
T H E
L I F E

Of the Reverend

MR. JONATHAN EDWARDS.

P A R T I.

*Containing the History of his Life, from his BIRTH to his
SETTLEMENT in the work of the MINISTRY.*

MR. JONATHAN EDWARDS was born October 5, 1703, at Windsor, a town in Connecticut. His father was the Rev. Mr. Timothy Edwards, minister of the gospel on the east side of Connecticut river in Windsor. He began to reside and preach at Windsor in November 1694, but was not ordained until July, 1698. He died January 27, 1758, in the 89th year of his age, not two months before this his son. He was in the work of the ministry above fifty-nine years : And from his first beginning to reside and preach there, to his death, are above sixty-three years ; and was able to attend on the work of the ministry and preach constantly until within a few years before his death. He was very universally esteemed and beloved as an upright, pious, exemplary man, and faithful minister of the gospel ; and was greatly useful. He was born at Hartford in Connecticut, May 14, 1669, received the honours of the college at Cambridge in New-England, by having the degrees of Batchelor and Master of Arts given him the same day, July 4, 1694, one in the forenoon, and the other in the afternoon.

On the 6th day of November 1694, he was married to Mrs. Esther Stoddard, in the 23d year of her age, the daughter of the late famous Mr. Solomon Stoddard of Northampton ; whose great parts and zeal for experimental religion are well known in all the churches in America ; and will probably be transmitted to posterity yet unborn, by his valuable writings. They

lived together in the married state above sixty-three years. Mrs. Edwards was born June 2, 1672.

They had eleven Children : All which lived to adult years, viz. ten daughters, and this their only son and fifth child.*

Mr.

* As the following more large and particular account, of Mr. Edwards's ancestors may gratify some readers, it is inserted here in the Margin.

Mr. Edwards's grandfather was Mr. Richard Edwards. His first wife was Mrs. Elizabeth Tuttle, daughter of Mr. William Tuttle of New-Haven in Connecticut, and Mrs. Elis Tuttle his wife, who came out of Northamptonshire in England. His second wife was Mrs. Talcot, sister to governor Talcot : By his first wife he had seven children, the oldest of which was the Rev. Mr. Timothy Edwards of Windsor, his father, before mentioned. By his second wife Mrs. Talcot, he had six children.

The father of Mr. Richard Edwards was Mr. William Edwards, who came from England young and unmarried. His wife, Mrs. Agnes Edwards, who also came out of England, had two brothers in England, one of them Mayor of Exeter, and the other of Barnstable. Mr. William Edwards's father was the Rev. Mr. Rich. Edwards, minister of the gospel in London. He lived in Queen Elizabeth's day, and his wife Mrs. Anne Edwards assisted in making a ruff for the queen. After the death of Mr. Edwards she married to one Mr. James Cole. She with her second husband, and her son William Edwards came into America, and all died at Hartford in Connecticut.

Mr. Edwards's grandfather, (Mr. Solomon Stoddard, and his predecessor at Northampton) married Mrs. Mather, the relict of the Rev. Mr. Mather his predecessor, and the first minister at Northampton. Her maiden name was Esther Warham, daughter and youngest child of the Rev. Mr. John Warham, minister at Windsor in Connecticut, who came out of England, before which he was minister in Exeter in England : He had four children, all daughters ; and Mrs. Warham survived him, and had two daughters by Mr. Newbury, her second husband.

Mrs. Esther Warham had three children by Mr. Mather, viz. Eunice, Warham and Eliakim. And she had twelve children by Mr. Stoddard, six sons and six daughters : Three of the sons died in infancy. The three that lived to adult years were Anthony, John and Israel. Israel died in prison in France. Anthony was the Rev. Mr. Anthony Stoddard, late minister of the Gospel at Woodbury

Mr. Edwards entered Yale College in the year 1716, and received the degree of Batchelor of Arts in September, 1720, a little before he was seventeen years old. He had the character of a sober youth, and a good scholar while he was a member of the college. In his second year at college, and thirteenth of his age, he read Locke on the human understanding, with great delight and profit. His uncommon genius, by which he was, as it were by nature, formed for closeness of thought and deep penetration, now began to exercise and discover itself. Taking that book into his hand, upon some occasion, not long before his death, he said to some of his select friends, who were then with him, That he was beyond expression entertained and pleased with it, when he read it in his youth at college ; that he was as much engaged, and had more satisfaction and pleasure in studying it, than the most greedy miser in gathering up handfuls of silver and gold from some new discovered treasure.

Though he made good proficiency in all the arts and sciences, and had an uncommon taste for natural philosophy, which he cultivated to the end of his life, with that justness and accuracy of thought which was almost peculiar to him ; yet moral philosophy or divinity was his favorite study. In this he early made great progress. He

bury in Connecticut, who lived to a great age, and was in the work of the ministry sixty years : He died September 6, 1760, in the eighty-second year of his age. John was the honourable John Stoddard, Esq. who lived at Northampton, and who often, especially in his younger years, served the town as their representative at the great and general court in Boston ; and was long head of the county of Hampshire as their chief Colonel, and chief Judge of the court of common pleas : And he long served his majesty, and the province of the Massachusetts-Bay, as one of his Majesty's council. He was remarkable as a politician, and for his spirit of government ; a wise counsellor, an upright and skilful judge, a steady and great friend to the interest of religion. He was a great friend and admirer of Mr. Edwards, and greatly strengthened his hands in the work of the ministry while he lived. A more particular account of the life and character of this truly great man may be seen in the sermon which Mr. Edwards preached and published on the occasion of his death.

Mr. Stoddard's father was Anthony Stoddard, Esq. of Boston, a zealous congregational man. He had five wives, the first of which, Mr. Stoddard's mother, was Mrs. Mary Downing, sister to Sir George Downing, whose other sister married Governor Bradstreet. Mr. Solomon Stoddard was their oldest child.

He lived at college near two years after he took his first degree, designing and preparing for the work of the ministry. After which, having passed the pre-requisite trials, he was licenced to preach the gospel as a candidate. And being pitched upon, and applied to by a number of ministers in New-England, who were intrusted to act in behalf of the English presbyterians at New-York, as a person to be sent to them, he complied with their request, and went to New-York the beginning of August, 1722; and preached there to very good acceptance about eight months. But by reason of the smallness of that society, and some special difficulties that attended it, he did not think they were in a capacity to settle a minister, with a rational prospect of answering the good ends proposed. He therefore left them, the next spring, and retired to his father's house; where he spent the summer in close study. He was indeed earnestly solicited by the people he had been among at New-York to return to them again; but for the reason just mentioned, he could not think himself in the way of his duty to gratify them.

In September, 1723, he received his degree of Master of Arts; about which time he had invitations from several congregations to come among them in order to his settlement in the work of the ministry; but being chosen tutor of Yale-College the next spring in the year 1724, being in the twenty first year of his age, he retired to the college, and attended the business of tutor there above two years.

While he was in this place, he was applied to by the people at Northampton, with an invitation to come and settle in the work of the ministry there, with his grandfather Stoddard, who by reason of his great age, stood in need of assistance. He therefore resigned his tutorship, in September, 1726, and accepted of their invitation; and was ordained in the work of the ministry at Northampton, colleague with his grandfather Stoddard, February 15, 1727, in the twenty fourth year of his age, where he continued in the work of the ministry until June 22, 1750, twenty three years and four months.

Between the time of his going to New-York and his settlement at Northampton, he formed a number of resolutions, and committed them to writing: the particular time, and special occasion of his making many of them, he has noted in his diary which he then kept; as well as many other observations and rules, which related to his own exercises and conduct,

duſt. And as theſe reſolutions, together with the things noted in his diary, may juſtly be conſidered, as the foundation and plan of his whole life, it may be proper here to give the reader a taſte and idea of them : Which will therefore be done in the following extracts.

P A R T II.

Containing EXTRACTS *from his* PRIVATE WRITINGS, &c.

S E C T I O N I.

HIS RESOLUTIONS.

BEING ſenſible that I am unable to do any thing without God's help, I do humbly intreat 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 God's glory, and my own good, profit and pleaſure, in the whole of my duration, without any conſideration of the time, whether now, or never ſo many 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 to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many and how great ſoever.

2. Reſolved, to be continually endeavouring to find out ſome new invention and contrivance to promote the fore-mentioned things.

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 avoid it.

5. Reſolved, never to looſe one moment of time ; but improve it 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.

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

11. Re-

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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

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

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, always to do what I can towards making, maintaining and establishing peace, when it can be without over-balancing detriment in other respects.

34. Resolved, in narrations never to speak any thing but the pure and simple verity.

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

37. Resolved, to enquire 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.

38. Re-

38. Resolved, never to speak any thing that is ridiculous, or matter of laughter on the Lord's Day.

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

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.

42. Resolved frequently to renew the dedication of myself to God, which was made at my baptism; which I solemnly renewed, when I was received into the communion of the church; and which I have solemnly re-made this twelfth day of January, 1722—3.

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

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

47. Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to deny whatever is not most agreeable to a good, and universally sweet and benevolent, quiet, peaceable, contented, easy, compassionate, generous, humble, meek, modest, submissive, obliging, diligent and industrious, charitable, even, patient, moderate, forgiving, sincere temper; and to do at all times what such a temper would lead me to. Examine strictly every week, whether I have done so.

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

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

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.

54. Whenever I hear any thing spoken in conversation of any person, if I think it would be praise-worthy in me, Resolved to endeavor to imitate it.

55. Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to act as I can think I should do, if I had already seen the happiness of Heaven, and Hell torments.

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 adversities, to examine whether I have done my duty, and resolve to do it; and let it be just as providence orders it, I will, as far as I can, be concerned about nothing but my duty and my sin.

62. Resolved, never to do any thing but duty; and then according to Eph. vi. 6, 7, 8. do it willingly and cheerfully as unto the Lord, and not to man; knowing that whatever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.

65. Resolved, very much to exercise myself in this all my live long, *viz.* with the greatest openness I am capable of, to declare my ways to God, and lay open my soul to him: all my sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, fears, hopes, desires, and every thing, and every circumstance; according to Dr. Manton's 27th sermon on the cxix Psalm.

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. *

* The Resolutions are seventy in number. But part of them are here transcribed, as a specimen of the whole. The number here affixed to them, is that by which they are numbered in the original manuscript; and retained here for the sake of the references made to some of them in the diary, as the reader will presently see.

SECTION II.

Extracts from his PRIVATE DIARY.

SATURDAY, *December 22, 1722.* This day revived by God's spirit. Affected with the sense of the excellency of holiness. Felt more exercise of love to Christ than usual.
Have

Have also felt sensible repentance of sin, because it was committed against so merciful and good a God. This night made the 37th Resolution.

Sabbathday night, Dec. 23. Made the 38th Resolution.

Monday, Dec. 24. Higher thoughts than usual of the excellency of Jesus Christ and his kingdom.

Wednesday, January 2, 1722—3. 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.—There is no dependence upon myself. 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.

Sabbathday, January 6, at night. Much concerned about the improvement of precious time. Intend to live in continual mortification, without ceasing, as long as in this world.

Tuesday, January 8, in the morning. Higher thoughts than usual, of the excellency of Christ, and felt an unusual repentance of sin therefrom.

Wednesday, January 9, at night. Decayed. I am sometimes apt to think, I have a great deal more of holiness than I have. I find now and then, that abominable corruption which is directly contrary to what I read of eminent Christians.—How deceitful is my heart! I take up a strong resolution, but how soon does it weaken!

Thursday, January 10, about noon. Reviving. 'Tis a great dishonor to Christ, in whom I hope I have an interest, to be uneasy at my worldly state and condition. When I see the prosperity of others, and that all things go easy with them; the world is smooth to them, and they are happy in many respects, and very prosperous, or are advanced to much honor, &c. to grudge and envy them, or be the least uneasy at it; to wish or long for the same prosperity, and that it would ever be so with me. Wherefore concluded always to rejoice in every one's prosperity, and to expect for myself no happiness of that nature as long as I live; but depend upon afflictions, and 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 what sins I shall be exposed to that day; and to make a resolution how to improve the day, and to 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 upon these things. 'Tis not to care about them, to depend upon them, to afflict ourselves much with fears of losing them, nor please ourselves with expectation of obtaining them, or hope of the continuance of them. At night made the 41st Resolution.

