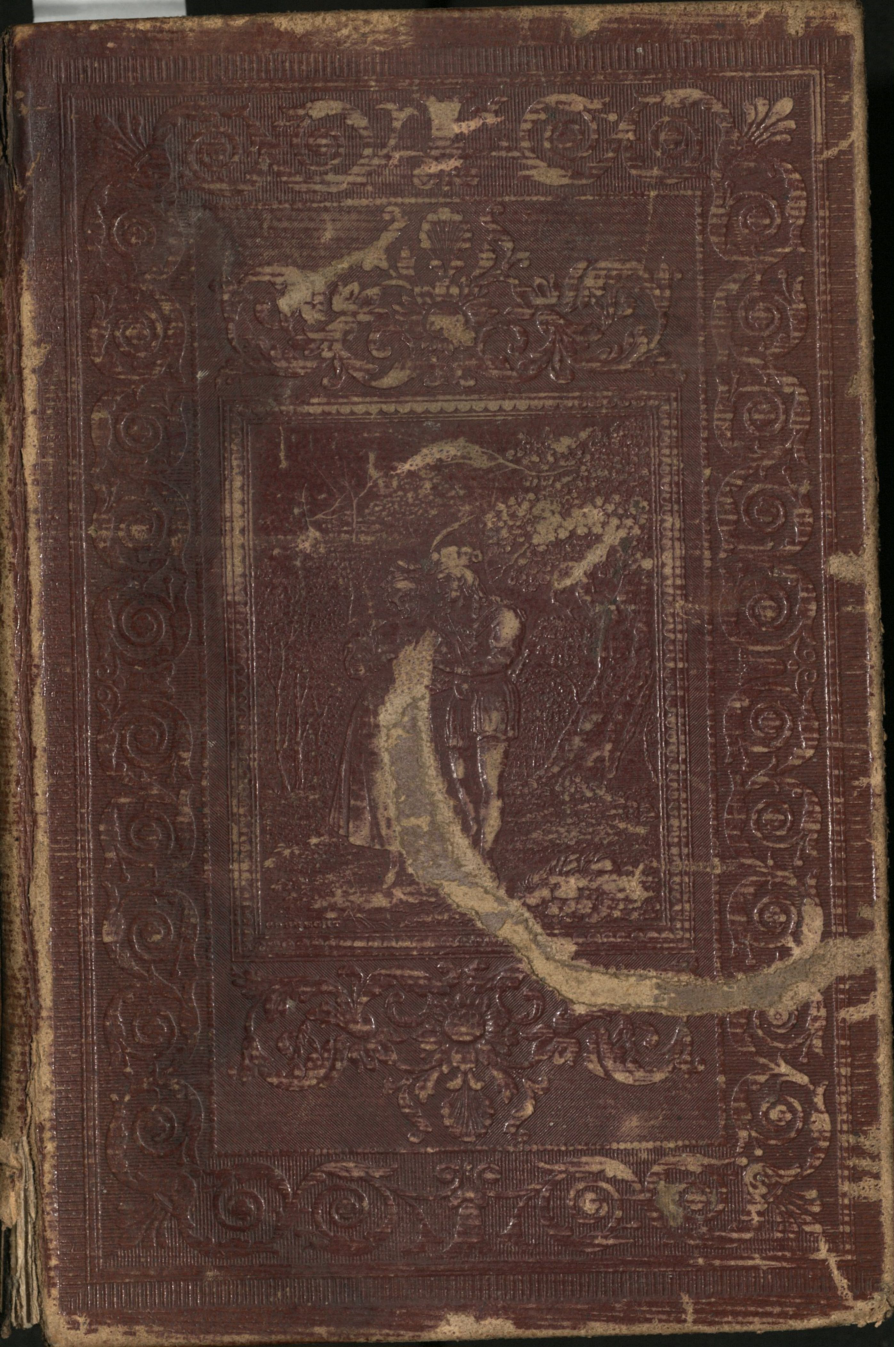

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VOL. VIII.

NEW YORK:

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1848.

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LIVES

OF

JONATHAN EDWARDS

AND

DAVID BRAINERD.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY HARPER AND BROTHERS.
1848.

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PREFACE.

In preparing the following account of the Apostle Eliot, it has been my object to confine the narrative as strictly as possible within the limits of his personal biography, and of the circumstances necessarily connected with it. The story obviously furnishes many points, at which a writer would desire to avail himself of the opportunities presented for discussion and general remarks. Among these topics, the condition and fate of the American Indians, and the character of missionary enterprises among them since Eliot's time, would open a large field for inquiry and reflection, in connexion with the history of a man, who labored so strenuously for that interesting race. It would likewise be desirable to take a somewhat ample notice of Mr. Eliot's fellow-laborers in the same benevolent work. But my limits have necessarily

precluded these and similar digressions. The object of a work like the present is to give a distinct and faithful picture of the life, doings, opinions, and habits of the individual; and the reader must be left to derive from the account such materials for speculation as may be suggested to his own mind.

Of the sources, from which I have drawn the facts for this biographical sketch, some are obvious, and have been before used; to others access has hitherto been had either not at all, or only at second hand. The "Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society," which are full of useful materials for the student of American history, have afforded important aid. These volumes, besides the account of the apostle Eliot prepared by his highly respected namesake, the Reverend Dr. John Eliot of Boston, contain scattered facts and documents connected with the subject of this work. I have consulted the Colony Records, and in a few instances they have furnished me with facts, which I was glad to obtain.

I have been reluctantly compelled, by want of room, to omit many of the most interesting questions proposed by the Indian converts to their teacher, and some details of Mr. Eliot's proceedings. But I hope the book will be found to present a fair representation of his deeds and character, and to constitute a memorial not altogether unworthy of one belonging to the venerable class of "the righteous who shall be in everlasting remembrance." The record of the wise and good will never be forgotten by a community, who understand what they owe to themselves; and it may be refreshing briefly to withdraw from the heating excitements, which daily crowd upon the public mind, to the contemplation of a man, whose long life was a life of moral labor, whose active spirit was a spirit of self-sacrifice and of pure benevolence.

