the application to Mr. Hollis, quitted Stockbridge, and went back to Newington; leaving the few boys, whom, by offering to board and clothe them gratuitously, he had persuaded to live with him, in the hands of the resident trustee.

This unhappy controversy, now drawing to its close, which, during its continuance, had threatened to subvert the whole Indian mission, and to destroy the prosperity of the village, and the temporal welfare of Mr. Edwards and his family, must have occupied so much of his attention, that when our readers remember, that he preached two discourses a week to the whites, as well as one, by an interpreter, to the *Housatonnucks*, and one to the *Mohawks*; and also catechised the children of the whites, the *Housatonnucks*, and the *Mohawks*; they will be ready to believe, that he found no time for any additional labours. And when they also recollect, that, on the 23d of November, 1752, he says, in his letter to Mr. Erskine,—“I began, the last August, to write a little on the Arminian controversy, but was soon broken off: and such have been my extraordinary avocations and hindrances, that I have not had time to set pen to paper, about this matter, since. But I hope God, in his providence, will favour me with opportunity to prosecute

the deign, and I desire your prayers that God would assist me in it;”—and that this proposed work, on the Arminian controversy, was none other, than the treatise on the freedom of the will; they will conclude, of course, that the execution of it must have been deferred to some happier period, when, amid the leisure and tranquillity of retirement, he could give his uninterrupted attention, and his individual strength, to its accomplishment. What then will be their surprise, when they find him opening his next letter to Mr. Erskine, under the date of April 14th, 1753, with the following annunciation.—“After many hindrances, delays, and interruptions, Divine Providence has so far favoured me, and smiled on my design of writing on the Arminian controversy, that I have almost finished the first draught of what I first intended; and am now sending the proposals for subscription, to Boston, to be printed.” Let it be remembered, that the Essay on the Freedom of the Will, which, in the opinion of Dugald Stewart, raises its author to the same rank as a metaphysician with Locke and Leibnitz, was written within the space of four months and a half; and those, not months of leisure, but demanding the additional duties of a parish, and of two distinct Indian missions; and presenting, also, all the cares, perplexities, and embarrassments of a furious controversy, the design of which was to deprive the author, and his family, of their daily bread. So far as I am aware, no similar example, of power and rapidity united, is to be found on the annals of mental effort.”<sup>2</sup>

*“Stockbridge, April 14, 1753.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

After many hinderances, delays, and interruptions, Divine Providence has so far favoured me, and smiled on my design of writing on the Arminian controversy, that I have almost finished the first draught of what I first intended and am now sending the proposals for subscription to Boston to be printed; with a letter of Mr. Foxcroft, to send thirty of those proposals to Mr. M'Laurin, with a letter to him; in which I have desired him to deliver half of them to you, as you have manifested yourself ready to use endeavours to get subscriptions in Scotland. The printing will be delayed to wait for subscriptions from thence. I therefore request that you endeavour to promote and expedite the affair.

Stockbridge affairs, relating to the Indians, are, in many respects, under a very dark cloud. The affair of the Iroquois, or Six Nations, here is almost at an end, as I have given a more particular account to Mr. M'Laurin. The commissioners in Boston, I believe, are discouraged about it, and have thoughts of sending and settling a missionary in their own country. The correspondents of the Society in Scotland, have also determined to send a missionary there, and have chosen Mr. Gordon a tutor of the college at Newark, for that end. Mr. Gordon is expected here at the beginning of May, to live at my house with Mr. Hawley, in order to learn the Iroquois language with him. It is probable that he and Mr. Hawley will go up, and spend the summer, in the Iroquois country.

The correspondents have also a disposition, that Mr. Brainerd should remove, with the whole congregation of Indians, to settle somewhere in the country of the

Six Nations; and he himself and his Indians, are ready for it. 'Tis probable that something will be done to prepare the way for it; and at least to see, whether the way can be prepared, or any door opened for it, this summer. Some of these Indians have a great desire, that the gospel should be introduced and settled in their country.

Some of the Stockbridge Indians have of late been under considerable awakenings,—two or three elderly men, that used to be vicious persons. My family is now in usual health. My daughter Burr, in New Jersey has been very ill all the winter past. We last heard from her about five weeks ago; when it was hoped there was some amendment.

My wife joins with me, in respectful and affectionate salutations to you and Mrs. Erskine. Desiring a remembrance in your prayers,

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother,

and obliged friend and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

The representations of the nephew of the opponent of Mr. Woodbridge, and those of the commissioners of Boston, to the Society in London, the former hostile, and the latter friendly, to Mr. Edwards and his associates, were sent forward, and arrived at their place of destination, in due season. That gentleman had entertained an overweening estimate of his own influence with the board of directors of the Society in London. They gave full credit to the statements of their own commissioners, and sustained them in upholding their missionaries and instructors. Perceiving, however, that an unhappy controversy subsisted at Stockbridge, relative to the mission, and knowing that their commissioners at Boston were 150 miles distant; they endeavoured to devise a plan, by which the existing evils might be remedied. Mr. Edwards, in his letter to Mr. Mauduit, one of their number, had observed, “What renders it the more necessary, that things here should be under the immediate care of trustees on the spot, is, the misunderstanding and jealousy here subsisting, between some of the chief of the present English inhabitants of the town, which is one of our greatest calamities. Things, on this account, do much need careful inspection; and therefore, the gentlemen intrusted ought to be such, as are perfectly impartial, and no way interested in, or related to, these contending parties.” The plan suggested by the directors was this, That eleven persons,—two in New York, two in Albany, one in Wethersfield, two in Hartford, one in Windsor, one in Suffield, one in Hadley, and one in Stockbridge,—should be a board of consultation, to advise their agents at Stockbridge, and to act, by correspondence, with the commissioners; and they counted upon the preceding extract, as what had confirmed them in the measure.<sup>3</sup> At the request of the Hon. Mr. Bromfield, one of the commissioners, Mr. Edwards, in a letter, dated Oct. 19, 1753, expressed his own views of the plan, and pointed out its inconvenience, if not utter impracticability. The commissioners having expressed similar views to the directors; the plan was relinquished. This was the result of the application to



the Society in London.<sup>4</sup>

The General Assembly of the church of Scotland, for the year 1753, having refused, by a very small majority, to restore Mr. Gillespie to the ministry in the kirk, and to his parish of Carnock;—an act of plain justice, which he would not ask them to render him,—Mr. Edwards addressed to him the following letter; a part of which must have been sweet and consoling to the feelings of suffering piety.

*“Stockbridge, October 18, 1753*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

The last November I wrote you a letter, and desired Mr. Foxcroft to put up with it, for you, one of my Answers to Mr. Williams. After that, in the latter part of the winter, I received a letter from you, dated June 15th, 1752, with Milton on Hirelings; and duplicates of a Letter from a Gentleman in Town, &c.; and Answers to the Reasons of Dissent, &c. I now return you my hearty thanks for these things. Since that, I have received letters from Mr. M'Laurin and Mr. Erskine, with various pamphlets and prints relative to your extraordinary affair I think, dear Sir, although your sufferings are like to continue, the General Assembly having refused to restore you to your former station and employments in the church of Scotland; yet they are attended with many manifestations of the goodness, and fatherly kindness, and favour of the great Governor of the world, in the many alleviations and supporting circumstances of your persecutions; in that so many of God's ministers and people have appeared to be so much concerned for you; and have so zealously, and yet so properly, exerted themselves in your behalf; and have so many ways given their testimony to the goodness of the cause in which you suffer, and the unrighteousness of the hardships which you have been subjected to; and that even so great a part of the General Assembly, themselves, have, in effect, given this testimony for you, there being but a very small majority, but what openly appeared for the taking off of the censure of the former Assembly, without any recantation on your part, or so much as an application from you, desiring them so to do. You have some peculiar reasons to rejoice in your sufferings, and to glorify God on account of them. They having been so greatly taken notice of by so many of the people of God, and there being so much written concerning them, tends to render them, with their circumstances, and particularly the patience and meekness with which you have suffered, so much the more extensively and durably to the glory of the name of your blessed lord, for whom you suffer. God is rewarding you for laying a foundation, in what has been said and done and written concerning your sufferings, for glory to his own name, and honour to you, in his church, in future generations. Your name will doubtless be mentioned hereafter with peculiar respect, on the account of these sufferings, in ecclesiastical history; as they are now the occasion of a peculiar notice, which saints and angels in heaven take of you, and of their praises to God on your account; and will be the occasion of a peculiar reward, which God will bestow upon you, when you shall be united to their assembly.

As to my own circumstances, I still meet with trouble, and expect no other, as

long as I live in this world. Some men of influence have much opposed my continuing a missionary at Stockbridge, and have taken occasion abundantly to reproach me, and endeavour my removal. But I desire to bless God, he seems in some respects to set me out of their reach. He raises me up friends, who are exerting themselves to counteract the designs of my opposers; particularly the commissioners for Indian affairs in Boston; with whom innumerable artifices have been used, to disaffect them towards me; but altogether in vain. Governor Belcher, also, has seen cause much to exert himself, in my behalf, on occasion of the opposition made to me. My people, both English and Indians, stedfastly adhere to me; excepting the family with whom the opposition began, and those related to them; which family greatly opposed me while at Northampton. Most numerous, continued, and indefatigable endeavours have been used, to undermine me, by attempting to alienate my people from me; innumerable mean artifices have been used with one another, with young and old, men and women, Indians and English: but hitherto they have been greatly disappointed. But yet they are not weary.

As we, dear Sir, have great reason to sympathize, one with another, with peculiar tenderness; our circumstances being in many respects similar; so I hope I shall partake of the benefit of your fervent prayers for me. Let us then endeavour to help one another, though at a great distance, in travelling through this wide wilderness; that we may have the more joyful meeting in the land of rest, when we have finished our weary pilgrimage.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate brother,  
and fellow-servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

“P. S. My wife joins in most affectionate regards to you and yours.”

The proposals for publishing the Essay on the Freedom of the Will, were issued in Massachusetts, in 1753; but in consequence of the kind offer of Mr. Erskine and Mr. M'Laurin, to circulate the papers, and procure subscribers for it in Scotland, the printing was postponed until the success of their efforts was known. What that success was, probably cannot now be ascertained. The work was published early in the year 1754, under the title of “A careful and strict Inquiry into the modern prevailing Notions of that Freedom of the Will, which is supposed to be essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame.” This work is justly considered as the most laboured and important of the metaphysical investigations undertaken by the author. The subject, as will be obvious from the preceding title, lies at the very foundation of all religion and of all morality. That it was also a subject of no ordinary difficulty, appears generally to have been felt, and in effect acknowledged; for until the time of Mr. Edwards, it had never been thoroughly investigated either by philosophers or theologians, though it was constantly recurring in their reasonings on the great principles connected with the moral government of God, and the character of man. Calvin, in his chapter on the Slavery of the Will, may be taken as an example of the most

that had been done to settle the opinions of the orthodox, and refute their opposers on this subject before this period. His defect, and that of his followers, until the time of Mr. Edwards, is seen in this one thing; that they insisted on the great fact, merely that the will of man was not in a state of indifference, but so strongly fixed in its choice as to require supernatural grace for conversion, overlooking in a great measure the nature of moral agency, and what is essential to its nature. Their opposers, on the contrary, were constantly affirming, that freedom of will was necessary to moral agency, and carried their views to the extent that the will determined itself, and could not be enslaved. In this state of ethical and theological science, Mr. Edwards set himself to the task of examining the great subject of moral agency, as connected with the human will; and by the precision of his definitions and statements, the cogency of his reasonings, the fulness of his illustrations, the thorough handling of all objections, and the application of his views to many scriptural truths, he placed the grand points of his subject in a light so overwhelmingly convincing, as to leave little room for any doubt or dispute afterwards.

In this treatise it is contended, that the power of choosing, or willing, does itself constitute freedom of agency; and that particular acts of will are determined, i.e. are rendered certain, or become such as they are, rather than otherwise, by some sufficient cause or reason, in perfect consistency with their being acts of will, or in perfect consistency with that power of willing which constitutes freedom of agency. On the ground that the power of willing pertains to man, the author asserts a natural ability, which is the just occasion of precept, invitation, &c. or of the will of God being addressed to him, and on the ground that his acts of will are rendered certain, by a sufficient cause, the author asserts a moral inability. The principal point contended for, and which is most essential to the defence of the Calvinistic scheme of faith, in distinction from the Arminian, is the latter one, that the acts of the will are rendered certain by some other cause than the mere power of willing. What the particular cause or causes may be, is not particularly considered, but this question is dismissed with a few brief remarks. The fact, that there is and must be, some such cause, is the great subject argued, and most powerfully demonstrated. This cause he asserts is the foundation of necessity, in the sense merely of certainty of action, and does not therefore destroy natural ability or the power of choice, nor imply that man acts otherwise than electively, or by choice; so that it is a necessity consistent with accountability, demerit, or the contrary and so with rewards and punishments. He asserts that all such terms as must, cannot, impossible, tenable, irresistible, unavoidable, invincible, &c. when applied here, are not applied in their proper signification, and are either used nonsensically, and with perfect insignificance, or in a sense quite diverse from their proper and original meaning, and their use in common speech; and that such a necessity as attends the acts of men's wills, is more properly called certainty than necessity.

Rightly to understand this controversy, it must be observed, that he and his opponents, alike, considered sin to consist in acts of will. Had this not been the case, it would have been idle for Mr. Edwards to have confined himself, in his whole treatise, to acts of choice, and the manner in which they are determined, i.e. rendered certain. He must, in that case, have agitated the previous question, re-

specting acts of choice themselves; and have asserted and maintained, that something else of specifically a different nature, enters into moral character, and forms the ground of praise and blame, or retribution. But the question which he considered to be at issue, is this: Does the mind will, in any given manner, without a motive, cause or ground, which renders the given choice, rather than a different choice, certain. Whitby, the writer whom he especially has in view, in his remarks on the freedom of man, asserts, that man, by his own activity alone, decides the choice. Mr. Edwards acknowledges that man chooses; but asserts, in opposition to the opinion of Whitby, and those who side with him, that there must be some other ground or cause, beside the mere activity of man, or his power of choosing, which occasions his choosing in one manner, rather than another. He asserts, that “doubtless common sense requires men’s being the authors of their own acts of will, in order to their being esteemed worthy of praise or dispraise, on account of them.” The very act of volition itself, is, doubtless, a determination; i.e. it is the mind’s drawing up a conclusion, or coming to a choice, between two things or more, proposed to it. But determining among external objects of choice, is not the same as determining the act of choice itself, among various possible acts of choice. The question is, What influences, directs, or determines, the mind or will, to such a conclusion or choice as it does form? Or what is the cause, ground, or reason, why it concludes thus, and not otherwise? This is the question, on his own statement.

In the latter part of February, 1754, a letter was received from Mr. Hollis, by Mr. Edwards, containing his explicit directions as to the school, for which he had expended so much money, to so little purpose. By this letter, Mr. Hollis withdrew the care of the school, and the expenditure of his benefactions, from the hands of those who had had the charge of them, and placed them in the hands of Mr. Edwards<sup>5</sup>. On the 25th, Mr. Edwards enclosed a copy of this letter, in a note to the provincial agent, requesting, from him, an account of the existing state of the school, and of the furniture and books belonging to it. On the 27th, he went to the school, to examine into its actual condition, and found in it six Indian boys. The following day, he mentioned this fact, in a second note to the agent, and informed him, that, as the Mohawks had long had the resolution to leave Stockbridge, early in the spring, he had appointed a conference with them, on the 1st of March, to learn whether they still persisted in that resolution; to the end, that, if they did so, he might suspend any further expense upon them, on Mr. Hollis’s account. At this conference, which was held with all the Mohawks, men, women, and children, in the presence of many of the people of the town, they informed him, that they had all agreed in the autumn, that they would return, in the spring, to their own country; and that this agreement was owing to the determination of the council of their nation, the sachems of the Conneenchees, and could not be altered, unless by a new determination of their sachems. Of this he gave the agent due notice the day following, as well as of his purpose to expend none of Mr. Hollis’s money upon them, so long as they persisted in that resolution.

As the general court had interested themselves in the affairs of Mr. Hollis, and had waited to know his mind concerning them, that they might order their own measures accordingly; Mr. Edwards, in a letter to the secretary of the province,

dated March 8th, enclosed an extract from the letter of Mr. Hollis, and informed him of the actual state of the school, of the determination of the council of the Mohawks, and the consequent resolution of the little colony to return to their own country, and of the notice he had given the agent, that he should withhold any subsequent expense of Mr. Hollis's money upon them. He likewise informed him, that some of the Mohawks had, since the conference, brought their children to him, and earnestly requested that they might be instructed; offering to take the charge of their maintenance themselves; and that he had consented to receive them<sup>6</sup>. He also asks the advice of the secretary, whether he might still occupy the schoolhouse, which had been built on the lands of the Indians, at the expense of the province, for the benefit of Mr. Hollis's school.

The individuals opposed to Mr. Edwards and Mr. Woodbridge, thus found every plan, which they had formed of connecting themselves with the Stockbridge mission, defeated, and their last hope extinguished. In 1750, the prospects of the mission, in consequence of the arrival of the two detachments of the *Mohawks* and *Onohquaugas*, which seemed to be mere harbingers of still larger colonies of their countrymen, were uncommonly bright and promising. And could the benevolent intentions of Mr. Hollis, of the Society in London, and of the provincial legislature, in behalf of the Iroquois, have been carried forward to their full completion, with no obstructions thrown in their way, by greedy avarice or unhallowed ambition; it is difficult to conceive of the amount of good which might have been accomplished. A large and flourishing colony of the Iroquois would soon have been established at Stockbridge, drawn thither for the education of their children, and brought directly within the reach of the means of salvation. What would have been the ultimate effect of such a colony on their countrymen at home, and on the more remote Indian tribes, can only be conjectured. By the steadfast resolution of those persons to oppose these plans of benevolence, unless the management of the funds by which they were to be accomplished could be placed in their own hands, this whole system of beneficence towards the Iroquois, which would only have enlarged with the opportunity of exerting it, was frustrated finally and for ever. We will not cherish the belief, that the disappointed individuals found any thing in this melancholy result, to console them under the shame and mortification of their own defeat; although they thus effectually prevented the benevolent efforts of their opponents, by driving the intended objects of them beyond their reach. A short time after the letter of Mr. Hollis was received, the individual, in whose hands the Mohawk school had been left by the former teacher, removed with his family to his former place of residence; leaving behind him only one of his associates at Stockbridge.

## FOOTNOTES

1 Now called the *Cayugas*.

2 Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, who had the MS. Letters of Mr. Edwards to Dr. Erskine in his possession, while writing his Life of the latter, observes, "It was not, however, till the month of July, 1752, that he (Mr. Edwards] appears to have resumed his studies, on the subject of Freewill; for, on the 7th of that month, he writes Dr. Erskine, that *he hoped soon to be at leisure, to resume his design.*" He then adds, "Whatever opinion may, be held, with regard to Mr. Edwards's argument, it must appear astonishing to those, who are capable of appreciating the difficulty of his subject, that, in *nine* months from the date of this letter. (on the 14th of April, 1753,) he could write Dr. Erskine, *that he had almost finished the first draught of what he originally intended.*" The passage, Mr. Edwards's letter of Nov. 23. 1752, announcing, that he began to write in August, but was soon broke off; and had not, from that time, been able to put pen to paper, about the matter; and that he hoped, that God, in his providence, would favour him with an opportunity to prosecute the design; obviously escaped Sir Henry's notice. If he regarded it as astonishing, that Mr. Edwards should have been able to write the work in *nine* months; what would have been his views of the subject. if, after first reading the details of the Stockbridge controversy, he had then discovered, that it was written, not in *nine* months, but in *four and a half*.

3 The directors, knowing the characters of the respective individuals residing in these places, whom they designated; and perceiving, from an inspection of the map, that Stockbridge was nearly central to most of the places mentioned; appear to have supposed, that they might all meet there, without inconvenience.

4 On this account only, is the plan worthy of being mentioned here.

5 Many benevolent men, on being apprized of such a wanton and shameful perversion of the funds, appropriated by themselves to a given charity, would, at once, have wholly discontinued their benefactions; but the benevolence of Mr. Hollis, like a living and copious fountain, could neither be dried up, nor obstructed.

6 These children of the Mohawks, and the children of the Onohquaugas, constituted, from this time, the male Iroquois boarding-school at Stockbridge. How long it was continued I have not been able to ascertain; but suppose it was removed to Onohquauga, soon after the establishment of the mission of Mr. Hawley at that place.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
by  
Sereno E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER XXIII.

SICKNESS OF MR. EDWARDS—"GODS LAST END IN CREATION"—"NATURE OF VIRTUE"—MR. EDWARDS SECOND SON RESIDES AT ONOHQUAUGA—DANGERS OF THE WAR—LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE—LETTER TO COL. WILLIAMS—LORD KAIMES—LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE—LETTER TO MR. M'CULLOCH—LETTER OF DR. BELLAMY—"TREATISE ON ORIGINAL SIN"—LETTER TO HIS FATHER—LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE.

IN July, 1754, Mr. Edwards had a most severe attack of the ague and fever, which lasted until January. It wholly disqualified him from writing even to his correspondents, and greatly enfeebled his constitution. In the course of the spring following, he began the preparation of two other treatises, which were entitled, "A Dissertation concerning the End for which God created the World;" and "A Dissertation concerning the Nature of True Virtue." These two subjects are fundamental in a system of theology. On the first, many writers had hazarded occasional remarks; yet it has rarely occupied the space even of a chapter or a section in theological systems; and I know not whether any writer before Mr. Edwards had made it the subject of a formal and separate treatise. From the purest principles of reason, as well as from the fountain of revealed truth, he demonstrates that the chief and ultimate end of the Supreme Being, in the works of creation and providence, was the manifestation of his own glory, in the highest happiness of his creatures. The treatise was left by the author, as at first written, without being prepared for the press; yet it exhibits the subject in a manner so clear and convincing, that it has been the manual of theologians from the time of its publication to the present.

The nature of virtue has been a frequent subject of discussion among ethical writers of almost every class, heathen, infidel, and Christian. Aristotle, and other ancient moralists, supposed virtue to consist in avoiding extremes, and in following the mean in everything. Others of the ancients defined virtue to be living according to nature. Balguy and Doddridge represent it as consisting in acting agreeably to the moral fitness of things. Wollaston places it in regard to truth.

Hutcheson defines it to be “a quality apprehended in some actions which produces approbation and love towards the actor, from those who receive no benefit from the action. Many writers, ancient and modern, have placed virtue in imitation of God; and many others in obedience to the will of God. Waterland, Rutherford, and (John) Brown, have placed it in a wise regard to our own interest. Bishop Butler says, that “a due concern about our own interest or happiness, and a reasonable endeavour to promote it, is virtue;” and that “benevolence, singly considered, is in no sort the whole of virtue.” Hume, who appears to have read several of the works of Edwards, and to have made use of them in accommodation to his own views, includes in his description of virtue, whatever is agreeable and useful to ourselves and others. Adam Smith refers it to the principle of sympathy. Paley, who read Edwards with care, defines virtue to be “The doing good to mankind in Obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.” Cumberland, in his *Laws of Nature*, justly regards it as consisting in the love of God, and of our fellow-creatures, and explains himself thus, “The foundation of all natural law is the greatest benevolence of every rational agent towards all.

Mr. Edwards represents virtue as founded in happiness; and as being love to the greatest happiness, or love to the happiness of universal being. He describes it, as leading its possessor to desire, and to promote, as far as in him lies, the happiness of all beings, and a greater degree of happiness in preference to a less. His account of the subject is in exact accordance with the decision of reason. Happiness is the end, for which intelligent beings were made, the perfection of their existence; and therefore virtue, or moral excellence, must be love to that happiness. It is also in exact accordance with the Scriptures. The sum of our duty is unquestionably virtue. But Moses sums up our duty in two commands, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart” and “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:” in other words, Thou shalt love the happiness of universal being.

When the Scriptures had so plainly pointed out the nature of virtue, as consisting in love; and its foundation, as being happiness; it is not a little remarkable, that so many acute writers, with the Scriptures in their hands, should have formed views either so obscure, or so erroneous, of these subjects; and, perhaps not less remarkable, that Mr. Edwards should have been able to discover its true nature, and its real foundation, at a very early age, as clearly as he did in after-life. That this was the case, no one will want evidence, who reads the various articles under the head of Excellency, particularly the last, in the *Notes on the Mind*.<sup>1</sup>

These two treatises were first published together in a pamphlet, in Boston, in 1788, without alteration from the rough draught of the author. He designed them both for publication, but never prepared either of them for the press. Though conceived and expressed with great perspicuity, they treat of subjects, which demand close thought in the reader, as well as the writer; and, on this account, have often been imperfectly comprehended, even by divines. But wherever they have been read and understood, they have to such a degree formed and regulated the views of theologians, with regard to the subjects of which they treat, that other treatises are consulted, rather as objects of curiosity, or history, than as guides of opinions and principles.<sup>2</sup>

In February, or early in March, this year, Mr. Edwards sent his second son,



Jonathan,<sup>3</sup> then a lad of nine years of age, to Onohquauga, to reside with Mr. Hawley, that he might learn more perfectly the language of the Iroquois. He continued there about a twelvemonth; when, in consequence of the war with France, the danger of attack from the Indians became so imminent, that Mr. Hawley returned with him to his father's house.