Saturday, January 12, in the morning. I have this day solemnly renewed my baptismal covenant and self-dedication, which I renewed when I was received 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 myself, I can challenge no right in this understanding, this will, these affections that are in me; neither have I any right to this body, or any of its members: No right to this tongue, these hands, nor feet: no right to these senses, these eyes, these ears, this smell or taste. I have given myself clear away, and have not retained any thing as my own. I have been to GOD this morning, and told him that I gave myself *wholly* to him. I have given every power to him; so that for the future I will challenge no right in myself, in any respect. I have expressly promised him, and 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 did believe in Jesus Christ, and receive him as a Prince and a Saviour; and would adhere to the faith and obedience of the gospel, how hazardous and difficult soever the profession and practice of it may be. 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

sake of Christ, to look upon it as a self-dedication ; and to receive me now as entirely his own, and 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 don't make the glorifying him my whole and entire business ; if I murmur in the least at afflictions ; if I grieve at the prosperity of others ; if I am any way uncharitable ; if I am angry because of injuries ; if I revenge : If I do any thing, purely to please myself, or if I avoid any thing for the sake of my 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 any good that I do, or rather GOD does by me ; or if I am any way proud. This day made the 42d and 43d Resolutions.

Monday, January 14.—The dedication I made of myself to my God, on Saturday last, has been exceeding useful to me. I thought I had a more spiritual insight into the scripture, reading the 8th chapter to the Romans, than ever in my life before.

Great instances of mortification are deep wounds given to the body of sin, hard blows that make him stagger and reel : we thereby get great ground and footing against him.—While we live without great instances of mortification and self-denial, the old man keeps whereabouts he was ; for he is sturdy and obstinate, and will not stir for small blows. After the greatest mortifications, I always find the greatest comfort.

Supposing there was never but one compleat Christian, in all respects of a right stamp, having christianity shining in its true lustre, at a time in the world ; Resolved to act just as I would do, if I strove with all my might to be that one, that should be in my time.

Tuesday, January 15. 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 am I ! What a poor, inconsistent, what a miserable wretch, without the assistance of God's spirit ! While I stand, I am ready to think I stand in my own strength, and upon my own legs ; and I am ready to triumph over my enemies, as if it were I myself that caused them to flee : When alas ! I am but a poor infant,
upheld

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, and 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 ?

Saturday, February 16. I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel requires.

At night. I have been negligent for the month past in these three things ; I have not been watchful enough over my appetite in eating and drinking ; in rising too late a mornings ; and in not applying myself with applications enough to the duty of secret prayer.

Sabbathday, February 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.

Saturday, March 2. 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 !

Wednesday, March 6, near sun-set. Felt the doctrines of election, free grace, and of our not being able to do any thing without the grace of God ; and that holiness is entirely, throughout, the work of God's spirit, with more pleasure than before.

Monday morning, April 1. 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, that 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

Saturday night, April 14. I could pray more heartily this night, for the forgiveness of my enemies, than ever before.

Wednesday, May 1, forenoon. 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 the troubles and difficulties of that state, to be greater than those of any other, 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 my thoughts, affections, desires and expectations, intirely 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 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. How sweetly will the mutual lovers join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How full will it fill us with joy to think, this enjoyment, these sweet exercises, will never cease or come to an end, but will last to all eternity.

Remember, after journeys, removes, 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. I think it a very good way to examine dreams every morning when I awake, what are the nature, circumstances, principles and ends of my imaginary actions and passions in them, to discern what are my chief 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 by too much dogmaticalness, too much of the egotism; a disposition to be telling of my own dislike and scorn; and freedom from those that are innocent, yea common infirmities of men; and many other such like things. O that God would help me to discern all the flaws and defects of my temper and conversation, and help
me

me in the difficult work of amending them : And that he would fill me so full of christianity, that the foundation of all these disagreeable irregularities may be destroyed, and the contrary sweetneses and beauties may of themselves naturally follow.

Sabbathday, May 5, in the morning. This day made the 47th resolution.

Sabbathday, May 12. 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 a burning love to him.

Saturday night, May 18. 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 : notwithstanding, 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.

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

Saturday, May 25, in the morning. As I was this morning reading the seventeenth resolution, it was suggested to me, that if I was 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 to see and narrowly search into this matter. Wherefore, *Mem.* For the future most nicely and diligently to look into our old divines opinions concerning conversion. Made the forty-eighth resolution.

Friday, June 1, afternoon. 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 hast so answered my prayer for mercy to keep 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.

Monday,

Monday, July 1. Again confirmed by experience of the happy effects of strict temperance, with respect both to body and mind. Resolved for the future to observe rather more of meekness, moderation and temper in disputes.

Thursday, July 18, near sun-set. Resolved to endeavor to make sure of that sign the apostle James gives of a perfect man, Jam. iii. 2. "If any man offend not in word, the same" is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

Monday, July 22. I see there is danger of my being drawn into transgression by the power of such temptations as a fear of seeming uncivil, and of offending friends. Watch against it.

Tuesday, July 23. When I find those groanings which cannot be uttered, the Apostle speaks of; and those soul-breakings, for the longing it hath, the Psalmist speaks of, (Psalm. cxix. 20.) to humour and promote them to the utmost of my power, and be not weary of earnestly endeavouring to vent my desires.

To count it all joy when I have occasion of great self-denial, because then I have a glorious opportunity of giving deadly wounds to the body of sin, and greatly confirming and establishing the new nature: To seek to mortify sin, and increase in holiness: these are the best opportunities, according to January 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 that, according to the 57th resolution. And as an opportunity of rending my heart off from the world, and setting it upon Heaven alone. To improve them 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 divert 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?

Friday afternoon, July 26. To be particularly careful to keep up inviolable a trust and reliance, ease and entire rest in God in all conditions, according to 57th resolution; for this I have found to be wonderfully advantageous to me.

Monday,

Monday, July 29. When I am concerned how I shall perform any thing to public acceptance, to be very careful that I have it very clear to me, that I do what is duty and prudence in the matter.

Wednesday, July 31. Never in the least to seek to hear farcical 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 the otherwise for it.

Wednesday, August 7. To esteem as some advantage that the duties of religion are difficult, and that many difficulties are some times 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 better for having brought it fourth with travail. And even to Christ Jesus himself, his mediatorial glory, his victory and triumph, his kingdom which he hath obtained; how much more glorious is it, how much more excellent and precious, for his having wrought it out by such agonies!

Friday, August 9. One thing that may be a good help towards thinking profitably in time of vacation is, when I light on a profitable thought, that I can fix my mind on, to follow it as far as possibly I can to advantage.

Sabbathday, after meeting, August 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 I see that none of those feared inconveniences follow.

Tuesday, August 13. I find it would be very much to 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 upon what footing and foundation I stand.

Thursday, August 29. The objection 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.

Monday, September 2. There is much folly, when I am quite sure I am in the right, and others are positive in contradicting me, to enter into a vehement or long debate upon it.

Monday,

Monday, September 23. I observe that old men seldom have any advantage of new discoveries ; because they are beside a way of thinking, they have been so long used to. 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 so ever I have been used to another way of thinking.

Thursday, October 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.

Thursday, November 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, and are all the while making new trouble, and feeding and pampering the old ; whereas the contrary practice would starve our afflictions. If we dwelt on the light side of things in our thoughts, and extenuated them all that possibly we could, when speaking of them, we should think little of them ourselves ; and the affliction would really, in a great measure, vanish away.

Thursday night, December 12. If at any time I am forced to tell others of that wherein I think they are something to blame ; for the avoiding 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.

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

Wednesday, January 1, 1723—4.

NOT to spend too much time in thinking even of important and necessary worldly business. To allow every thing it's proportion of thought, according to it's urgency and importance.

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Friday,

Friday, January 10. (After having wrote considerable in a short hand, which he used when he would have what he wrote effectually concealed from every body but himself, he notes the following words in round hand) Remember to act according to Prov. xii. 23. "A prudent man concealeth knowledge."

Monday, February 3. Let every thing have the value now, that it will have on a sick bed: and frequently in my pursuits of whatever kind, let this come into my mind; "How much shall I value this on my death bed?"

Wednesday, February 5. Have not in time past in my prayers, enough insisted upon the glorifying God in the world, and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, the prosperity of the church, and the good of men. 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, earnest prayers of the whole church: and if my prayers should have some influence, it would be but imperceptible and small.

Thursday, February 6. More convinced than ever of the usefulness of a free religious conversation. I find by conversing on natural philosophy, I gain knowledge abundance faster, and see the reasons of things much clearer, than in private study. Wherefore earnestly to seek at all times for religious conversation; for those that I can with profit and delight and freedom so converse with.

Sabbathday, February 23. 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.

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 scripture most, I have evermore been most lively, and in the best frames.

Saturday night, June 6. This week has been a remarkable week with me with respect to despondencies, fears, perplexities, multitudes of cares and distraction of mind; 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 never will be another kind of world.

Tuesday,

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

Tuesday, September 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 clearer, and shall gain time. 1st. By lengthening out my life. 2dly. shall need less time for digestion after meals. 3dly. shall be able to study closer without wrong to my health. 4thly. shall need less time to sleep. 5thly. shall seldomer be troubled with the head-ach.

Sabbathday, November 22. Considering that by-standers always espy some faults which we do not see ourselves, or at least are not so fully sensible of : there are many secret workings of corruption which escape our sight, and others only are sensible of : 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 blame-worthy, unlovely or unbecoming.

SECTION III.

REFLECTION on the foregoing EXTRACTS.

THE foregoing extracts were wrote by Mr. Edwards in the 20th and 21st years of his age, as appears by the dates. This being kept in mind, the judicious reader will make proper allowance for some things, which may appear a little juvenile, or like a young christian, as to the matter, or manner of expression ; which would not have been found, had it not have been done in early life. Which, indeed are no blemishes, the whole being taken together : as by this, it appears more natural, and the strength of his resolution, and fervor of mind ; and his skill and discerning in divine things, so seldom found even in old age, are the more striking. And in this view, we shall be led to admire his conscientious strictness, his zeal and painfulness, his experience and judgment in true religion, at so early an age. For here are not only the most convincing evidences of sincerity and thorough religion, of his engaging in a life devoted to GOD in good earnest, so as to make religion his

his only business ; but through his great attention to this matter, he appears to have the judgment and experience of grey hairs.

This is the beginning of a life so eminently holy and useful as Mr. Edwards's was. He who became one of the greatest divines in this age ; has had the applause and admiration of America, Britain, Holland, and Germany, for his piety, and great judgment and skill in divinity ; and has been honored above most others in the christian world, in this century ; in his being made the instrument of doing so much good : He began his life thus : He entered on a public life with such views, such exercises, such resolutions.

This may serve as a direction and excitement to those who are young, to devote themselves to GOD in good earnest, and enter on the business of strict and thorough religion without delay : especially those who are looking towards the work of the ministry, as they would take the most direct, the only way to answer the good ends which they profess to seek.

It is to be lamented, that there is so much reason to think, there are so few instances of such early piety in our day. If the protestant world abounded with young persons of this stamp ; with young men, who are preparing for the work of the ministry, with such a temper, such exercises, and such resolutions, what a delightful prospect would this afford, of the near approach of happier days, than the church of GOD has ever yet seen ! What pleasing hopes that the great, the merciful head of the church, was about to send forth labourers, faithful, successful labourers into his harvest ; and bless his people with " Pastors which shall feed them with knowledge and understanding !"