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count of Him. — Miss Edwards. — His Visit at Boston. — Attentions paid Him. — His Return to Northampton. — Circumstances of his Death. — His Example. 352

The idea, that there are forty or fifty different original languages among the Aborigines of North America, is, I am satisfied, a great mistake. The Mohegan, in its various dialects, is the general language within the limits of the United States.

Aug. 8. 1788 — Jonathan Edwards

LIFE

OF

JONATHAN EDWARDS,

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY;

BY

SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY AND CHURCH GOVERNMENT IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY.

VOL. VIII. 1

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

CHAPTER I.

His Birth. — His elementary Education. — His collegiate Course. — His early Piety.

We owe scarcely any debt to our generation more obvious, or more important, than to record, for the benefit of coming times, the lives of men eminent for their talents, their intellectual culture, and their pure and elevated virtue. We owe to the dead themselves the duty of commemorating their actions, of cherishing their reputation, and of perpetuating, as far as possible, the benefits which they have conferred upon us. This is especially the case, when their eminence is of such a peculiar character as to present, at every step, an example adapted not to dazzle, but to instruct, to guide, and to animate. It was quaintly said by one of the kings of Aragon, "Dead men are our best instructers." With living men, and passing measures, there is, ordinarily, connected so much prejudice and passion, that we are often

insensible to their most impressive lessons. But, when death has set his seal upon the character of a departed worthy, and the din of conflict has passed away, we are prepared to receive the full benefit of his example.

Hence it is that the character and the works of some men become more precious to the community every year that we recede from the period of their departure from the scene of action. No one can doubt that this is the case with regard to the life of the great and good man whose history and portrait there will now be an attempt to exhibit. The writer of these pages, in undertaking the task assigned to him, of compiling the following memoir, felt that he was venturing on the performance of a duty as arduous as it was honorable. He considered himself as called upon, not to be the apologist of a party, but faithfully to exhibit one of the greatest of men just as he was, and to endeavor to render his history and character useful to the great cause to which he consecrated his life. Whatever may be the measure of his success, this is his great object. For the same purpose, the view taken will be more extended and minute than, in ordinary cases, is deemed proper for the present work. In taking this course, the supposition can scarcely be admitted that it will be regretted by intelligent readers.

JONATHAN EDWARDS was born at East Windsor, Connecticut, on the 5th day of October, 1703. His parents were, the Reverend Timothy Edwards, for sixty-four years the beloved and venerated pastor of the Congregational Church of East Windsor; and Esther Stoddard, daughter of the Reverend Solomon Stoddard, who was, for more than half a century, pastor of the church of Northampton, Massachusetts, and, in his day, one of the most eminent ministers of New England for piety, talents, pastoral fidelity, and usefulness. The families of Edwards and Stoddard were both of English descent, and had been both distinguished, for several generations, for piety, intellectual vigor, and commanding influence in their respective spheres of duty. William Edwards, Esquire, the great-grandfather of Jonathan, was the first of his family who came to America, about the year 1640, and settled in Hartford, as a respectable merchant; and Anthony Stoddard, Esquire, the grandfather of Esther Stoddard, appears to have emigrated from the West of England, about the same time, and to have taken up his abode in Boston; in what profession is unknown.

The character of Esther Stoddard, the mother of the subject of this memoir, was no less eminent than that of her husband. She is represented, by tradition, as a woman of distinguished

strength of mind, of superior education, peculiarly fond of reading, and of ardent piety; and, of course, as well adapted to adorn and to bless the large domestic circle committed to her care. She was the mother of eleven children. The subject of this memoir was the fifth child of his parents in order, and their only son.

Young Edwards received all the early part of his education under his paternal roof at East Windsor. His father was eminent among his clerical brethren as a Latin, Greek, and Hebrew scholar, and was, for many years, in the habit of receiving under his tuition, and preparing for college, a number of young men destined for the learned professions. He also instructed his daughters in the same branches of knowledge, as are usually required in candidates for admission into the college classes. Under the direction of this enlightened, pious, and affectionate parent, aided by his elder sisters, who had preceded him in these branches of instruction, the subject of this memoir commenced the study of the Latin language at six years of age.

Of the character or history of these early studies, little is known, excepting that it may be inferred, from the accuracy and maturity of his attainments in classical literature, and in Hebrew, in after-life, that the foundation, in these departments of knowledge, was now carefully and skil-

fully laid. From the earliest period of his education with which we are acquainted, his intellectual culture seems to have been marked by an ardent thirst for knowledge, a desire to go to the bottom of every subject, and, what might have been expected, as the natural consequence, indefatigable diligence. He was early taught, by his excellent father, to use the pen abundantly; to study with it habitually in his hand; to make a record of his doubts, his difficulties, and his comments on every subject, and to bring all his knowledge to the test of expressing it on paper for himself. In a word, it seems to have been a leading principle of his father, in regard to this son, and indeed all his children, to encourage them, from their tenderest years, to engage frequently in letter-writing, and every other kind of composition, as one of the best means of intellectual discipline. That this early habit exerted much influence on his subsequent studies and investigations, and contributed, in no small degree, to give a character to his after-life, cannot be doubted.

Nor did he confine his attention, at this tender age, to those studies which usually employ the mental faculties in their earlier developement. Nothing that came in his way seems to have escaped his inquisitive and active powers. The science of nature, as well as of the mind and of morals, all had attractions for him, and all engaged

a portion of his attention. The humble record of his reply, at ten years of age, to a fellow student, who had advanced the notion that the soul is material, certainly evinces a capacity of connected thought on such subjects, and a power of humor and sarcasm, truly rare in a child. And his detailed notice and speculations on the habits of the Wood-Spider, two years afterwards, show a degree of wakefulness, activity, and discrimination of mind, a habit of close attention, and a power of philosophical speculation, altogether extraordinary.

In the year 1716, this remarkable youth entered Yale College at New Haven, a few days before the completion of the thirteenth year of his age. That institution was then not only in its infancy, but likewise laboring under many and serious disadvantages. It had been founded at Saybrook, in 1701; but the rector or president resided at Killingworth, eight or ten miles distant from Saybrook, because he continued to be the pastor of a church at the former place, and his people refused to consent to his dismission from them. All the students, therefore, during the incumbency of the Reverend Mr. Pierson, the first rector, resided and studied at Killingworth. The commencements, however, were constantly held at Saybrook, which was the nominal and legal seat of the college.