The war of 1754 was most disastrous to the colonies; and the frontier settlements of New England, of which Stockbridge was one, were exposed to unceasing anxiety and alarm, from their constant liability to attack from the French savages. In the autumn, several of the inhabitants of Stockbridge were killed by these marauders; in consequence of which it became a garrisoned town; and every family had quartered upon it its own quota of the soldiers, necessary for the defence of the place. The state of things, in this respect, may be learned from the following letter of Mr. Edwards, to the officer who had the command of the troops in that part of the county.

*“Stockbridge, Feb. 26, 1755.*

SIR,

We have not lodgings and provisions, so as to board and lodge more than four soldiers; and being in a low state as to my health, and not able to go much abroad, and upon that and other accounts, under much greater disadvantages than others to get provisions, it is far this reason, and not because I have a disposition to make difficulty, that I told the soldiers of this province, who had hitherto been provided for here, that we could not board them any longer. I have often been told that you had intimated, that you have other business for them in a short time. Captain Hosmer has sent three of his men to lodge at my house, whom I am willing to entertain, as I choose to board such as are likely to be continued for our defence in times of danger. Stebbins has manifested to us a desire to continue here. Him, therefore, I am willing to entertain, with your consent. Requesting your candid construction of that, which is not intended in any inconsistency with my having all proper honour and respect, I am

Your humble servant,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

The subsequent letter to Mr. Erskine will show, still more fully, the state of alarm and terror then existing at Stockbridge.

*“Stockbridge, April 15, 1755.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

The last year, in the spring, I received, without a letter, a packet containing the

following books: Casaubon on Enthusiasm; Warburton's Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion; Merrick on Christ the True Vine; Campbell's Apostles no Enthusiasts; Discourse on the Prevailing Evils of the Present Time; Remarks on Apostles no Enthusiasts; Moncrieff's Review and Examination of some Principles in Campbell's Apostles no Enthusiasts; Gilbert on the Guilt and Pardon of Sin; Hervey on the Cross of Christ; An Account of the Orphan School, &c. at Edinburgh; Memorial Concerning the Surgeon's Hospital; Gairdner's Account of the Old People's Hospital; State of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge; Abridgment of the Rules of said Society; Regulations of the Town's Hospital at Glasgow; and Annals of the Persecution of the Protestants in France.

In the beginning of last December, I received another packet without a letter; the wrapper superscribed with your hand. In this were the following pamphlets: A Sermon by a Lay Elder, before the Commission; A Letter to a Gentleman at Edinburgh; Resolutions of the General Assembly, of May 22d, 1736; Rutherford's Power of Faith and Prayer; Inquiry into the Method of Settling Parishes; The Nature of the Covenant and Constitution of the Church of Scotland; Essay on Gospel and Legal Preaching; Necessity of Zeal for the Truth; A Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine of Justification, against the Charge of Antinomianism. The last week I received a letter from you, dated 11th July, 1754; which was found at Mr. Prince's by one that went to Boston from hence, and had lain there Mr. Prince could not tell how long. In this letter you make mention of these last-mentioned pamphlets, received last December. I now return you my hearty thanks for this letter, and these generous presents. I should have written to you long ago, had I not been prevented by the longest and most tedious sickness that ever I had in my life: It being followed with fits of ague which came upon me about the middle of last July, and were for a long time very severe, and exceedingly wasted my flesh and strength, so that I became like a skeleton. I had several intermissions of the fits by the use of the Peruvian bark; but they never wholly left me till the middle of last January. In the mean time, I several times attempted to write letters to some of my friends about affairs of importance, but found that I could bear but little of such writing. Once, in attempting to write a letter to Mr. Burr, a fit of the ague came upon me while I was writing, so that I was obliged to lay by my pen. When my fits left me they left me in a poor weak state, so that I feared whether I was not going into a dropsy. Nevertheless, I have of late gradually gained strength.

I lately received a letter from Mr. M'Laurin, dated Aug. 13, 1754; which Mr. Prince sent me, with a letter from himself, wherein he informed me that a captain of a ship from Glasgow, then lately arrived, brought an account of Mr. M'Laurin's death; that he died very suddenly, with an apoplexy, a little before he left Glasgow. Since I received that letter, I sent to Mr. Prince, desiring to know more of the certainty of the account. This is an affecting piece of news. It is an instance of death which I have much cause to lament. He has long shown himself to be a very worthy, kind, and obliging friend and correspondent of mine. And doubtless, the church of Scotland has much cause to lament his death. There is reason to think that he was one of them that stood in the gap to make up the hedge in these evil times. He was a wise, steady, and most faithful friend of gospel truth

and vital piety, in these days of great corruption. I wish that I may take warning by it, as well as by my own late sickness, to prepare for my own departure hence.

I have nothing very comfortable to write respecting my own success in this place. The business of the Indian mission, since I have been here, has been attended with strange embarrassments, such as I never could have expected, or so much as once dreamed of; of such a nature, and coming from such a quarter, that I take no delight in being very particular and explicit upon it. But, beside what I especially refer to, some things have lately happened that have occasioned great disturbance among the Indians, and have tended to alienate them from the English. As particularly, the killing of one of them in the woods, by a couple of travellers, white men, who met him, and contended with him. And though the men were apprehended and imprisoned; yet on their trial they escaped the sentence of death: one of them only receiving a lighter punishment, as guilty of manslaughter: by which these Indians, and also the Indians of some other tribes, were greatly displeased, and disaffected towards the English. Since the last fall, some Indians from Canada, doubtless instigated by the French, broke in upon us, on the sabbath, between meetings, and fell upon an English family, and killed three of them; and about an hour after killed another man, coming into the town from some distant houses; which occasioned a great alarm in the town, and in the country. Multitudes came from various parts, for our defence, that night, and the next day; and many of these conducted very foolishly towards our Indians on this occasion, suspecting them to be guilty of doing the mischief, charging them with it, and threatening to kill them, and the like. After this, a reward being offered by some private gentlemen, to some that came this way as soldiers, if they would bring them the scalp of a Canada Indian; two men were so extremely foolish and wicked, that they, in the night, dug up one of our Indians, that had then lately died, out of his grave, to take off his scalp; that, by pretending that to be a scalp of a Canada Indian, whom they had met and killed in the woods, they might get the promised reward. When this was discovered, the men were punished. But this did not hinder, but that such an act greatly increased the jealousy and disaffection of the Indians, towards the English. Added to these things, we have many white people, that will, at all times, without any restraint, give them ardent spirits, which is a constant temptation to their most predominant lust.

Though I have but little success, and many discouragements, here at Stockbridge, yet Mr. Hawley, now a missionary among the Six Nations, who went from New England to Onohquauga, a place more than 200 miles distant from hence, has, of late, had much encouragement. Religion seems to be a growing, spreading thing, among the savages in that part of America, by his means. And there is a hopeful prospect, of way being made for another missionary in those parts, which may have happy consequences, unless the Six Nations should go over to the French; which there is the greatest reason to expect, unless the English should exert themselves, vigorously and successfully, against the French, in America, this year. They seem to be waiting to see whether this will be so or no, in order to determine, whether they will entirely desert the English, and cleave to the French. And if the Six Nations should forsake the English, it may be expected, that the Stockbridge Indians, and almost all the nations of Indians in North America, will

follow them. It seems to be the most critical season, with the British dominions in America, that ever was seen, since the first settlement of these colonies; and all, probably, will depend on the warlike transactions of the present year. What will be done I cannot tell. We are all in commotion, from one end of British America to the other; and various expeditions are projected, and preparing for; one to Ohio, another to the French Forts in Nova Scotia, another to Crown Point. But these affairs are not free from embarrassments: great difficulties arise, in our present most important affairs, through the dispirited state of the several governments. It is hard for them to agree upon means and measures. And we have no reason to think that the French are behind us in their activity and preparations. A dark cloud seems to hang over us: we need the prayers of all our friends, and all friends to the protestant interest. Stockbridge is a place much exposed; and what will become of us, in the struggles that are coming on, God only knows. I have heard that Messrs. Tennent and Davies are arrived in America, having had good success in the errand they went upon. Mr. Bellamy is not likely to go to New York, principally by reason of the opposition of some of the congregation, and also of some of the neighbouring ministers. I have heard, they have lately unanimously agreed to apply themselves to Mr. M'Gregor, of New Londonderry, alias Nutfield, in New England, to be their minister; who is a gentleman that, I think, if they can obtain him, will be likely to suit them, and competent to fill the place. And I have heard, that there has been some difference in his own congregation, that has lately made his situation there uneasy. If so, he will be more likely to consent to the motion from New York.

My wife joins with me in respectful and affectionate salutations to you and Mrs. Erskine.

I am, dear Sir, your affectionate and obliged brother,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS."

"P.S. In a journey I went to Northampton, the last April, I carried the foregoing letter, with others for Scotland, so far, seeking an opportunity to send them from thence to Boston; and there I met another letter from Mr. Prince, with a joyful contradiction of his former account of Mr. M'Laurin's death; which occasioned my bringing my packet home again. Nevertheless, after I had broken open and perused this letter, I thought best to send it along, enclosed in a wrapper to Mr. M'Laurin; who, I hope, is yet living, and will convey it to you.

J.E.

*"Stockbridge, June 2, 1755."*

In the beginning of September, the danger became so imminent, that Mr. Ed-

wards, at the request of the people of the town, addressed the following urgent letter to the colonel of the county.

“To Col. Israel Williams.

*Stockbridge, Sept. 5, 1755.*

SIR,

Yesterday the English inhabitants of the town sent away a letter, directed to you, to be conveyed to Hatfield, respecting the state of the town, stating that it was left very greatly exposed, by the drawing off of all the Connecticut soldiers; that Governor Shirley, by his urgency, had persuaded away almost all the Indian inhabitants fit for war, who objected much against going, on that account, that the departure of so many would leave the town, and their wives and children too, defenceless; that the governor removed their objection, by promising that a sufficient number of English soldiers should be maintained here, during their absence, for the defence of the town; and also, that we had just now information sent in writing, from Mr. Vanschaak, that two large parties of Indians are lately gone out of Crown Point, against our frontiers; and so entreating that soldiers may be speedily sent. But being informed to-day, that you are gone from Hatfield, and not knowing whether you will seasonably receive the aforementioned letter, I now, at the desire of the people, give you this brief information of what was therein written; earnestly desiring, that we may not be left so easy and open a prey to our enemies, who, we have reason to think, have the means of learning our situation, and are certainly preparing to attack some of the most defenceless of the frontier villages. We hope that the troops may be forwarded immediately; for, having no adequate means of repelling an attack, we have no security for a single day.

I am respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

In 1751, an anonymous work was published in Edinburgh, entitled “Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion,”<sup>4</sup> of which Henry Home,<sup>5</sup> Esq. soon avowed himself the author. These essays, though written by a member of the church of Scotland, were regarded as decidedly sceptical in their tendency, and brought the author into some difficulties with the particular church with which he was connected. This led to a public discussion of the character of the work at large—particularly of the Essay on Liberty and Necessity. When this discussion was commencing, the Essay on the Freedom of the Will arrived in Scotland. It was extensively read by men of speculative minds; and, though presenting a view of the subject wholly new, gave great satisfaction to men of all classes. Lord Kaimes and his friends, having read the work of Mr. Edwards, endeavoured to show that the view of liberty and necessity, in the Freedom of the Will, was substantially the same with that given by his lordship. Mr. Erskine apprized Mr. Ed-

wards of this fact. In the following letter, the latter barely alludes to the work of Lord Kaimes, as a work of corrupt tendency. In a subsequent letter to his friends, written in the summer of the following year, and now appended to the Treatise on the Freedom of the Will,<sup>6</sup> he examines the views of liberty and necessity by his lordship, shows their entire discordance with his own views, as exhibited in the Freedom of the Will, and exposes their inconsistency, not only with reason but with each other. This letter, from a sense of justice to its author, was immediately published, in the form of a pamphlet, by Mr. Erskine, and produced a universal conviction, that Lord Kaimes had wholly misunderstood the view taken of liberty and necessity by Mr. Edwards; and that his own views of it were at war, alike with reason and revelation. Indeed, his lordship himself appears to have been of the same opinion; for, in a subsequent edition, the Essay on Liberty and Necessity is said to have been much changed, as to present essentially different views of those important subjects.

“To the Rev. John Erskine, Minister of the Gospel, at Culross, Scotland.

*Stockbridge, Dec. 11, 1755*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I last wrote to you July 24th, 1755. Since that I received a letter from you, dated June 23, 1755, together with the Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion,<sup>7</sup> from Mr. Hogg, and the Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments of Sopho, from yourself. I thank you for your letter and present, and shall write a letter of thanks to Mr. Hogg, for his present by your hand, added to former instances of his generosity. I had before read that book of Essays, having borrowed Mr. Bellamy's, and also that book of Mr. David Hume's, which you speak of. I am glad of an opportunity to read such corrupt books, especially when written by men of considerable genius; that I may have an idea of the notions that prevail in our nation. You say that some people say, that Lord Kaimes's being made a Lord of Session would have been prevented, if Chancellor Hardwick and Archbishop Herring had seasonably seen his book. I should be glad to know who this Chancellor Hardwick is, and what is his character. By your mentioning him in such a manner, I am ready to suppose he may be, in some respects, of good character; and it is a matter of thankfulness, if a man of good character, and a friend to religion, be Lord Chancellor.

As to our warlike concerns, I have not heretofore been very particular in writing about them, in my letters to Scotland, supposing it highly probable that you would have earlier accounts from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, than any I can send you, living at so great a distance from any of the sea-ports. Nevertheless, seeing you propose my sending you some account of the present posture of affairs, I would say, that it appears to me that notwithstanding some remarkable favours of Heaven, of which we are very unworthy, it has in the general been a year of great frowns of Providence on British America. Notwithstanding our success at Nova Scotia, and in having the better in the battle near Lake George, and taking

the French general prisoner; yet, considering the advantages the enemy hath obtained against us, by General Braddock's defeat, especially in gaining over and confirming the Indians on their side, and disheartening and weakening our friends, and what we have suffered from our enemies, and how greatly we are weakened and almost sunk with our vast expenses, especially in New England, and the blood as well as money we have expended; I say, considering these things, and how little we have gained by our loss and trouble, our case is no better, but far worse than it was in the beginning of the year. At least, I think it certain, that we have attained no advantage, in any wise, to balance our trouble and expense of blood and treasure. The expedition to the eastward has been remarkably successful; but the other three expeditions, that against the French forts on the Ohio, that against Niagara, and that against Crown Point, have all been unsuccessful, as to their main designs. And though the army under General Johnson had a kind of victory over the French, and took the Baron Dieskau, their general, prisoner; yet we suffered very greatly in the battle, and the taking of the French general probably, was the saving of his army. For, by telling a lie to our army, viz. that the French were in constant expectation of being greatly enforced by a large body, that marched another way, and had appointed to meet them near that place, our army was prevented from pursuing the enemy, after they had repelled them; which, if they had done, the French might have been under great advantages to have cut them off, and prevented the return of almost all of them to Crown Point, which could be no otherwise than through the water in their batteaux. Our army never proceeded any farther than the place of their engagement; but, having built a fort there, near Lake George, alias Lake St. Sacrament, after they had built another near Hudson's river, about fourteen miles on this side, and left garrisons, has lately returned. As also has the army under General Shirley, (who went with designs against Niagara,) after having built some vessels of force in the lake Ontario, and strengthened the fortifications at Oswego, and sent for the remains of General Braddock's army to Albany, there to go into winter quarters. The governors of the several provinces, in the latter part of the last month, had a meeting to confer together, concerning our warlike affairs, and to agree on a plan of operations to be recommended to the government at home for the next year. But I have heard nothing of their determinations. The Indians have not done much mischief on the frontiers of New England, since our army have been about us; but have been dreadful in their ravages, on the back settlements of Virginia and Pennsylvania.

It is apparent that the ministry at home miss it very much, in sending over British forces to fight with Indians in America, and in sending over British officers, to have the command of our American forces. Let them send us arms, ammunition, money, and shipping; and let New England men manage the business in their own way, who alone understand it. To appoint British officers over them, is nothing but a hindrance and discouragement to them. Let them be well supplied, and supported, and defended by sea, and then let them go forth under their own officers and manage in their own way, as they did in the expedition against Cape Breton. All the provinces in America seem to be fully sensible, that New England men are the only men to be employed against Canada; as I had opportunity abun-

dantly to observe, in my late journey to New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia. However, we ought to remember that neither New England men, nor any other, are any thing unless God be with us; and when we have done all, at finding fault with men and instruments employed, we cannot expect prosperity, unless the accursed thing be removed from our camp.

God has lately frowned on my family, in taking away a faithful servant, who was a great help to us; and one of my children has been under threatening infirmities, but is somewhat better. I desire your prayers for us all.

My wife joins with me in affectionate and respectful salutations to you and Mrs. Erskine.

I am, Rev, and dear Sir.

Your obliged brother,

and affectionate friend,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

The effect of the war on the Indian mission will be seen from the following letter to Mr. M’Culloch.

*“Stockbridge, April 10, 1756.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your favour of August, 1755, with Mr. Imries’s letter, which came to hand in the latter part of the last month. It recommends a man, especially a minister of the gospel, to me, to see in him evidences of a disposition to be searching into the prophecies of Scripture, relating to the future advancement of Christ’s kingdom on earth. It looks as though he was a man, who felt concern for Christ’s kingdom and interests in the world; as though he were one of those, who took pleasure in the stones, and favoured the dust of Zion. But it has proved by events, that many divines, who have been of this character, have been over-forward to fix the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. However, I will not positively charge Mr. Imries with this, before I see what he has to offer, in proof of those things which he has advanced. I think that neither I nor any other person, that knows no more than what is contained in his letter, of the reasons that he builds his opinions upon, have any opportunity to judge of those opinions. And therefore I should think it a pity that his private letter to Mr. Hogg was published to the world, before his reasons were prepared for the press. This letter has been reprinted in Boston; but coming abroad, with so little mention of the grounds of his opinion, it gives occasion to the profane to reproach and ridicule it, and its author.

With respect to Mr. Hawley, and Mr. Brainerd, and their Indians, concerning which you desire to be informed; the correspondents have altered their determination, from time to time, with respect to Mr. Brainerd and his Indians. They seemed inclined at first to their removal to Wawwoming, alias Wyoming, and



then to Onohquauga, and then to Wyoming again; and finally, about a twelve-month ago, they wholly dismissed him from employ as a missionary to the Indians, and pastor to the Indian church at Bethel. I cannot say I am fully satisfied with their conduct in doing this so hastily; nor do I pretend to know so much, concerning the reasons of their conduct, as to have sufficient grounds positively to condemn their proceedings. However, the congregation is not wholly left as sheep without a shepherd, and are in part committed to the care of Mr. William Tennent, who lives not far off, and is a faithful, zealous minister, who visits them, and preaches to them, once a week; but I think not often upon the sabbath. The last fall, I was in New Jersey and Philadelphia, and was present at a meeting of the correspondents; when Mr. Tennent gave an agreeable account of the then present state of these Indians, with respect to religion, and also of their being in better circumstances, as to their lands, than they had been. Mr. Brainerd was then at Newark with his family, where he had been preaching, as a probationer for settlement, ever since Mr. Burr's dismissal from that place, on account of his business as president of the college. But whether Mr. Brainerd is settled, or like to settle there, I have not heard. At the forementioned meeting of the correspondents, I used some arguments, to induce them to re-establish Mr. Brainerd, in his former employ with his Indians, and to send them to Onohquauga. But I soon found it would be fruitless to urge the matter. What was chiefly insisted on, as an insuperable obstacle to Mr. Brainerd's going, with his family, so far into the wilderness, was Mrs. Brainerd's very infirm state. Whether there was indeed any sufficient objection to such a removal, at that time, or no; Divine Providence has, since that, so ordered the state and consequences of the war, subsisting here in America, that insuperable obstacles are laid in the way of their removal, either to Onohquauga, Wawwoming, or any other parts of America, that way. The French, by their indefatigable endeavours with the nation of the *Delawares*, so called, from their ancient seat about Delaware river, though now chiefly residing on the Susquehannah and its branches, have stirred them up to make war on the English; and dreadful have been the ravages and desolations, which they have made of late, on the back parts of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. They are the principal nation inhabiting the parts about Susquehannah river, on which both Wyoming and Onohquauga stand. The latter indeed is above the bounds of their country, but yet not very far from them; and the Delaware Indians are frequently there, as they go to and fro; on which account there is great danger, that Mr. Hawley's mission and ministry there will be entirely broken up. Mr. Hawley came from there about two months ago, with one of my sons, about ten years old; who had been there with him near a twelvemonth, to learn the Mohawk language. He has since been to Boston, to consult the commissioners for Indian affairs, that have employed him, and returned: and yesterday went from my house, to meet some of his Indians, at an appointed time and place in the Mohawk country; to determine with them, whether it will be safe for him to return to abide with them. If not, yet will he be under the pay of the commissioners till next fall, and the issue be seen of the two expeditions now in prosecution, one against Crown Point, the other against the French forts at Frontenac and Niagara, near Lake Ontario; which may possibly make a great alteration, as to the state of the war with the Indians. If Mr. Hawley deter-

mines not to return to Onohquauga this spring, he will probably go as chaplain to the Indians, in General Shirley's army, in the expedition to Lake Ontario.

You speak of the vast superiority of the numbers of the English, in America, to those of the French; and that some therefore think, the settlements of the former are in no great danger from the latter. Though it be true, that the French are twenty times less than we are in number, yet it may be a question, whether other things, in which they exceed us, when all jointly considered, will not more than counterbalance all our excess of numbers. They vastly exceed us in subtilty and intrigue, in vigilance and activity, in speed and secrecy; in acquaintance with the continent of North America, in all parts west of the British settlements, for many hundred leagues, the rivers, lakes, and mountains, the avenues and passes; and also in the influence they have among the various tribes and nations of Indians, and in their constant skill and indefatigable diligence in managing them, to alienate them from the English, attach them firmly to themselves, and employ them as their tools. Beside the vast advantage they have, in time of war, in having all united under the absolute command of one man, the governor of Canada; while we are divided into a great many distinct governments, independent of one another, and, in some respects, of clashing interests: interests which unspeakably clog and embarrass our affairs, and make us, though a great, yet an unwieldy, unmanageable body, and an easy prey to our vigilant, secret, subtle, swift and active, though comparatively small, enemy.

As to a description of the situation of those parts you mention, I can give you no better than you have, in many that abound in Great Britain. With respect to the situation of Stockbridge, it is not in the province of New York, as you have been informed, but in the utmost border of the province of Massachusetts, on the west, next to the province of New York; about 40 miles west of Connecticut river, about 25 miles east of Hudson's river, and about 35 miles south east from Albany: a place exposed in this time of war. Four persons were killed here, in the beginning of September, 1754, by Canada Indians; which occasioned a great alarm to us, and to a great part of New England. Since then we have had many alarms; but God has preserved us.

I desire your prayers that we may still be preserved, and that God would be with me and my family, and people, and bless us in all respects. My wife and family join with me, in their respects to you and yours.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother and servant,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS."

In consequence of the ill success attending the British arms, during the campaign of 1756, the danger of the frontiers became extreme, and the friends of Mr. Edwards were, for a time, exceedingly anxious for his personal safety. Mr. Bellamy, at this period, sent him the following kind invitation, to look to Bethlem, as the place of retreat, for himself and his family.

*“Bethlem, May 31, 1756*

DEAR SIR,

I am in pain, fearing our army against Crown Point will be defeated. God only knows how it will be. Your own discretion will make you sufficiently speedy, to secure yourself and family. We stand as ready to receive you, and any of your family, to all the comforts our house affords, as if you were our children. I am greatly interested in your safety.—I am concerned for Mr. Hawley. I fear he will be too venturesome, and fling away his life for nothing.—I wish, if you know how to get one along, you would send him a letter.—Our youngest child still remains somewhat unwell. The Indian boys grow more and more easy and content, but they love play too well—are very ignorant—and very stupid, as to the things of religion—and in arithmetic, when I would teach them any thing that is a little difficult, they are soon discouraged, and don’t love to try. So I take them off, and put them to writing again—designing, by little and little, to get them along. They will not endure hardship, and bend their minds to business, like English boys. It seems they were never taught their catechism. Shall I teach it? I have got three Bibles; but have not yet given them to the boys, they are so ignorant. I expect you will give me any instructions you think proper; and remain, Rev. Sir,

J. BELLAMY.”

It is probable that Mr. Edwards began his Treatise on Original Sin about this period, and that he devoted the leisure hours of the summer, autumn, and winter, to the preparation of that work. The date of the author’s preface, May 26, 1757, shows the time when it was finished for the press.