But if our youth neglect all proper improvement of the mind ; are shy of seriousness and strict piety ; choose to live strangers to it, and keep at a distance from all appearance of it ; are wanton, and given to carnal pleasures ; what a gloomy prospect does this afford ! If they who enter into the work of the ministry ; from a gay, careless, and what may justly be called a vicious life, betake themselves to a little superficial study of divinity, and soon begin to preach ; while all the external seriousness and zeal they put on, is only from worldly motives ; they being without any inward, experimental acquaintance with spiritual, divine things, and even so much as any taste for true divinity ; no wonder if the churches " suck dry breasts ;" and there are many ignorant watchmen.

But, as the best comment on the foregoing resolutions and diary ; and that the reader may have a more particular, full
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and instructive view of Mr. Edwards's entrance on a religious life, and progress in it, as consisting in the views and exercises of his mind; a brief account thereof is here inserted, which was found among his papers, in his own hand-writing: and which, it seems, was wrote near twenty years after, for his own private advantage.

SECTION IV.

An Account of his CONVERSION, EXPERIENCES, and RELIGIOUS EXERCISES, given by himself.

I Had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but 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, 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 duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious talk 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 secret and retired place, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and used to be from time to time much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element, when 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 process 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 performance of it; and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in ways of sin.

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Indeed, I was at some times very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of the time of my being at college. 'Till it pleased God, in my last year at college, at a time when I was in the midst of many uneasy thoughts about the state of my soul, to seize me with a pluriſy; in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and ſhook me over the pit of hell.

But 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; but I had great and violent inward ſtruggles: 'Till after many conflicts with wicked inclinations, and 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 my ſalvation, and practice the duties of religion: But without that kind of affection and delight, that I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward ſtruggles and conflicts, and ſelf-reflections. I made ſeeking my ſalvation the main buſineſs of my life. But yet it ſeems to me, I ſought after a miſerable manner: Which has made me ſome times ſince to queſtion, whether ever it iſſued in that which was ſaving; being ready to doubt, whether ſuch miſerable ſeeking was ever ſucceeded. But yet I was 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 my concern that I had, by the name of terror.

From my childhood up, my mind had been wont to be 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, in the time of it, 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
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mind rested in it ; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections, that had until then abode with me, all the preceding part of my life. 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 God's sovereignty, in the most absolute sense, in shewing mercy to whom he will shew mercy, and hardening and eternally damning 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 times since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty, than I had then. I have often since, not only had a conviction, but a *delightful* conviction. The doctrine of God's sovereignty has very often appeared, an exceeding pleasant, bright and sweet doctrine to me : and absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not with this.

The first that I remember that ever I found any thing 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 honor 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 wrapt up to God in Heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in Him. I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of scripture to myself ; and went to prayer, 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. I had an inward, sweet sense of these things, that at times came into my heart ;
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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 ; and 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, “ the lilly of the valleys.” The words seemed to me, sweetly to represent, the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. And 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 used, as it were, to carry me away in my contemplations ; in what I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world ; and a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, or 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 as it were, kindle up a sweet burning in my heart ; an ardor of my 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 looked up on the sky and clouds ; there came into my mind, a sweet sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, that 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,

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for a long time ; and so in the day time, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things ; in the mean time, 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. I used to be a person uncommonly terrified with thunder : and it used to strike me with terror, when I saw a thunder-storm rising. But now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God at the first appearance of a thunder-storm. And used to take the opportunity at such times, to fix myself to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder : which often times was exceeding entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. And while I viewed, used to spend my time, as it always seemed natural to me, to sing or chant forth my meditations ; to speak my thoughts in soliloquies, and speak with a singing voice.

I felt then a 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, Psal. 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 ; I was almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. Spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year. And used to spend abundance of my time, in 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. And 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 things of religion, were of an exceeding different kind, from those forementioned, that I had when I was a boy. They were totally of another kind ; and what I then had no more notion or idea 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 is in them.

My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase, until I went to preach at New-York ; which was about a year and a half after they began. 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 exceeding amiable to me. I felt in me a burning desire to be in every thing a compleat 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. My longings after it, 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 disciple of Christ. I sought an encrease of grace and holiness, and that I might live an holy life, with vastly 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 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 innumerable and bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit, that there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness ; and sweet 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 of those 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 hindrance and burden to me, that what I felt within, I could not express to God, and give vent to, as I desired. The inward ardor of my soul, seemed

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 sweet principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared to me exceeding delightful as a world of love. It appeared to me, that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love.

I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness. I remember I then said sometimes to myself, I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes. It appeared to me, there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely. It appeared to me, to be the highest beauty and amiableness, above all other beauties: that it was a divine beauty; far purer than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else, was like mire, filth 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. It seemed to me, it brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness and rapture to the soul: and that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; that is all pleasant, delightful and undisturbed; 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 it's 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 then, and at other times, had so great a sense of the loveliness of, as humility, brokenness of heart and poverty of spirit: and there was nothing that I had such a spirit to long for. My heart as it were panted after this, to lie low before God, and in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be all; that I might become as a little child.

While I was there 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.

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On January 12, 1722—3. 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 if 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 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. My secret prayer 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 to me, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interest of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it; and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be earnest to read public news-letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favorable 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 of the things of God; and our conversation used much to turn 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 an 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 ravishing food communicated,

communicated, that I could not get along in reading. Used oftentimes to dwell 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 Weathersfield by water. As I sailed away, I kept sight of the city as long as I could; and when I was out of sight of it, it would affect me much to look that way, with a kind of melancholy mixed with sweetness. However, that night after this sorrowful parting, I was greatly comforted in God at Westchester, 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 Sabbath; where I had a sweet and refreshing season, walking alone in the fields.

After I came home to Windsor, remained much in a like frame of my mind, as I had been in at New-York; but only some times felt my heart ready to sink, with the thoughts of my friends at New-York. And my refuge and support was in contemplations on the heavenly state; as I find in my diary of May 1, 1723. It was my comfort to think of that 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 is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting; where these persons that appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely, and full of love to us. And how sweetly will the mutual lovers join together to sing 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!

Continued much in the same frame in the general, that I had been in at New-York, till I went to New-Haven, to live there as tutor of the college; having one special season of uncommon sweetness: particularly once at Bolton, in a journey from Boston, walking out alone in the fields. After I went to

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New-Haven, I sunk in religion ; my mind being diverted from my eager and violent pursuits after holiness, by some affairs that greatly perplexed and distracted my mind.

In September, 1725, was taken ill at New-Haven ; and endeavoring 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. And 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, pleasant contemplations, and longings of soul. I observed that those who watched with me, would often be looking out for the morning, and seemed to wish for it. Which brought to my mind those words of the Psalmist, which my soul with sweetness 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 the morning came, and the beams of the sun came in at the windows, it refreshed my soul from one morning to another. It seemed to me to be some image of the sweet 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. It seemed to me, I could gladly honor 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 in my mind, 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, that gave me much more experience of my own heart, than ever I had before.

Since I came to this town, [Northampton] I have often had sweet complacency in God, in views of his glorious perfections, and the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me, a glorious and lovely Being, chiefly on the 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 shewing mercy to whom he would shew mercy ; and man's absolute dependance 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, as great
part

part of his glory. It has often been sweet to me to go to 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 to be 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, and most pleasant and 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, *Isai. xxxii. 2.* "A man shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest," &c.

It has often appeared sweet to me, to be united to Christ; to have Him for my head, and to be a member of his body: and 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 thro' the wilderness of this world. That text, *Matt. xviii.* at the beginning, 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 entirely off from my own root, and 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, *Psal. 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 that Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me to be worthy to be rejoiced in; and that rejoicing of Christ, seemed to me to shew the excellency of Christ, and the spirit that he was of.

Sometimes only mentioning a single word, causes 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.

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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 safe 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 lotted upon it all the way as I read. And my mind has been much entertained and delighted, with the scripture promises and prophecies, of the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom on 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. And his blood and atonement has appeared sweet, and his righteousness sweet; which is always accompanied with an 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 rid out into the woods for my health, *Anno 1737*; and having lit 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 to me so calm and sweet, appeared 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 withal, an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, than to be 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;

live upon him; to serve and follow him, and to be totally wrapt up in the fulness of Christ; 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 that have had the same effects.

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of sanctifier; in his holy operations communicating divine 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.

I have sometimes had 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.

I have often since I lived in this town, had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently so 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, since my conversion, than ever I had before. 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. I thought I should wonder, that they should content themselves with such expressions as these, if I had any reason to imagine, that their sin bore any proportion to mine. It seemed to me, I should wonder at my self, if I should express my wickedness in such feeble terms as they did.

My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and infinitely swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or infinite 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. I go about very often, for this many years, with these expressions 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 infinitely below hell itself, far beyond sight of every thing, but the piercing eye of God's grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth, and to the bottom of such an abyss.

And yet, I am not in the least inclined to think, that I have a greater conviction of sin than ordinary. It seems to me, my conviction of sin is exceeding small, and faint. It appears to me 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. That my sins appear to me so great, do not seem to me to be, because I have so much more conviction of sin than other christians, but because I am so much worse, and have so much more wickedness to be convinced of. When I have had these turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I thought I knew in the time of it, 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 of God, I can not 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 speaking of their longing to be humbled to the dust. Though that may be a proper expression for them, I always think for myself, that I ought to be humbled down below hell. It is an expression that it has long been natural for me to use in prayer to God. I ought to lie infinitely low before God.

It is affecting to me to think, how ignorant I was, when I was a young christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit left in my heart.

I have vastly a greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, and meer good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The thought of any comfort or joy, arising in me, on any consideration, or
reflection

reflection on my own amiableness, or any of my 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 it's head, continually, every where, 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, as revealed in the gospel. On one Saturday night in particular, had a particular discovery of the excellency of the gospel of Christ, above all other doctrines; so that I could not but say to my self; "This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine:" and of Christ, "This is my chosen prophet." It appeared to me to be 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, January 1738—9, 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 a 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 which 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.

PART III.

Containing a History of his Life from his ENTERING on the
Work of the Ministry, unto his DEATH.

SECTION I.

HIS GENERAL MANNER OF LIFE.

MR. EDWARDS made a secret of his private devotion, and therefore it 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 exercise in secret. It appears by his diary that in his youth he determined to attend secret prayer more than twice a day, when circumstances would allow. He was, so far as it can be known, much on his knees in secret, and in devout reading 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, words and whole demeanor, (though without any thing of affected grimace and sour austerity) was 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.

Agreeable to his resolutions, he was very careful and abstemious in eating and drinking; as doubtless it was necessary for great a student, and a person of so delicate and tender a bodily make as he was, should be, in order to be comfortable and useful. When he had, by careful observation, found what kind, and what quantity of diet, best suited his constitution, and rendered him most fit to pursue his work, he was very strict and exact in complying with it; and in this respect *lived by rule*; and herein constantly practised great self-denial: Which he also did in his constant early rising, in order to redeem time for his study. He used himself to rise by four or between four and five in the morning.

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Though he was of a tender and delicate constitution, yet few students are capable of close application more hours in a day than he. He commonly spent thirteen hours every day in his study. His most usual diversion in the summer was riding on horseback and walking. He would commonly, unless diverted by company, ride two or three miles after dinner to some lonely grove, where he would dismount and walk a while. At which times he generally carried his pen and ink with him, to note any thought that should be suggested, which he chose to retain and pursue, as what promised some light on any important subject. In the winter he was wont almost daily to take an ax and chop wood moderately for the space of half an hour or more.