After the death of the first rector, in 1707, his successor, the Reverend Mr. Andrews, appointed rector *pro tempore*, also continued for twelve years to hold the office in conjunction with that of pastor of the church at Milford, more than forty miles distant from Saybrook. So that when young Edwards entered the college, the students were scattered in several places, owing to a struggle in respect to its ultimate location. Thirteen resided at New Haven, fourteen at Wethersfield, and four at Saybrook. The distance of the rector's residence from the places of study and tuition greatly diminished both his influence and his usefulness. Both the instruction and government of the institution were chiefly conducted by the tutors. Owing to this, and other untoward circumstances, the state of the college, at the time referred to, was peculiarly unfriendly to tranquil and profitable study.

But such were the love of knowledge and the manly firmness of young Edwards, that no difficulty appalled him; no agitation turned him aside from his prescribed course. He surmounted all obstacles, and showed that he was able to mark out a course for himself. Though his fellow-students became disorderly, and, at length, mutinous, yet he took no part in the mutiny and insubordination which surrounded him, but studied with diligence and success; and such were his

dignity and scholarship, that he maintained, by the acknowledgment of all, the highest standing in his class, and the entire respect and confidence of his fellow-students, notwithstanding his refusal to unite with them in their disorderly proceedings. No part of his collegiate studies seems to have been slighted, much less overlooked. All of them appear to have engaged his close and faithful attention. On all of them he seems to have laid out his strength. Here, as under his father's roof, he continued the habit of using the pen continually in all his studies.

It is presumed to be very rare indeed that a boy of fourteen years of age ever thinks of looking into such a book as Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding." But that such a youth should not only look into it, but enter with delight into its philosophy and its arguments, is a fact of which there are probably few examples. Yet such was the case with the subject of this memoir. In his second year in college, he not only read the work in question with interest, but declared that, in the perusal of it, he enjoyed a far higher pleasure "than the most greedy miser finds, when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold from some newly-discovered treasure." This fact shows the bent, as well as the wakeful activity, of his mind. To this department of study he manifested an insatiable fondness to the end of life. But in

every department, to which his attention was turned, he was a devoted student. In mathematics, in natural philosophy and astronomy, and in moral science, as well as in the philosophy of the human mind, he appears to have been determined to take nothing on trust, but to think, to inquire, and to judge for himself. The manuscript notes, which he left on all these subjects, bear a very striking character. They evince a mind ardent in the pursuit of knowledge, and determined to digest and make his own every thing that he received from books, or from his teachers, and even a disposition, at that early age, to push his inquiries beyond them all.

The close of his collegiate course corresponded with this reputation. It was not only honorable, but so in the highest degree. In September, 1720, a few days before the completion of his seventeenth year, he received the first degree in the arts; and, at the Commencement, had assigned to him not only the most eminent, but almost the sole and accumulated honor awarded to his class.

The mind of this extraordinary youth, as might have been expected from the character of his parents, was early and carefully directed in the channel of moral and religious culture. His father's family seems to have been a scene of the most pure and refined intellectual and moral influence, as well as of the most sound and enlight-

ened piety. Perhaps in no domestic circle in the land, were habits of thought, of intelligence, of literary taste, of industry, and of religion in all its loveliness, more conspicuous than in that of which he was a member. There is no human influence better adapted to exert a happy power in forming the character of a young man, than the society of cultivated, refined, and virtuous sisters. In this respect, young Edwards was peculiarly favored. Himself the only son, associated with ten sisters of enlightened, polished minds, and engaged, to a considerable extent, in the same studies with himself, he manifested all that softness, refinement, and moral correctness, which the society of such sisters was eminently adapted to impress. He was in a school fitted to impart the finest moral finish to intellectual culture. Even before his mind was brought under the governing influence of religious truth, his amiable spirit, his modesty, his docility, his dutifulness to his parents, his fraternal kindness and attention, and his uniform respectfulness and regularity,—all demonstrated that his domestic training had been of the most benign and happy character. And hence, during his collegiate course, amidst all the disorders into which his fellow-students were betrayed by their peculiar and unhappy circumstances, he seems to have stood aloof from all their turbulence; to have maintained a prudent, firm, inoffensive, dig-

nified course, and yet not to have forfeited the respect or the good will of his companions in study.

He had no participation in that ignoble character, which is too often found in the classes of colleges; the character of those who, while they boast of their spirit and manliness, have not the moral courage to do as their own consciences tell them they ought in a season of disorder and rebellion. There is no more miserable *cowardice*, than that which governs young men in public literary institutions, who cannot summon firmness of mind enough to separate themselves from disorderly, mutinous companions; but are dragged on, in a course which they secretly condemn, and which may lead not only to their injury and disgrace, but to their irretrievable ruin. We have, in the character of the noble youth before us, an example of one who manifested all the softness and refinement of the most plastic nature, united with all the decision, moral courage, and elevation of spirit, that marked the finest specimen of modest heroism.

The first religious impressions of any remarkable character, made on the mind of young Edwards, seem to have occurred in the seventh or eighth year of his age. They were made during a season of unusual religious attention in his father's church. According to his own modest

account, he was for many months much affected, and seriously concerned about the things of religion, and his soul's salvation. He was abundant in religious duties; used to pray five times a day in secret; spent much time in religious conversation and prayer with other boys; united with them in erecting a booth, as a place of social worship, in a neighboring retired place; and often felt much flow of affection and pleasure when engaged in the exercises of religion. In a few months, however, these impressions and habits gradually wore off, and he returned to his former state of comparative carelessness. His own deliberate estimate, afterwards, of his exercises at this period, was that they were spurious, and by no means partook of the nature of genuine piety. A different estimate, however, has been formed by some of his pious friends. They suppose that, even then, the germ of true religion was implanted in his heart, which, amidst some subsequent backsliding, never wholly perished.

Toward the latter part of his course in college, impressions of a more deep, genuine, and permanent character seem to have been made on his heart. To this period he referred the commencement of his life as a Christian. His own account of the event is in the following language.

"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 that concern by the name of terror. From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased. 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 I never could give an account how, or by what means, I was thus convinced; not in the least imagining at the time nor for a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's spirit in it; but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections.