The views of Mr. Edwards, in this treatise, are these: that there is a tendency in human nature, prevailing and effectual, to that sin, which implies the utter ruin of all; that this tendency originates in the sin of Adam, of which the whole race are imputed the partakers; and that this tendency consists, in their being left of God, at their original, in the possession of merely human appetites and passions, in themselves “innocent,” and without the influx of those superior principles, which come from divine influences. The only guilt, attributed by him to mankind, before they come to the exercise of moral agency themselves, is that of participating in the apostasy of Adam, in consequence of the original constitution of God, which made him and his race “one.”

He supposes this tendency to sin, pertaining to men, at their original, to constitute the subject of it a sinner, only, because he regards him as a participator in that sin, by which Adam apostatized, with his whole race. This tendency he calls “sinful,” “corrupt,” “odious,” &c., because it is a tendency “to that moral evil, by which the subject of it becomes odious in the sight of God.” (Part 1. Chap. II. Sect. III.) He supposes that infants, who have this tendency in their nature, are, as yet, “sinners, only by the one act or offence of Adam”; and, that “they have not renewed the act of sin themselves.” (Part I. Chap. IV.) He utterly denies any positive agency of God, in producing sin; and resolves the tendency to sin, into the

“innocent principles” of human nature; (which God might create, without sin;) and the withholding of that positive influence, from which spring superior and divine principles:—which act of withholding, is not infusing, or positively creating, any thing. These “innocent principles”—such as hunger and thirst, love and hatred, desire and fear, joy and sorrow, and self-love, as distinguished from selfishness,—which are necessary to the nature of man, and belong to him, whether holy or sinful, are not, in his view, sin. They barely constitute the ground of certainty, that the being, who has them, will sin, as soon as he is capable of sinning, if that positive influence, from which spring superior and divine principles, is withheld; and, in this relation, they are spoken of, under the general designation, “a tendency,” “a propensity,” &c. to sin.

The views of Imputation, contained in this work, are such, as had been long and extensively entertained; yet some of them, certainly, are not generally received, at present. With this exception, the Treatise on Original Sin is regarded as the standard work, on the subject of which it treats; and is doubtless the ablest defence of the doctrine of human depravity, and of the doctrine that that depravity is the consequence of the sin of Adam, which has hitherto appeared.

The father of Mr. Edwards, as the reader may remember, on account of the increasing infirmities of age, had requested his people to settle a colleague in the ministry in 1752, but continued to preach to them regularly until the summer of 1755, when he was in his eighty-seventh year. The following letter, probably the last ever written to him by his son, shows the gradual decline of his health and strength, during the two following years.

“To the Rev Timothy Edwards, East Windsor.

*Stockbridge, March 24, 1757.*

HONOURED SIR,

I take this opportunity just to inform you, that, through the goodness of God, we are all in a comfortable state of health, and that we have heard, not long since, of the welfare of our children in New Jersey and Northampton. I intend, God willing, to be at Windsor some time near the beginning of June; proposing then to go a journey to Boston. I intended to have gone sooner; but I foresee such hindrances, as will probably prevent my going till that time. We rejoice much to hear, by Mr. Andrewson, of your being so well as to be able to baptize a child at your own house the sabbath before last. We all unite in duty to you and my honoured mother, and in respectful and affectionate salutations to sisters and cousins; and in a request of a constant remembrance in your prayers.

I am, honoured Sir,

Your dutiful son,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.”

Not long after Mr. Edwards had forwarded to Mr. Erskine his vindication of himself,<sup>8</sup> against the charge of having advanced, in the *Freedom of the Will*, the same views of liberty and necessity, with those exhibited by Lord Kaimes; he received from his friend a pamphlet, entitled “*Objections to the Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion examined*;” in which the opinion was directly advanced, that, if it were really true, (as Mr. Edwards had insisted and demonstrated in the *Freedom of the Will*,) that there is no liberty of contingency, nor self-determining power in the will, as opposed to moral necessity, or the certain connexion between motives and volitions; yet it was best for mankind, that the truth, in this respect, should not be known, because, in that case, they would not regard either themselves, or others, as deserving of praise or blame for their conduct. In the following letter, Mr. Edwards exposes the folly and absurdity of this opinion; and explains, in a remarkably clear and convincing manner, the practical bearing of the great principles advanced in the *Freedom of the Will*, on the subject of salvation. This letter might well have been published at the time, and circulated through the church at large. And we recommend it to the frequent and prayerful perusal both of those ministers, who cannot clearly comprehend the distinction between physical and moral inability, and of those who do not perceive the importance of explaining and enforcing this distinction from the pulpit; as exhibiting the consequences of representing impenitent sinners, to be possessed of any other inability to repent and believe, than mere unwillingness, in a manner too awful to be resisted, by a conscientious mind.

“To Mr. Erskine.

*Stockbridge, August 3, 1757.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

In June last, I received a letter from you, dated January 22, 1757, with ‘Mr. Anderson’s Complaint verified,’ and ‘Objections to the Essays’<sup>9</sup> examined.’ For these things, I now return my hearty thanks.

The conduct of the vindicator of the ‘Essays,’ from objections made against them, seems to be very odd. Many things are produced from Calvin, and several Calvinistic writers, to defend what is not objected against. His book is almost wholly taken up about that which is nothing to the purpose; perhaps only to amuse and blind the common people. According to your proposal, I have drawn up something, stating the difference between my hypothesis, and that of the Essays; which I have sent to you, to be printed in Scotland, if it be thought best; or to be disposed of as you think proper. *Essays on the principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, by Lord Kaimes<sup>10</sup> I have written it in a letter to you; and if it be published, it may be as ‘A letter from me to a minister in Scotland.’ Lord Kaimes’s notion of God’s deceiving mankind, by a kind of invincible or natural instinct or feeling, leading them to suppose, that they have a liberty of contingency and self-determination of will, in order to make them believe themselves and others worthy to be blamed or praised for what they do, is a strange notion indeed; and it is hard for me to conjecture, what his views could be, in publishing such things to

the world.

However, by what I have heard, some others seem to be so far of the same mind, that they think, that if it be really true, that there is no self-determining power in the will, as opposed to any such moral necessity, as I speak of, consisting in a certain connexion between motives and volitions, it is of a mischievous tendency to say any thing of it; and that it is best that the truth in this matter should not be known by any means. I cannot but be of an extremely different mind. On the contrary, I think that the notion of liberty, consisting in a contingent self-determination of the will, as necessary to the morality of men's dispositions and actions, is almost inconceivably pernicious; and that the contrary truth is one of the most important truths of moral philosophy, that ever was discussed, and most necessary to be known; and that for want of it, those schemes of morality and religion, which are a kind of infidel schemes, entirely diverse from the virtue and religion of the Bible, and wholly inconsistent with, and subversive of, the main things belonging to the gospel scheme, have so vastly and so long prevailed, and have stood in such strength. And I think, whoever imagines that he, or any body else, shall ever see the doctrines of grace effectually maintained against these adversaries, till the truth in this matter be settled, imagines a vain thing. For, allow these adversaries what they maintain in this point, and I think they have strict demonstration against us. And not only have these errors a most pernicious influence, in the public religious controversies that are maintained in the world; but such sort of notions have a more fatal influence many ways, on the minds of all ranks, in all transactions between God and their souls. The longer I live, and the more I have to do with the souls of men, in the work of the ministry, the more I see of this. Notions of this sort are one of the main hindrances of the success of the preaching of the word, and other means of grace, in the conversion of sinners. This especially appears, when the minds of sinners are affected with some concern for their souls, and they are stirred up to seek their salvation. Nothing is more necessary for men, in such circumstances, than thorough conviction and humiliation; than that their consciences should be properly convinced of their real guilt and sinfulness in the sight of God, and their deserving of his wrath. But who is there, that has had experience of the work of a minister, in dealing with souls in such circumstances, that does not find that the thing, that mainly prevents this, is men's excusing themselves with their own inability, and the moral necessity of those things, wherein their exceeding guilt and sinfulness in the sight of God most fundamentally and mainly consist: such as, living from day to day without one spark of true love to the God of infinite glory, and the fountain of all good; their having greater complacency in the little vile things of this world, than in him; their living in a rejection of Christ, with all his glorious benefits and dying love; and after all the exhibition of his glory and grace, having their hearts still as cold as a stone towards him; and their living in such ingratitude, for that infinite mercy of his laying down his life for sinners. They, it may be, think of some instances of lewd behaviour, lying, dishonesty, intemperance, profaneness, &c. But the grand principles of iniquity, constantly abiding and reigning, from whence all proceeds, are all overlooked. Conscience does not condemn them for those things, because they cannot love God of themselves, they cannot believe of themselves, and the

like. They rather lay the blame of these things, and their other reigning wicked dispositions of heart, to God, and secretly charge him with all the blame. These things are very much for want of being thoroughly instructed in that great and important truth, that a bad will, or an evil disposition of heart, itself, is wickedness. It is wickedness, in its very being, nature, and essence, and not merely the occasion of it, or the determining influence, that it was at first owing to. Some, it may be, will say, 'they own it is their fault that they have so bad a heart, that they have no love to God, no true faith in Christ, no gratitude to him, because they have been careless and slothful in times past, and have not used means to obtain a better heart, as they should have done.' And it may be, they are taught, 'that they are to blame for their wickedness of heart, because they, as it were, brought it on themselves, in Adam, by the sin which he voluntarily committed, which sin is justly charged to their account;' which perhaps they do not deny. But how far are these things from being a proper conviction of their wickedness, in their enmity to God and Christ. To be convinced of the sin of something that, long ago, was the occasion of their enmity to God; and to be convinced of the wickedness of the enmity itself; are quite two things. And if sinners, under some awakening, find the exercise of corruption of heart, as it appears in a great many ways; in their meditations, prayers, and other religious duties, and on occasion of their fears of hell, &c. &c.; still, this notion of their inability to help it, excusing them, will keep them from proper conviction of sin herein. Fears of hell tend to convince men of the hardness of their hearts. But then, when they find how hard their hearts are, and how far from a proper sensibility and affection in things of religion; they are kept from properly condemning themselves for it, from the moral necessity, or inability, which attends it. For the very notion of hardness of heart implies moral inability. The harder the heart is, the more dead is it in sin, and the more unable to exert good affections and acts. Thus the strength of sin is made the excuse for sin. And thus I have known many under fears of hell, justifying, or excusing, themselves, at least implicitly, in horrid workings of enmity against God, in blasphemous thoughts, &c.

It is of great importance, that they that are seeking their salvation, should be brought off from all dependence on their own righteousness; but these notions above all things prevent it. They justify themselves in the sincerity of their endeavours. They say to themselves, that they do what they can; they take great pains; and though there be great imperfection in what they do, and many evil workings of heart arise, yet these they cannot help: here moral necessity, or inability, comes in as an excuse. Things of this kind have visibly been the main hindrance of the true humiliation and conversion of sinners, in the times of awakening that have been in this land, every where, in all parts, as I have had opportunity to observe, in very many places. When the gospel is preached, and its offers and invitations and motives most powerfully urged, and some hearts stand out, here is their strong hold, their sheet-anchor. Were it not for this, they would either comply, or their hearts would condemn them for their horrid guilt in not complying. And if the law of God be preached in its strictness and spirituality, yet conscience is not properly convinced by it. They justify themselves with their inability; and the design and end of the law, as a school-master to fit them for Christ, is de-

feated. Thus both the law and the gospel are prevented from having their proper effect.

The doctrine of a self-determining will, as the ground of all moral good and evil, tends to prevent any proper exercises of faith in God and Christ, in the affair of our salvation, as it tends to prevent all dependence upon them. For, instead of this, it teaches a kind of absolute independence on all those things, that are of chief importance in this affair; our righteousness depending originally on our own acts, as self-determined. Thus our own holiness is from ourselves, as its determining cause, and its original and highest source. And as for imputed righteousness, that should have any merit at all in it, to be sure there can be no such thing. For self-determination is necessary to praise and merit. But what is imputed from another is not from our self-determination or action. And truly, in this scheme, man is not dependent on God; but God is rather dependent on man in this affair: for he only operates consequentially in acts, in which he depends on what he sees we determine and do first.

The nature of true faith implies a disposition to give all the glory of our salvation to God and Christ. But this notion is inconsistent with it, for it in effect gives the glory wholly to man. For that is the very doctrine that is taught, that the merit and praise is his, whose is the original and effectual determination of the praiseworthy deed. So that, on the whole, I think it must be a miracle, if ever men are converted that have imbibed such notions as these, and are under their influence in their religious concerns.

Yea, these notions tend effectually to prevent men's ever seeking after conversion, with any earnestness. It is manifest that men never will be in earnest in this matter, till their consciences are awakened, and they are made sensible of God's anger, and their danger of suffering the terrible effects of it. But that stupidity, which is opposed to this awakening, is upheld chiefly by these two things: their insensibility of their guilt, in what is past and present; and their flattering themselves, as to what is future. These notions of liberty of indifference, contingency, and self-determination, as essential to guilt or merit, tend to preclude all sense of any great guilt for past or present wickedness. As has been observed already, all wickedness of heart is excused, as what, in itself considered, brings no guilt. And all that the conscience has to recur to, to find any guilt, is the first wrong determination of the will, in some bad conduct, before that wickedness of heart existed, that was the occasion of introducing or confirming it. Which determination arose contingently from a state of indifference. And how small a matter does this at once bring men's guilt to, when all the main things, wherein their wickedness consists, are passed over. And indeed the more these principles are pursued, the more and more must guilt vanish, till at last it comes to nothing, as may easily be shown.

And with respect to self-flattery and presumption, as to what is future, nothing can possibly be conceived more directly tending to it, than a notion of liberty, at all times possessed, consisting in a power to determine one's own will to good or evil; which implies a power men have, at all times, to determine them to repent and turn to God. And what can more effectually encourage the sinner, in present delays and neglects, and embolden him to go on in sin, in a presumption of having



his own salvation at all times at his command? And this notion of self-determination and self-dependence, tends to prevent, or enervate, all prayer to God for converting grace; for why should men earnestly cry to God for his grace, to determine their hearts to that which they must be determined to of themselves. And indeed it destroys the very notion of conversion itself. There can properly be no such thing, or any thing akin to what the Scripture speaks of conversion, renovation of the heart, regeneration, &c. if growing good, by a number of self-determined acts, are all that is required, or to be expected.

Excuse me, Sir, for troubling you with so much on this head. I speak from the fulness of my heart. What I have long seen of the dreadful consequences of these prevalent notions every where, and what I am convinced will still be their consequences so long as they continue to prevail, fills me with concern. I therefore wish that the affair were more thoroughly looked into, and searched to the very bottom.

I have reserved a copy of this letter, and also of my other to you, dated July 25, intending to send them to Mr. Burr, to be by him conveyed, by the way of New York or Philadelphia. Looking on these letters as of special importance, I send duplicates, lest one copy should fail. The packet, in which I enclose this, I cover to Mr. Gillies, and send to Boston, to the care of Mr. Hyslop, to be conveyed to Mr. Gillies. But yet have desired him, if he has a more direct opportunity, to convey the packet to Edinburgh, by the way of London, then to put a wrapper over the whole, inscribed to you; and to write to you, desiring you to break open the packet, and take out the letters which belong to you.

You will see, Sir, something of our sorrowful state, on this side of the water, by my letter to Mr. M'Culloch. O, Sir, pray for us; and pray in particular, for

Your affectionate and obliged

Friend and brother,

JONATHAN EDWARDS."

## FOOTNOTES

1 See Appendix IV. In several of the articles under the head of Exceilency, the reader will find, if I mistake not, as striking specimens of powerful metaphysical reasoning, as any to be found in the Essay on the Freedom of the Will.

2 Bishop Butler has left a "Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue," which the curious reader will do well to examine in connexion with Mr. Edwards's "Dissertation on the Nature of True Virtue;" if he wishes to compare the powers of these two distinguished men, when endeavouring to grasp the same subject

3 Afterwards the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, D. D. President of Union College, Schenectady. He was familiarly acquainted with the Housatonnuck and the Iroquois; in early life, more so than with the English

4 The subjects treated of in this volume were, Attachment to objects of Distress. Law of Nature. Law of Necessity. Belief. Personal Identity. Authority of our Senses. Idea of Power. Knowledge of Future Events. Dread of Supernatural Powers in the Dark. Our knowledge of the Deity.

5 Soon after created a lord of session, with the title of Lord Kaimes.

6 See vol. i. pp. 89-93. Lord Kaimes had a much higher reputation, as a writer, fifty years ago than at present. The perusal of his Essay on Liberty and Necessity, and of the remarks upon it, in the letter of Mr. Edwards, here referred to, will inevitably lead to the conviction, that, as a metaphysician, he was neither accurate nor profound.

7 See Vol. I. pp. 89-93.

8 Essays on the principles of Morality and Natural Religion, by Lord Kaimes.

9 By Lord Kaimes.

10 See the letter in Vol. I. pp. 8

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A.M.  
by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER XXIV.

DEATH OF PRESIDENT BURR—HIS CHARACTER—MR. EDWARDS CHOSEN HIS SUCCESSOR—LETTERS OF MRS. BURR—TO A GENTLEMAN IN SCOTLAND—TO A GENTLEMAN IN BOSTON—TO HER MOTHER—LETTER OF MR. EDWARDS, TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE COLLEGE—LETTER OF MRS. BURR, TO HER FATHER—LETTER TO DR. BELLAMY—COUNCIL DISMISS MR. EDWARDS—INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT—FIRST SERMON AT PRINCETON—SICKNESS—DEATH—LETTER OF DR. SHIPPEN—LETTERS OF MRS. EDWARDS. AND OF HER DAUGHTER, TO MRS. BURR—DEATH OF MRS. BURR—DEATH OF MRS. EDWARDS.

THE Rev. Aaron Burr, president of the college at Princeton, and the son-in-law of Mr. Edwards, died, on the 24th of September, 1757, two days before the public commencement. He was a native of Fairfield, Connecticut, was born in 1716, and was graduated at Yale college in 1735. In 1738, he was ordained, as pastor of the Presbyterian church at Newark. In 1748, he was unanimously elected president of the college, as successor to Mr. Dickinson. Though possessed of a slender and delicate constitution, he joined, to uncommon talents for the despatch of business, a constancy of mind, that commonly secured to him success. The flourishing state of the college, at the time of his death, was chiefly owing to his great and assiduous exertions. Until the autumn of 1755, he discharged the duties, both of president and pastor of the church.[In the autumn of 1756, the college was removed to Princeton.] Mr. Burr was greatly respected, in every station and relation of life. He was a man of acknowledged talents, of sound, practical good sense, of unimpeachable integrity, and of ardent piety. Polished in his manners, he had uncommon powers in conversation, and possessed the happy art of inspiring all around him with cheerfulness. As a reasoner, he was clear and solid: and as a preacher, animated, judicious, fervent, and successful. He had warm affections, was greatly endeared to his family and friends, and was open, fair, and honourable in all his intercourse with mankind. During the period of his presidency, he secured the high esteem and confidence of all who were interested in the college.—In the latter part of July, or the beginning of August, being in a low state of health, he made a rapid and exhausting visit to Stockbridge, in a very hot, sultry season. He soon returned to Princeton, and went immediately to Elizabeth-

town; where, on the 19th of August, he made an attempt, before the legislature, to procure the legal exemption of the students from military duty. On the 21st, at Newark, being much indisposed, he preached an extemporaneous funeral sermon, in consequence of a death in the family of his successor. He then returned to Princeton, and, in a few days, went to Philadelphia, on the business of the college. On the way, his disorder took the form of an intermittent fever. On his return, he learned that his friend, Governor Belcher, died at Elizabethtown, on the 31st of August, and that he had been designated to preach the funeral sermon. His wife, perceiving his increasing illness, besought him to spare himself, and decline the undertaking; but he felt himself bound, if possible, to perform it. Having devoted the afternoon of Sept 2d, to the task of preparing the sermon, in the midst of a high fever, which was succeeded by delirium in the night, he rode the next day to Elizabethtown, about forty miles, and, on the 4th, in a state of extreme languor and exhaustion, when it was obvious to every one, that he ought to have been confined to a sick bed, he with great difficulty preached the sermon. He returned to Princeton the following day; and his disorder immediately assumed the character of a fixed and violent fever, seated on the nerves. At the approach of death, that gospel, which he had preached to others, gave him unfailing support. He was patient and resigned, and cheered with the liveliest hope at a happy immortality.

The corporation of the college met, two days after his death, and on the same day made choice of Mr. Edwards as his successor.

Some of the circumstances, connected with the sickness and death of her husband, are alluded to in the following letter from Mrs. Burr, to a gentleman in Scotland, written soon after Mr. Burr's decease.

“HONOURED SIR,

I flatter myself I shall not be thought intrusive, if I acknowledge, in a few lines, the receipt of your letter, dated in August, to my late dear husband, which reached me after he was beyond the reach of all mortal things. The affectionate regard that you express for one, who was dearer to me than my own life, was extremely affecting to me; nor can I forgive myself, if I neglect to acknowledge it, in terms of lively gratitude. You, Sir, had a large share, with me, in that dear good man's heart, which he often expressed, with the warmest affection. I thought it might not be improper, to lay your letter before the trustees, as they were then convened, and it chiefly concerned the college; and then I sent it to my honoured father, the Rev. Mr. Edwards, who is chosen to succeed my dear husband; which, I hope, will be grateful to the friends of the college, in Scotland. I here enclose you, Sir, the last attempt my dear husband made to serve God in public, and to do good to his fellow-creatures—a Sermon, that he preached at the funeral of our late excellent governor. You will not think it strange, if it has imperfections; when I tell you, that all he wrote on the subject, was done in a part of one afternoon and evening, when he had a violent fever on him, and the whole night after, he was irrational.

Give me leave to beg an interest in your prayers, at the throne of grace, for a poor, disconsolate widow, and two fatherless orphans. Please to present, with great respect, my kindest regard to your lady and daughters.

I am, honoured Sir,

Your most obliged and humble servant,

## ESTHER BURR."

The two following extracts from letters, written soon after the death of Mr. Burr, will show the strength of her own feelings, as well as her religious sentiments, and the exercises of her heart. The first is from a letter to a near friend of the family, in Boston.

"Your most kind letter of condolence gave me inexpressible delight, and at the same time set open afresh all the avenues of grief, and again probed the deep wound death has given me. My loss—Shall I attempt to say how great my loss is—God only can know—And to him alone would I carry my complaint.—Indeed, Sir, I have lost all that was or could be desirable in a creature.—I have lost all that ever I set my heart on in this world.—I need not enlarge on the innumerable amiable qualities of my late dear husband, to one that was so well acquainted with him, as you were; however pleasing it is to me to dwell on them.—Had not God supported me by these two considerations; first, by showing the right he has to his own creatures, to dispose of them when and in what manner he pleases; and secondly, by enabling me to follow him beyond the grave, into the eternal world, and there to view him in unspeakable glory and happiness, freed from all sin and sorrow; I should, long before this, have been sunk among the dead, and been covered with the clods of the valley.—God has wise ends in all that he doth. This thing did not come upon me by chance; and I rejoice that I am in the hands of such a God."

The other is from a letter to her mother, dated at Princeton, Oct. 7, 1757. After giving some account of Mr. Burr's death, and representing the sense she had of the greatness of the loss, which she and her children had sustained; she writes in the following words:

"No doubt, dear Madam, it will be some comfort to you to hear, that God has not utterly forsaken, although he has cast down. I would speak it to the glory of God's name, that I think he has, in an uncommon degree, discovered himself to be an all-sufficient God, a full fountain of all good. Although all streams were cut off, yet the fountain is left full.—I think I have been enabled to cast my care upon him, and have found great peace and calmness in my mind, such as this world cannot give nor take.—I have had uncommon freedom and nearness to the throne of grace. God has seemed sensibly near in such a supporting and comfortable manner, that I think I have never experienced the like. God has helped me to review my past and present mercies, with some heart-affecting degree of thankfulness.

I think God has given me such a sense of the vanity of the world, and uncertainty of all sublunary enjoyments, as I never had before. The world vanishes out at my sight! Heavenly and eternal things appear much more real and important than ever before. I feel myself to be under much greater obligations to be the Lord's, than before this sore affliction.—The way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, has appeared more clear and excellent; and I have been constrained to venture my all upon him; and have found great peace of soul in what I hope have been the actings of faith. Some parts of the Psalms have been very comforting and refreshing to my soul.—I hope God has helped me to eye

his hand, in this awful dispensation; and to see the infinite right he has to his own, and to dispose of them as he pleases.

Thus, dear Madam, I have given you some broken hints of the exercises and supports of my mind, since the death of him, whose memory and example will ever be precious to me as my own life. O, dear Madam! I doubt not but I have your and my honoured father's prayers daily for me; but give me leave to entreat you both, to request earnestly of the Lord, that I may never despise his chastenings, nor faint under this his severe stroke; of which I am sensible there is great danger, if God should only deny me the supports that he has hitherto graciously granted.