He had an uncommon thirst for knowlege, in the pursuit of which, he spared no cost nor pains. He read all the books, especially books of divinity, that he could come at, from which he could hope to get any help in his pursuit of knowlege. And in this, he confined not himself to authors of any particular sect or denomination; yea took much pains to come at the books of the most noted writers, who advance a scheme of divinity most contrary to his own principles. But he studied the BIBLE more than all other books, and more than most other divines do. His uncommon acquaintance with the Bible appears in his sermons, and in most of his publications: and his great pains in studying it are manifest in his manuscript notes upon it; of which a more particular account may be given hereafter. He took his religious principles from the Bible, and not from any human system or body of divinity. Though his principles were *Calvinistic*, yet he called no man, father. He thought and judged for himself, and was truly very much of an original. This is evident by what he published in his life-time, and is yet more so by his MSS. Many volumes of which he has left; and the reader may expect a more particular account of them in the sequel. For reading was not the only method he took to improve his mind; but he did this much by writing; without which, it is probable no student can make improvements to the best advantage. Agreeable to resolution 11th, he applied himself with all his might to find out the truth: He searched for understanding and knowlege, as for silver, and digged for it, as for hid treasures. Every thought on any subject, which appeared to him worth pursuing and preserving, he pursued, as far as he then could, with
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his pen in his hand. Thus he was all his days, like the busy bee, collecting from every opening flower, and storing up a stock of knowlege, which was indeed sweet to him, as the honey and the honey-comb. And as he advanced in years and in knowlege, his pen was more and more employed, and his manuscripts grew much faster on his hands.

He was thought by some, who had but a slight acquaintance with him to be stiff and unfociable; but this was owing to want of better acquaintance. He was not a man of many words indeed, and was some-what reserved among strangers, and those on whose candor and friendship he did know he could rely. And this was probably owing to two things. First, the strict guard he set over his tongue from his youth, which appears by his resolutions, taking great care never to use it in any way that might prove mischievous to any; never to *sin with his tongue*; or to improve it 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. 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 even in all his words; which led him to be above many others, agreeable to St. James's advice, *slow to speak*. Secondly, this was in part the effect of his bodily constitution. He possessed but a comparative small stock of animal life: his animal spirits were low and he had not strength of lungs to spare, that would be necessary in order to make him what would be called, an affable, facecious gentleman, in all companies. They who have a great flow of animal spirits, and so can speak with more ease and less expence, may doubtless lawfully practice free conversation in all companies for a lower end, (e. g. to please and render themselves acceptable) than he, who has not such a stock to expend upon. It becomes *him* to reserve what he has, for higher and more important service. Besides, the want of animal spirits lays a man under a *natural* inability to that freedom of conversation, at all times, and in whatever company he is; which those of more life naturally go into; and the greatest degree of a fociable disposition, humility and benevolence, will not remove this obstacle.

He was not forward to enter into any dispute among strangers, and in companies where were persons of different sentiments; as he was sensible that such disputes are generally unprofitable

profitable, and often sinful and of bad consequence; and he thought he could dispute to the best advantage with his pen in his hand: Yet he was always free to give his sentiments on any subject proposed to him; and remove any difficulties or objections offered by way of enquiry, as lying in the way of what he looked upon to be the truth. But how groundless the imputation of *stiff* and *unsociable* was, his known and tried friends best knew. They alwas found him easy of access, kind and condescending; and though not talkative, yet affable and free. Among such whose candor and friendship he had experienced, he threw off the reserve, and was most open and free; quite patient of contradiction, while the utmost opposition was made to his sentiments, that could be by any plausible arguments or objections. And indeed, he was on all occasions quite sociable and free withal, who had any special business with him.

In his conduct in his family he practised that conscientious exactness which was perspicuous in all his ways. He maintained a great esteem and regard for his amiable and excellent consort. Much of the tender and kind was expressed in his conversation with her and conduct towards her. He was wont frequently to admit her into his study, and converse 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 time in which this used to be commonly attended, was just before going to bed, after prayers in the family. As he rose very early himself, he was wont to have his family up in season in the morning; after which, before the family 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, &c. 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 special care to begin his government of them in season. When they first discovered any considerable degree of will and stubbornness, he would attend to them till he had thoroughly subdued them and brought them to submit. And such prudent thorough discipline, exercised with the greatest calmness, and commonly without striking

striking a blow, 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 treat with them in his study, singly and particularly about their own soul's concerns; and to give them warning, exhortation and direction, as he saw occasion. He took much pains to instruct them in the principles 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 this was on the evening before the sabbath. And as he believed that the Sabbath or holy time began at sun-set the evening before the day, he ordered his family to finish all their secular business by that time or before; when they were all called together, and a psalm was sung and prayer attended, as an introduction to the sanctifying the Sabbath. This care and exactness effectually prevented that intruding on holy time, by attending on secular business, too common in families where the evening before the Sabbath is pretended to be observed.

He was a great enemy to young people's unseasonable company-keeping and frolicking, as he looked upon it a great means of corrupting and ruining youth. And he thought the excuse many parents make for tolerating their children in it, (*viz.* that it is the custom, and others children practise it, which renders it difficult, and even impossible to restrain theirs) was insufficient and frivolous: and manifested a great degree of stupidity, on supposition the practice was hurtful and pernicious to their souls. And when some of his children grew up he found no difficulty in restraining them from this pernicious practice; but they cheerfully complied with the will of their parents herein. He allowed not his children to be 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 came to make them a visit. If any gentleman desired acquaintance with his daughters; after handsomely introducing himself, by properly consulting the parents, he was allowed all proper opportunity for it; a room and fire if needed: but must not intrude on the proper hours of rest and sleep, or the religion and order of the family.

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He had a strict and inviolable regard to justice in all his dealings with his neighbours, and was very careful to provide for things honest in the sight of all men; so that scarcely a man had any dealings with him, that was not conscious of his uprightness. He appeared to have a sacred regard to truth in his words, both in promises and narrations, agreeable to his resolutions. This doubtless was one reason why he was not so full of words as many are. No man feared to rely on his veracity.

He was cautious in chusing his *intimate friends*, and therefore had not many that might properly be called such. But to them he shewed 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, 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 knowlege of mankind.

His conversation with his friends was always savory and profitable: In this he was remarkable, and almost singular.—He was not wont to spend his time with them, in scandal, evil-speaking and back-biting, or in foolish jesting, idle chat, and telling stories: But his mouth was that of the just, which bringeth forth wisdom, and his lips dispersed knowlege. His tongue was as the pen of a ready writer, while he conversed about important, heavenly, divine things, which his heart was so full of, in such a natural and free manner, 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.

His great benevolence to mankind discovered itself, among other ways, by the uncommon regard he shewed to liberality, and charity to the poor and distressed. He was much in recommending this, both in his public discourses and private conversation. He often declared it to be his opinion, that professed christians, in these days are 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 scripture, 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

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members of that church : and that the principal business of deacons is to take care of the poor in the faithful and judicious distribution and improvement of the church's temporals, lodged in their hands. And he did not content himself with only recommending charity to others, but practised it much himself : Though, according to his master's advice, he took great care to conceal his deeds of charity ; by which means doubtless most of his alms-deeds will be unknown till the resurrection, which if known, would prove him to be as great an instance of charity as any that can be produced in this age. 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 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. *

Mr. Edwards had the most universal character of a *good preacher* of almost any minister in this age. 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 admired him above all that ever they heard. His eminency as a preacher seems to be owing to the following things.

First, The great pains he took in composing his sermons, especially in the first part of his life. As by his early rising, and constant attention to his study, he had more time than most others ; so he spent more time in making his sermons. He wrote most of his sermons all out, for near twenty years after he first began to preach ; though he did not wholly confine himself to his notes in his delivering them.

Secondly,

* 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.

Secondly, His great acquaintance with divinity, his study and knowlege of the bible. His extensive and universal knowlege, and great clearness of thought, enabled him to handle every subject with great judgment and propriety, and to bring out of his treasury things new and old. Every subject he handled was instructive, plain, entertaining and profitable; which was much owing to his being master of the subject, and his great skill to treat it in a most natural, easy, and profitable manner. None of his composures were dry speculations, or unmeaning harangues, or words without ideas. When he dwelt on those truths which are much controverted and opposed by many, which was often the case, he would set them in such a natural and easy light, and every sentiment from step to step, would drop from his lips, attended with such clear and striking evidence, both from scripture and reason, as even to force the assent of every attentive hearer.

Thirdly, His excellency as a preacher was very much the effect of his great acquaintance with his own heart, his inward sense and high relish of divine truths, and the high exercise of true, experimental religion. This gave him a great insight into human nature: He knew what was in man, both the saint and the sinner. This helped him to skill, to lay truth before the mind, so as not only to convince the judgment, but touch the heart and conscience; and enabled him to speak out of the abundance of his heart, what he knew, and testify what he had seen and felt. This gave him a taste and discerning, without which he could not have been able to fill his sermons, as he did, with such striking, affecting sentiments, all suited to solemnize, move, and rectify the heart of the hearer. His sermons were well connected, not usually long, and commonly a large part taken up in the improvement; which was closely connected with the subject, and consisted in sentiments naturally flowing from it.

But no description of his sermons will give the reader the idea of them which they have who sat under his preaching, or have even read some of his discourses which are in print. There is a great number now in manuscript, which are probably as worthy the view of the public, and at least tend as much to instruct and quicken christians, as most that have been published in this century.

His appearance in the desk was with a good grace, and his delivery easy, natural and very solemn. He had not a strong, loud

loud voice ; but appeared with such gravity and solemnity, and spake with such distinctness, clearness and precision ; his words were so full of ideas, set in such a plain and striking light, that few speakers have been so able to demand the attention of an audience as he. His words often discovered a great degree of inward fervor, without much noise or external emotion, and fell with great weight on the minds of his hearers. He made but little motion of his head or hands in the desk, but spake so as to discover the motion of his own heart, which tended in the most natural and effectual manner to move and affect others.

As he wrote his sermons out at large for many years, and always wrote a considerable part of most of his public discourses ; so he carried his notes into the desk with him, and read the most that he had wrote ; yet he was not so confined to his notes, when he had wrote at large, but that, if some thoughts were suggested while he was speaking, which did not occur when writing, and appeared to him pertinent and striking, he would deliver them ; and that with as great propriety and fluency, and oftner with greater pathos, and attended with a more sensible good effect on his hearers, than all he had wrote.

Though, as has been observed, 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 his using his notes so much as he did, a deficiency and infirmity. And in the latter part of his life was inclined to think it had been better, if he had never accustomed himself to use his notes at all. It appeared to him that preaching wholly without notes, agreeable to the custom in most protestant countries, and 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 none 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.

His

His prayers 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 promote true devotion.

He kept himself quite free from worldly cares. He gave himself wholly to the work of the ministry, and entangled not himself with the affairs of this life. He left the particular oversight and direction of the temporal concerns of his family, almost entirely to Mrs. Edwards ; who was better able than most of her sex to take the whole care of them on her hands. He was less acquainted with most of his temporal affairs than many of his neighbours ; and seldom knew when and by whom his forage for winter was gathered in, or how many milk kine he had ; whence his table was furnished, &c.

He did not 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 circumstances. And he catechised the children in public every Sabbath in the summer. And he used sometimes to propose questions to particular young persons in writing, for them to answer after a proper time given them to prepare. In putting out these questions, he endeavoured to suit them to the age, genius and abilities 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 scripture ; and therefore led, and even obliged persons to study the bible.

He

He did neglect visiting his people from house to house, because he did not look upon it, in ordinary cases, to be one part of the work of the gospel minister. But 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 hereby to promote the great ends of the gospel ministry. He observed that some ministers had a talent at entertaining and profiting by occasional visits among their people. They have words at will, and a knack at introducing profitable, religious discourse in a free, natural, and, as it were, undesigned way. He supposed such had a call to spend a great deal of their time in visiting their people. But he looked on his talents to be quite otherwise. He was not able to enter into a free conversation with every person he met with, and in an easy manner turn it to what topick he pleased, without the help of others, and, as it may be, against their inclination. He therefore found that his visits of this kind must be in a great degree unprofitable. And as he was settled in a great town, it would take 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 as much better to promote the great ends of his ministry. For it appeared to him, that he could do the greatest good to souls, and most promote the interest of Christ by preaching and writing, and conversing with persons under religious impressions in his study; where 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. In times therefore of the out-pouring of God's spirit, and the revival of religion among his people, his study was thronged with persons to lay open their spiritual concerns to him, and seek his advice and direction: whom he received and conversed with, with great freedom and pleasure, and had the best opportunity to deal in the most particular manner with each one.