"And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against it, in the most absolute sense, in God's showing mercy to whom he will show

mercy, and hardening whom he will. But I have often, since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty than I had then. I have often, since, had not only a conviction, but a *delightful* conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceedingly pleasant, bright, and sweet. Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not so. The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading these words, 1 Timothy, 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 rapt up to him in heaven, and be, as it were, swallowed up in him for ever. I kept saying, and as it were singing, over these words of Scripture to myself, and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him; and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do, with a new sort of affection.

"From about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart, and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. My mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. I found no books so delightful to me, as those which treated of these subjects. Those words, Canticles ii. 1, used to be abundantly with me. They seemed to me sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. The whole book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it about that time, and found, from time to time, an inward sweetness, that would carry me away in my contemplations. This I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapped and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things would often, of a sudden, kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my

heart; an ardor of soul that I know not how to express.

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

"After this, my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered. There seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and sky; in the grass, flowers, and trees; in the water and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit

and view the moon for a long time; and, in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the 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; although formerly nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder-storm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, if I may so speak, at the first appearance of a thunder-storm, and used to take the opportunity at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God.

"While thus engaged, it always seemed natural for me to sing or chant forth my meditations, or to speak my thoughts in soliloquies, with a singing voice. I 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, Psalm cxix. 20. *My soul breaketh for the longing it hath.* I often felt a

mourning and lamenting in my heart, that I had not turned unto God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; indeed almost perpetually in the contemplation of them.

"I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year; often walking alone in the woods and solitary places for meditation, soliloquy, and prayer, and converse with God. It was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplation. I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights, which I now felt in the things of religion, were of an exceedingly different kind from those before mentioned, that I had when a boy; and what then I had no more notion of, than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colors. They were of a more inward, pure, soul animating and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached my 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."

Such were the decisive religious views and elevated affections with which the subject of this memoir was blessed, when he was between sixteen and seventeen years of age. To some

readers a portion of his language may appear to indicate an excited imagination, and a state of feeling bordering on enthusiasm. But such an estimate will not be made by any, who have had an opportunity of attending to the subsequent writings of this illustrious man, or who have contemplated the strongly-marked character of his piety in after-life. The truth is, he entered more heartily and thoroughly into the character of the great objects of pious emotion than most Christians do; and no wonder that he spake a corresponding language.

In all his Diary, his language on the subject of personal religion is more strong and fervid than is common, chiefly because his piety was more deep and ardent, as well as more enlightened, than is commonly found even in zealous, devoted believers. As his intellectual superiority to most men appeared even in his early youth, so the character of his piety, from its very commencement, bears the stamp of unusual depth, fervor, clearness, and governing power. It is probable that those, who are most capable of appreciating religious character, after comparing all the memorials of this eminent man in relation to his religious exercises, will be of the opinion that a more edifying example of piety, sober and scriptural, as well as elevated, is rarely to be found in the church of God. His divine Master was

evidently training him, from his earliest youth, in the school of sanctified experience, as well as of intellectual culture, for those eminent services in the department of practical piety, as well as of theological investigation, which he was destined afterwards to render to his generation.

The date of his first making a profession of religion by uniting himself with the church, is not precisely known. It was, probably, about the time of his leaving college, or soon after the completion of the seventeenth year of his age.

CHAPTER II.

His License to preach the Gospel. — His temporary Residence in the City of New York. — His Tutorship in Yale College. — The further Developement of his Talents and Piety.

The subject of this memoir, after completing his undergraduate course at New Haven, returned to the college, and spent nearly two years in connexion with it, diligently prosecuting his theological studies with a view to the gospel ministry. During this time, his piety seems to have been fervent, active, and growing. In June or July, 1722, after the usual preparatory trials, he received a license to preach the gospel, a few months before the completion of his nineteenth year. Almost immediatety after beginning to preach, he was selected by some ministers of New England, who had been intrusted with the choice of a candidate for that purpose, to visit the city of New York, and preach to a small body of Presbyterians, who had been recently organized, as a church, under peculiar circumstances, in that city.

The first Presbyterian Church in the city of

New York was organized in 1716; and their first pastor was the Reverend James Anderson, a native of Scotland, who had been, for several years before, the pastor of a church at New Castle, in Delaware. The church prospered under his ministrations, and erected a commodious edifice in Wall Street, near Broadway, in 1719. But still the congregation, though not large enough to admit of an advantageous division, was not entirely united. A number of them, having been accustomed to the less regular and rigid habits of the Congregational churches of South Britain and of New England, were not pleased with the strict Presbyterianism, according to the Scottish model, which Mr. Anderson endeavored to enforce. They charged him with ecclesiastical domination, and also with an interference in the temporal concerns of the church. On these accounts the uneasiness of the dissatisfied party became at length so great, that, in the year 1722, they drew off from the body of the congregation, formed themselves into a separate church, and worshipped apart for a number of months.

This new society, soon after their organization, as before stated, received the subject of this memoir to preach as a candidate for settlement. He came to them in the month of August, 1722, and supplied their pulpit, with much acceptance, until the following April. But, finding the congrega-

tion too small to support a minister, and perceiving some unexpected difficulties to arise, he left the city, and returned to East Windsor. The impression, which he left on the minds of this people, seems to have been not only favorable, but very strongly so. Some of them, indeed, appear to have conceived for him a very warm attachment. Accordingly he was, soon afterwards, earnestly solicited by them to pay them another visit. But, judging from what he saw when among them, that it was not his duty to become their pastor, he declined a compliance with their second invitation. Whether they ever called any other preacher, and how long they continued in a state of separation from the main body of the church, is not known. It is believed, however, that, soon after Mr. Edwards left them, they perceived the impossibility of their going on with comfort, as a separate congregation, and quietly returned to their old connexion.

Mr. Edwards appears to have passed his time in New York with pleasure and profit. His letters and diary of that date, indicate unusual comfort in religion, and a deep impression of the kindness and Christian affection of the little flock to which he ministered.