O, I am afraid I shall conduct myself so, as to bring dishonour on my God, and the religion which I profess! No, rather let me die this moment, than be left to bring dishonour on God's holy name.—I am overcome—I must conclude, with once more begging, that, as my dear parents remember themselves, they would not forget their greatly afflicted daughter, (now a lonely widow,) nor her fatherless children.—My duty to my ever dear and honoured parents, and love to my brothers and sisters.

From, dear madam,

Your dutiful and affectionate daughter,

ESTHER BURR."

"The news of his appointment to the presidency," says Dr. Hopkins, "was quite unexpected, and not a little surprising, to Mr. Edwards. He looked on himself in many respects, so unqualified for that business, that he wondered that gentlemen of so good judgment, and so well acquainted with him, as he knew some of the trustees were, should think of him for that place. He had many objections in his own mind, against undertaking the business, both from his unfitness and his particular circumstances; yet could not certainly determine that it was not his duty to accept it. The following extract of a letter which he wrote to the trustees, will give the reader a view of his sentiments and exercises on this occasion, as well as of the great designs he was deeply engaged in and zealously prosecuting"

*Stockbridge, Oct 19, 1757.*

REV. AND HON. GENTLEMEN,

I was not a little surprised on receiving the unexpected notice of your having made choice of me to succeed the late President Burr, as the Head of Nassau Hall.—I am much in doubt, whether I am called to undertake the business which you have done me the unmerited honour to choose me for.—If some regard may be had to my outward comfort, I might mention the many inconveniences and great detriment, which may be sustained by my removing with my numerous family, so far from all the estate I have in the world, (without any prospect of disposing of it, under present circumstances, but with great loss,) now when we have scarcely got over the trouble and damage sustained by our removal from Northampton, and have but just begun to have our affairs in a comfortable situation, for a subsistence in this place; and the expense I must immediately be at to put myself into circumstances tolerably comporting

with the needful support of the honours of the office I am invited to; which will not well consist with my ability.

But this is not my main objection. The chief difficulties in my mind, in the way of accepting this important and arduous office, are these two: First, my own defects unfitting me for such an undertaking, many of which are generally known; beside others of which my own heart is conscious.—I have a constitution, in many respects, peculiarly unhappy, attended with flaccid solids, vapid, sizy, and scarce fluids, and a low tide of spirits; often occasioning a kind of childish weakness and contemptibleness of speech, presence, and demeanour, with a disagreeable dulness and stiffness, much unfitting me for conversation, but more especially for the government of a college.—This makes me shrink at the thoughts of taking upon me, in the decline of life, such a new and great business, attended with such a multiplicity of cares, and requiring such a degree of activity, alertness, and spirit of government; especially as succeeding one so remarkably well qualified in these respects, giving occasion to every one to remark the wide difference. I am also deficient in some parts of learning, particularly in algebra, and the higher parts of mathematics, and the Greek classics; my Greek leaning having been chiefly in the New Testament.—The other thing is this; that my engaging in this business will not well consist with those views, and that course of employ in my study, which have long engaged and swallowed up my mind, and been the chief entertainment and delight of my life.

And here, honoured Sirs, (emboldened by the testimony I have now received of your unmerited esteem, to rely on your candour,) I will with freedom open myself to you.

My method of study, I from my first beginning the work of the ministry, has been very much by writing; applying myself, in this way, to improve every important hint; pursuing the clue to my utmost, when any thing in reading, meditation, or conversation, has been suggested to my mind, that seemed to promise light in any weighty point; thus penning what appeared to me my best thoughts, on innumerable subjects, for my own benefit.—The longer I prosecuted my studies in this method, the more habitual it became, and the more pleasant and profitable I found it.—The farther I travelled in this way, the more and wider the field opened, which has occasioned my laying out many things in my mind, to do this in manner, if God should spare my life, which my heart hath been much upon; particularly many things against most of the prevailing errors of the present day, which I cannot with any patience see maintained, (to the utter subverting of the gospel of Christ,) with so high a hand, and so long continued a triumph, with so little control, when it appears so evident to me, that there is truly no foundation for any of this glorying and insult. I have already published something on one of the main points in dispute between the Arminians and Calvinists; and have it in view, God willing, (as I have already signified to the public,) in like manner to consider all the other controverted points, and have done much towards a preparation for it.—But beside these, I have had on my mind and heart (which I long ago began, not with any view to publication) a great work, which I call a History of the Work of Redemption, a body of divinity in an entire new method, being thrown into the form of a history; considering the affair of Christian theology, as the whole of it, in each part, stands in reference to the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ; which I suppose to be, of all others, the grand design of God, and the

*sumum* and *ultimum* of all the divine operations and decrees; particularly considering all parts of the grand scheme, in their historical order.—The order of their existence, or their being brought forth to view, in the course of divine dispensations, or the wonderful series of successive acts and events; beginning from eternity, and descending from thence to the great work and successive dispensations of the infinitely wise God, in time; considering the chief events coming to pass in the church of God, and revolutions in the world of mankind, affecting the state of the church and the affair of redemption, which we have an account of in history or prophecy; till, at last, we come to the general resurrection, last judgment, and consummation of all things; when it shall be said, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.—Concluding my work, with the consideration of that perfect state of things, which shall be finally settled, to last for eternity.—This history will be carried on with regard to all three worlds, heaven, earth, and hell; considering the connected, successive events and alterations in each, so far as the Scriptures give any light; introducing all parts of divinity in that order which is most scriptural and most natural; a method which appears to me the most beautiful and entertaining, wherein every divine doctrine will appear to the greatest advantage, in the brightest light, in the most striking manner, showing the admirable contexture and harmony of the whole.

I have also, for my own profit and entertainment, done much towards another great work, which I call the Harmony of the Old and New Testament, in three parts. The first, considering the prophecies of the Messiah, his redemption and kingdom; the evidences of their references to the Messiah, &c. comparing them all one with another, demonstrating their agreement, true scope, and sense; also considering all the various particulars wherein those prophecies have their exact fulfilment; showing the universal, precise, and admirable correspondence between predictions and events. The second part, considering the types of the Old Testament, showing the evidence of their being intended as representations of the great things or the gospel of Christ; and the agreement of the type with the antitype. The third and great part, considering the harmony of the Old and New Testament, as to doctrine and precept. In the course of this work, I find there will be occasion for an explanation of a very great part of the Holy Scriptures; which may, in such a view, be explained in a method, which to me seems the most entertaining and profitable, best tending to lead the mind to a view of the true spirit, design, life, and soul of the Scriptures, as well as their proper use and improvement.—I have also many other things in hand, in some of which I have made great progress, which I will not trouble you with an account of. Some of these things, if Divine Providence favour, I should be willing to attempt a publication of. So far as I myself am able to judge of what talents I have, for benefiting my fellow-creatures by word, I think I can write better than I can speak.

My heart is so much in these studies, that I cannot find it in my heart to be willing to put myself into an incapacity to pursue them any more in the future part of my life, to such a degree as I must, if I undertake to go through the same course of employ, in the office of president, that Mr. Burr did, instructing in all the languages, and taking the whole care of the instruction of one of the classes, in all parts of learning, besides his other labours. If I should see light to determine me to accept the place offered me, I should be willing to take upon me the work of a president, so far as it consists in the general in-



spection of the whole society; and to be subservient to the school, as to their order and methods or study and instruction, assisting, myself, in the immediate instruction in the arts and sciences, (as discretion should direct, and occasion serve, and the state of things require,) especially of the senior class; and added to all, should be willing to do the whole work of a professor of divinity, in public and private lectures, proposing questions to be answered, and some to be discussed in writing and free conversation, in meetings of graduates, and others, appointed in proper seasons, for these ends. It would be now out of my way, to spend time in a constant teaching of the languages; unless it be the Hebrew tongue; which I should be willing to improve myself in, by instructing others.

On the whole, I am much at a loss, with respect to the way of duty, in this important affair: I am in doubt, whether, if I should engage in it, I should not do what both you and I would be sorry for afterwards. Nevertheless, I think the greatness of the affair, and the regard due to so worthy and venerable a body, as that of the trustees of Nassau Hall, requires my taking the matter into serious consideration, And unless you should appear to be discouraged, by the things which I have now represented, as to any further expectation from me, I shall proceed to ask advice, of such as I esteem most wise, friendly, and faithful; if, after the mind of the commissioners in Boston is known, it appears that they consent to leave me at liberty, with respect to the business they have employed me in here.”

Soon after the death of President Burr, Mr. Edwards addressed a letter to his greatly afflicted daughter, fraught with all the affectionate instruction and consolation which such a father could impart.[Unfortunately this letter is lost.] To this she returned the following answer:

“To the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, Stockbridge

*Princeton, Nov. 2, 1757.*

To my ever honoured father.

HONOURED SIR,

Your most affectionate, comforting letter, by my brother Parsons, was exceeding refreshing to me; although I was somewhat damped by hearing, that I should not see you until spring.[When Mr. Edwards wrote the letter to which she refers, he did not think of going to Princeton till Spring; but he afterwards determined otherwise.] But it is my comfort in this disappointment, as well as under all my affliction, that God knows what is best for me, and for his own glory. Perhaps I counted too much on the company, and conversation, of such a near and dear affectionate father and guide. I cannot doubt but all is for the best; and I am satisfied that God should order the affair of your removal, as shall be for his glory, whatever becomes of me.

Since I wrote my mother a letter, God has carried me through new trials, and given me new supports. My little son has been sick with a slow fever, ever since my brother left us, and has been brought to the brink of the grave; but, I hope in mercy, God is bringing him back again. I was enabled after a severe struggle with nature, to resign the child with the greatest freedom. God showed me that the children were not my own, but his, and that he had a right to recall what he had lent, whenever he thought fit; and that I had no reason to

complain, or say that God was hard with me. This silenced me. But O how good is God. He not only kept me from complaining, but comforted me, by enabling me to offer up my child by faith, if ever I acted faith. I saw the fulness there was in Christ for little infants, and his willingness to accept of such as were offered to him. 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,' were comforting words. God also showed me, in such a lively manner, the fulness there was in himself of all spiritual blessings, that I said, 'Although all streams were cut off, yet so long as my God lives, I have enough.' He enabled me to say, 'Although thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee.' In this time of trial, I was led to enter into a renewed and explicit covenant with God, in a more solemn manner than ever before; and with the greatest freedom and delight, after much self-examination and prayer, I did give myself and my children to God, with my whole heart. Never, until then, had I an adequate sense of the privilege we are allowed in covenanting with God. This act of soul left my mind in a great calm, and steady trust in God. A few days after this, one evening, in talking of the glorious state my dear departed husband must be in, my soul was carried out in such large desires after that glorious state, that I was forced to retire from the family to conceal my joy. When alone I was so transported, and my soul carried out in such eager desires after perfection and the full enjoyment of God, and to serve him uninterruptedly, that I think my nature would not have borne much more. I think, dear Sir, I had that night a foretaste of heaven. This frame continued, in some good degree, the whole night. I slept but little, and when I did, my dreams were all of heavenly and divine things. Frequently since, I have felt the same in kind, though not in degree. This was about the time that God called me to give up my child. Thus a kind and gracious God has been with me, in six troubles and in seven.

But O, Sir, what cause of deep humiliation and abasement of soul have I, on account of remaining corruption, which I see working continually in me, especially pride. O, how many shapes does pride cloak itself in. Satan is also busy, shooting his darts. But blessed be God, those temptations of his, that used to overthrow me, as yet have not touched me. I will just hint at one or two, if I am not tedious as to length.—When I was about to renew my covenant with God, the suggestion seemed to arise in my mind, 'It is better you should not renew it, than break it when you have: what a dreadful thing it will be, if you do not keep it!' My reply was, 'I did not do it in my own strength.' Then the suggestion would return, 'How do you know that God will help you to keep it.' But it did not shake me in the least.—Oh, to be delivered from the power of Satan, as well as sin! I cannot help hoping the time is near. God is certainly fitting me for himself; and when I think that it will be soon that I shall be called hence, the thought is transporting.

I am afraid I have tired out your patience, and will beg leave only to add my need of the earnest prayers of my dear and honoured parents, and all good people, that I may not at last be a castaway; but that God would constantly grant me new supplies of divine grace. I am tenderly concerned for my dear brother Timothy, but I hope his sickness will not be unto death, but for the glory of God.—Please to give my duty to my honoured mother, and my love to all my brothers and sisters.

I am, honoured and dear Sir,

With the greatest respect,  
Your affectionate and dutiful daughter,

ESTHER BURR.”

While Mr. Edwards was in a state of suspense alluded to in his letter to the trustees of the college, he determined to ask the advice of a number of gentlemen in the ministry, on whose judgment and friendship he could rely, and to act accordingly. One of those invited, on this occasion, was his old and faithful friend, and former pupil, Mr. Bellamy, of Bethlem: to whom, having received from him, on the last day of November, two letters, dated on the 12th and 17th of that month, he returned, on the next day, the following answer; which, while it refers to the subject of the council, shows also, in a very striking manner, with what ease and readiness he could throw a clear and certain light on any dark and difficult passage of the word of God.

“*Stockbridge, Dec. 1, 1757.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Yesterday I received your two letters, of the 12th and 17th of Nov.; but I saw and heard nothing of Mr. Hill. I thank you for your concern, that I may be useful in the world.—I lately wrote you a letter, informing you of our choice of a council, to sit here on the 21st of this month; and enclosed in it a letter missive to Mr. Brinsmade, who as one of the council. I hope, before this time, you have received it. Don’t fail of letting me see you here; for I never wanted to see you more.

As to the question you ask, about Christ’s argument, in John x. 34-36. I observe,

*First*, That it is not all princes of the earth, who are called gods, in the Old Testament; but only the princes of Israel, who ruled over God’s people. The princes, who are called gods, in here referred to, are, in the same sentence, distinguished from the princes of the nations of the world. ‘I have said, Ye are gods; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.’

*Secondly*, That the reason why these princes of Israel were called gods, was, that they, as the rulers and judges of God’s Israel, were types and figures of Him, who is the true King of the Jews, and the Prince of God’s people, who is to rule over the house of Jacob for ever, the Prince and Saviour of God’s church, or spiritual Israel, gathered from all nations of the earth; who is God indeed. The throne of Israel, or of God’s people, properly belonged to Christ. He only was the proper Heir to that throne; and therefore, the princes of Israel are said to sit upon the throne of the Lord, 1 Chron. xxix. 23; and the kingdom of Israel, under the kings of the house of David, is called the kingdom of the Lord 2 Chron. xiii. 8 And because Christ took the throne, as the Antitype of those kings, therefore he is said, Luke i. 32. to sit upon their throne.—Thus, the princes of Israel, in the Psal. 82 are called gods, and sons of God, or ‘all of them children of the Most High;’ being appointed types and remarkable representations of the true Son of God, and in him of the true God. They were called gods, and sons of God, in the same manner as the Levitical sacrifices were called an atonement for sin, and in the same manner as the manna was

called the bread of heaven, and angels' food. These things represented, and, by special divine designation, were figures of, the true Atonement, and of Him who was the true Bread of heaven, and the true angels food; in the same sense as Saul, the person especially pointed out in the Psal. 82, is called 'the Lord's anointed,' or (as in the original) Messiah, or Christ, which are the same. And it is to be observed, that these typical gods, and judges of Israel, are particularly distinguished from the true God, and true Judge, in the next sentence. Psal. lxxxii. 8 'Arise, o god, thou judge of the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations.'—This is a wish for the coming of that King, that should reign in righteousness, and judge righteously; who was to inherit the Gentiles, as well as the Jews; and the words, as they stand in connexion with the two preceding verses, import thus much—'As to you, the temporal princes and judges of Israel, you are called gods, and sons of God, being exalted to the place of kings, judges, and saviours of God's people, the kingdom and heritage of Christ; but you shall die like men, and fall like other princes; whereby it appears that you are truly no gods, nor any one of you the true Son of God, which your injustice and oppression also shows. But oh, that He who is truly God, the Judge of the earth, the true and just Judge and Saviour, who is to be King over Gentiles as well as Jews, would come and reign!'—It is to be observed, that when it is said in this verse—'Arise, O God'—the word rendered God, is Elohim—the same used in Psal. lxxxii. 6, 'I have said, Ye are gods,'—I have said, Ye are *elohim*.

*Thirdly*, As to the words of Christ, in John x. 35 'If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came,' I suppose that, by the word of God coming to these princes of Israel, is meant, their being set forth by special and express divine designation, to be types or figurative significations of God's mind. Those things which God had appointed to be types, to signify the mind of God, were a visible word. Types are called the word of the Lord—as in Zech. xi. 10, 11, and in Zech. iv. 4-6.—The word of God came to the princes of Israel, both as they, by God's ordering, became subjects of a typical representation of a divine thing, which was a visible word of God; and also, as this was done by express divine designation, as they were marked out to this end, by an express, audible, and legible word, as in Exod. xxii. 28 and Psal. lxxxii 1, and besides, the thing, of which they were appointed types, was Christ, who is called 'the word of God'—Thus, the word of God came to Jacob, as a type of Christ, 1 Kings xviii. 31. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Jacob, unto whom the word of the lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name'—The word Israel is prince of god:—Jacob being, by that express divine designation, appointed as a type of Christ, the true Prince of God, (who is called, in Isa. xlix 3, by the name of Israel,) in his prevailing in his wrestling with God, to save himself and his family from destruction by Esau, who was then coming against him, and obtaining the blessing for himself and his seed.—Now,

*Fourthly*, Christ's argument lies in these words, The Scripture cannot be broken That word of God, by which they are called gods, as types of Him who is truly God, must be verified, which they cannot be, unless the Antitype be truly God.—They are so called, as types of the Messiah, or of the Anointed One, (which is the same,) or the Sanctified or Holy One, or Him that was to be sent; which were all known names among the Jews for the Messiah. (See Dan. ix. 24, 25. Psal. lxxxix. 19, 20. Psal. xvi. 10. John ix. 7.) But it was on this ac-

count, that those types or images of the Messiah were called gods, because He, whom they represented, was God indeed. If he were not God, the word by which they were called gods could not be verified, and must be broken. As the word, by which the legal sacrifices were called an atonement, and are said to atone for sin, was true in no other sense, than as they had relation to the sacrifice of Christ the true atonement. If Christ's sacrifice had not truly atoned for sin; the word, which called the types or representations of it an atonement, could not be verified. So, if Jesus Christ had not been the true Bread from heaven, and angels' food indeed; the scripture which called the type of him, the bread from heaven, and angels' food, would not have been verified, but would have been broken.

These, Sir, are my thoughts on John x. 34. &c.

I am yours, most affectionately,

J. EDWARDS."

"*P. S. Dec. 5.*—The opportunity for the conveyance of my letters to the ministers chosen to be of the council, your way, not being very good, I here send other letters, desiring you to take the charge of conveying them with all possible care and speed."

The gentlemen invited to the council, at his desire, and that of his people, met at Stockbridge, January 4, 1758; [I have ascertained the names of only three of the members of the council—Mr. Bellamy, Mr. Brinsmade, and Mr. Hopkins. This date is right, though it differs from that mentioned in the letter to Mr. Bellamy.] and, having heard the application of the agents of the college, and their reasons in support of it; [The agents of the college were Rev. Messrs. Caleb Smith and John Brainerd.] Mr. Edwards's own representation of the matter; and what his people had to say, by way of objection, against his removal; determined that it was his duty to accept of the invitation to the presidency of the college. When they published their judgment and advice to Mr. Edwards and his people, he appeared uncommonly moved and affected with it, and fell into tears on the occasion, which was very unusual for him, in the presence of others; and soon after, he said to the gentlemen who had given their advice, that it was matter of wonder to him, that they could so easily, as they appeared to do, get over the objections he had made against his removal. [The council, at the request both of the English and Indian congregations at Stockbridge, addressed a letter to the commissioners in Boston, requesting that the Rev. John Brainerd might be appointed Mr. Edwards's successor;—the Housatonnucks offering land for a settlement to the Indian congregation at Cranberry, New Jersey, if they would remove to Stockbridge;—and another letter to the trustees of the college, requesting that they would use their collective and individual influence, to procure the appointment of Mr. Brainerd, and his removal to Stockbridge.] But, as he thought it his duty to be directed by their advice, he should now endeavour cheerfully to undertake it, believing he was in the way of his duty.

"Accordingly, having had, by the application of the trustees of the college, the consent of the commissioners of the 'Society in London, for Propagating the Gospel, in New England and the Parts adjacent,' to resign their mission; he girded up his loins, and set off from Stockbridge for Princeton, in January. He left his family at Stockbridge, not to be removed till the spring. He had two

daughters at Princeton; Mrs. Burr, and Lucy, his eldest daughter that was unmarried. His arrival at Princeton was to the great satisfaction and joy of the college. And indeed all the greatest friends of the college, and to the interests of religion, were highly satisfied and pleased with the appointment.”

It was a singular fact, that, soon after his arrival at Princeton, he heard the melancholy tidings of the death of his father. It occurred on the 27th of January, 1758, in the 89th year of his age.

“The corporation met as soon as could be with convenience, after his arrival at the college, when he was by them fixed in the president’s chair. While at Princeton, before his sickness, he preached in the college-hall, sabbath after sabbath, to the great acceptance of the hearers; [The first sermon which he reached at Princeton was on the unchangeableness of Christ in Vol. I . P. 949. It was upwards of two hours in the delivery; but is said to have been listened to with such profound attention, and deep interest, by the audience that they were unconscious of the lapse of time, and surprised that it closed so soon.] but did nothing as president, unless it was to give out some questions in divinity to the senior class, to be answered before him; each one having opportunity to study and write what he thought proper upon them. When they came together to answer them, they found so much entertainment and profit by it, especially by the light and instruction Mr. Edwards communicated, in what he said upon the questions, when they had delivered what they had to say, that they spoke of it with the greatest satisfaction and wonder.

“During this time, Mr. Edwards seemed to enjoy an uncommon degree of the presence of God. He told his daughters he once had great exercise, concern, and fear, relative to his engaging in that business; but since it now appeared, so far as he could see, that he was called of God to that place and work, he did cheerfully devote himself to it, leaving himself and the event with God to order what seemed to him good.

“The small-pox had now become very common in the country, and was then at Princeton, and likely to spread. And as Mr. Edwards had never had it, and inoculation was then practised with great success in those parts, he proposed to be inoculated, if the physician should advise to it, and the corporation would give their consent. Accordingly, by the advice of the physician, and the consent of the corporation, he was inoculated February 13th. He had it favourably, and it was thought all danger was over; but a secondary fever set in and, by reason of a number of pustules in his throat, the obstruction was such, that the medicines necessary to check the fever could not be administered. It therefore raged till it put an end to his life, on the 22d of March, 1758, in the 55th year of his age.

“After he was sensible that he could not survive that sickness, a little before his death, he called his daughter to him, who attended him in his sickness, and addressed her in a few words, which were immediately taken down in writing, as near as could be recollected, and are as follows:—‘Dear Lucy, It seems to me to be the will of God, that I must shortly leave you; therefore give my kindest love to my dear wife, and tell her, that the uncommon union, which has so long subsisted between us, has been of such a nature, as I trust is spiritual, and therefore will continue for ever: and I hope she will be supported under so great a trial, and submit cheerfully to the will of God. And as to my children, you are now like to be left fatherless; which I hope will be an inducement to you all, to seek a Father who will never fail you. And as to my funeral, I would have it to be like Mr. Burr’s; and any additional sum of money, that might be expected to be laid out that way, I would have it dis-

posed of to charitable uses.’ [President Burr ordered, on his death-bed that his funeral should not be attended with pomp and cost; that nothing should be expended but what was agreeable to the dictates of christian decency; and that the sum which must be expended at a fashionable funeral, above the necessary cost of a decent one, should be given to the poor, out of his estate.]

“He said but very little in his sickness; but was an admirable instance of patience and resignation, to the last. Just at the close of his life, as some persons, who stood by, expecting he would breathe his last in a few minutes, were lamenting his death, not only as a great frown on the college, but as having a dark aspect on the interest of religion in general; to their surprise, not imagining that he heard, or ever would speak another word, he said, ‘Trust in God, and ye need not fear.’ These were his last words. What could have been more suitable to the occasion? And what need of more? In these there is as much matter of instruction and support, as if he had written a volume. This was the only consolation to his bereaved friends, deeply sensible as they were of the loss which they and the church of Christ had sustained in his death: **GOD IS ALL SUFFICIENT, AND STILL HAS THE CARE OF HIS CHURCH.** [The reader may wish to see the notice taken of the death of Mr. Edwards at the time when it occurred. The following is the account of it, in the Boston Gazette of April 10, 1750.—“On Wednesday, the 22d of last month, died, by inoculation at Nassau Hall, an eminent servant of God the Rev. pious, Mr. Jonathan Edwards. president of the college of New Jersey; a gentleman of distinguished abilities, and a heavenly temper of mind: a most rational, generous catholic and exemplary Christian admixed by all who knew him. for his uncommon candour and disinterested benevolence; a pattern of temperance, meekness, patience, and chant ; always steady, calm, and serene; a very judicious and instructive preacher, and a most excellent divine. And as he lived, cheerfully resigned to the will of Heaven so he died, or rather, as the Scriptures emphatically express it, with respect to good men *he fell asleep* in Jesus, without the least appearance of pain.”]