He was a skilful guide to souls under spiritual difficulties. And was therefore sought unto not only by his own people, but by many who lived scores of miles off. He became such an able guide, partly by his own experimental acquaintance with divine things, and unwearied study of God's word; and partly by his having so much concern with souls under spiri-
tual

tual troubles. For he had not been settled in the work of the ministry many years before the spirit of God was wonderfully poured out on his people, by which a great concern about their souls became almost universal; and a great number were hopefully the subjects of saving conversion. This was principally in the year 1734. A particular account of which has been wrote by him, entitled, *A faithful narrative of the surprising work of God in the conversion of many hundred souls in Northampton*. Which has been printed in England, Germany and America; to which the reader must be refered.

And there was another remarkable time of the outpouring of God's spirit in the years 1740, and 1741, in which Northampton partook largely; though not exclusive of most other parts of the land. Mr. Edwards in this time had to deal not only with his own people, but with multitudes of others. The hearing that the same things were at Northampton some years before, and the same Mr. Edwards had for knowlege, piety, and a great acquaintance with experimental religion, naturally led both ministers and people, in almost all parts of New-England, to look to him for direction and assistance, in this extraordinary time. Being in this time earnestly solicited by the ministers and people of many places to come and preach among them, he went to many; though he was not able to gratify all who desired him. And his preaching was attended with great success.

And as many of the ministers and people in New-England, had been unacquainted with such things as then appeared, they were greatly exposed to run wild, as it were, and actually did, by the subtle temptations of the devil, taking advantage of the ignorance and wickedness of men's hearts, go into great extremes both as opposers and friends to the work of God. Mr. Edwards was greatly helpful by his direction and assistance against the two opposite extremes, both in conversion, preaching and writing. His publications on this occasion were especially of great and extensive service. Of which it may be proper to give some account here.

The first is a sermon preached at New-Haven, Sept. 10, 1741, *On the distinguishing marks of the spirit of God, &c.*

In the year 1742, he published a book of five parts, intitled, *Some thoughts concerning the present revival of religion in New-England, and the way in which it ought to be acknowledged and promoted, &c.*

In the year 1746, he published a *Treatise on Religious Affections*, All which might be justly considered by the church of christ as a voice behind them saying, "This is the way, walk therein." Especially the last-mentioned book, which has been esteemed by many the best that has been wrote on that subject; setting the distinction between true and false religion in the most clear and striking light.

To the same purpose, is *The life of the Rev. Mr. DAVID BRAINERD, with reflections and observations thereon*; published by Mr. EDWARDS in the year 1749.

Mr. Edwards was what by some is called a rigid *Calvinist*. Those doctrines of Calvinism, which have been most objected against, and given the greatest offence, appeared to him as scriptural, reasonable and important as any; and he thought that to give them up, was in effect to give up all. And therefore he looked upon those who called themselves *Calvinists*, that were for palliating the matter, by, as it were, trimming off the knots of Calvinism, that they might conform it more to the taste of those who are most disposed to object against it, were really giving up and betraying the cause they pretend to espouse; and were paving the way not only to Arminianism, but to Deism. For if these doctrines, in the whole length and breadth of them were relinquished, he did not see, where a man could set his foot down with consistency and safety, short of Deism, or even Atheism itself; or rather universal Scepticism.

He judged that nothing was wanting, but to have these doctrines properly stated and judiciously and well defended, in order to their appearing most agreeable to reason and common sense, as well as the doctrines of revelation; and that this therefore was the only effectual method to convince, or silence and shame the opposers of them. All will be able to satisfy themselves of the truth of this, by reading his treatise on *Justification*, and his two last books on *the Freedom of the Will*, and *Original Sin*.

In this view of things, he thought it of importance that ministers should be very critical in examining candidates for the ministry, with respect to their *principles*, as well as their religious disposition and morals. And on this account he met with considerable difficulty and opposition in some instances. His opinion was, that an erroneous or unfaithful minister was likely

to do more hurt than good to the church of Christ; and therefore he could not have any hand in introducing a man into the ministry, unless he appeared *sound in the faith*, and manifested to a judgment of charity, a *disposition to be faithful*.

SECTION II.

HIS DISMISSION from *Northampton*, with the *occasion* and *circumstances* of it.

MR. EDWARDS was very happy in the esteem and love of his people for many years, and there was the greatest prospect of his living and dying so. He was the last minister almost in New-England that would have been pitched upon to be opposed and renounced by his people. But by what has come to pass with respect to this, we have an instructive lesson on the instability of all human affairs, and the unreasonableness of trusting in man.

In the year 1744, Mr. Edwards was informed that some of the young persons in town, who were members of the church, had books in keeping, which they improved to promote lascivious and obscene discourse among the young people. And upon enquiring, a number of persons were found to testify, that they had heard one and another from time to time talk obscenely; as what they were led to by reading a book or books, which they had among them. Upon which Mr. Edwards thought the brethren of the church ought to look into the matter. And in order to introduce it, he preached a sermon from Heb. xii. 15, 16. "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, &c." After sermon he desired the brethren of the church to stay, and told them what information he had got; and proposed whether they thought proper to take any measures to examine into the matter. They with one consent and much zeal, manifested it to be their opinion, that it ought to be enquired into. And proceeded to choose a number of men, to assist their pastor in examining into the affair. Upon which Mr. Edwards appointed

the time for their meeting at his house: and then read a catalogue of the names of young persons, whom he desired to come to his house at the same time. Some were the accused, and some witnesses; but it was not then declared of which number any particular person was.

When the names were published, it appeared, that there were but few of the considerable families in town, to which none of the persons named did belong, or were nearly related. Whether this was the occasion of the alteration or not, before the day appointed came, a great number of heads of families altered their minds (yea many condemned what they had done, before they got home to their own houses) and declared, they did not think proper to proceed as they had done; that their children should not be called to an account in such a way for such things, &c. &c. And the town was suddenly all on a blaze. This strengthened the hands of the accused, and some refused to appear, and others that did appear, behaved unmannerly, and 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! This seemed in a great measure to put an end to Mr. Edwards's usefulness at Northampton, and doubtless laid a foundation, and will help to account for the surprizing events which will by and by be related. To be sure he had no great visible success after this; but the influences of God's spirit were greatly withheld, and security and carnality much increased among them. That great and singular degree of visible religion and good order which had been found among them, soon began gradually to decay; and the youth have since been more wanton and dissolute.

Mr. Stoddard, Mr. Edwards's grand-father and predecessor in the work of the ministry, was of the opinion, that unconverted persons had a right in the sight of God, or considered as such, to the sacrament of the Lord's supper; that therefore it was their duty to come to that ordinance, though they knew they had no true goodness, or gospel 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

not to be such as to express or imply a real compliance with, or consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, or a hearty embracing 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. Accordingly, he endeavoured to form a short profession for persons to make in order to be admitted into the church and come to the sacrament, answerable to this principle. And it took place and was practised upon in Northampton; and persons were admitted into the church, and to the sacrament, not under the notion of their being true saints, or that they had any real goodness.

Mr. Stoddard's appearing to maintain this principle made a great noise in the country; and he was opposed as introducing something contrary to the principles and practice of almost all the churches in New-England. And the matter was publicly controverted between him and Dr. Increase Mather, of Boston. However, through Mr. Stoddard's great influence and ascendance over the people at Northampton, it was introduced there though not without opposition. And his principles by degrees spread very much among ministers and people in that country, and in other parts of New-England; though no church except Northampton publicly and professedly acted upon this principle by altering the profession that those made, who were admitted to the sacrament, to suit it to such a notion: but required of all who joined to the church a profession of that wherein true christianity or real godliness consists. And of late years his opinion that persons who have no real goodness, but are in a christless state, and know themselves to be so, may make a christian profession and come to the sacrament, without lying and hypocrisy; and that they have a right, and it is their duty so to do, has greatly spread in the country.

Mr. Edwards had some hesitation about this matter when he first settled at Northampton, and afterwards; but did not receive such a degree of conviction, that the admitting persons into the church, who made no pretence to real godliness was wrong, as to prevent his practising upon it with a good conscience, for some years. But at length his doubts about the matter greatly increased, which put him upon examining it more thoroughly than he had ever before done, by searching the scripture, and reading and examining such books, as were written to defend the admission of persons to sacraments, without a profession

profession of saving faith. And the result was a full conviction that it was wrong, and that he could not practice upon it 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 the profession of christianity was a profession of that, wherein real christianity consists; was therefore a profession of true respect of Christ, and a hearty embracing the gospel, &c. That therefore no person who rejected Christ in his heart, could make such a profession consistent with truth. And therefore, as the ordinance of the Lord's supper was instituted for none but visible professing christians, none but those who are real christians have a real right in the sight of God to come to that ordinance: and that none ought to be admitted thereto, who do not make a profession of real christianity, and so cannot be received in a judgment of charity as true friends to Jesus Christ, or real saints. *

When Mr. Edwards's sentiments were known, in the spring of the year 1744, 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 alone would 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 understanding the matter in dispute, and persisted in a refusal to attend to what Mr. Edwards had to say in defence of his principles. And from beginning to end 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,

Mr. Edwards thought of preaching on the subject, that they might know what were his sentiments, and what were the grounds of them, (of both which he was sensible the most of them were quite ignorant) before they took any step for a separation between him and his people. But that he might do
nothing

* They who have a desire more fully to understand this controversy and know if it is justly represented here, may do it by reading what Mr. Edwards wrote on this occasion, in order to explain and vindicate his principles; together with the Rev. Mr. Williams's answer, and Mr. Edwards's reply to him. And if they please, they may consult what Dr. Mather, and Mr. Stoddard before wrote on this subject.

nothing to increase the tumult, but on the contrary take all those steps, which he could with a good conscience, that tended to peace, he first proposed the thing to the church's standing committee; 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 would by no means consent to it, but strenuously opposed it. Upon which he gave it over for the present, as what in such circumstances would rather raise a tumult, and blow the fire up to a greater height, than answer the good ends proposed.

Mr. Edwards being sensible that his principles were not understood, and much misrepresented through the country; and finding that his people were in too much of a heat calmly to attend to the matter in controversy then; and were in a disposition even to refuse to hear him preach upon it, proposed to print what he had to say on the point; as this seemed to be the only way left him to have a fair hearing. Accordingly his people consented to put off the calling a council, till what he should write was published. But they manifested great uneasiness in waiting, before it came out of the press. And when it was published, it was read but by very few of them. Mr. Edwards being sensible of this, renewed his proposal to preach upon it, 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 of strife." But it passed in the negative.

Mr. Edwards 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, he having had the advice of the ministers and messengers of the neighbouring churches, who met at Northampton to advise them under their difficulties, proceeded to appoint a lecture, in order to preach on the subject, proposing to do so weekly until he had finished what he had to say. On Monday there was a precinct or society meeting, in which a
vote

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. And accordingly, proceeded to choose a committee of three men for this purpose, who waited on him, and did their errand. However, Mr. Edwards thought proper to proceed according to his proposal, and accordingly preached a number of sermons until 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 a decisive council to determine the matter of difference between pastor and people, or rather to dismiss the pastor from his church and people, (for the delay of which a great deal of impatience had been publicly manifested) was now more particularly attended to by Mr. Edwards and the church.

Mr. Edwards had before this insisted upon it 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 in defence of his cause: which if they would do, perhaps the need of such a council would be superseded. And besides, he thought there was abundant public evidence, that they were not yet in a temper suited to attend on, and be active in such a transaction, as he dissolving the relation between them and their pastor; which would, as things then stood, probably be the event. He observed, " That it was exceeding unbecoming churches
 " of the Lamb of God to manage their religious affairs of the
 " greatest importance in a ferment and tumult, which ought
 " to be managed with great solemnity, deep humiliation, and
 " submission to the awful frowns of heaven, humble dependence on God, and with fervent prayer and supplication to
 " him. That therefore for them to go about such an affair,
 " in such a manner as they did, would be most unbecoming
 " the gospel, greatly to the dishonor of God and religion, and
 " a way in which a people cannot expect a blessing. That
 " such a great affair as this should be gone about with calm
 " consideration; but that such a temper as the people were
 " then in, was wholly inconsistent with this."