During the time that he passed in theological study at New Haven, in the city of New York, and in his subsequent residence for a number of

months at his father's house in East Windsor, he formed a number of *resolutions* for the government of his own heart and life, which, though evidently intended for his own private use alone, have, happily, been left on record for the use of after-times. These resolutions are *seventy* in number, and were all formed and committed to writing before he was twenty years of age. No abridgment or general description would be doing justice, either to the resolutions themselves, or to the memory of him who formed them. They are here recited at length, under the persuasion that a more instructive and impressive memorial can scarcely be presented to the minds of young men; and also that no intelligent reader can rise from the perusal of them without the conviction, that he, who formed them at such an early age, must have had a firmness of religious principle, a depth of piety, a decision of character, an acquaintance with the human heart, and a comprehensiveness of views in regard to Christian duty, truly rare in the most mature minds.

"RESOLUTIONS.

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

"Remember to read over these resolutions once a week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"7. *Resolved*, Never to do any thing which I

should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.

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

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

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

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

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

"13. *Resolved*, To be endeavoring 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 towards irrational beings.

"16. *Resolved*, Never to speak evil of any one

so that it shall tend to his dishonor, more or less, upon no account, except for some real good.

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

"18. *Resolved*, To live so at all times, as I think it best, in my most devout frames, and when I have the clearest notion of the things of the gospel and another world.

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

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

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

"22. *Resolved*, To endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness in the other world, as I possibly can, with all the might, power, vigor, and vehemence, yea, violence, I am capable of, or can bring myself to exert, in any way that can be thought of.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"31. *Resolved*, Never to say any thing at all against anybody, but when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honor, and

of love to mankind; agreeable to the lowest humility and sense of my own faults and failings; and agreeable to the Golden Rule; often when I have said any thing against any one, to bring it to, and try it strictly by, the test of this resolution.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"38. *Resolved*, Never to utter any thing that is sportive, or matter of laughter, on a Lord's day.

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

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

"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 remade this 12th day of January, 1723.

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

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

"45. *Resolved*, Never to allow any pleasure or grief, joy or sorrow, nor any affection at all, nor

any *degree* of affection, nor any circumstance relating to it, but what helps religion.

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

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

"48. *Resolved*, Constantly, with the utmost niceness and diligence, and the strictest scrutiny, to be looking into the state of my soul, that I may know whether I have truly an interest in Christ or not; that, when I come to die, I may not have any negligence respecting this, to repent of.

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

"50. *Resolved*, That I will act so, as I think

I shall judge would have been best and most prudent, when I come into the future world.

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

"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.

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

"54. *Resolved*, Whenever I hear any thing spoken in commendation of any person, if I think it would be praiseworthy in me, that I will endeavor to imitate it.

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

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

"57. *Resolved*, When I fear misfortunes and

adversity, to examine whether I have done my duty, and resolve to do it, and let the event be just as Providence orders it. I will, as far as I can, be concerned about nothing but my duty and my sin.

"58. *Resolved*, Not only to refrain from an air of dislike, fretfulness, and anger in conversation; but to exhibit an air of love, cheerfulness, and benignity.

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

"60. *Resolved*, Whenever my feelings begin to appear in the least out of order, when I am conscious of the least uneasiness within, or the least irregularity without, I will then subject myself to the strictest examination.

"61. *Resolved*, That I will not give way to that listlessness which I find unbends and relaxes my mind from being fully and fixedly set on religion, whatever excuse I may have for it; that what my listlessness inclines me to do, is best to be done, &c.

"62. *Resolved*, Never to do any thing but my duty, and then, according to Ephesians vi. 6–8,

to do it willingly and cheerfully, as unto the Lord, and not to man; knowing, that whatever good any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.

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

"64. *Resolved*, When I find those '*groanings which cannot be uttered*,' of which the Apostle speaks, and those '*breakings of soul for the longing it hath*,' of which the Psalmist speaks, Psalm cxix. 20, that I will promote them to the utmost of my power, and that I will not be weary of earnestly endeavoring to vent my desires, nor of the repetitions of such earnestness.

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

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

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

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

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

"70. Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak."

A number of these resolutions have been so often repeated and adopted by eminent men since the days of Edwards, and are, on this account, so familiar to the minds of intelligent readers, that their real character and bearing, as formed more than a hundred years ago by an inexperienced youth under twenty years of age, who, perhaps, had rarely seen such a code, or any thing like it before, are seldom adequately appreciated. We cannot help pausing again to direct the reader's attention to them, as evincing a depth of prac-

tical wisdom; a delicacy and strength of conscientiousness; an honesty of desire to know and correct his own infirmities; a firmness and constancy of religious purpose; a moral purity and elevation, and an habitual spirituality of mind, which are peculiarly worthy of being sought by every young man who wishes to act a part corresponding with his rational and immortal nature, and from which the most advanced and devoted Christian may derive profit. There is indeed in them, not merely a specimen of moral purity, but of the moral sublime, as beautiful as it is touching.

In the month of September, 1723, Mr. Edwards attended the Commencement of Yale College, and received the degree of Master of Arts. At the same time he was elected to the office of tutor in that institution. But, as it was not necessary that he should enter on the discharge of the duties of that office for a number of months, he passed the succeeding winter and spring at New Haven, in diligent theological study. During this time, he was invited by several congregations to undertake the pastoral office over them; but, sensible of the importance of more mature and enlarged knowledge, he declined all those invitations, contented himself with the occasional exercise of his pulpit talents, and directed his mind with ardor to writing and reading on

professional subjects, until the following June. Here is another evidence of an enlarged and elevated mind. He "magnified" the importance and responsibility of the office which he sought. Many a young man, since, as well as before his time, of narrow views and crude knowledge, has rushed into the pastoral office with scarcely any of that furniture which enables the shepherd of souls "rightly to divide the word of truth"; but JONATHAN EDWARDS, with a mind of superior grasp and penetration, and with attainments already greater than common, did not think three full years of diligent professional study enough to prepare *him* for this arduous work. He could not prevail on himself to accept a pastoral charge, *until, after his collegiate graduation, he had devoted six years to close and appropriate study.* A similar estimate on the same subject was formed long before by a kindred mind. John Calvin, after he had published the first edition of his "Institutions of the Christian Religion," that wonderful monument of learning, piety, and talents, did not consider himself as sufficiently mature in knowledge to undertake the pastoral office, and was on his way to Strasburg, for the purpose of further pursuing his studies, when he was constrained, by irresistible importunity, to stop at Geneva, and there give his aid to the friends of the Reformation. When will young men, un-

speakably inferior to these master-minds, both in capacity and attainment, learn to resist that spirit of superficial, presumptuous haste, which is hurrying them prematurely into the pulpit, and burdening the church, to a lamentable extent, with "blind leaders of the blind"?