“He appeared to have the uninterrupted use of his reason to the last, and died with as much calmness and composure, to all appearance, as that with which one goes to sleep.”

The physician, who inoculated and constantly attended him, in his sickness, addressed the following letter to Mrs. Edwards, on this occasion:

“To Mrs. Sarah Edwards, Stockbridge.

*Princeton, March 22, 1758.*

MOST DEAR AND VERY WORTHY MADAM,

I am heartily sorry for the occasion of writing to you, by this express, but I know you have been informed, by a line from your excellent, lovely, and pious husband, that I was brought here to inoculate him, and your dear daughter Esther, and her children, for the small-pox, which was then spreading fast in Princeton; and that, after the most deliberate and serious consultation, with his nearest and most religious friends, he was accordingly inoculated with them, the 23rd of last month; and although he had the smallpox favourably, yet, having a number of them in the roof of his mouth and throat, he could not possibly swallow a sufficient quantity of drink, to keep off a secondary fever, which has proved too strong for his feeble frame; and this afternoon, between two and three o’clock, it pleased God to let him sleep in that dear Lord Jesus, whose kingdom and interest he has been faithfully and painfully serving all his life. And never did any mortal man more fully and clearly evidence the sincer-

ity of all his professions, by one continued, universal, calm, cheerful resignation, and patient submission to the Divine will, through every stage of his disease, than he; not so much as one discontented expression, nor the least appearance of murmuring, through the whole. And never did any person expire with more perfect freedom from pain;—not so much as one distorted hair—but in the most proper sense of the word; he fell asleep. Death had certainly lost its sting, as to him.

Your daughter, Mrs. Burr, and her children, through the mercy of God, are safely over the disease, and she desires me to send her duty to you, the best of mothers. She has had the small-pox the heaviest of all whom I have inoculated, and little Sally far the lightest; she has but three in her face. I am sure it will prove serviceable to her future health.

I conclude, with my hearty prayer, dear Madam, that you may be enabled to look to that God, whose love and goodness you have experienced a thousand times, for direction and help, under this most afflictive dispensation of his providence, and under every other difficulty, you may meet with here, in order to your being more perfectly fitted for the joys of heaven hereafter.

I am, dear Madam,

Your most sympathizing

And affectionate friend,

And very humble servant,

WILLIAM SHIPPEN.”

This letter reached Mrs. Edwards while in a feeble state of health, when she was preparing to pay a visit, first to her sister, Mrs. Hopkins, at West Springfield, and then to her mother, Mrs. Edwards, of Windsor, in consequence of the death of Mr. Edwards’s father. What her feelings were, and those of her family, under this unexpected and overwhelming dispensation, can be more easily conceived than described.

“She had long told her intimate friends, that she had, after long struggles and exercises, obtained, by God’s grace, an habitual willingness to die herself, or part with any of her most near relatives. That she was willing to bring forth children for death; and to resign up him, whom she esteemed so great a blessing to her and her family, her nearest partner, to the stroke of death, whenever God should see fit to take him. And when she had the greatest trial, in the death of Mr. Edwards, she found the help and comfort of such a disposition. Her conduct on this occasion was such as to excite the admiration of her friends; it discovered that she was sensible of the great loss, which she and her children had sustained in his death; and, at the same time, showed that she was quiet and resigned, and had those invisible supports, which enabled her to trust in God with quietness, hope, and humble joy.”

A few days afterwards, she addressed the following letter to Mrs. Burr.

*“Stockbridge, April 3, 1758.*

MY VERY DEAR CHILD,

What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod, and lay our hands on our mouths! The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness, that we had him so long. But my



God lives: and he has my heart. O what a legacy my husband, and your father, has left us! We are all given to God; and there I am, and love to be.

Your ever affectionate mother,  
SARAH EDWARDS”

On the same sheet was the following letter from one of her daughters.

“MY DEAR SISTER, WILLIAM SHIPPEN.”

My mother wrote this with a great deal of pain in her neck, which disabled her from writing any more. She thought you would be glad of these few lines from her own hand.

O, sister, how many calls have we, one upon the back of another? O, I beg your prayers, that we, who are young in this family, may be awakened and excited to call more earnestly on God, that he would be our Father, and Friend for ever.

My father took leave of all his people and family as affectionately as if he knew he should not come again. On the sabbath afternoon he preached from these words,—We have no continuing city, therefore let us seek one to come. The chapter that he read was Acts the 20<sup>th</sup>. O, how proper; what could he have done more? When he had got out of doors he turned about,—‘I commit you to God,’—said he.—I doubt not but God will take a fatherly care of us, if we do not forget him.

I am your affectionate sister,  
SUSANNAH EDWARDS.

*Stockbridge, April 3, 1758.”*

“Mrs. Burr and her children were inoculated at the same time that her father was, and had recovered when he died. But after she was perfectly recovered, to all appearance, she was suddenly seized with a violent disorder, which carried her off in a few days; and which, the physician said, he could call by no name, but that of a messenger, sent suddenly, to call her out of the world. She died April 7, 1758, sixteen days after her father, in the 27th year of her age. She was married to Mr. Burr June 29, 1752. They had two children, a son and a daughter.

“Mrs. Burr exceeded most of her sex in the beauty of her person, as well as in her behaviour and conversation. She discovered an unaffected, natural freedom, towards persons of all ranks, with whom she conversed. Her genius was much more than common. She had a lively, sprightly imagination, a quick and penetrating discernment, and a good judgment. She possessed an uncommon degree of wit and vivacity; which yet was consistent with pleasantness and good nature; and she knew how to be facetious and sportive, without trespassing on the bounds of decorum, or of strict and serious religion. In short, she seemed formed to please, and especially to please one of Mr. Burr’s taste and character, in whom he was exceedingly happy. But what crowned all her ex-

cellencies, and was her chief glory, was RELIGION. She appeared to be the subject of divine impressions, when seven or eight years old; and she made a public profession of religion, when about fifteen. Her conversation, until her death, was exemplary, as becometh godliness"—She was, in every respect, an ornament to her sex, being equally distinguished for the suavity of her manners, her literary accomplishments, and her unfeigned regard to religion. Her religion did not cast a gloom over her mind, but made her cheerful and happy, and rendered the thought of death transporting. She left a number of manuscripts, on interesting subjects, and it was hoped they would have been made public; but they are now lost.

Mrs. Edwards did not long survive her husband. In September she set out, in good health, on a journey to Philadelphia, to take care of her two orphan grand-children, which were now in that city; and had been, since the death of Mrs. Burr. As they had no relations in those parts, Mrs. Edwards proposed to take them into her own family. She arrived there, by the way of Princeton, Sept 21, in good health, having had a comfortable journey. But, in a few days, she was seized with a violent dysentery, which, on the fifth day, put an end to her life, October 2d 1738, in the 49th year of her age. She said not much in her sickness; being exercised, most of the time, with violent pain. On the morning of the day she died, she apprehended her death was near, when she expressed her entire resignation to God, and her desire that he might be glorified in all things; and that she might be enabled to glorify him to the last: and continued in such a temper, calm and resigned, till she died.

Her remains were carried to Princeton, and deposited with those of Mr. Edwards. Thus they who were in their lives remarkably lovely and pleasant, in their death were not much divided. Here, the father and mother, the son and daughter, were laid together in the grave, within the space of a little more than a year; though a few months before their dwelling was more than 150 miles apart:—two presidents of the same college, and their consorts, than whom it will doubtless be hard to find four persons more valuable and useful!

By these repeated strokes, following in quick succession, the American church, within a few months, sustained a loss, which probably, in so short a space of time, will never be equalled.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwards lived together, in the married state, above thirty years; in which time they had eleven children, three sons and eight daughters. The second daughter died Feb. 14, 1748. The third daughter was Mrs. Burr. The youngest daughter, Elizabeth, died soon after her parents.

The trustees of the college erected a marble monument over the grave of Mr. Edwards, which has the following inscription:

M. S.  
Reverendi admodum Viri,  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.  
Collegii Novæ Cæsariæ Præsidis.  
Natusapud Windsor Connecticutensium V. Octobris.  
a. d. mdcciii, s. v.  
Patre Reverendo Timotheo Edwards oriundus,  
Collegio Yalensi educatus;

Apud Northampton Sacris initiatus, xv Februarii,  
mdccxxvi-vii.  
Illinc dimissus xxii Junii, mdcccl  
Et Munus Barbaros instituendi accepit.  
Præses Aulæ Nassovicæ creatus xvi Februarii.  
mdccclviii.  
Defunctus in hoc Vico XXII Martii sequentis, S.N.  
Ætatis LV, heu nimis brevis!  
Hic jacet mortalis pars.  
Qualis Persona quæris, Viator?  
Vir Corpore procero, sed gracili,  
Studiis intensissimus, Abstinencia, et Sedulitate,  
Attentiato.  
Ingenii acumine, Judicio acri, et Prudentiâ,  
Secundus Nemini Mortalium.  
Artium liberalium et Scientiarum peritia insignis,  
Critacorum sacrorum optimus, Theologus eximius,  
Ut vix alter æqualis; Disputator candidus;  
Fidei Christianæ Propugnator validus et invictus;  
Conconiator gravis, serius, discriminans;  
Et, Deo ferente, Successu  
Felicissimus.  
Pietate præclarus, Moribus suis severus,  
Ast aliis æquus et benignus.  
Vixit dilectus, veneratus—  
Sed, ah! lugendus  
Moriebatur.  
Quantos Gemitus discedens ciebat!  
Heu Sapientia tanta! heu Doctrina et Religio!  
Amissum plorat Collegium, plorat et Ecclesia:  
At, eo recepto, gaudet  
  
Cælum.  
Abi, Viator, et pia sequere Vestigia.

MEMOIR  
of  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A.M.  
by  
Serenio E. Dwight

Revised & Corrected  
by  
Edward Hickman

FIRST PUBLISHED 1834

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

THE writer of the preceding pages regrets, at least as sincerely as any of his readers, that the collection of facts, which they contain, is not more full and complete; yet, in consequence of the long interval which has elapsed since the death of President Edwards, they are all, which after much time, and labour, and travel, he has been able to discover. Such as they are, they constitute, with his writings body of materials from which we are to form our estimate of his character, as an intelligent and moral being.

In reviewing them, it is delightful to remember, in the outset, that so far as the human eye could judge, the individuals of both the families from which he derived his descent, were, as far back as we can trace them, distinguished for their piety. Each married pair, in both lines, with that care and conscientiousness which so generally marked the pilgrims of New England, and their puritan ancestors, trained up their children in the fear of God, and continued through life to supplicate daily the divine favour on them and their descendants, in all succeeding generations. Their prayers, ascending separately and successively indeed, were yet embodied in their influence, and from Him, who “showeth mercy to thousands of generations of them that love him, and keep his commandments,” called down concentrated blessings on their common offspring. So full, so rich were these blessings, as bestowed on the subject of this Memoir, that, perhaps, no one example on record furnishes a stronger encouragement to parents, to wrestle with God for the holiness and the salvation of their posterity.

It was owing to the moral influence thus exerted, and to the divine favour thus secured, that when we review the childhood and youth of Mr. Edwards, we find them not only passing without a stain upon his memory, but marked by a purity and excellence rarely witnessed at so early a period of life. The religious impressions made upon his mind in childhood, were certainly frequent, deep, and of long continuance, and had a powerful effect upon his ultimate character; yet the estimate formed of their real nature by different persons will probably be different. His own estimate of them was, unquestionably, that they were not the result of real religion.

The circumstances which led him to this conclusion, were these two:—First, That, after he had cherished the hope of his own conversion, for a considerable period, and had experienced a high degree of joy, in what he regarded as communion with God, he lost imperceptibly this spirituality of mind, relinquished for a season the “constant performance” of the practice of secret prayer, and cherished many affections of a worldly and sinful character:—Secondly, That when he recovered from this state of declension, his views of divine truth, particularly those connected with the sovereignty of God, were in many respects new, and far more clear and delightful than any which he had previously formed.

Without calling in question the fact, that a given individual has, on some accounts, decidedly superior advantages for judging of his own Christian character, than others enjoy; and without presuming to decide on the correctness of the estimate, thus formed by Mr. Edwards; it may not be improper to state various circumstances, which lead me to suspect, that it may perhaps have been erroneous. 1. The declension, of which he complains, appears to have been chiefly, or wholly, a declension in the state of the affections. 2. Those impressions began when he was seven or eight years of age, and were so powerful and lasting, as to render religion the great object of attention, for a number of years. As made on the mind of such a child, they were very remarkable, even if we suppose them to have resulted in piety. 3. The season of his declension commenced soon after his admission to college, when he was twelve years of age. That a truly pious child, in consequence of leaving his early religious connexions and associations, and especially the altar and the incense of the parental sanctuary; of removing to a new place of residence, of entering on a new course of life, of forming new acquaintances and attachments, of feeling the strong attractions of study, and the powerful incentives of ambition, and of being exposed to the new and untried temptations of a public seminary; should, for a season, so far decline from his previous spirituality, as to lose all hope of his own conversion, is so far from being a surprising event, that, in ordinary cases, it is perhaps to be expected. Piety, at its commencement in the mind, is usually feeble; and especially is it so, in the mind of a child. How often are similar declensions witnessed, even at a later age. Yet the subject of such backsliding, though, during its continuance, he may well renounce the hope of his conversion, does not usually regard the period of his recovery as the commencement of his Christian life.—4. He had not, at this period, made a public profession of religion; and, of course, was not restrained from such declension by his own covenant, by communion with Christians, or by the consciousness, that, as a visible Christian, his faults were subjected to the inspection and the censure of the surrounding world. 5. Though charitable in judging others, he was at least equally severe in judging himself. 6. He appears, at a very early period, to have formed views of the purity of the Christian character—of the degree of freedom from sin, and of the degree of actual holiness, requisite to justify the hope of conversion—altogether more elevated in their nature, than the truth will warrant. 7. That his views of divine truth—particularly of the sovereignty of God—should have opened, after the age of twelve, with so much greater clearness and beauty, as to appear wholly new, was to have been expected from the nature of the case. 8. At a subsequent period, when his mind was incessantly occupied by the unusual perplexities of his tutorship, he complained of a similar declension. 9. The purity, strength,

and comprehensiveness of his piety, as exhibited immediately after his public profession of Christianity, was so much superior to what is frequently witnessed, in Christians of an advanced standing, as almost to force upon us the conviction that it commenced—not a few months before, at the time of his supposed conversion, but—at a much earlier period of life. Rare indeed is the fact, that holiness is not, at its commencement in the soul, “as a grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds;” and though in the rapidity of its growth, it differs widely in different soils, yet time is indispensably necessary, before its fruits can cover the full-grown plant, like the clusters on the vine.—These considerations, and particularly the last, have led me to believe, that the early religious impressions of Mr. Edwards are to be regarded, as having been the result of a gracious operation of the Spirit of God upon his heart.

Under this happy influence, exerted in childhood, his character was formed. It prompted him then to study the Scriptures, to love prayer, to sanctify the sabbath, and to pay an unusual attention to the duties of religion. It inspired him with reverence towards God, and made him afraid to sin. It rendered him conscientious in the performance of every relative duty, in manifesting love and gratitude, honour and obedience, towards his parents, kindness and courteousness towards his sisters, and the other companions of his childhood, respect and deference to his superiors, and good will to all around him. It led him also, at a very early period, to overcome that aversion to mental labour, which is so natural to man, and to devote himself with exemplary assiduity to the great duty, daily assigned him, of storing his mind with useful knowledge. Some of our readers, we are aware, may perhaps regard the recollections of his earlier years, as of little importance; but those, who cherish common sympathies, with the whole body of evangelical Christians, in the deep interest which they feel in his character and efforts, and who reflect, that the foundation of that character and of those efforts was then laid, will requite of us no apology for thus exhibiting the comparative innocence and purity, the docility and amiableness, the tenderness of conscience, the exemplary industry, and the ardent thirst for knowledge, which characterized this vernal season of his life.

The development of mental superiority, in the childhood and youth of Mr. Edwards, was certainly uncommon, if not singular. Boys of the age of eleven and twelve, even when receiving every aid from their parents and instructors, and when feeling the influence of all the motives, which they can present, are usually unwilling, in any branch of natural science, to examine, so as thoroughly to comprehend, the discoveries and investigations of others. Still more unwilling are they to make this examination, when no such aid is furnished, and no such inducements are presented. But rare indeed is the instance, in which the attention of such a boy has been so far arrested, by any of the interesting phenomena, in either of the kingdoms of nature, that he has been led, without prompting, and without aid, to pursue a series of exact observations and discoveries, as to the facts themselves; to search out their causes; and, as the result of the whole, to draw up and present a lucid, systematic, and well digested report of his investigations.

After the lapse of a little more than a year, just as he attained the age of fourteen, we find him entering on pursuits of a still higher character. Few boys of that age have sufficient strength of intellect to comprehend the *Essay on the Human Understanding*. Of those who have, but a small proportion can be per-

suaded to read it; and a much smaller, still, are found to read it voluntarily, and of choice. We find Edwards, however, at this period of life, not only entering on this work of his own accord, and with deep interest, but at once relinquishing every other pursuit, that he may devote himself wholly to the philosophy of the mind; and, to use his own language, “enjoying a far higher pleasure in the perusal of its pages, than the most greedy miser finds, when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold, from some newly discovered treasure.” Nor is this all. While reading the work of Locke, he presents himself before us, not as a pupil, nor simply as a critic; but in the higher character of an investigator, exploring for himself the universe of minds, and making new and interesting discoveries. Fortunately his investigations are preserved, and may be compared with the efforts of other distinguished men, at the same period of life, in other countries and in other ages. And if any one of all those efforts discovers greater perspicacity and mental energy, than the “Notes on the Mind;” particularly, the articles entitled, Being, Space, Motion, Genus, the Will, and Excellency we are yet to learn where it is to be found, and who was its author. The discussion of the very important and difficult question, in the last of these articles, What is the foundation of excellency,—of excellency in its most enlarged acceptance, in things material and spiritual, in things intellectual, imaginative, and moral,—is not only original, as to its youthful author, and profound, but is even now, we believe, in various respects, new to the investigations of philosophy.[The last article under this head, is obviously the foundation of the author’s subsequent Treatise on the Nature of true Virtue.] The Notes on Natural Science, furnish similar proof of high mental superiority; and, by their variety of topics, their general accuracy, and their originality, evince a power and comprehension, discovered by only here and there an individual, when possessed of the full maturity of his faculties. His habits of thinking and reasoning, at this time of life, appear to have been as severe, as exact, and as successful, as those of the most accomplished scholars usually are, in the vigour of manhood. The plan of study, itself, which he then formed,—of studying with his pen; and of immediately, and of course, employing the principles of the science he was examining, which had been already detailed and demonstrated by others, in the discovery of new principles,—is at least equal evidence of the same superiority. So vigorous was the mental soil, that the seeds of thought could not be implanted therein, without being quickened at once, and made to grow into a rich and abundant harvest. Looking at these two series of notes in connexion with the plan of study under which they grew, and then comparing them, by the aid of recollection, with the efforts of other children and youths of uncommon promise; we instinctively ask, When, and where, has the individual lived, who has left behind him substantial proofs, that he has possessed, at the same age, a mind more powerful, comprehensive, or creative?

These conclusions are only confirmed by the survey of his succeeding years. Though drawn away from the entire devotion of his mind to his collegiate studies, by (what were to him) the alluring blandishments of mental philosophy, he yet sustained in his class the first standing as a scholar; and, though leaving college when sixteen, he was not too young to receive its highest honours. Having entered the pulpit at eighteen, he was, after a few trials, designated by a number of gentlemen of a superior character, for a very important and difficult station; to which, as well as to various other interesting fields of labour, he received most pressing invitations.

The extraordinary difficulties and perplexities of the college, while he was one of its officers, sufficient as they were to have overwhelmed a common mind, only served to furnish him and his colleagues a fairer opportunity, to show forth the superiority of their own character. By their wisdom and fidelity, the college was preserved and enlarged, when in imminent danger of ruin; and the period of their administration will ever be regarded as one of the most important eras in its history.

While the review of the childhood and youth of Mr. Edwards thus forces upon us the conviction, that, in the early development of extraordinary mental powers, he has had few equals; and enables us to reflect, with pleasure, that these powers were never prostituted to folly, or to vice, but from the beginning were faithfully devoted to the great end for which they were given; it also leads us to remark, that his character, as a moral being, was thoroughly formed and established, at a very early period of life. Like a dutiful child, he listened, indeed, to the counsels of his parents, as to the principles by which his conduct should be regulated; but he also examined for himself the foundations of those principles, and, having discovered that they were firm and immovable, formed out of them a series of rules, for the systematic regulation of his own conduct. These rules, particularly as exemplified in the journal of his daily life, evince not only a pure and transparent sincerity, and the greatest openness of soul towards God; as well as an inspection, metaphysically accurate, of his own mind, and a thorough acquaintance with his own heart; but a knowledge of his duty,—to God, his fellow-men, and himself,—and a conscientiousness in performing it, which are usually the result of great wisdom and piety, combined with long experience. They grew, obviously, out of a disposition to turn every occurrence of life to a religious use, and thus to grow wiser and better, continually, under the course of discipline to which the providence of God subjected him. They appear to have been made under the immediate inspection of the Omniscient eye, with a solemn conviction that he was an immortal being, formed to act on the same theatre with God, and angels, and the just made perfect, in carrying forward the kingdom of holiness and joy, in its ever enlarging progress. Viewing himself as just entering on this career of glory, he adopted, for the permanent direction of his course, the best and noblest resolution, that an intelligent being can form:—"Resolved, That I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God, 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 myriads of ages hence: resolved, to do whatsoever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general: resolved, so to do, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many soever, and how great soever." In the spirit of this resolution, we find him, with all the earnestness of which he was capable, giving up himself to God,—all that he was, and all that he possessed,—so as habitually to feel that he was in no respect his own, and could challenge no right to the faculties of his body, to the powers of his mind, or the affections of his heart; receiving Christ as a Prince and a Saviour, under a solemn covenant to adhere to the faith and obedience of the gospel, however hazardous and difficult the profession and practice of it might be; and taking the Holy Spirit as his Teacher, Sanctifier, and only Comforter. And, in accordance with both, we find him, at this time, regularly making the glory of God the great end for which he lived; habitually trusting in God, to such a degree, as to feel no uneasiness about his worldly condition; maintaining the



most open and confidential intercourse with his Maker; cherishing exalted thoughts of Christ and his salvation; feeling himself to be a part of Christ, and to have no separate interest from his; exercising a filial and delightful sense of dependence on the Holy Spirit, for the daily communication of his grace; regarding communion with God as the very life and sustenance of the soul; delighting in praising God, and in singing his praises, and as much when alone, as in the company of others; often observing days of secret fasting, that he might discover, and repent of, and renounce every sin; maintaining a constant warfare against sin and temptation; frequently renewing his dedication of himself to God; conversing daily and familiarly with his own death and his own final trial; rejoicing habitually in the divine perfections and the divine government; reverentially acknowledging the divine hand in all the works of nature, and in all the events of providence; exhibiting a calm and sweet submission to the divine will under all the afflictions of life, so that he could regard afflictions as real and great blessings; and enabled so to live with God, from day to day, and from hour to hour, as to be delightfully conscious of his presence, to refer his inmost mind to the inspection of his eye, to value his approbation above all things else, to cherish a joyful sense of union to him, to converse with him, as a father, concerning his wants, infirmities, and sins, his dangers, duties, and trials, his joys and sorrows, his fears and desires, his hopes and prospects, and to commune with him in all his works and dispensations, in his perfections and his glory. And, as the result of this, we find the Spirit of God unfolding to him the wonders of divine truth; vouchsafing to him joyful and glorious discoveries of the perfections of God, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; enabling him to live, as in the immediate presence and vision of the things that are unseen and eternal; and communicating to him a joyful assurance of the favour of God, and of a title to future glory.