But having used all means which he could think of within his power to bring them to a more calm and charitable temper, and to hear and weigh what he had to say in his own defence,

with

with attention and candor; and finding that nothing prevailed; but rather the tumult and uproar was increased; 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 in his choice. Mr. Edwards thought this an unreasonable restraint on him, as it was known that the ministers and churches in that county were almost universally against him in the controversy that divided him and his people, and made the two parties. He indeed did not suppose that the business of the proposed council would be to determine whether his opinion which was the occasion of the difficulty between him and his people was right or no; or that what they were to judge of, depended upon this. But their business would be — to see and determine whether any possible way could be devised for an accommodation between pastor and people, and to use their wisdom and endeavour in order to this. And if they found this impracticable, they must determine, whether things were now ripe for a separation; whether what ought in justice to be previous to a separation had already actually been done, so that there was nothing further in justice 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: how far he was innocent, and whether he might yet be employed in the work of the ministry, &c. All which were matters of great importance to him, and required upright and impartial judges. And considering the great influence a difference in religious opinions has to prejudice men one against another; and the close connection 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 wholly left to them. Besides, he thought 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,

as was just now said, the people strenuously and obstinately opposed him. They at length 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 chuse 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 3d. they voted their consent to his proposal of going out of the county for two of the churches, that should be applied to. And then they proceeded to make choice of the ten ministers and churches, of which the council should consist. Accordingly, the churches were sent to, and the council convened on the 19th of June. Who, after they had made some fruitless attempts for a composition between the pastor and church, passed a resolve, by the majority of one voice * only, to the following purpose: "That it is expedient that the pastoral relation between Mr. Edwards and his church be immediately dissolved if the people still persist in desiring it." And it being publicly put to the people, whether they still insisted on Mr. Edwards's dismission from the pastoral office over them? A great majority (above two hundred against twenty) zealously voted for his dismission. And he was accordingly dismissed June 22, 1750.

The dissenting part of the council, entered their protest against this proceeding, judging that it was too much in a hurry, as they were by no means ripe for a separation, considering the
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* One of the churches which Mr. Edwards chose did not see fit to join the council. However, the minister of that church being at Northampton at the sitting of the council, was desired by Mr. Edwards and the church to sit in council and act, which he did. But there being no messenger from the church, the council was not full, and there was a disparity; by which means doubtless, there was one vote more for an immediate dismission, than against it.

past conduct, and present temper of the people. And some of that part of the council that were active, expressed themselves surprized at the uncommon zeal and engagedness of spirit, publicly manifested by the people in their voting for a dismission; which evidenced to them, and all observing spectators, that they were far from a temper of mind becoming such a solemn and awful transaction, considered in all its circumstances.

Being thus dismissed, he preached his farewell sermon on the first of July, from 2 Cor. i. 14. The doctrine he observed from the words was this, "Ministers and the people that have been under their care, must meet one another before Christ's tribunal, at the day of judgment." It was a remarkably solemn and affecting discourse, and was published at the desire of some of the hearers.

After Mr. Edwards was dismissed from Northampton, he preached there some times occasionally when they had no other preacher to supply the pulpit: till at length a great uneasiness was manifested by many of the people, at his preaching 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, when Mr. Edwards was in town, and they had no other minister to preach to them, they carried on public worship among themselves, and without any preaching, rather than to invite Mr. Edwards!

Every one must be sensible that this was a great trial to Mr. Edwards. He had been near 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 S. 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 heart: 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

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poured

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, in a great tumult and heat, with haste, and a great degree of violence ; like the Jews of old 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 ! To have the tables turned so suddenly and the voice so general and loud against him. This surely must come very near to him, and try his spirit. The words of the psalmist seems applicable to this case, “ It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it ; neither was it he that hated 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 and 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. To be sure, he viewed himself as taking the most direct way to these, according to the natural course of things, by discovering and adhering to his principles, in the situation he then was. For he foresaw all this, before it came upon him ; and therefore had the opportunity and the temptation to escape it, by concealing his principles. When he was fixed in his principles

ples, 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 his readiness to deny himself, and forsake all that he had, to follow Christ.

A man must have a considerable degree of the spirit of a martyr, not to flinch in such a case as this ; but go on with the steadfastness and resolution with which he did. He, as it were, put his life in his hand, and ventured on where 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 calmly and courageously row on in the storm, as it were, 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 handsome sum, and sent it over to him.

And God did not leave him without tender, 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, who joined with him after his dismissal, and 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 stay among them, as circumstances were ; 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 ; and because in the multitude of counsellors there is safety, he consented

sented to ask the advice of an ecclesiastical council. Accordingly, a council was called, and convened at Northampton on the 15th of May 1751.

The town on this occasion was put into a great tumult and fire. They who were active in Mr. Edwards's dismissal supposed, though without any ground, and contrary to truth, that he was contriving and attempting with his friends, again to introduce himself at Northampton. They drew up a remonstrance against their proceedings, and laid it before the council (though they would not acknowledge them to be an ecclesiastical council) containing many heavy, though groundless, insinuations and charges against Mr. Edwards, and bitter accusations of the party who had adhered to him: But 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.

The council having heard what Mr. Edwards, and they who adhered to him, and any others who desired to be heard, had to say, advised, agreeable to Mr. Edwards's judgment and expectation, that he should leave Northampton, and accept of the mission to which he was invited at Stockbridge; of which a more particular account will be given presently.

Many other facts relative to this sorrowful, strange, surprising affair (the most so doubtless of any of the kind, that ever happened in New-England; and perhaps, in any part of the christian world) might be related; but as this more general history of it, may be sufficient to answer the ends proposed, viz. to rectify some gross misrepresentations, that have been made of the matter, and discover the great trial Mr. Edwards had herein, it is thought best to suppress other particulars. As a proper close to this melancholy story; and to confirm, and further illustrate what has been related, the following letter from Joseph Hawley, Esq. (a gentleman who was well acquainted with, and very active in the transactions of this whole affair, and very much a head and leader in it) to the Rev. Mr. Hall of Sutton, published in a weekly news-paper in Boston, May 19, 1760, is here inserted.

To

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 was a member; I say sir, I have often wished every of them truly knew my real sense of my own conduct in the affairs that the one and the other of said councils are privy to; and 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 said councils, but also to confess my faults to them, and take shame to myself therefor before them. I have often studied with myself in what manner it was practicable for me to do it; and when I understood that you sir, and Mr. Eaton were to be at Cold Spring at the time of their 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 which 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 knowlege 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

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 said church ; and 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, and from mere fidelity to his great master, and a tender regard to the souls of his flock, as we had the highest reason to judge : which 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 parting with, 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 was an eye-witness of our temper and conduct.

And although it does not become me to pronounce decisively on a point so disputable as what 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 enquire, 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 about that time published 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, *to wit.*

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 was making one morning to the people, wherein you was, if I do not misremember, briefly
 exhorting

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 had 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 tract by clear implication contained some severe, uncharitable, and if I do not misremember, groundless and slanderous imputations on Mr. Edwards, and 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 : am persuaded was highly provoking to God, and 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 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)

free) it was every where larded with unchristian bitterness, farcaistical and unmannerly insinuations, 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 thereof abovementioned, 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. 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 said remonstrance against Mr. Edwards and said brethren, which they demanded, was ever vindicated by all the subtle answers that were given to 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 charges of scandalous matters against them before 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 said council for the purpose abovesaid; 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 said council earnestly and repeatedly moved for, and which the church finally denied (as you know.) I think it discovered a great deal of pride and vain sufficiency in the church, and shewed them to be very opinative, especially the chief sticklers, one of whom I own 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 propose to us; among whom there were divers justly in great reputation for grace and wisdom.

In these instances, Sir, of my conduct, and others (to which you was not privy) in the course of that most melancholy contention with Mr. Edwards, wherein 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: and I hereby own, Sir, that such treatment of Mr. Edwards, as is herein before mentioned, 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 to 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. and those in Luke x. at the 16th: 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 the 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.”

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; and whether said church were not guilty of 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 until we cry to him for Christ's sake to pardon and save us from that judgment which such ungodly deeds deserve, and publicly humble and take shame to ourselves therefor. 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 favor and blessing, until our eyes are opened, and we become thoroughly convinced that we have greatly provoked the most High, and 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 therefor, and until 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 honor 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 in 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 therefor, 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 and opportunity therefor 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 candor 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 therefor, in the first place, I humbly and most earnestly ask forgiveness of God; next, 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 knowlege of the matters abovesaid, or any of them.

I have no desire, Sir, that you should make any secret of this letter; but desire 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 news papers; for I can not 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 over run 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

ed 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 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.

SECTION III.

His MISSION to the INDIANS at STOCK- BRIDGE, &c.

THE Indian Mission at Stockbridge (a town in the western part of the province of the Massachusetts-Bay, sixty miles from Northampton) being vacant by the death of the late Reverend Mr. Sergeant, the honored and reverend commissioners for Indian affairs, in Boston, who have the care and direction of it, applied to him, as the most suitable person they could think of to be entrusted with that mission. And he was at the same time invited by the inhabitants of Stockbridge ; and being advised by the council, above mentioned, to accept of the invitation, he repaired to Stockbridge ; and was introduced and fixed as missionary to the Indians there by an ecclesiastical council called for that purpose, August 8, 1751.

When Mr. Edwards first engaged in the mission, there was a hopeful prospect of its being extensively serviceable, under his care and influence ; not only to that tribe of Indians which was settled at Stockbridge, but among the Six Nations : some of whom were coming to Stockbridge to settle, and bring their own, and as many of their neighbours children as they could get ; to be educated and instructed there. For this end, a house for a board-

a boarding school, which was projected by Mr. Sergeant, was erected on a tract of land appropriated to that use by the Indians at Stockbridge : where the Indian children, male and female were to be educated, by being cloathed and fed, and instructed by proper persons in useful learning. And the boys to be learned husbandry or mechanic trades, and the girls all sorts of women's work. For the encouragement of which, some generous subscriptions were made both in England and America. And the great and general court of the province of the Massachusetts-Bay, did much to promote the affair, and provided lands for the Mohocks to settle on, who should incline to come. And the generous Mr. Hollis, to encourage the thing, ordered twenty-four Indian children to be educated on the same footing, wholly at his cost. Also the society in London, for propagating the gospel among the Indians in and about New-England, directed their commissioners in Boston to do considerable towards this design.

But partly by reason of some unhappy differences that took place among those who had the chief management of this affair at Stockbridge, of which a particular account would not be proper in this place ; and partly by the war breaking out between England and France, which is generally very fatal to such affairs among Indians, this hopeful prospect came to nothing.

Mr. Edwards's labours were attended with no remarkable visible success while at Stockbridge : though he performed the business of his mission to the good acceptance of the inhabitants in general, both English and Indians, and of the commissioners, who supported him honorably, and confided very much in his judgment and wisdom in all matters relating to the mission.

Stockbridge proved to Mr. Edwards a more quiet, and, on many accounts, a much more comfortable situation than he was in before. It being so much in one corner of the country, his time was not so much taken up with company, as it was at Northampton, though many of his friends, from almost all parts of the land, often made him pleasant and profitable visits. And he had not so much concern and trouble with other churches as he was obliged to have when at Northampton, by being frequently sought to for advice, and called to assist in ecclesiastical councils. Here therefore he followed his beloved study more closely, and to better purpose than ever. In these six years he doubtless made swifter advances in knowledge than ever before, and added more to his manuscripts than in any six years of his life. And

And this was probably as useful a part of his life as any. For in this time he wrote the two last books that have been published by him (of which a more particular account will be given hereafter) by which he has doubtless greatly served the church of Christ, and will be a blessing to many thousands yet unborn.