In the month of June, 1724, Mr. Edwards commenced his actual attention to the duties of a tutor in Yale College. It has been already mentioned, that during his connexion with the college as an undergraduate, the state of the institution was far from tranquil or flourishing. The period of his residence in it as a tutor was marked with new and serious difficulties. From January, 1721, to the Commencement in 1722, the students were, the greater part of the time, in a state of the most distressing insubordination and disorder. At the Commencement in 1722, the Reverend Mr. Cutler, the rector, and one of the tutors, declared themselves converts to Episcopacy. This declaration resulted in their immediate removal from office; and the college was for four years without a presiding head.

In this exigency, each of the trustees agreed to act as vice-rector, for a month in turn; and the instruction of the classes, and the details of government, were devolved almost entirely on the tutors. It was happy for the college, that, in these circumstances, they had tutors of such rare

accomplishments as were those of young Edwards and his colleagues. The singular union in Mr. Edwards, of gravity, dignity, fine talents, accurate scholarship, eminent piety, and remarkably gentle and respectful manners, could scarcely fail of conciliating the respect and attachment of a body of students. His colleagues seem in some degree to have resembled him. Under their administration, the institution might really be said to flourish. President Stiles pronounced them "the pillar tutors, and the glory of the college at the critical period" under consideration.

It is the remark of Lord Bacon, that "reading makes a *full* man; conversation a *ready* man; and writing an *exact* man." He might have added, that *teaching* includes, and has a tendency to extend and rivet, the advantages of *all three*. It is wonderful that young men, who prize accurate and digested knowledge, do not more generally appreciate the value, as a mental discipline, of engaging in the business of instruction. There can be no doubt that young Edwards derived essential advantage from filling the office of tutor for more than two years. True, it interrupted, in a considerable degree, his professional studies; and he appears to have thought that it interfered not a little with his comfort, and especially with his progress, in religion. But that this employment served to arrange and digest

his knowledge; that it contributed to enlarge his views both in literature and science, and to render those views more systematic and practical; that it aided him in the work of professional instruction as long as he lived; and that it imparted to his whole character more of that firmness, energy, skill in managing minds, and self-confidence, which were of essential use to him in after-life, none will, for a moment, doubt.

And, even with respect to his growth in grace, his occupations as tutor, if they served to diminish his opportunities for tranquil and devout retirement, were well adapted to show the need of religion; to exemplify the power of religion; and to prepare him to return to his former privileges with more zeal and real enjoyment. Nay, more; when a tree is advancing toward maturity, it is no doubt benefited by calm seasons and genial weather. But even the wind and the storm, with all their untoward appearances, are means of benefit, by causing it to take deeper root, and to become more firmly fixed in the soil. So the unwearied labor and the continual anxiety of a college officer, situated as was young Edwards, had a tendency to ripen his spiritual judgment, to confirm his religious principles, and to give the whole man a more steadfast, rooted, and determined character.

In the course of the second year of his tutor-

ship, he was visited with a severe attack of illness, which confined him to the house for nearly three months. During this illness, and especially in the progress of his recovery from it, he appears to have manifested the strength of religious principle and the consolations of religious hope nearly, if not quite, as much as at any previous period. And although he himself, as before suggested, made a less favorable estimate of his religious state at this time, than before, it may be doubted whether his apprehension was well founded to any serious extent. It is certain, however, that his Diary about this time was not so full, and does not appear to have been so punctually kept as before.

Mr. Edwards, during his connexion with the college at New Haven, as well as afterwards, was in the habit of frequently setting apart days for special prayer and self-examination, accompanied with fasting. Nor did he regard the duty of *fasting* as some modern sciolists in religion affect to consider it, as a mere *metaphorical fast*, that is, as "fasting in spirit"; as only a season of "special abstinence from sin." To act upon this principle is solemn mockery. It is setting at nought all the representations of this duty, either by precept or example, in the word of God, or in the example of the most eminently godly men in all ages. Just as well might men talk of paying

their debts in spirit, or of performing deeds of charity only in spirit. Mr. Edwards considered *literal abstinence from food*, either entire or partial, according to the state of his health and other circumstances, as essentially included in this duty

Generally on these days, the state of his mind, as recorded in his Diary, seems to have borne a very marked character. The following extracts from that record will serve to show, that there was no real decline, at the time of its date, in his deep moral sensibility, his sacred and delicate conscientiousness, and his ardent desire to mortify all sin, and to grow in every grace and virtue.

"*Friday night, October 7th*, 1723. I see there are some things quite contrary to the soundness and perfection of Christianity, in which almost all good men do allow themselves, and where innate corruption has an unrestrained, secret vent, which they never take notice of, or think to be no hurt, or cloak under the name of virtue; which things exceedingly darken the brightness, and hide the loveliness, of Christianity. Who can understand his errors? Oh that I might be kept from secret faults!"

"*Thursday, October 18th.* 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."

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

"*Monday, February* 3*d*, 1724. Let every thing have the value now which it will have on a sick bed; and frequently, in my pursuits, of whatever kind, let this question come into my mind, How much shall I value this on my death-bed?"

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

"*Thursday, February* 6*th*. More convinced than ever of the usefulness of free religious conversation. I find by conversing on natural philosophy, that I gain knowledge abundantly faster, and see the reason of things much more clearly,

than in private study; wherefore, earnestly to seek, at all times, for religious conversation; and for those with whom I can, at all times, with profit and delight, and with freedom, so converse.

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

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

"*Tuesday, February* 10*th*, 1725. A virtue which I need in a higher degree, to give lustre and beauty to my behavior, is gentleness. If I had more of an air of gentleness, I should be much mended."

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

The last extract deserves particular notice, inasmuch as it illustrates, in a very striking manner, one of the great peculiarities of the character of Edwards. He was unwilling, even at this early age, to do any thing *slightly* or *superficially*. His object seems to have been to go to the bottom of every subject that he touched; and, above all, did he manifest this with respect to sacred things.