This state of his heart towards God, prepared him for a just estimate of his own character, for the formation of the best habits, and for a conscientious and faithful government over himself. The daily and careful survey of his sins, by the light of the divine holiness, enabled him to discover the deceitfulness of his own heart, and led him habitually to abhor himself, to form none but humbling and abasing views of his own attainments in piety, and to esteem others better than himself. There was something extremely delicate in his constitution; which always obliged him to the exactest rules of temperance, and every method of cautious and prudent living. His temperance was the result of principle. It was not the mere ordinary care and watchfulness of temperate people, but such a degree of self-denial, both as to the quantity and quality of his food, as left his mind, in every part of the day, alike unclouded in its views, and unembarrassed in its movements. We have seen, from his diary, that he rose at a very early hour, throughout the year; that, in the morning, he considered well the business and studies of the day, resolved to pursue that which was the most important; that his habits of punctuality were exact and thorough; that he husbanded his time, as the miser guards his choicest treasures; not losing it even in his walks, his rides, or his journeys; and not allowing himself to leave his study for the table, if his mind would thereby lose its brighter moments, and its happier sequences of thought and discovery; and that, in consequence of this regularity of life, and an exact and punctilious regard to bodily exercise, he was enabled to spend an unusual portion of every day, in severe and laborious mental application.[On a preceding page it is stated on the authority of Dr. Hopkins that

he regularly spent thirteen hours every day in close study. After receiving the invitation to Princeton, he told his eldest son, that he had for many years spent fourteen hours a day in study; and mentioned the necessity of giving up part of his time to other pursuits as one of his chief objections against accepting the office of president.] Let it also be remembered, by every minister, that notwithstanding the exact discipline to which his mind had been subjected, by the course of his education, and by his long devotion to metaphysical pursuits, he continued his attention to mathematical studies, as a source, alike, of recreation and improvement, throughout the whole of his ministerial life.

The habits of his religious life, which he formed in his youth, were not less thorough and exact. His observation of the sabbath was such as to make it, throughout, a day of real religion; so that not only were his conversation and reading conformed to the great design of the day, but he allowed himself in no thoughts or meditations, which were not decidedly of a religious character. It was his rule, not only to search the Scriptures daily, but to study them so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that he might perceive a regular and obvious growth in his knowledge of them. By prayer and self-application, he took constant care to render them the means of progressive sanctification. He made a secret of his private devotions, observes Dr. Hopkins, and therefore they cannot be particularly known; though there is much evidence that he was punctual, constant, and frequent in secret prayer, and often kept days of fasting and prayer in secret, and set apart time for serious, devout meditations on spiritual and eternal things, as part of his religious exercises in secret. It appears from his diary, that his stated seasons of secret prayer were, from his youth, three times a day,—in his journeys, as well as at home. He was, so far as can be known, much on his knees in secret, and in devout reading of God's word, and meditation upon it. And his constant, solemn converse with God, in these exercises of secret religion, made his face, as it were, to shine before others. His appearance, his countenance, his words, and whole demeanour, were attended with a seriousness, gravity and solemnity, which was the natural, genuine, indication and expression, of a deep abiding sense of divine things on his mind, and of his living constantly in the fear of God. His watchfulness over himself—over his external conduct and over his secret thoughts and purposes—was most thorough and exemplary. The fear of God, and a consciousness of his own weakness, made him habitually apprehensive of sin, and led him most carefully to avoid every temptation. His self-examination was regular, universal, and in a sense constant. Every morning he endeavoured to foresee, and to guard against, the dangers of the day. Every night he carefully reviewed the conduct of his mind, during its progress, and inquired, wherein he had been negligent; what sin he had committed; wherein he had denied himself; and regularly kept an account of every thing which he found to be wrong. This record he reviewed at the close of the week, of the month, and of the year, and on the occurrence of every important change in life; that he might know his own condition, and that he might carry his sins in humble confession before God. Whenever he so much questioned whether he had done his duty, as that the quiet of his mind was thereby disturbed, he regularly set it down, that he might examine its real nature; and, if found in any respect to be wrong, might put it away. Every course of conduct, which led him in the least to doubt of the love of God; every action of his mind, the review of which would give him uneasiness in the hour of death, and on his final trial; he endeavoured, with all his strength, to avoid. Every obvious sin he traced back to

its original, that he might afterward know where his danger lay. Every desire, which might prove the occasion of sin,—the desire of wealth, of ease, of pleasure, of influence, of fame, of popularity,—as well as every bodily appetite, he strove not only to watch against, but habitually and unceasingly to mortify; regarding occasions of great self-denial as glorious opportunities of destroying sin, and of confirming himself in holiness; and uniformly finding that his greatest mortifications were succeeded by the greatest comforts. On the approach of affliction he searched out the sin, which he ought especially to regard, as calling for such a testimony of the divine displeasure, that he might receive the chastisement with entire submission, and be concerned about nothing but his duty and his sin. The virtues and sins of others led him to examine himself, whether he possessed the former, and whether he did not practise the latter. Thus his whole life was a continued course of self-examination; and in the duty of secret fasting, and humiliation, which he very frequently observed,—a duty enjoined by Christ, on his followers, as explicitly, and in the same terms, as the duty of secret prayer; enjoined too, for the very purpose of discovery, confession, and purification,—he was accustomed, with the greatest unreservedness of which he was capable, to declare his ways to God, and to lay open his soul before him, all his sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, and fears, as well as his desires and hopes; that the light of God's countenance might shine upon him without obstruction.

The fear of God had a controlling influence, also, in regulating his intercourse with mankind. The basis of that intercourse, in all the relations of life, and indeed of his whole character, was evangelical integrity,—a settled unbending resolution to do what he thought right, whatever self-denial or sacrifices it might cost him. This trait of character he early discovered, in the unfavourable estimate, which he formed, of his youthful attainments in religion; and in the severe judgment, which he passed upon the period of his official connexion with college, as a period of marked declension in his Christian life. He discovered it, during that connexion, in his most conscientious and honourable efforts to promote the welfare of that institution, under uncommon difficulties and trials. He discovered it during his ministry at Northampton, in the very laborious performance of every ministerial duty, and in his firm and fearless defence of the truth, in opposition to numbers, power, and influence. He discovered it eminently in the affair of his dismissal. His conscience at first hesitated, as to the lawfulness of the prevailing mode of admission to the church. Still, he regarded the question as altogether doubtful. It had been once publicly discussed; his own colleague and grandfather, who had introduced it at Northampton, being one of the combatants; and the victory had been supposed to be on his side, and in favour of the existing mode. The churches of the county had adopted it; and the whole current of public opinion,—the united voice of wealth, fashion, numbers, learning, and influence,—was in its favour. If he decided against continuing the practice, all these would certainly be combined against him; his people would demand his dismissal, before a tribunal which had prejudged the case; his only means of supporting a young and numerous family would be taken away, at a time of life, when an adequate provision for their wants would probably involve him in extreme embarrassment. Yet none of these things moved him; and his only anxiety was, to ascertain and to perform his duty. He discovered it, in the same manner, in the controversy at Stockbridge. There, the same influence, which, in the former case,

had effected his dismissal, he knew would be combined against him, with increased hostility, and in all probability would deprive his family a second time of their support; unless he sat quietly, and saw the charities of Christian philanthropy perverted to sources of private emolument. But in such a crisis he could not deliberate for a moment.

“He had a strict and inviolable regard to justice, in all his dealings with his neighbours, and was very careful to provide things honest in the sight of all men; so that scarcely a man had any dealings with him, who was not conscious of his uprightness.

“His great benevolence to mankind discovered itself, among other ways, by the uncommon regard he showed to liberality, and charity to the poor and distressed. He was much in recommending this, both in his public discourses, and in private conversation. He often declared it to be his opinion, that professed Christians were greatly deficient in this duty, and much more so than in most other parts of external Christianity. He often observed how much this is spoken of, recommended, and encouraged, in the Holy Scriptures, especially in the New Testament. And it was his opinion, that every particular church ought, by frequent and liberal contributions, to maintain a public stock, that might be ready for the poor and necessitous members of that church; and that the principal business of deacons is, to take care of the poor, in the faithful and judicious improvement and distribution of the church’s contributions, lodged in their hands. And he did not content himself with merely recommending charity to others, but practised it much himself; though, according to his Master’s advice, he took great care to conceal his acts of charity; by which means, doubtless, most of his alms-deeds will be unknown till the resurrection, but which, if known, would prove him to have been as honourable an example of charity, as almost any that can be produced. This is not mere conjecture, but is evident many ways. He was forward to give, on all public occasions of charity; though, when it could properly be done, he always concealed the sum given. And some instances of his giving more privately have accidentally come to the knowledge of others, in which his liberality appeared in a very extraordinary degree. One of the instances was this: upon his hearing that a poor obscure man, whom he never saw, or any of his kindred, was, by an extraordinary bodily disorder, brought to great straits; he, unasked, gave a considerable sum to a friend, to be delivered to the distressed person; having first required a promise of him, that he would let neither the person, who was the object of his charity, nor any one else, know by whom it was given. This may serve both as an instance of his extraordinary charity, and of his great care to conceal it.” [“As both the giver, and the object of his charity, are dead, and all the ends of the proposed secrecy are answered; it is thought not inconsistent with the above-mentioned promise, to make known the fact, as it is here related.”]

Not less exemplary was his practice of the kindred virtue of hospitality, so much enjoined on all Christians, in the sacred Scriptures. As his acquaintance was very extensive, his house was the frequent resort of gentlemen from all parts of the colonies; and the friend, and the stranger of worth, ever found a kind and cordial welcome at his table, and in the midst of his family.

“He was thought by some to be distant and unsociable in his manners; but this was owing to the want of a better acquaintance. He was not, indeed, a man of many words, and was somewhat reserved in the company of strangers, and of those, on whose candour and friendship he did not know that he could rely.

And this was probably owing to two causes. First, the strict guard he set over his tongue, from his youth. From experience and observation he early discovered, that the sins of the tongue make up a very formidable proportion of all the sins committed by men, and lead to a very large proportion of their remaining sins. He therefore resolved to take the utmost care, never to sin with his tongue; to avoid not only uttering reproaches himself, but receiving them, and listening to them from others; to say nothing for the sake of giving pain, or wounding the feelings or reputation of others; to say nothing evil concerning them, except when an obvious duty required him to do it, and then to speak, as if nobody had been as vile as himself, and as if he had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings, as others; never to employ himself in idle, trivial, and impertinent talk, which generally makes up a great part of the conversation of those, who are full of words, in all companies; and to make sure of that mark of a perfect man, given by James, ‘if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able, also, to bridle the whole body.’ He was sensible, that ‘in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin,’ and therefore refrained his lips, and habituated himself to think before he spoke, and to propose some good end in all his words; which led him, conformably to an apostolic precept, to be, above many others, slow to speak.—Secondly, this was in part the effect of his bodily constitution. He possessed but a comparatively small stock of animal life: his spirits were low, and he had neither the vivacity nor strength of lungs to spare, that would have been requisite in order to render him what might be called an affable, sprightly companion, in all circles. They who have a great flow of animal spirits, and so can speak with more ease, and less expense and exhaustion, than others, may doubtless lawfully engage in free conversation, in all companies, for a lower end than that which he proposed: e. g. to please, or to render themselves agreeable to others. But not so he who has not such an abundant supply: it becomes him to reserve what he has for higher and more important service. Besides, the want of animal spirit lays a man under a natural inability of exercising that freedom of conversation, at all times, and in whatever company he is, which those possessed of more vivacity naturally and easily glide into; and the greatest degree of humility and benevolence, of good sense and social feeling, will not remove this obstacle.

“He was not forward to enter into any dispute before strangers, and in companies where there might be persons of different sentiments; being sensible that such disputes are generally unprofitable, and often sinful, and of bad consequence. He thought he could dispute to the best advantage with his pen; yet he was always free to give his sentiments, on any subject proposed to him, and to remove any difficulties or objections offered by way of inquiry, as lying in the way of what he looked upon to be the truth. But how groundless, with regard to him, the imputation of being distant and unsociable was, his known and tried friends best knew. They always found him easy of access, kind and condescending; and though not talkative, yet affable and free. Among those, whose candour and friendship he had experienced, he threw off all that, which to others had the appearance of reserve, and was most open and communicative; and was always patient of contradiction, while the utmost opposition was made to his sentiments, that could be made by any arguments or objections, whether plausible or solid. And indeed he was, on all occasions, quite sociable and free with all who had any special business with him.

“His conversation with his friends was always savoury and profitable: in this he was remarkable, and almost singular. He was not accustomed to spend his time with them in evil speaking, or foolish jesting, idle chit-chat, and telling stories; but his mouth was that of the just, which bringeth forth wisdom, and whose lips dispense knowledge. His tongue was as the pen of a ready writer, while he conversed about important heavenly and divine things, of which his heart was so full, in a manner so new and original, so natural and familiar, as to be most entertaining and instructive; so that none of his friends could enjoy his company without instruction and profit unless it was by their own fault.

“He was cautious in choosing his intimate friends, and therefore had not many that might properly be called such; but to them he showed himself friendly in a peculiar manner. He was, indeed, a faithful friend, and able above most others to keep a secret. To them he discovered himself, more than to others, and led them into his views and ends in his conduct in particular instances: by which they had abundant evidence that he well understood human nature, and that his general reservedness, and many particular instances of his conduct, which a stranger might impute to ignorance of men, were really owing to his uncommon knowledge of mankind.

“In his family, he practised that conscientious exactness, which was conspicuous in all his ways. He maintained a great esteem and regard for his amiable and excellent consort. Much of the tender and affectionate was expressed in his conversation with her, and in all his conduct towards her. He was often visited by her in his study, and conversed freely with her on matters of religion; and he used commonly to pray with her in his study, at least once a day, unless something extraordinary prevented. The season for this, commonly, was in the evening, after prayers in the family, just before going to bed. As he rose very early himself, he was wont to have his family up betimes in the morning; after which, before they entered on the business of the day, he attended on family prayers; when a chapter in the Bible was read, commonly by candle-light in the winter; upon which he asked his children questions, according to their age and capacity; and took occasion to explain some passages in it, or enforce any duty recommended, as he thought most proper.

He was careful and thorough in the government of his children; and, as a consequence of this, they revered, esteemed, and loved him. He took the utmost care to begin his government of them, when they were very young. When they first discovered any degree of self-will and stubbornness, he would attend to them, until he had thoroughly subdued them, and brought them to submit. Such prudent discipline, exercised with the greatest calmness, being repeated once or twice, was generally sufficient for that child; and effectually established his parental authority, and produced a cheerful obedience ever after.

“He kept a watchful eye over his children, that he might admonish them of the first wrong step, and direct them in the right way. He took opportunities to converse with them singly and closely, about the concerns of their souls, and to give them warnings, exhortations, and directions, as he saw them severally need.” The salvation of his children was his chief and constant desire, and aim, and effort concerning them. In the evening, after tea, he customarily sat in the parlour, with his family, for an hour, unbending from the severity of study, entering freely into the feelings and concerns of his children, and relaxing into

cheerful and animated conversation, accompanied frequently with sprightly remarks, and sallies of wit and humour. But, before retiring to his study, he usually gave the conversation, by degrees, a more serious turn, addressing his children, with great tenderness and earnestness, on the subject of their salvation; when the thought that they were still strangers to religion would often affect him so powerfully, as to oblige him to withdraw, in order to conceal his emotions.—”He took much pains to instruct his children in the principles and duties of religion, in which he made use of the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism: not merely by taking care that they learned it by heart, but by leading them into an understanding of the doctrines therein taught, by asking them questions on each answer, and explaining it to them. His usual time to attend to this was on the evening before the sabbath. And, as he believed that the sabbath, or holy time, began at sunset, on the evening preceding the first day of the week, he ordered his family to finish all their secular business by that time, or before; when all were called together, a psalm was sung, and prayer offered, as an introduction to the sanctification of the sabbath. This care and exactness effectually prevented that intruding on holy time, by attending to secular business, which is too common even in families where the evening before the sabbath is professedly observed.

“He was utterly opposed to every thing like unseasonable hours, on the part of young people, in their visiting and amusements; which he regarded as a dangerous step towards corrupting them, and bringing them to ruin. And he thought the excuse offered by many parents, for tolerating this practice in their children,—that it is the custom, and that the children of other people are allowed thus to practise, and therefore it is difficult, and even impossible, to restrain theirs,—was insufficient and frivolous, and manifested a great degree of stupidity, on the supposition that the practice was hurtful and pernicious to their souls. And when his children grew up, he found no difficulty in restraining them from this improper and mischievous practice; but they cheerfully complied with the will of their parents. He allowed none of his children to be absent from home after nine o’clock at night, when they went abroad to see their friends and companions; neither were they allowed to sit up much after that time, in his own house, when any of their friends came to visit them. If any gentleman desired to address either of his daughters, after the requisite introduction and preliminaries, he was allowed all proper opportunities of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the manners and disposition of the young lady, but must not intrude on the customary hours of rest and sleep, nor on the religion and order of the family.”

Perhaps there never was a man more constantly retired from the world, giving himself to reading and contemplation; and it was a wonder that his feeble frame could subsist under such fatigues, daily repeated, and so long continued. Yet, upon this being alluded to by one of his friends, only a few months before his death, he said to him, “I do not find but that I now am as well able to bear the closest study, as I was thirty years ago; and can go through the exercises of the pulpit with as little uneasiness or difficulty.”—In his youth he appeared healthy, and with a good degree of vivacity, but was never robust. In middle life he appeared very much emaciated, by severe study, and intense mental application. In his person he was tall of stature, and of a slender form. [His height was about 6 feet 1 inch.] He had a high, broad, bold forehead, and an eye unusually piercing and luminous; and on his whole coun-

tenance the features of his mind—perspicacity, sincerity, and benevolence—were so strongly impressed, that no one could behold it without at once discovering the clearest indications of great intellectual and moral elevation. His manners were those of the Christian gentleman, easy, tranquil, modest, and dignified; yet they were the manners of the student, grave, sedate, and contemplative; and evinced an exact sense of propriety, and an undeviating attention to the rules of decorum. “He had,” observes one of his contemporaries, “a natural steadiness of temper, and fortitude of mind; which, being sanctified by the Spirit of God, was ever of vast advantage to him, to carry him through difficult services, and to support him under trying afflictions in the course of his life.—Personal injuries he bore with a becoming meekness and patience, and a disposition to forgiveness.” According to Dr. Hopkins himself an eye-witness, these traits of character were eminently discovered, throughout the whole of his long-continued trials at Northampton. His own narrative of that transaction, his remarks before the council, his letters relating to it, and his farewell sermon, all written in the midst of the passing occurrences, bespeak as calm, and meek, and unperturbed a state of mind, as they would have done, had they been written by a third person, long after the events took place.—”The humility, modesty, and serenity of his behaviour, much endeared him to his acquaintance, and made him appear amiable in the eyes of such as had the privilege of conversing with them.—The several relations sustained by him, he adorned with exemplary fidelity; and was solicitous to fill every station with its proper duty.—In his private walk as a Christian, he appeared an example of truly rational, consistent, uniform religion and virtue; a shining instance of the power and efficacy of that holy faith, to which he was so firmly attached, and of which he was so zealous a defender. He exhibited much of spirituality, and a heavenly bent of soul. In him one saw the loveliest appearance—a rare assemblage of christian graces, united with the richest gifts, and mutually subserving and recommending one another.”

“He had an uncommon thirst for knowledge, in the pursuit of which he spared no cost nor pains. He read all the books, especially books treating of theology, that he could procure, from which he could hope to derive any assistance in the discovery of truth. And in this, he did not confine himself to authors of any particular sect or denomination; but even took much pains to procure the works of the most distinguished writers, who advanced views of religion or morals most contrary to his own principles; particularly the ablest Arminian, Socinian, and infidel writers. But he studied the Bible more than all other books, and more than most other divines do.” He studied the Bible, to receive implicitly what it teaches; but he read other books to examine their soundness, and to employ them as helps in the investigation of principles, and the discovery of truth. His uncommon acquaintance with the Bible, appears in his sermons, in his treatises,—particularly in the treatises on the Affections, on the History of Redemption, on United and Extraordinary Prayer, on the Types of the Messiah, on the Qualifications for Communion, and on God’s Last End in the Creation,—in his Notes on the Scriptures, and in his Miscellaneous Observations and Remarks. Any person who will read his works with close attention, and then will compare them with those of other theological writers, since the days of the apostles, will easily be satisfied that no other divine has as yet appeared, who has studied the Scriptures more thoroughly, or who has been more successful in discovering the mind of the Holy Spirit. He took his reli-



gious principles from the Bible, and not from treatises, or systems of theology, or any work of man. On the maturest examination of the different schemes of faith, prevailing in the world, and on comparing them with the sacred Scriptures, he adhered to the main articles of the reformed religion, with an unshaken firmness and with a fervent zeal, yet tempered with charity and candour, and governed by discretion. Few men are less under the bias of education, or the influence of bigotry: few receive the articles of their creed so little upon trust, or discover so much liberality or thoroughness in examining their foundation. His principles have been extensively styled Calvinistic, yet they differ widely from what has usually been denominated Calvinism, in various important points; particularly, in all immediately connected with moral agency; and he followed implicitly, if any man ever followed, the apostolic injunction, to call no man, Father, by receiving nothing on human authority, and examining scrupulously every principle which he adopted. He thought, and investigated, and judged for himself; and from the strength of his reasoning powers, as well as from his very plan of study, he became truly an original writer. As we have already sufficiently seen, reading was not the only, nor the chief, method which he took of improving his mind; but he devoted the strength of his time and of his faculties to writing, without which no student, and, be it remembered, no minister, can make improvements to the best advantage. He preached extensively on subjects, continued through a series of discourses;—many of his treatises having been a course of sermons actually delivered from the desk. In this practice, every minister who has a mind fitted for investigation, would do well to follow him. “Agreeably to the 11th Resolution, he applied himself, with all his might, to find out truth: he searched for it as for silver, and digged for it as for hidden treasures. Every thought, on any subject, which appeared to him worth pursuing and preserving, he pursued as far as he then could, with a pen in his hand. Thus he was, all his days, like the industrious bee, collecting honey from every opening flower, and storing up a stock of knowledge, which was indeed sweet to him, as honey and the honey-comb.”

As a scholar, his intellectual furniture exceeded what was common, under the disadvantages experienced at that time, in these remote colonies. He had an extensive acquaintance with the arts and sciences—with classical and Hebrew literature, with physics, mathematics, history, chronology, ethics, and mental philosophy. By the blessing of God on his indefatigable labours, to the last, he was constantly treasuring up useful knowledge, both human and divine.

“Thus he appears to have been uncommonly accomplished for the arduous and momentous province to which he was finally called. And had his precious life been spared, there is every reason to believe, that he would have graced the station on which he had but entered, and proved a signal blessing to the college of New Jersey, and therein extensively served his generation according to the will of God”

His inattention to his style is certainly to be regretted. In earlier life, he appears to have thought neatness and correctness in writing of little consequence, [see Preface to Five Sermons, vol. i. p. 621.] and to have sent his works to the press very much in the state in which they were first written. Let it here be remembered, that the cultivation of style was not then attended to in the colonies; that the people at large were accustomed to discourses written in the plainest man-

ner; and that it is extremely doubtful, whether, in the then existing state of the country, it would have been possible for him to have devoted much attention to the style of his sermons, without greatly diminishing their amount of impression. About the time of his leaving Northampton, he received one of the works of Richardson, [Sir Charles Grandison. I had this anecdote from his eldest son.] which he read with deep interest, and regarded as wholly favourable to good morals and purity of character. The perusal of it led him to attempt the formation of a more correct style, his previous inattention to which he then deeply regretted; and in this attempt he had much success. The style of the *Freedom of the Will*, though obviously that of a student, and not of a man of the world, is otherwise as correct as that of most of the metaphysical treatises to be found in the language. The same is true, generally, of the *Treatise on Original Sin*; although it was in the press when he died, and never received his last corrections. [The treatises on the Affections and on United Extraordinary Prayer, are the most incorrect of all his works, published by himself. In his sermons, published in his life-time, somewhat of the *limae labor*— is discernible. The works, published by his son Dr. Edwards, in this country, are but little altered from the rough draught ; but those first published in Edinburgh, are, generally, more so. The *History of Redemption* was considerably corrected by my father, and afterwards thrown into the form of a treatise by Dr. Erskine. The sermons published by Dr. Hopkins are the least correct of all his works.] In the two highest excellences of style, perspicuity and precision, he was probably never excelled.