Thus, after his uprightness and faithfulness had been sufficiently tried at Northampton, his kind master provided for him a quiet retreat, which was rendered the more sweet by the preceding storm; and where he had a better opportunity to pursue and finish the work God had for him to do.

SECTION IV.

His being made **PRESIDENT of NEW-JERSEY COLLEGE;** *his SICKNESS and DEATH.*

ON the 24th of September, 1757, the Rev. Mr. Aaron Burr, President of New-Jersey College, died.—And at the next meeting of the Trustees, Mr. Edwards was chosen his successor. The news of which was quite unexpected, and not a little surprizing to him. 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. 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,

Stockbridge, 19th October 1757.

Reverend and Honored Gentlemen,

I Was not a little surprized, 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 honor to choose me for—If some regard may be had to my outward comfort, I might mention the many inconveniencies and great detriment, which must 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, without losing it, in great part) now when we have scarcely got over the trouble and damage sustained by our removal from Northampton, and have but just began to have our affairs in a comfortable situation for a subsistence in this place; and the expence I must immediately be at to put myself into circumstance tolerably comporting with the needful support of the honor of the office I am invited to; which will not well consist with my ability.—But this is not my main objection: The chief difficulty 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; besides other, which my own heart is conscious to.—I have a constitution in many respects peculiarly unhappy, attended with flaccid solids, vapid, sily and scarce fluids, and a low tide of spirits; often occasioning a kind of childish weakness and contemptibleness of speech, presence and demeanor; with a disagreeable dulness and stiffness, much unfitting me for conversation, but more especially for the government of a college.—This poorness of constitution 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 in the Greek Classics; my Greek learning having been chiefly in the new testament.

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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, honored sirs, (emboldened by the testimony I have now received of your unmerited esteem, to rely on your candor) I will with freedom open myself to you.

My method of study, 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 clew 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 further 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 in this 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 controul, 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 besides 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 an 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 the divine operations and decrees ; particularly considering all parts of the grand scheme in their
historical

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 account of in history or prophecy; until 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 divine doctrine, will appear to greatest advantage in the brightest light, in the most striking manner, shewing 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 and true scope and sense: also considering all the various particulars wherein these prophecies have their exact fulfilment; shewing the universal, precise, and admirable correspondence between predictions and events. The second part: Considering the types of the Old Testament, shewing the evidence of their being intended as representations of the great things of 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 scripture; 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 to 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 a 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 labors.—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 inspection of the whole society and subservient to the school, as to their order and methods of study and instruction, assisting myself in immediate instruction in the arts and sciences (as discretion should direct and occasion serve, and the state of things require) especially 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 my 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 should 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

from me, 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."

In this suspense 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. Who upon his, and his people's desire, met at Stockbridge, January 4, 1758. And having heard Mr. Edwards's representation of the matter, and what his people had to say by way of objection against his removal, determined 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 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, to be the head of a college; which appeared great and weighty to him. But as he thought it his duty to be directed by their advice, he should now endeavor 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 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 until spring. He had two daughters at Princeton, Mrs. Burr, the widow of the late President Burr, and his oldest daughter that was unmarried.

His arrival at Princeton was to the great satisfaction and joy of the college. And indeed all the greatest friends to the college, and to the interest of religion, were highly satisfied and pleased with the appointment of Mr. Edwards to the presidency of that college, and had their hopes and expectations greatly raised hereby. And his correspondents and friends, and well-wishers to the college in Scotland, greatly approved of it.

The corporation met as soon as could be with conveniency, after his arrival at the college, when he was by them fixed in the president's chair.

While

While at Princeton, before his sickness, he preached in the college-hall from Sabbath to Sabbath, to the great acceptance of the hearers: 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 had 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 consent of the corporation, he was inoculated February 13. He had it favorably, and it was thought all danger was over: But a secondary fever set in; and by reason of a number of pustles in his throat, the obstruction was such, that the medicines necessary to stanch the fever, could not be administered. It therefore raged until 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 should 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

“ subsisted between us, has been of such a nature, as I trust is
 “ spiritual, and therefore will continue forever : And I hope
 “ the shall be supported under so great a trial, and submit cheer-
 “ fully to the will of God. And as to my children, You are
 “ now like to be left fatherless, which I hope will be an in-
 “ ducement 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 disposed of to charita-
 “ ble uses.” * *one as about of 100 : this most modest sum*

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, and expected 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 surprize, not imagining that he heard, or would ever speak another word, he said, “ TRUST IN GOD, AND YE NEED NOT FEAR.” These were his last words. And what could have been more suitable to the occasion ! And what need of more ! In these is as much matter of instruction and support, as if he had wrote a volume. This is the only consolation to his bereaved friends, who are sensible of the loss they, and the church of Christ have sustained in his death ; *God is allsufficient, and still has the care of his church.*

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

* President Burr ordered on his death bed, that his funeral should not be attended with that pomp and cost, by procuring and giving away a great number of costly mourning scarfs, &c. and the consumption of great quantities of spirituous liquors ; which is an extravagance that is become too customary in those parts, especially at the funerals of the great and the rich : and 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 *modish* funeral, over and above the necessary cost of a *decent* one, should be given to the poor, out of his estate.

It is to be wished and hoped, that the laudable example of these two worthy Presidents, in which they bear their dying testimony against a practice so unchristian, and of such bad tendency so many ways, will have some good effect.

The physician who inoculated and constantly attended him in his sickness, has the following words in his letter to Mrs. Edwards on this occasion : “ Never did any mortal man more fully and clearly evidence the sincerity 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 words, he really fell asleep.”

PART IV.

Containing an Account of his MANUSCRIPTS, and the BOOKS published by him.

SECTION I.

His MANUSCRIPTS.

MR. Edwards has left a great many volumes in manuscript, which he wrote in a miscellaneous way on almost all subjects in divinity ; which he did, not with any design they should ever be published in the form in which they are ; but for the satisfaction and improvement of his own mind, and that he might retain the thoughts which appeared to him worth preserving. Some idea of the progress he had made, and the materials he had collected in this way, he gives in the foregoing letter to the Trustees of Nassau-Hall. He has wrote much on the prophecies of the Messiah, Justification, the Divinity of Christ, and the Eternity of Hell Torments. He wrote a great deal on the Bible, in the same way, by opening his thoughts on particular passages of it, as they occurred to him in reading or meditation ; by which he has cast much light on many parts of the Bible, which has escaped other interpreters. And by which his great and painful attention to the Bible, and making it the only rule of his faith, are manifest.

If

If the public was willing to be at the cost, and publishing books of divinity met with as much encouragement now, as it has sometimes, there might be a number of volumes published from his manuscripts, which would afford a great deal of new light and entertainment to the church of Christ: though they would be more imperfect, than if he himself had prepared them for public view.

As the method he took to have his miscellaneous writings in such order, as to be able with ease to turn to any thing he had wrote upon a particular subject, when he had occasion, is perhaps as good as any, if not the best that has been proposed to the public; some account of it will here be given, as what may be of advantage to young students, who have not yet gone into any method, and are disposed to improve their minds by writing.

He *numbered* all his miscellaneous writings. The first thing he wrote is No. 1, the second No. 2, and so on. And when he had occasion to write on any particular subject, he first set down the number, and then wrote the subject in capitals or large character, that it might not escape his eye, when he should have occasion to turn to it. As for instance, if he was going to write on the happiness of Angels, and his last No. was 148, he would begin thus—149. ANGELS, their HAPPINESS.—And when he had wrote what he designed at that time on that subject, he would turn to an alphabetical table which he kept, and under the letter A, he would write, Angels, their happiness, if this was not already in his alphabet; and then set down the number, 149, close at the right hand of it. And if he had occasion to write any new thoughts on this same subject; if the number of his miscellanies was increased, so that his last number was 261, he would set down the number 262, and then the subject, as before. And when he had done writing for that time, he turned to his table, to the word Angels; and at the right hand of the number 149, set down 162. By this means he had no occasion to leave any chasms: but began his next subject where he left off his last. The number of his miscellaneous writings ranged in this manner, amounts to above 1400. And yet by a table contained on a sheet or two of paper, any thing he wrote can be turned to, at pleasure.

SECTION II.

His PUBLICATIONS.

MR. EDWARDS was greatly esteemed and famed as an AUTHOR, both in Europe and America. His publications naturally raised in the reader of taste and judgment, an opinion of his greatness and piety. His books met with a good reception in Scotland especially, and procured him great esteem and applause there. A gentleman of note there for his superior genius and talents, has the following words concerning Mr. Edwards, in a letter to one of his correspondents in America. "I looked on him as incomparably the greatest divine and philosopher in Britain or her Colonies; and rejoiced that one so eminently qualified for teaching divinity was chosen President of New-Jersey College," And in another letter the same gentleman says, "Ever since I was acquainted with Mr. Edwards's writings, I have looked upon him as the greatest divine this age has produced. And a Rev. gentleman lately from Holland, says, That Mr. Edwards's writings, especially on the *Freedom of the Will*, were had in great esteem there: that the professors of the celebrated academy, presented their compliments to President Edwards. Several members of the classis of Amsterdam gave their thanks, by him, to pious Mr. Edwards, for his just observations on Mr. Brainerd's life; which book was translated in Holland, and was highly approved of by the University of Utrecht—"

A brief account of what he published is therefore here subjoined.

A Sermon preached at Boston, on 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31. with a preface by one of the ministers of Boston.

A Sermon preached at Northampton, in the year 1734, from Math. xvi. 17, intitled, A divine and supernatural Light immediately imparted to the soul by the Spirit of God.

The Narrative which has been mentioned, wrote Nov. 6, 1736, which was first printed in London, and recommended by Dr. Watts, and Dr. Guyse; and had two editions there. And then it had another edition in Boston, in the year 1738, recommended by four of the senior Ministers in Boston. To which were prefixed five discourses on the following subjects.

I. Justifi-

I. Justification by faith alone. II. Pressing into the kingdom of God. III. Ruth's resolution. IV. The justice of God in the damnation of Sinners. V. The excellency of Jesus Christ.

Delivered at Northampton, chiefly at the time of the wonderful pouring out of the Spirit of God there.

The discourse on Justification by faith alone, may be recommended as one of the best things that has been wrote on that subject; setting this truth in a most plain, scriptural, and convincing light; and as well worthy the careful perusal of all christians; especially candidates for the ministry. The other discourses are excellent, having much divinity in them, and tending above most that are published, to awaken the conscience of the sinner, and instruct and quicken the christian.

A Sermon preached at Enfield, July 8, 1741, intituled, Sinners in the hands of an angry God. Preached at a time of great awakenings there; and attended with remarkable impressions on many of the hearers.

A Sermon on the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God, preached at New-Haven, Sept. 10, 1741, from 1 John iv. 1. published with great enlargements. This was reprinted in Scotland.

Some thoughts concerning the present revival of religion in New-England, and the way in which it ought to be acknowledged and promoted, humbly offered to the public, in a treatise on that subject, in five parts. Published in the year 1742. This had a second edition in Scotland.

A treatise concerning religious affections. Published in the year 1746. These three last have been mentioned before, with the particular occasion and design of their publication.

A treatise intituled, An humble attempt to promote explicit agreement, and visible union of God's people in extraordinary prayer, for the revival of religion, &c. Recommended by five of the principal ministers in Boston. Published in 1747. In which he shews his great acquaintance with scripture, and his attention to, and good understanding of the prophetic part of it.

An account of the life of the Rev. Mr. David Brainerd, minister of the gospel and missionary to the Indians, &c. with reflections and observations thereon. Published in the year 1749.

An enquiry into the qualifications for full communion in the visible church. Published in the year 1749, intended as

an explanation and vindication of his principles in the matter, which occasioned his dismissal from Northampton.

A reply to the Rev. Mr. William's answer to the forementioned inquiry. Published in the year 1752.

A Sermon preached at Newark, before the Synod, Sept. 28, 1752, from Jam. ii. 19. intitled, True grace distinguished from the experience of Devils.