It is supposed that most pious men, and even those who are fervently pious, in setting apart days for special devotion, are wont to comprehend among the objects of their serious consideration a variety of topics, such as their sins, their mercies, their duties, their failures, their prospects, and all in the same exercise. No doubt this comprehensive plan is, to a certain extent, at all times proper. But the subject of this memoir seems to have found it for *his* edification, at least on some occasions, to select seasons of special retirement and devotion for dwelling on particular subjects with peculiar seriousness, and in a more

thorough and extended manner than usual. He would labor for hours to keep a given subject, or class of subjects, before his mind, and to enter into them as deeply and extensively as possible, until his own mind was deeply affected by them.

One of the greatest defects of most pious men, and of most intellectual men, is the want of the power and the habit of continuous meditation.

No one was ever eminently devout, or eminently successful in the work of investigation, who had not, in some good degree, attained this important habit. To be able to look at a subject closely, with fixed attention, and for a considerable time together, is essential to the art of conversing deeply with our own hearts, or examining any important question in the most profound and happy manner. This precious art Edwards diligently cultivated, and to a very unusual degree attained; and the benefit of it was abundantly manifest, both in the depth of his piety, and the distinguished success of his moral and theological investigations.

As he strove to go to the bottom of every subject in his intellectual inquiries, so he seems especially to have resolved to be superficial in nothing pertaining to the duties of the closet. He was willing to *take time* for meditation, as well as for prayer; to dwell on important subjects bearing on the religion of the heart, until he, in some measure, grasped the length and breadth, and

depth and height, of their real character, and until his mind was, in some good degree, affected with their practical importance. There are few points in the history of this great man more worthy of being closely studied and diligently imitated. There is perhaps scarcely any defect, which more lamentably cleaves to the habits, the attainments, and the efforts of even good men, than that of *superficiality*. In scholarship, in theological furniture, in practical piety, in the duties of devotion, and in benevolent enterprise, few things seem to be more needed than going to work, in every thing, in that thorough manner, which characterized the excellent subject of this memoir. He seemed to feel in every thing, in searching his own heart as well as in investigating truth, or in any way attempting to benefit his fellow-men, that he was *acting for eternity*.

CHAPTER III.

His Settlement as a Pastor at Northampton. — Ministerial Habits. — Marriage. — His first Publication — Ministerial Success. — Second and third Publications. — His European Correspondence.

During the summer of 1726, when Mr. Edwards had held the office of tutor for a little more than two years, he received a pressing invitation to undertake the pastoral office at Northampton, as a colleague to his grandfather, the Reverend Solomon Stoddard, who had been for more than half a century the highly venerated and beloved pastor of the Congregational church in that town. The people of Northampton were of course well acquainted with the character and standing of their pastor's grandson, and earnestly desired to obtain his services. Their pastor was warmly attached to the promising youth by the joint ties of consanguinity and high esteem, and was no less desirous of receiving him as a colleague. And Mr. Edwards, on his part, had been, on a variety of accounts, long attached to the people and the place, and was predisposed to regard with favor their proposals. He accepted their call; and on

the 15th day of February, 1727, in the twenty-fourth year of his age, he was ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, and installed co-pastor of the church of Northampton.

Here his ministrations were highly acceptable, and his external situation at least such as promised an unusual amount of ministerial comfort. Located in one of the most beautiful towns in New England, connected with a people more than commonly intelligent and polished, and united in the pastoral relation with one on every account so beloved and venerated, there seemed to be no outward circumstance wanting to render his situation pleasant and promising. In one respect, indeed, and that the most important, the town was by no means prosperous. The state of religion was low. The church, it is true, during Mr. Stoddard's ministry, had been blessed with several extensive and powerful revivals of religion, in the course of which, large additions had been made to their numbers. But for some time before Mr. Edwards's settlement among them, their spiritual condition had been by no means favorable; and the greatly advanced age of Mr. Stoddard forbade the hope of his being much longer useful among them.

Mr. Edwards addressed himself to his ministry in Northampton, with all that seriousness and diligence which might have been expected from a

man so well furnished for his work, and so deeply impressed with a sense of its importance. He resumed those habits of close study which had distinguished him almost from his infancy. He did not content himself with constant and careful preparation for the pulpit, but spent a large portion of each week in the diligent study of the original Scriptures, and in theological investigation on the most extended scale. He also continued, or rather now employed to a greater extent than ever, the habit of studying with pen in hand; making notes on every book which he studied; recording his thoughts on every important subject which came before his mind; and daily adding to that mass of manuscripts which he began to form several years before, and which now accumulated more rapidly under his hands.

His habit was, when in his ordinary health, to spend thirteen hours every day in his study. His ordinary health was, indeed, extremely delicate; and to maintain it in tolerable comfort required unceasing care. Nor would it have been possible for him to sustain the amount of study which has been stated, had not his daily attention to bodily exercise, his system of vigilant abstemiousness in eating and drinking, and his constant regard to all the means of bodily and mental relaxation and refreshment within his reach, been kept up with undeviating punctuality. All these he maintained

with sacred care from day to day, as a religious duty.

His most favorite form of exercise seems to have been that of riding on horseback. And even this, with a sort of insatiable greediness for knowledge, he rendered subservient to his plans of study. He would ride out several miles, taking his pen and ink and paper with him; and, alighting in some forest or grove, he would meditate; and, as thoughts which he considered valuable occurred to him, he committed them in a hasty manner to writing. And even when he was riding along, if any thing which he deemed worth preserving came into his mind, he would alight, take out his writing apparatus, and make a memorandum of it, sufficiently intelligible to secure the thought in a more permanent form when he returned home. In this manner he seldom returned from a ride without bringing with him hints and suggestions adapted to serve as the basis of important theological inquiries, or to throw light on some peculiarly rich or difficult passage of holy Scripture. And if, in the course of the night, any thought which he considered as worth remembering arose in his mind, he would immediately rise, light a candle, and commit enough of it to writing to serve as a memorial of the whole train, to be afterwards distinctly recorded.