Of the powers of his mind, enough, perhaps, has been said already. They were certainly very varied, and fitted him for high distinction in any of the pursuits of learning or science.—His memory was strong, exact, uniform, and comprehensive.—His imagination was rich and powerful. I know that the contrary opinion has extensively prevailed, and that for three reasons. First, he paid little or no attention to his style of writing. Secondly, he never cultivated his imagination, and never indulged it but sparingly, and probably in no instance, for mere ornament. Thirdly, his great works are treatises on metaphysical subjects. A writer without imagination, always thinks and writes in a dry manner; and, if his powers are great, like those of Aristotle, he writes like a pure intelligence. Those who are conversant with the writings of Edwards, need not be informed that all his works, even the most metaphysical, are rich in illustration, or that his sermons abound with imagery of every kind, adapted to make a powerful and lasting impression. In his earlier writings, this faculty of his mind was suffered to act with less restraint. The first production of his pen, on the materiality of the soul, is a constant play of imagination and wit. The boy who could speak of the spiders of the forest, as “those wondrous animals, from whose glistening web so much of the wisdom of the Creator shines,”—who, in describing their operations, could say, “I have seen a vast multitude of little shining webs, and glistening strings, brightly reflecting the sun-beams, and some of them of great length, and of such a height, that one would think they were tacked to the vault of the heavens, and would be burnt like tow in the sun;”—and who, in exposing the absurdity of the supposition, that there can be absolutely nothing, observes, “When we go to form an idea of perfect nothing, we must not suffer our thoughts to take sanctuary in a mathematical point, but we must think of the same, that the sleeping rocks do dream of;”—possessed an imagination at once rich, brilliant, and creative.—His taste, if we do not refer to style of writing, but merely to the judgment of the mind, concerning all the varieties of sublimity and beauty, was at once delicate and correct.—Few of mankind, hitherto, have possessed either inven-

tion, ratiocination, or judgment in so high a degree; and it is difficult to say for which of these he is most distinguished. In comparing him with the metaphysicians of the old world, we must not forget his and their respective advantages for the culture of the mind. He was born in an obscure village, in which the ancient reign of barbarism was only beginning to yield to the inroads of culture and civilization; in a colony comprising but here and there a settlement; and in a country literally in its infancy, constituting with the exception of now and then a white plantation, one vast continuous forest, and distant three thousand miles from Europe, the seat of arts, refinement, and knowledge. He was educated at a seminary but three years older than himself; which had as yet no domical, and which furnished advantages totally inferior to those now enjoyed at the respectable academies of New England. The rest of his life was passed amid the cares of a most laborious profession, and on the very frontiers (and the latter part of it in the very midst) of savage life; with no libraries to explore, and with no men of eminence with whose minds his could come into daily contact. His greatest work was written in four months and a half while each sabbath he delivered two sermons to his English flock, and two others by interpreters, to two distinct auditories of Indians, and catechised the children of both tribes, and carried on all the correspondence of the mission, and was forced to guard against the measures of a powerful combination, busily occupied in endeavouring to drive him from his office, and thus to deprive his family of their daily bread.—With these things in view, instead of drawing any such comparison myself, I will refer my readers to the opinion of a writer of no light authority on such a subject,—I mean Dugald Stewart;—who, after having detailed the systems of Locke, and Leibnitz, and Berkeley, and Condillac, speaks thus of the subject of this Memoir:—"There is, however, one metaphysician, of whom America has to boast, who, in logical acuteness and subtlety, does not yield to any disputant bred in the universities of Europe. I need not say that I allude to Jonathan Edwards."

Mr. Edwards acquired a very high character, as a divine and as a preacher, during his life. "Among the luminaries of the church, in these American regions," says one of his contemporaries, [I suppose the writer referred to here, and in various other places, to have been Dr. Finley.] "he was justly reputed a star of the first magnitude; thoroughly versed in all the branches of theology, didactic, polemic, casuistic, experimental, and practical. In point of divine knowledge and skill, he had few equals, and perhaps no superior; at least in those foreign parts."—"Mr. Edwards," says Dr. Hopkins, "had the most universal character of a good preacher, of almost any minister in America. There were but few that heard him, who did not call him a good preacher, however they might dislike his religious principles, and be much offended at the same truths when delivered by others; and most people admired him above all the preachers that ever they heard." His character as a laborious and faithful minister, and especially as a powerful and successful preacher, if we may judge from the history of his life, and of the time in which he lived, was such for many years before his death, as to leave him here without a competitor.[For many of the remarks on the character of Mr. Edwards, as a preacher and writer, I am indebted to a well written review of the Worcester edition of his Works in the Christian Spectator; but they are usually so blended with my own, that it is impossible to designate the passages.] This was owing chiefly to his preaching and pastoral labours; for most of his laboured productions were published either a little before, or after, his death; yet, long ere this,

his fame as a preacher and minister of Christ, had pervaded the colonies, and was extensively known in Great Britain. Until within these few years, there were many living witnesses, who had heard him in their youth, and who distinctly remembered the powerful impressions left on their minds by his preaching, and particularly described his appearance in the pulpit, the still, unmoved solemnity of his manner, the weight of his sentiments first fixing the attention, and then overwhelming the feelings, of his audience. One of his youthful auditors, afterwards a gentleman of great respectability, informed my father that he was present, when he delivered the sermon in the History of Redemption, in which he describes the day of judgment; and that so vivid and solemn was the impression made on his own mind, that he fully supposed, that as soon as Mr. Edwards should close his discourse, the Judge would descend, and the final separation take place. The late Dr. West, of Stockbridge, who heard him in his childhood, in that village, gave me an account generally similar of the effects of his preaching. On one occasion, when the sermon exceeded two hours in its length, he told me that from the time that Mr. Edwards had fairly unfolded his subject, the attention of the audience was fixed and motionless, until its close; when they seemed disappointed that it should terminate so soon. There was such a bearing down of truth upon the mind, he observed, that there was no resisting it.—In his own congregation, the visible effects of his preaching were such as were never paralleled in New England. Often, also, he was invited to great distances to preach; and these occasional sermons sometimes produced a wonderful effect. One of these instances, which occurred at Enfield, at a time of great religious indifference there, is thus mentioned by the Rev. Dr. Trumbull. “When they went into the meeting-house, the appearance of the assembly was thoughtless and vain. The people hardly conducted themselves with common decency. The Rev Mr. Edwards, of Northampton, preached; and before the sermon was ended, the assembly appeared deeply impressed, and bowed down with an awful conviction of their sin and danger. There was such a breathing of distress and weeping, that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence, that he might be heard.” This was the commencement of a general and powerful revival of religion.

To what, it may not improperly be asked, are this reputation and this success to be ascribed? It was not to his style of writing: that had no claims to elegance, or even to neatness.—It was not to his voice; that, far from being strong and full, was, in consequence of his feeble health, a little languid, and too low for a large assembly; though relieved and aided by a proper emphasis, just cadence, well placed pauses, and great clearness, distinctness, and precision of enunciation.—It was not owing to attitude or gesture, to his appearance in the pulpit, or to any of the customary arts of eloquence. His appearance in the pulpit was with a good grace, and his delivery easy, perfectly natural, and very solemn. He wrote his sermons; and in so fine and so illegible a hand, that they could be read only by being brought near to the eye. “He carried his notes with him into the pulpit, and read most that he wrote: still, he was not confined to them; and if some thoughts were suggested to him while he was preaching, which did not occur to him when writing, and appeared pertinent, he would deliver them with as great propriety and fluency, and often with greater pathos, and attended with a more sensibly good effect on his hearers, than what he had written.”[“Though, as has been observed,” says Dr. Hopkins, “he was wont to read

so considerable a part of what he delivered, yet he was far from thinking this the best way of preaching in general; and looked upon using his notes, so much as he did, a deficiency and infirmity, and in the latter part of his life, he was inclined to think it had been better, if he had never been accustomed to use his notes at all. It appeared to him, that preaching wholly without notes, agreeably to the custom in most protestant countries, and in what seems evidently to have been the manner of the apostles and primitive ministers of the gospel, was by far the most natural way, and had the greatest tendency, on the whole, to answer the end of preaching; and supposed that no one, who had talents, equal to the work of the ministry, was incapable of speaking *memoriter*, if he took suitable pains for this attainment from his youth. He would have the young preacher write all his sermons, or at least most of them, out, at large; and, instead of reading them to his hearers, take pains to commit them to memory: which, though it would require a great deal of labour at first, yet would soon become easier by use, and help him to speak more correctly and freely, and be of great service to him all his days.”] While preaching, he customarily stood, holding his small manuscript volume in his left hand, the elbow resting on the cushion or the Bible, his right hand rarely raised but to turn the leaves, and his person almost motionless—It was not owing to the pictures of fancy, or to any ostentation of learning, or of talents. In his preaching, usually all was plain, familiar, sententious, and practical.

One of the positive causes of his high character, and great success, as a preacher, was the deep and pervading solemnity of his mind. He had, at all times, a solemn consciousness of the presence of God. This was visible in his looks and general demeanour. It obviously had a controlling influence over all his preparations for the pulpit; and was most manifest in all his public services. Its effect on an audience is immediate, and not to be resisted. “He appeared,” says Dr. Hopkins, “with such gravity and solemnity, and his words were so full of ideas, that few speakers have been able to command the attention of an audience as he did.”—His knowledge of the Bible, evinced in his sermons—in the number of relevant passages which he brings to enforce every position, in his exact discernment of the true scope of each, in his familiar acquaintance with the drift of the whole Scriptures on the subject, and in the logical precision with which he derives his principles from them—is probably unrivalled.—His knowledge of the human heart, and its operations, has scarcely been equalled by that of any uninspired preacher. He derived this knowledge from his familiarity with the testimony of God concerning it in the Bible; from his thorough acquaintance with his own heart; and from his profound knowledge of mental philosophy. The effect of it was, to enable him to speak to the consciousness of every one who heard him; so that each one was compelled to reflect, in language like that of the woman of Sychar, “Here is a man, who is revealing to me the secrets of my own heart and life: is not this man from God?”—His knowledge of theology was so exact and universal, and the extensiveness of his views and of his information was so great, that while he could shed unusual variety and richness of thought over every discourse, he could also bring the most striking and impressive truths, facts, and circumstances, to bear upon the point, which he was endeavouring to illustrate or enforce.—His aim, in preparing and delivering his sermons, was single. This is so obvious, that no man probably ever suspected him of writing or delivering a sermon, for the sake of display, or reputation. From the first step to the last, he aimed at nothing but the salvation of his hearers, and at the glory of God as revealed in it. This enabled him to bring all his powers of mind and heart to bear on this one object.—His feelings on this subject were most intense. The love of Christ constrained him; and the strong desire of his soul was, that they

for whom Christ died might live for Him who died for them. "His words," says Dr. Hopkins, "often discovered a great degree of inward fervour, without much noise or external emotion, and fell with great weight on the minds of his hearers; and he spake so as to reveal the strong emotions of his own heart, which tended, in the most natural and effectual manner, to move and affect others"—The plan of his sermons is most excellent. In his introduction, which is always an explanation of the passage, he exhibits uncommon skill, and the sagacity with which he discovers, and the power with which he seizes at once, the whole drift and meaning of the passage in all its bearings, has rarely if ever been equalled. In the body of the discourse, he never attempts an elaborate proof of his doctrine, from revelation and reason; but rather gives an explanation of the doctrine, or places the truth on which he is discoursing directly before the mind, as a fact, and paints it to the imagination of his hearers. In the application, where he usually lays out his strength, he addresses himself with peculiar plainness to the consciences of his hearers, takes up and applies to them minutely all the important ideas contained in the body of the discourse, and appropriates them to persons of different characters and situations in life, by a particular explanation of their duties and their dangers: and lastly, by a solemn, earnest, and impressive appeal to every feeling and active principle of our nature, he counsels, exhorts, warns, expostulates, as if he were determined not to suffer his hearers to depart, until they were convinced of their duty, and persuaded to choose and to perform it.—His graphic manner of exhibiting truth, is, perhaps, his peculiar excellence. The doctrines of the gospel, in his hands, are not mere abstract propositions, but living realities, distinctly seen by the author's faith, and painted with so much truth and life, and warmth of colouring, as cannot fail to give his hearers the same strong impression of them, which already exists in his own mind. With all this, he preached the real truth of God, in its simplicity and purity, keeping nothing back, with so much weight of thought and argument, so much strength of feeling, and such sincerity of purpose, as must enlighten every understanding, convince every conscience, and almost convert every heart.—I inquired of Dr West, Whether Mr. Edwards was an eloquent preacher. He replied, "If you mean, by eloquence, what is usually intended by it in our cities; he had no pretensions to it. He had no studied varieties of the voice, and no strong emphasis. He scarcely gestured, or even moved; and he made no attempt, by the elegance of his style, or the beauty of his pictures, to gratify the taste, and fascinate the imagination. But, if you mean by eloquence, the power of presenting an important truth before an audience, with overwhelming weight of argument, and with such intenseness of feeling, that the whole soul of the speaker is thrown into every part of the conception and delivery; so that the solemn attention of the whole audience is riveted, from the beginning to the close, and impressions are left that cannot be effaced; Mr. Edwards was the most eloquent man I ever heard speak."—As the result of the whole, we are led to regard him as, beyond most others, an instructive preacher, a solemn and faithful preacher, an animated and earnest preacher, a most powerful and impressive preacher in the sense explained, and the only true sense, a singularly eloquent preacher, and, through the blessing of God, one of the most successful preachers since the days of the apostles. It ought here to be added, that the sermons of Mr. Edwards have been, to his immediate pupils, and to his followers, the models of a style of preaching, which has been most signally blessed by God to the con-

version of sinners, and which should be looked to as a standard, by those who wish, like him, to turn many to righteousness, that with him they may shine, as the stars, for ever and ever.

His prayers," says Dr. Hopkins, "were indeed extempore. He was the farthest from any appearance of a form, as to his words and manner of expression, of almost any man. He was quite singular and inimitable in this, by any, who have not a spirit of real and undissembled devotion; yet he always expressed himself with decency and propriety. He appeared to have much of the grace and spirit of prayer; to pray with the spirit and with the understanding; and he performed this part of duty much to the acceptance and edification of those who joined with him. He was not wont, in ordinary cases, to be long in his prayers: an error which, he observed, was often hurtful to public and social prayer, as it tends rather to damp, than to promote, true devotion."

His practice, not to visit his people in their own houses, except in cases of sickness or affliction, is an example, not of course to be imitated by all. That, on this subject, ministers ought to consult their own talents and circumstances, and visit more or less, according to the degree in which they can thereby promote the great ends of their ministry, cannot be doubted. That his time was too precious to the church at large, to have been devoted, in any considerable degree, to visiting, all will admit. Yet it is highly probable, that, if he had been somewhat less in his study, and seen his people occasionally in the midst of their families, and known more of their circumstances and wants, and entered more into their feelings, his hold on their affections would have been stronger, and more permanent. Certainly this will be true with ministers at large.—In other pastoral duties, in preaching public and private lectures, in extraordinary labours during seasons of attention to religion, and in conversing with the anxious and inquiring, he was an uncommon example of faithfulness and success. "At such seasons, his study was thronged with persons, who came to lay open their spiritual concerns to him, and seek his advice and direction. He was a peculiarly skilful guide to those who were under spiritual difficulties; and was therefore sought unto, not only by his own people, but by many at a great distance." For this duty he was eminently fitted, from his own deep personal experience of religion, from his unwearied study of the word of God, from his having had so much intercourse with those who were in spiritual troubles, from his uncommon acquaintance with the human heart, with the nature of conversion, and with revivals of religion, and from his skill in detecting and exposing every thing like enthusiasm and counterfeit religion. How great a blessing was it to a church, to a people, and to every anxious inquirer, to enjoy the counsels and the prayers of such a minister!

But it is the theological treatises of Mr. Edwards, especially, by which he is most extensively known, to which he owes his commanding influence, and on which his highest reputation will ultimately depend. It is proper, therefore, before we conclude, to sketch his character as a theologian and controversialist, and to state the actual effects of his writings.

As a theologian, he is distinguished for his scriptural views of divine truth. Even the casual reader of his works can scarcely fail to perceive that, with great labour, patience, and skill, he derived his principles from an extensive and most accurate observation of the word of God. The number of passages which he adduces from the Scriptures, on every important doctrine, the critical attention he has evidently given them, the labour in arranging them, and the

skill and integrity with which he derives his general conclusions from them, is truly astonishing. We see no intermixture of his own hypotheses; no confidence in his own reason, except as applied to the interpretation of the oracles of God; nor even that disposition to make extended and momentous inferences, which characterizes some of his successors and admirers.

Another characteristic of his theology, is the extensiveness of his views. In his theology, as in his mind, there was nothing narrow, no partial, contracted views of a subject: all was simple, great, and sublime. His mind was too expanded to regard the distinctions of sects and churches. He belonged, in his feelings, to no church but the church of Christ, he contended for nothing but the truth; he aimed at nothing but to promote holiness and salvation. The effect of his labours so exactly coincides with the effects of the gospel, that no denomination can ever appropriate his name to itself, or claim him as its own.

Viewing Mr. Edwards as a controversialist, the most excellent, if not the most striking, trait in his character, is his integrity. Those who have been most opposed to his conclusions, and have most powerfully felt the force of his arguments, have acknowledged that he is a perfectly fair disputant. He saw so certainly the truth of his positions, and had such confidence in his ability to defend them by fair means, that the thought of employing sophistry in their defence never occurred to him. But, if he had felt the want of sound arguments, he would not have employed it. His conscience was too enlightened, and his mind too sincere. His aim, in all his investigations, was the discovery and the defence of truth. He valued his positions, only because they were true; and he gave them up at once, when he found that they were not supported by argument and evidence.

Another trait in his character, as a reasoner, is originality, or invention. Before his time, the theological writers of each given class or party, had, with scarcely an exception, followed on, one after another, in the same beaten path, and, whenever any one had deviated from it, he had soon lost himself in the mazes of error. Mr. Edwards had a mind too creative to be thus dependent on others. If the reader will examine carefully his controversial and other theological works, and compare them with those of his predecessors on the same subjects; he will find that his positions are new, that his definitions are new, that his plans are new, that his arguments are new, that his conclusions are new, that his mode of reasoning and his methods of discovering truth are perfectly his own; and that he has done more to render theology a new science, than, with perhaps one or two exceptions, all the writers who have lived since the days of the fathers.

Another characteristic of his controversial writings, is the excellent spirit which every where pervades them. So strikingly is this true, that we cannot but urge every one, who peruses them, to examine for himself, whether he can discover, in them all, a solitary deviation from Christian kindness and sincerity. By such an examination he will discover in them, if I mistake not, a fairness in proposing the real point in dispute, a candour in examining the arguments of his opponents, in stating their objections, and in suggesting others in which had escaped them, and a care in avoiding every thing like personality, and the imputation of unworthy motives, rarely paralleled in the annals of controversy. It should here be remembered, that he wrote his treatise on the Affections, and his several works on revivals of religion, in the very heat of a violent contest, which divided and agitated this whole country; that in his treatises



on the Freedom of the Will, on Original Sin, and on Justification, he handles subjects, which unavoidably awaken the most bitter opposition in the human heart, and opposes those, who had boasted of their victories over what he believed to be the cause of truth, “with no little glorying and insult;” that his treatise on the Qualifications for Communion, was written amid all the violence, and abuse, and injury of a furious parochial controversy; and that, in the Answer to Williams, he was called to reply to the most gross personalities, and to the most palpable misrepresentations of his arguments, his principles, and his motives.

He has, I know, been charged sometimes with handling his antagonists with needless severity. But let it be remembered, that his severity is never directed against their personal character, but merely against their principles and arguments; that his wit is only an irresistible exposition of the absurdity which he is opposing;[ Few men have possessed a greater fund of genuine wit, than Mr. Edwards. In early life, he found it difficult to restrain it. The clear *reductio ad absurdum*, to which he subjects every scheme and argument of his antagonists, in the Freedom of the Will, is usually a brilliant example of true logical wit. The Answer to Williams abounds with it. I doubt whether the annals of metaphysics can show a finer specimen of it, than the following; which is the conclusion of his exposure of the metaphysical notion of an action or act, as defined by Chubb, and his associates:

“So that, according to their notion of an act, considered with regard to its consequences, these following things are all essential to it: viz. That it should be necessary, and yet not necessary; that it should be from a cause, and yet from no cause; that it should be the fruit of choice and design, and yet not the fruit of choice and design; that it should be the beginning of motion or exertion, and yet consequent on previous exertion; that it should be before it is ; that it should spring immediately out of indifference and equilibrium, and yet be the effect of preponderation; that it should be self-originated, and also have its original from something else; that it is what the mind causes itself of its own will, and can produce or prevent according to its choice or pleasure, and yet what the mind has no power to prevent, precluding all previous choice in the affair.

“So that an act, according to their metaphysical notion of it, is something of which there is no idea; it is nothing but a confusion of the mind, excited by words without any distinct meaning, and is an absolute nonentity; and that in two respects: 1. There is nothing in the world that ever was, is, or can be, to answer the things which must belong to its description, according to what they suppose to be essential to it. And, 2. There neither is, nor ever was, nor can be, any notion or idea to answer the word, as they use and explain it. For if we should suppose any such notion, it would many ways destroy itself. But it is impossible that any idea or notion should subsist in the mind, whose very nature and essence, which constitutes it, destroys it.—If some learned philosopher, who has been abroad, in giving an account of the curious observations he had made in his travels, should say, he had been in Terra del Fuego, and there had seen an animal, which he calls by a certain name, that begat and brought forth himself, and yet had a sire and dam distinct from himself; that he had an appetite, and was hungry, before he had a being; that his master, who led him, and governed him at his pleasure, was always governed by him, and driven by him where he pleased; that when he moved, he always took a step before the first step; that he went with his head first, and yet always went tail foremost, and this, though he had neither head nor tail it would be no impudence at all to tell such a traveller, though a man of profound learning, that he himself had no idea of such an animal as he gave an account of, and never had, nor ever would have.”] that he stood forth as the champion of truth, and the opponent of error; and that, in this character, it was his duty not merely to prostrate error, but to give it a death-blow, that it might never rise again.

But the characteristic of his controversial, and indeed of all his theological, writings, which gives them their chief value and effect, is the unanswerableness of his arguments. He not only drives his enemy from the field, but he erects a rampart, so strong and impregnable, that no one afterwards has any

courage to assail it; and his companions in arms find the great work of defending the positions, which he has occupied, already done to their hands

This impossibility of answering his arguments, arises, in the first place, from the strength and conclusiveness of his reasoning. By first fixing in his own mind, and then exactly defining, the meaning of his terms, by stating his propositions with logical precision, and by clearly discerning and stating the connexion between his premises and conclusions, he has given to metaphysical reasoning very much of the exactness and certainty of mathematical demonstration.

Another cause of the unanswerable character of his reasonings, is, that he usually follows several distinct trains of argument, which all terminate in the same conclusion. Each of them is satisfactory; but the union of all, commencing at different points, and arriving at the same identical result, cannot fail to convince the mind, that that result is not to be shaken.

A third cause of this is, that he himself anticipates, and effectually answers, not only all the objections that have been made, but all that apparently can be made, to the points for which he contends. These he places in the strongest light and examines under every shape which they can assume in the hands of an evasive antagonist, and shows that, in every possible form, they are wholly inconclusive.

A fourth cause is his method of treating the opinions of his opponents. It is the identical method of Euclid. Assuming them as premises, he with great ingenuity shows, that they lead to palpable absurdity. He demonstrates that his opponents are inconsistent with themselves, as well as with truth and common sense;—and rarely stops, until he has exposed their error to contempt and ridicule.

This unanswerableness of Mr. Edwards's reasonings, in his controversial works, has been most publicly confessed. The *Essay on the Will* treats of subjects the most contested within the limits of theology; and, unless it can be answered, prostrates in the dust the scheme of doctrines, for which his antagonists so earnestly contend. Yet, hitherto, it stands unmoved and unassailed; and the waves of controversy break harmless at its base.[1] The treatise on *Original Sin*, though written chiefly to overthrow the hypothesis of an individual, is perhaps not less conclusive in its reasonings. That he succeeded in that design, as well as in establishing the great principles for which he contends will not be doubted by any one who examines the controversy; and is said to have been virtually confessed, in a melancholy manner, by Taylor himself. He had indiscreetly boasted, in his larger work, that it never would be answered. The answer was so complete, that it admitted of no reply. His consequent mortification is said to have shortened his days. Whether it was true, or not, that the grasp of his antagonist was literally death, it was at least death to the controversy. The treatise on the *Qualifications for Communion*, attacked the most favourite scheme of all the lax religionists of this country, the only plausible scheme, ever yet devised, of establishing a communion between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial. They regarded this attack with indignation, from one end of the country to the other. One solitary combatant appeared in the field; and, being left in a state of irrecoverable prostration, he has hitherto found no one adventurous enough to come to his aid. The *Treatise, and Reply*, of Mr. Edwards, by the conclusiveness of their reasonings, have so changed the opinion and practice of the ministers, and the churches, of New

England, that a mode of admission, once almost universal, now scarcely finds a solitary advocate.

But it may not unnaturally be asked, What are the changes in theology, which have been affected by the writings of President Edwards. It gives me peculiar pleasure that I can answer this question, in the words of his son, the late Dr. Edwards, President of Union College, Schenectady.

“CLEARER STATEMENTS  
OF THEOLOGICAL TRUTH,  
MADE BY PRESIDENT EDWARDS, AND THOSE WHO HAVE  
FOLLOWED HIS COURSE OF THOUGHT.