A careful and strict inquiry into the modern prevailing notion of that freedom of will, which is supposed to be essential to moral agency, &c. Published in the year 1754.

This is justly thought by good judges to be one of the greatest efforts of the human mind, that has appeared, at least in this century. In which the author shews that force and strength of mind, that judgment, penetration and accuracy of thought, that justly intitles him to the character of one of the greatest genius's of this age. This treatise doubtless goes further towards settling the main points in controversy between Calvinists and Arminians, than any thing that has been wrote : he having herein abundantly demonstrated the chief principles on which Arminians build their whole scheme, to be false and most absurd. Whenever therefore this book comes to be generally attended to, it will doubtless prove fatal to Arminian and Pelagian principles. This was reprinted in London, Anno 1762 : and has been introduced by the Rev. T. Clap, President of Yale College, to be recited there by the Students.

The great christian doctrine of Original Sin defended ; evidences of its truth produced, and arguments to the contrary answered. Containing, in particular, a reply to the objections and arguings of Dr. John Taylor, &c. Published in the year 1758. This was in the press when he died.

Besides these, he published several Ordination Sermons, and some others, preached upon particular occasions.

A P P E N D I X, No. I.

Containing a brief ACCOUNT of Mrs. ESTHER BURR, and some Extracts of LETTERS wrote by her.

MRS. BURR and her children were inoculated at the same time her father was, and were recovered when he died. But after she was perfectly recovered to all appearance, she was suddenly seized with a violent disorder, which carried her out of the world 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; by him she had two children, a son and a daughter.

Mrs. Burr exceeded most of her sex in the beauty of her person; and in a decent and easy gesture, behaviour and conversation: not stiff and starch on the one hand, nor mean and indecent on the other, in her unaffected, natural freedom with 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 thought, and a good judgment. She had a peculiar finartness in her make and temper, which yet was consistent with pleasantness and good nature: and she knew how to be pleasant and facetious, without trespassing on the bounds of gravity, or strict and serious religion. In short, she seemed to be formed to please, and especially to please one of Mr. Burr's taste and talents, in whom he was exceeding happy. But what crowned all her excellencies, and was her chief glory, was her *Religion*. She was hopefully converted when she was seven or eight years old; and she made a public profession of religion when she was about fifteen years of age; and her conversation and conduct to her death, was exemplary and as becometh godliness. But as her religious sentiments and exercises, will best be understood by those who were strangers to her, by her own words; the following extracts are made from letters which she wrote not long before her death.

The

The following is an extract from a letter she wrote to her mother, not long after Mr. Burr's death, dated at Princeton, October 7, 1757. After giving some account of Mr. Burr's death, and representing the sense she had of the greatness of the loss she and her children had sustained, she writes in the following words :

“ **N**O 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 allsufficient 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 calm 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 comforting 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 of 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 has been 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 honored father's prayers daily for me ; but give me leave to intreat you both to request earnestly of the Lord, that I may never despise his chastenings, nor faint under this his severe stroke ;

which

which I am sensible there is great danger of, if God should only deny me the supports that he has hitherto graciously granted.

“O, I am afraid I shall conduct so as to bring dishonor on my God, and the religion which I profess!—No, rather let me die this moment, than be left to bring dishonor 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 honored parents, love to my brothers and sisters. From,

Dear Madam,

your dutiful and affectionate daughter,

E S T H E R B U R R.”

“To my ever honored Father.

Princeton, November 2, 1757.

* HONORED SIR,

“YOUR most affectionate, comforting letter by my brother, was exceedingly refreshing to me, although I was something damped by hearing that I should not see you until spring.* But it is my comfort in this disappointment, as well as under all my afflictions, that God knows what is best for me, and for his own glory. Perhaps I lotted too much on the company and conversation of such a near and dear and affectionate father and guide. I can not 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 comes of me.

“Since I wrote my mother’s letter, God has carried me through new trials, and given me new supports. My little son has been sick with the 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 up again. I was enabled to resign the child (after a severe struggle with nature) with the greatest freedom

* When Mr. Edwards wrote the letter she refers to, he did not think of going to Princeton till spring; but he afterwards determined otherwise, and went in January, as is before related.

freedom. God shewed me that the child was not my own, but his ; and that he had a right to recall what he had lent, whenever he thought fit ; and I had no reason to complain, or say 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 the child by faith, I think, 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 shewed me in such a lively manner, the fullness 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 up myself and children to God, with my whole heart. Never until now, had I a sense of the privilege we are allowed in covenanting with God ! This act of soul left my mind in a quiet 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 longing desires after this 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. 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, especially pride ! O, how many shapes doth pride cloke itself in !

Satan

“ 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. O, to be delivered from the power of satan, as well as sin! I can not help hoping the time is near. God is certainly fitting me for himself; and when I think it will be soon that I shall be called hence, the thought is transporting.”

A P P E N D I X, No. II.

Containing a short sketch of Mrs. EDWARDS'S LIFE and CHARACTER.

MRS. Sarah Edwards, the amiable consort of President Edwards, did not long survive him. In September she set out in good health on a journey to Philadelphia, to take care of her two orphan grandchildren, 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 suddenly seized with a violent dysentery, which put an end to her life on the fifth day, October 2, 1758, 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 desire that God 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, which is about 40 miles from Philadelphia, and deposited with Mr. Edwards's. Thus they who were in their lives remarkably lovely and pleasant, in their death were not much divided. Here lie the father and mother, the son and daughter, who are 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,

conforts, than whom it will doubtless be hard to find four persons more valuable and useful ; in a few months are cut off from the earth forever ; and by a remarkable providence are put, as it were, into one grave ! And we the survivors are left under the gloomy apprehension that these righteous are taken away from the evil to come !

Surely America is greatly emptied by these deaths ! How much knowledge, wisdom and holiness is gone from the earth forever ! And where are they who shall make good their ground !

Mrs. Edwards was born in New-Haven, in Connecticut, Jan. 9, 1709—10. Her father was the Rev. Mr. James Pierpoint, who was long an eminently godly and useful minister of the gospel at New-Haven.* She was married to Mr. Edwards, July 20, 1727, in the 18th year of her age.

Though Mrs. Edwards's full character will not be attempted here, yet it is thought proper to mention a few things, in which she excelled, and set an example worthy the imitation of all.

She remembered her creator in the days of her youth, and became truly and remarkably religious at about five years old. Was a more than ordinary beautiful person ; of a pleasant, agreeable countenance ; of an amiable, courteous conversation and behaviour : the law of kindness was in her tongue.

She was eminent for her piety and experimental religion. Religious conversation was much her delight ; and this she promoted in all companies as far as was proper and decent for her : and her discourse shewed her understanding in divine things, and the great impresson they had on her mind. The friends of true religion, and they who were ready to engage in religious conversation, and delighted in that which was most essential and practical in true religion, were her peculiar friends and intimates. To whom she would open her mind freely, and tell them the exercises of her own heart ; and what God had done for her soul, for their encouragement, and

* He was the eldest son of Mr. John Pierpoint of Roxbury, who came out of England. Her mother was Mrs. Mary Pierpoint, eldest daughter of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Hooker, minister of the gospel at Farmington, in Connecticut, and son of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Hooker, once minister of the gospel at Hartford, and famous as a divine, through all the churches in New-England.

and excitement in the ways of God. Her mind appeared, to them who were most conversant with her, constantly to attend to divine things, even on all occasions, and in all business of life.

The religious duties of the closet, she was a great friend to, and took much delight in them. She highly prized social worship. Was wont to attend the private meetings for religious worship, which were kept up at Northampton, while Mr. Edwards lived there. And promoted and attended meetings of persons of her own sex only, in order for prayer and religious conversation. She was a constant attender on public worship; and behaved with great gravity and seriousness in the house of God.

She paid proper deference to Mr. Edwards, and treated him with decency and respect at all times. As he was of a weakly, infirm constitution, and was peculiar and exact in his diet, she was a tender nurse to him; cheerfully attending upon him at all times, and ministering to his comfort: and spared no pains to conform to his inclinations, and make things agreeable and comfortable to him.

She accounted it her greatest glory, and that wherein she could best serve God and her generation, in being a means of promoting Mr. Edwards's comfort and usefulness in this way. And no person of discerning could be conversant in the family without observing and admiring the great harmony and mutual love and esteem that subsisted between them.

When she herself laboured under bodily disorders and pains, which was often the case, she was not wont to be full of her complaints, and put on a dejected or sour countenance, being out of humour with every body and every thing, as if she was disregarded and neglected: but she would bare up under them with patience, and a kind of cheerfulness and good humour.

She was a good oeconomist, managing her household affairs with discretion; in which she was laborious and diligent. She was very careful that nothing should be wasted and lost. And often, when she did any thing to save a small matter, or directed her children to do it in any instance, or saw them waste any thing; she would mention the words of our Saviour: which, she said, she often thought of, as containing a maxim worth remembering: when, as the reason why his disciples should gather up the fragments, he says, *That nothing be lost*. She took almost the whole care of the temporal affairs of the family,

without doors and within : and in this she was peculiarly suited to Mr. Edwards's disposition, who chose to have no care of any worldly business.

She had an excellent way of governing her children : she knew how to make them regard and obey her cheerfully without loud, angry words, or heavy blows. She seldom struck her children a blow ; and in speaking to them used mild, gentle and pleasant words. If any correction was needful, it was not her manner to give it in a passion. And when she had occasion to reprove and rebuke, she would do it in few words, without heat and noise, with all calmness and gentleness of mind. And in her directions or reproofs, in any 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 need speak but once ; she was cheerfully obeyed ; murmuring and answering again was not known among them. And the kind and gentle treatment they had from their mother, while she strictly and punctually maintained her parental authority, seemed naturally to beget and promote a filial regard and respect ; and lead them to a mild, tender treatment of each other ; for quarelling and contention, as it frequently takes place among children, was not known among them. She carefully observed the first appearances of resentment and ill-will towards any, in her young children ; and did not connive at it and promote it, as many who have the care of children do, but was careful to shew her displeasure at it, and suppress it to her utmost : not by angry, wrathful words and blows, which often provoke children to wrath, and stir up and confirm their irascible passions, rather than abate and suppress them.

As she was 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 in their most pliable age, when they commonly receive impressions by which they are very much formed for life : so she was very careful to do her part in this important business. And when she met with any special difficulty in this matter, or foresaw any, she was wont to apply to Mr. Edwards for advice and assistance : and on such occasions they would both attend to it, as a matter of great importance.

But this was not all, in which she expressed her care for her children. She thought that parents had great and important duty

duty to do towards their 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 evidence of her pregnancy, and consideration that it was with 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 mother of children, she was in travel for them, that they might be born of God by having Christ formed in them.

As the law of kindness was in her tongue, so her hands were not withheld from beneficence and charity. She was always a friend and patroness of the poor and helpless; and much in acts of charity, as well as recommending it to others on all proper occasions.

She was remarkable for her kindness to her friends and visitants, who resorted to Mr. Edwards's. She would spare no pains to make them welcome, and provide for their convenience and comfort. And she was peculiarly kind to strangers, who came to her house. She would take such kind and special notice of such, and so soon get acquainted with them, as it were, and shew such regard and concern for their comfort, and so kindly offer what she thought they needed, as to discover she knew the heart of a stranger, and well understood how to do it good; and so as to oblige them to feel in some measure as if they were at home.

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 theirs 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 and patience, 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.

She

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 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 conversation and conduct on this occasion was even to the admiration of her friends. It was such as discovered that she was sensible of the great loss, she and her children had sustained in his death; and at the same time shewed, that she was quiet and resigned, and had those invisible supports and comforts by which she could trust in God with quietness, hope and humble joy.

They lived together in the married state above thirty years. In which time they had eleven children; all which are now living, except the second daughter, who died February, 14, 1748, (of whom the public have some account in the life of Mr. Brainerd, P. 251.) and their third daughter, Mrs. Burr, before mentioned; and their youngest daughter, named Elizabeth, who died since her parents. The surviving children are three sons, and five daughters.

FINIS.