“1. The important question, concerning the ultimate end of the creation, is a question, upon which Mr. Edwards has shed much light. For ages it had been disputed, whether the end of creation was the happiness of creatures themselves, or the declarative glory of the Creator. Nor did it appear that the dispute was likely to be brought to an issue. On the one hand, it was urged, that reason declared in favour of the former hypothesis. It was said that, as God is a benevolent being, he doubtless acted under the influence of his own infinite benevolence in the creation; and that he could not but form creatures for the purpose of making them happy. Many passages of Scripture also were quoted in support of this opinion. On the other hand, numerous and very explicit declarations of Scripture were produced to prove that God made all things for his own glory. Mr. Edwards was the first, who clearly showed, that both these were the ultimate end of the creation, that they are only one end, and that they are really one and the same thing. According to him, the declarative glory of God is the creation, taken, not distributively, but collectively, as a system raised to a high degree of happiness. The creation, thus raised and preserved, is the declarative glory of God. In other words, it is the exhibition of his essential glory.

“2. On the great subject of Liberty and Necessity, Mr. Edwards made very important improvements. Before him, the Calvinists were nearly driven out of the field, by the Arminians, Pelagians and Socinians. The Calvinists, it is true, appealed to Scripture, the best of all authority, in support of their peculiar tenets. But how was the Scripture to be understood. They were pressed and embarrassed by the objection,—That the sense, in which they interpreted the sacred writings, was inconsistent with human liberty, moral agency, accountability, praise and blame. It was consequently inconsistent with all command and exhortation, with all reward and punishment. Their interpretation must of course be erroneous, and an entire perversion of Scripture. How absurd, it was urged, that a man totally dead, should be called upon to arise and perform the duties of the living and sound—that we should need a divine influence to give us a new heart, and yet be commanded to make us a new heart, and a right spirit—that a man has no power to come to Christ, and yet be commanded to come to him on pain of damnation! The Calvinists themselves began to be ashamed of their own cause and to give it up, so far at least as relates to liberty and necessity. This was true especially of Dr. Watts and Doddridge, who, in their day, were accounted leaders of the Calvinists. They must needs bow in the house of Rimmon, and admit the self-determining power; which, once admitted and pursued to its ultimate results, entirely overthrows the doctrines of regeneration, of our dependence for renewing and sanctifying grace, of absolute decrees, of the saints perseverance, and the whole system of doctrines, usually denominated the doctrines of grace.—But Mr. Edwards put an end to this seeming triumph of those, who were thus hostile to that system of doctrines. This he accomplished, by pointing out the difference between natural

and moral, necessity and inability, by showing the absurdity, the manifold contradictions, the inconceivableness, and the impossibility, of a self-determining power, and by proving that the essence of the virtue and vice, existing in the disposition of the heart and the acts of the will, lies not in their cause, but in their nature. Therefore, though we are not the efficient causes of our own acts of will, yet they may be either virtuous or vicious; and also that liberty of contingency, as it is an exemption from all previous certainty, implies that free actions have no cause, and come into existence by mere chance. But if we admit that any event may come into existence by chance, and without a cause, the existence of the world may be accounted for in this same way; and atheism is established.—Mr. Edwards and his followers have further illustrated this subject by showing, that free action consists in volition itself, and that liberty consists in spontaneity. Wherever, therefore, there is volition, there is free action; wherever there is spontaneity there is liberty; however and by whomsoever that liberty and spontaneity are caused. Beasts, therefore, according to their measure of intelligence, are as free as men. Intelligence, therefore, and not liberty, is the only thing wanting, to constitute them moral agents.—The power of self-determination, alone, cannot answer the purpose of them who undertake its defence; for self-determination must be free from all control and previous certainty, as to its operations, otherwise it must be subject to what its advocates denominate a fatal necessity, and therefore must act by contingency and mere chance. But even the defenders of self-determination themselves, are not willing to allow the principle, that our actions, in order to be free, must happen by chance.—Thus Mr. Edwards and his followers understand, that the whole controversy concerning liberty and necessity, depends on the explanation of the word liberty, or the sense in which that word is used. They find that all the senses in which the word has been used, with respect to the mind and its acts, may be reduced to these two: 1. Either an entire exemption from previous certainty, or the certain futurity of the acts which it will perform: or, 2. Spontaneity.—Those, who use it in the former sense, cannot avoid the consequence, that, in order to act freely, we must act by chance, which is absurd, and what no man will dare to avow. If then liberty means an exemption from an influence, to which the will is or can be opposed, every volition is free, whatever may be the manner of its coming into existence. If, furthermore, God, by his grace, create in man a clean heart and holy volitions, such volitions being, by the very signification of the term itself, voluntary, and in no sense opposed to the divine influence which causes them, they are evidently as free as they could have been, if they had come into existence by mere chance and without cause. We have, of course no need of being the efficient causes of those acts, which our wills perform, to render them either virtuous or vicious. As to the liberty, then, of self-determination or contingency, it implies, as already observed, that actions, in order to be free, must have no cause; but are brought into existence by chance. Thus have they illustrated the real and wide difference between natural and moral necessity. They have proved that this difference consists, not in the degree of previous certainty that an action will be performed—but in the fact, that natural necessity admits an entire opposition of the will, while moral necessity implies, and, in all cases, secures, the consent of the will. It follows that all necessity of the will, and of its acts, is of the moral kind; and that natural necessity cannot possibly affect the will or any of its exercises. It likewise follows, that if liberty, as applied to

a moral agent, mean an exemption from all previous certainty that an action will be performed, then no action of man or any other creature can be free; for on this supposition, every action must come to pass without divine prescience, by mere chance, and consequently without a cause.—Now, therefore, the Calvinists find themselves placed upon firm and high ground. They fear not the attacks of their opponents. They face them on the ground of reason, as well as of Scripture. They act not merely on the defensive. Rather they have carried the war into Italy, and to the very gates of Rome.—But all this is peculiar to America; except that a few European writers have adopted, from American authors, the sentiments here stated. Even the famous Assembly of Divines had very imperfect views of this subject. This they prove, when they say, “Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created;”—and “God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, so as the contingency of second causes is not taken away, but rather established.”—These divines unquestionably meant, that our first parents, in the instance, at least, of their fall, acted from self-determination, and by mere contingency or chance. But there is no more reason to believe or even suppose this, than there is to suppose it true of every sinner, in every sin which he commits.

“3. Mr. Edwards very happily illustrated and explained The nature of True Virtue, or Holiness.—What is the nature of true virtue, or holiness?—In what does it consist?—and, Whence arises our obligation to be truly virtuous or holy?—are questions which moral writers have agitated in all past ages. Some have placed virtue in self-love;—some in acting agreeably to the fitness of things;—some in following conscience, or moral sense;—some in following truth;—and some in acting agreeably to the will of God. Those who place or found virtue in fitness, and those who found it in truth, do but use one synonymous word for another. For they doubtless mean moral fitness, and moral truth; these are no other than virtuous fitness, and virtuous truth. No one would pretend that it is a virtuous action to give a man poison, because it is fit or direct mode of destroying his life. No person will pretend that the crucifying of Christ was virtuous, because it was true, compared with the ancient prophecies.—To found virtue in acting agreeably to conscience, or moral sense, justifies the persecutions of Christians by Saul of Tarsus, as well as a great proportion of heathenish idolatry.—If we found virtue in the will of God, the question arises, Whether the will of God be our rule, because it is in fact what it is, wise, good and benevolent; or whether it be our rule, merely because it is his will, without any consideration of its nature and tendency; and whether it would be a rule equally binding, as to observance, if it were foolish and malicious?—Mr. Edwards teaches, that virtue consists in benevolence. He proves that every voluntary action, which, in its general tendency and ultimate consequences, leads to happiness, is virtuous, and that every such action, which has not this tendency, and does not lead to this consequence, is vicious. By happiness, in this case, he does not mean the happiness of the agent only, or principally, but happiness in general, happiness on the large scale. Virtuous or holy benevolence embraces both the agent himself and others—all intelligences, wherever found, who are capable of a rational and moral blessedness. All actions, proceeding from such a principle, he holds to be fit, or agreeable to the fitness of things—agreeable equally to reason, and, to a well-informed conscience, or moral sense, and to moral truth;—and agreeable especially to

the will of God, who “is love,” or benevolence.—In this scheme of virtue or holiness, Mr. Edwards appears to have been original. Much indeed has been said, by most moral writers, in favour of benevolence. Many things they had published, which imply, in their consequences, Mr. Edward’s scheme of virtue. But no one before him had traced these consequences to their proper issue. No one had formed a system of virtue, and of morals, built on that foundation.

“4. Mr. Edwards has thrown much light on the inquiry concerning The Origin of Moral Evil. This question, comprehending the influence which the Deity had in the event of moral evil, has always been esteemed most difficult and intricate. That God is the author of sin, has been constantly objected to the Calvinists, as the consequence of their principles, by their opponents. To avoid this objection, some have holden that God is the author of the sinful act, which the sinner commits, but that the sinner himself is the author of its sinfulness. But how we shall abstract the sinfulness of a malicious act from the malicious act itself; and how God can be the author of a malicious act, and not be the author of the malice, which is the sinfulness of that act; is hard to be conceived. Mr. Edwards rejects, with abhorrence, the idea that God either is, or can be, the agent, or actor, of sin. He illustrates and explains this difficult subject, by showing that God may dispose things in such a manner, that sin will certainly take place in consequence of such a disposal. In maintaining this, he only adheres to his own important doctrine of moral necessity. The divine disposal, by which sin certainly comes into existence, is only establishing a certainty of its future existence. If that certainty, which is no other than moral necessity, be not inconsistent with human liberty; then surely the cause of that certainty, which is no other than the divine disposal, cannot be inconsistent with such liberty.

“5. The followers of Mr. Edwards have thrown new and important light upon ‘The Doctrine of Atonement. It has been commonly represented, that the atonement, which Christ made, was the payment of a debt, due from his people. By this payment, they were purchased from slavery and condemnation. Hence arose this question,—If the sinner’s debt be paid, how does it appear that there is any pardon or grace in his deliverance?—The followers of Mr. Edwards have proved, that the atonement does not consist in the payment of a debt, properly so called. It consists rather in doing that, which, for the purpose of establishing the authority of the divine law, and of supporting in due time the divine government, is equivalent to the punishment of the sinner according to the letter of the law. Now, therefore, God, without the prostration of his authority and government, can pardon and save those who believe. As what was done to support the divine government, was not done by the sinner, so it does not at all diminish the free grace of his pardon and salvation. [It is proper to remark, that the above statement is not altogether correct. The same views of the atonement appear in Bates on the Harmony of the Divine Attributes in Redemption: in the writings of Howe, Baxter, and some other eminent divines of the seventeenth century.]

“6. With respect to The Imputation of Adam’s Sin, and The Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness, their statements also have been more accurate. The common doctrine had been, that Adam’s sin is so transferred to his posterity, that it properly becomes their sin. The righteousness of Christ, likewise, is so transferred or made over to the believer, that it properly becomes his righteousness. To the believer it is reckoned in the divine account.—On this the

question arises, How can the righteousness or good conduct of one person be the righteousness or good conduct of another? If, in truth, it cannot be the conduct of that other; how can God, who is omniscient, and cannot mistake, reckon, judge, or think it to be the conduct of that other?—The followers of Mr. Edwards find relief from this difficulty, by proving that to impute righteousness, is, in the language of Scripture, to justify; and that, to impute the righteousness of Christ, is to justify on account of Christ's righteousness. The imputation of righteousness can, therefore, be no transfer of righteousness. They are the beneficial consequences of righteousness, which are transferred. Not therefore the righteousness of Christ itself, but its beneficial consequences and advantages are transferred to the believer.—In the same manner they reason with respect to the imputation of Adam's sin. The baneful consequences of Adam's sin, which came upon himself, came also upon his posterity. These consequences were, that, after his first transgression, God left him to an habitual disposition to sin, to a series of actual transgressions, and to a liableness to the curse of the law, denounced against such transgression.—The same consequences took place with regard to Adam's posterity. By divine constitution, they, as descending from Adam, become, like himself, the subjects of an habitual disposition to sin. This disposition is commonly called original depravity. Under its influence they sin, as soon as, in a moral point of view, they act at all. This depravity, this disposition to sin, leads them naturally to a series of actual transgressions, and exposes them to the whole curse of the law.—On this subject two questions have been much agitated in the Christian world:—1. Do the posterity of Adam, unless saved by Christ, suffer final damnation on account of Adam's sin?—and, if this be asserted, how can it be reconciled with justice?—2. How shall we reconcile it with justice, that Adam's posterity should be doomed, in consequence of his sin, to come into the world, with an habitual disposition themselves to sin?—On the former of these questions, the common doctrine has been, that Adam's posterity, unless saved by Christ, are damned on account of Adam's sin, and that this is just, because his sin is imputed or transferred to them. By imputation, his sin becomes their sin. When the justice of such a transfer is demanded, it is said that the constitution, which God has established, makes the transfer just.—To this it may be replied, that in the same way it may be proved to be just, to damn a man without any sin at all, either personal or imputed. We need only to resolve it into a sovereign constitution of God. From this difficulty the followers of Mr. Edwards relieve themselves, by holding that, though Adam was so constituted the federal head of his posterity, that in consequence of his sin they all sin or become sinners, yet they are damned on account of their own personal sin merely, and not on account of Adam's sin, as though they were individually guilty of his identical transgression. This leads us to the second question stated above:—viz. How shall we reconcile it with perfect justice, that Adam's posterity should, by a divine constitution, be depraved and sinful, or become sinners, in consequence of Adam's apostasy?—But this question involves no difficulty, beside that, which attends the doctrine of divine decrees. And this is satisfactory; because for God to decree that an event shall take place, is, in other words, the same thing as if he make a constitution, under the operation of which that event shall take place. If God has decreed whatever comes to pass, he decreed the fall of Adam. It is obvious that, in equal consistency with justice, he may decree any other sin. Consequently he may decree that every man shall sin; and



this too, as soon as he shall become capable of moral action. Now if God could, consistently with justice, establish, decree, or make a constitution, according to which this depravity, this sinfulness of disposition, should exist, without any respect to Adam's sin, he might evidently, with the same justice, decree that it should take place in consequence of Adam's sin. If God might consistently with justice decree, that the Jews should crucify Christ, without the treachery of Judas preceding, he might with the same justice decree, that they should do the same evil deed, in consequence of that treachery.—Thus the whole difficulty, attending the connexion between Adam and his posterity, is resolved into the doctrine of the divine decrees; and the followers of Mr. Edwards feel themselves placed upon strong ground—ground upon which they are willing, at any time, to meet their opponents.—They conceive, furthermore, that, by resolving several complicated difficulties into one simple vindicable principle, a very considerable improvement is made in the representations of theological truth. Since the discovery and elucidation of the distinction, between natural and moral necessity, and inability; and since the effectual confutation of that doctrine, which founds moral liberty on self-determination; they do not feel themselves pressed with the objections, which are made to divine and absolute decrees.

“7. With respect to The State of the Unregenerate, The Use of Means, and The Exhortations, which ought to be addressed to the Impenitent, the disciples of Mr. Edwards, founding themselves on the great principles of moral agency, established in the Freedom of the Will, have since his day made considerable improvement upon former views.—This improvement was chiefly occasioned by the writings of Robert Sandeman, a Scotchman, which were published after the death of Mr. Edwards. Sandeman, in the most striking colours, pointed out the inconsistency of the popular preachers, as he called them; by whom he meant Calvinistic divines in general. He proved them inconsistent, in teaching that the unregenerate are, by total depravity, ‘dead in trespasses and sins,’—and yet supposing that such sinners do often attain those sincere desires, make those sincere resolutions, and offer those sincere prayers, which are well pleasing in the sight of God, and which are the sure presages of renewing grace and salvation. He argued, that, if the unregenerate be dead in sin, then all that they do must be sin; and that sin can never be pleasing and acceptable to God. Hence he taught, not only that all the exercises and strivings of the unregenerate are abominable in the Divine view, but that there is no more likelihood, in consequence of their strictest attendance on the means of grace, that they will become partakers of salvation, than there would be in the total neglect of those means. These sentiments were entirely new. As soon as they were published, they gave a prodigious shock to all serious men, both ministers and others. The addresses to the unregenerate, which had hitherto consisted chiefly in exhortations to attend on the outward means of grace, and to form such resolutions, and put forth such desires, as all supposed consistent with unregeneracy, were examined. It appearing that such exhortations were addresses to no real spiritual good; many ministers refrained from all exhortations to the unregenerate. The perplexing inquiry with such sinners consequently was—‘What then have we to do? All we do is sin. To sin is certainly wrong. We ought therefore to remain still, doing nothing, until God bestow upon us renewing grace.’ In this state of things, Dr. Hopkins took up the subject. He inquired particularly into the exhortations delivered by the inspired

writers. He published several pieces on *The character of the Unregenerate*; on *Using the Means of Grace*; and on *The Exhortations*, which ought to be addressed to the Unregenerate. He clearly showed that, although they are dead in depravity and sin, yet, as this lays them under a mere moral inability to the exercise and practice of true holiness,—and as such exercise and practice are their unquestionable duty,—to this duty they are to be exhorted. To this duty only, and to those things which imply it, the inspired writers constantly exhort the unregenerate. Every thing short of this duty is sin. Nevertheless, ‘as faith cometh by hearing,’ those who ‘hear,’ and attend on the means of grace, even in their unregeneracy, and from natural principles, are more likely than others to become the subjects of divine grace. The Scriptures sufficiently prove, that this is the constitution which Christ has established. It likewise accords perfectly with experience and observation, both in apostolic and subsequent ages.

“8. Mr. Edwards greatly illustrated *The Nature of Experimental Religion*. He pointed out, more clearly than had been done before, the distinguishing marks of genuine Christian experience, and those religious affections and exercises, which are peculiar to the true Christian. The accounts of Christian affection and experience, which had before been given, both by American and European writers, were general, indiscriminate, and confused. They seldom, if ever, distinguished the exercises of self-love, natural conscience, and other natural principles of the human mind under conviction of divine truth, from those of the new nature, given in regeneration. In other words, they seldom distinguished the exercises of the sinner under the law work, and the joys afterwards often derived from a groundless persuasion of his forgiveness, from those sincere and evangelical affections, which are peculiar to the real convert. They did not show how far the unregenerate sinner can proceed in religious exercises, and yet fall short of saving grace. But this whole subject, and the necessary distinction, with respect to it, are set in a striking light by Mr. Edwards, in his treatise concerning *Religious Affections*.

“9. Mr. Edwards has thrown much light upon the subject of affection as disinterested. The word disinterested, is, indeed, capable of such a sense, as affords a ground of argument against disinterested affections; and scarcely perhaps is an instance of its use to be found, in which it does not admit of an equivocation. It seems to be a mere equivocation to say, that disinterested affection is an impossibility; and that, if we are not interested in favour of religion, we are indifferent with respect to it, and do not love it at all. But who ever thought that, when a person professes a disinterested regard for another, he has no regard for him at all. [The whole difficulty is removed by reflecting that disinterested is the converse of selfish; and uninterested, the converse of interested.] The plain meaning is, that his regard for him is direct and benevolent, not selfish, nor arising from selfish motives. In this sense, Mr. Edwards maintained that our religious affections, if genuine, are disinterested; that our love to God arises chiefly—not from the motive that God has bestowed, or is about to bestow, on us favours, whether temporal or eternal, but—from his own infinite excellence and glory. The same explanation applies to the love which every truly pious person feels for the Lord Jesus Christ, for every truth of divine revelation, and for the whole scheme of the gospel. Very different from this is the representation given by most theological writers before Mr. Edwards. The motives presented by them, to persuade men to love and serve God, to come unto Christ, to repent of their sin; and to embrace and practise religion, are chiefly of the selfish

kind. There is, in their works, no careful and exact discrimination upon this subject.

“10. He has thrown great light on the important doctrine of Regeneration. Most writers before him treat this subject very loosely. They do indeed describe a variety of awakenings and convictions, fears and distresses, comforts and joys, as implied in it; and they call the whole, regeneration. They represent the man before regeneration as dead, and no more capable of spiritual action, than a man naturally dead is capable of performing those deeds, which require natural life and strength. From their description, a person is led to conceive, that the former is as excusable, in his omission of those holy exercises, which constitute the christian character and life, as the latter is, in the neglect of those labours, which cannot be performed without natural life. From their account, no one can determine in what the change, effected by regeneration, consists. They do not show the inquirer, whether every awakened and convinced sinner, who afterwards has lively gratitude and joy, is regenerated; or whether a gracious change of heart implies joys of a peculiar kind: neither, if the renewed have joys peculiar to themselves, do the teachers, now referred to, describe that peculiarity; nor do they tell from what motives the joys, that are evidence of regeneration, arise. They represent the whole man, his understanding, and his sensitive faculties, as renewed, no less than his heart and affections. According to them generally, this change is effected by light. As to this indeed they are not perfectly agreed. Some of them hold, that the change is produced by the bare light and motives exhibited in the gospel. Others pretend, that a man is persuaded to become a Christian, as he is persuaded to become a friend to republican government. Yet others there are, who hold that regeneration is caused by a supernatural and divine light immediately communicated. Their representation of this seems to imply, and their readers understand it as implying, an immediate and new revelation. But, according to Mr. Edwards, and those who adopt his views of the subject, regeneration consists in the communication of a new spiritual sense or taste. In other words, a new heart is given. This communication is made, this work is accomplished, by the Spirit of God. It is their opinion, that the intellect, and the sensitive faculties, are not the immediate subject of any change in regeneration. They believe, however, that, in consequence of the change which the renewed heart experiences, and of its reconciliation to God, light breaks in upon the understanding. The subject of regeneration sees, therefore, the glory of God’s character, and the glory of all divine truth. This may be an illustration. A man becomes cordially reconciled to his neighbour, against whom he had previously felt a strong enmity. He now sees the real excellencies of his neighbour’s character, to which he was blinded before by enmity and prejudice. These new views of his neighbour, and these different feelings towards him, are the consequence of the change: its evidence, but not the change itself.—At the same time, Mr. Edwards and others believe, that in saving experience, the sensitive faculties are brought under the due regulation by the new heart or holy temper. None of the awakenings, fears, and convictions, which precede the new heart, are, according to this scheme, any part of regeneration; though they are, in some sense, a preparation for it, as all doctrinal knowledge is. The sinner, before regeneration, is allowed to be totally dead to the exercises and duties of the spiritual life. He is nevertheless accounted a moral agent. He is therefore entirely blameable in his impenitence, his unbelief, and his alienation from God. He is therefore, with

perfect propriety, exhorted to repent, to become reconciled to God in Christ, and to arise from his spiritual death, that “Christ may give him light.”—According to this system, regeneration is produced, neither by moral suasion, i.e. by the arguments and motives of the gospel, nor by any supernatural, spiritual light; but by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit. Yet the light and knowledge of the gospel are, by divine constitution, usually necessary to regeneration, as the blowing of the rams’ horns was necessary to the falling of the walls of Jericho; and the moving of the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, was necessary to the raising of Lazarus.”

---

Thus it appears, that Mr. Edwards taught us in his writings, in a manner so clear, that mankind have hitherto been satisfied with the instruction, Why God created this material and spiritual universe;—What is the nature of that government which he exercises over minds, and how it is consistent with their perfect freedom;—What is the nature of that virtue, which they must possess, if they are to secure his approbation;—What is the nature, the source, the extent, and the evidences of that depravity, which characterizes man, as a fallen being;—What is the series of events by which his redemption is accomplished;—What are the qualifications for that church, to which the redeemed belong;—What are the grounds on which they are justified;—What are the nature and evidences of that religion, which is imparted to them by the Spirit of grace;—What are the nature and effects of that revival of religion which accompanies an effusion of his divine influences on a people;—And what are the inducements to united and extraordinary prayer, that such effusions may be abundantly enjoyed by the church of God.—By what is thus said, we do not intend, that all his reasonings are solid, or all his opinions sound and scriptural; but we know of no writer, since the days of the apostles, who has better comprehended the word of God; who has more fully unfolded the nature and design of the revelation of his mind, which it contains; who has more ably explained and defended the great doctrines which it teaches; who has more clearly illustrated the religion which it requires; who has done more for the purification and enlargement of that church which it establishes; or who, in consequence of his unfoldings of divine truth, will find, when the work of every man is weighed in the balances of eternity, a larger number to be “his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing in that day.”—And when we remember, in addition to all this, that we can probably select no individual, of all who have lived in that long period, who has manifested a more ardent or elevated piety towards God, a warmer or more expanded benevolence towards man, or greater purity, or disinterestedness, or integrity of character—one, who gave the concentrated strength of all his powers, more absolutely, to the one end of glorifying God in the salvation of man;—and then reflect that at the age of fifty-four, in the highest vigour of all his faculties, in the fulness of his usefulness, when he was just entering on the most important station of his life, he yielded to the stroke of death; we look towards his grave, in mute astonishment, unable to penetrate those clouds and darkness, which hover around it. One of his weeping friends [Dr. Finley.] thus explained this most surprising dispensation:—“He was pouring in a flood of light upon mankind, which their

eyes, as yet, were too feeble to bear.”—If this was not the reason; we can only say—“Even so, Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight.”