In this way did this wonderful man pass his

time, employing every waking moment not occupied in devotion, either in the eager acquisition of knowledge, or in imparting it to others for their temporal and eternal benefit. "So exact was the distribution of his time," says his biographer, "and so perfect the command of his mental powers, that, in addition to his preparation of two discourses in each week, his stated and occasional lectures and his customary pastoral duties, he continued regularly his "Notes on the Scriptures," his "Miscellanies," his "Types of the Messiah," and his "Prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament, and their Fulfilment." Such were the earlier, as well as the later habits of a man, who was, probably, enabled to accomplish more, not only for his cotemporaries, but also for the permanent benefit of the church of God, than any other single individual of our country, of the age in which he lived.

On the 28th of July, 1727, Mr. Edwards was married to Miss Sarah Pierrepont, daughter of the Reverend James Pierrepont, pastor of a church in New Haven. Mr. Pierrepont was a minister highly respectable for talents, usefulness, and influence. He was one of the leading founders and patrons of Yale College; one of its board of trustees; and, in the infant state of the institution, read lectures to the students, as professor *pro tempore* of moral philosophy. The "*Saybrook Plat-*

form," if tradition be correct, was drafted by him. His father, John Pierrepont, Esquire, was a respectable gentleman, a native of England, who migrated from that country toward the close of the preceding century, and settled in Massachusetts.

Perhaps no event of Mr. Edwards's life had a more close connexion with his subsequent comfort and usefulness than this marriage. Miss Pierrepont was a lady, who, to much personal attraction, added an unusual amount of those intellectual and moral qualities, which fit their possessor to adorn the most important stations. She had an understanding much above the ordinary grade; an education the best that the country afforded; fervent, *enlightened piety;* and an uncommon share of that *prudence, dignity, and polish, which are so peculiarly valuable in the wife of a pastor.* From a very early period after their union, she seems to have taken on herself the whole management of her family, and thus to have relieved her husband from all the anxieties and interruptions of domestic care, and left him at liberty to pursue his studies without remission. In short, he appears to have been completely relieved by her from all secular concerns. Her wisdom, energy, economy, and persevering industry enabled her to preside over a large family, and manage her children with singular felicity, fidelity, and acceptance.

Indeed, Mr. Edwards was so eminently blessed in the partner of his life, that a large share of the comfortable health which he enjoyed with so frail a body, and of the tranquil, happy leisure with which he was favored for study, were to be ascribed, under God, to the unremitting care, skill, and enlightened assiduity of the best of wives, who devoted herself to his comfort with peculiar diligence and success. Nor were the happy effects of her eminent accomplishments confined to her own family. She was highly popular among the members of his congregation, and established an influence over them, and especially with the female part of them, which greatly promoted the interests of religion in the parish, and which proved an important aid to him in the discharge of his pastoral duties. It is impossible to estimate how far the domestic relations of the greatest and best of men may make or mar their usefulness. Above all, none can measure the importance of a wise, pious, and prudent wife to a minister of the gospel. In the case of Edwards, it pleased the great Head of the church to order every thing concerning him in such a manner, as to make the most of the powers, which he had given him for serving the church and his generation.

Very soon after the ordination of Mr. Edwards, he was permitted to witness some gratifying fruit of his labors. There was a sensible increase of

attention and of serious inquiry among his people, and about twenty hopeful converts were brought into the communion of the church. This religious attention, though never very extensive or powerful, continued for nearly two years, and in no small degree encouraged the youthful pastor as well as his paternal coadjutor in labor.

In February, 1729, a little more than eighteen months after Mr. Edwards's marriage, his venerable grandfather and colleague, Mr. Stoddard, was removed by death at a very advanced age, and the whole care of a large congregation devolved on our youthful pastor. In a short time afterward, by the increased pressure of his cares, and especially by the excess of his application to study, his health was so far impaired, that he was obliged to desist from preaching, and to be absent from his flock for several months. After his return, his labors seem to have been pursued for several years with their wonted diligence, vigor, and acceptance, but without any considerable measure of that visible success for which he, no doubt, earnestly longed and prayed. Indeed, after the decline of that effusion of the Holy Spirit which almost immediately succeeded his ordination, the state of his church, as to vital piety and even correct morals, became sensibly worse, and greatly discouraged and distressed him.

In July, 1731, Mr. Edwards visited Boston, and

among other public ministrations, preached at the Thursday Lecture, which had been for many years maintained in that town. The discourse appeared to the ministers and others who heard it so excellent and reasonable, that a copy of it was requested for publication. With much reluctance he complied with the request. It was printed, with a preface by the Reverend Messrs. Prince and Cooper, highly venerated pastors of Boston, commending it in strong language. This was Mr. Edwards's first publication. The text was 1 Corinthians, i. 29, 30. It appears among his printed works, under the title of "God glorified in Man's Dependence." It is an excellent sermon, and might have been expected to gratify intelligent and pious hearers. The general subject was a favorite one of the author, and often occupied his heart and employed his pen afterwards.

Prior to the year 1732, as has been already hinted, the state of religion in the church at Northampton had been lamentably low and declining. Early in that year, the appearance of things began to be more favorable. A number of the young people became more sober and attentive to the means of grace. Several mischievous practices, which had been common, and not unpopular in the town, were gradually abandoned. The vigilant and faithful pastor observing this, and anxious that his people should proceed

understandingly, as well as conscientiously, in all things, as the religious awakening gained ground, took up several important subjects in the pulpit, both doctrinal and practical, and treated them in a deeply solemn and impressive manner. The result was, that by the blessing of God on the indefatigable labors of his servant in 1733, 1734, and 1735, especially in the last named year, the town was favored with an extensive and powerful revival of religion; so extensive and powerful, indeed, as to constitute a memorable era in the history of that church.

A variety of circumstances, both preceding and attending this revival, are worthy of notice. Immediately before its commencement, the Arminian controversy had occupied a large share of the public attention in that part of New England, and had been conducted with zeal and in some cases with great warmth. Some of the friends of religion in Northampton deprecated the introduction of this controversy into their church, as likely to exert an unhappy influence on the public mind, and to suspend, if not destroy, the religious attention which was evidently becoming more powerful and general.

Mr. Edwards judged differently. Believing the Arminian errors to have a most pestiferous influence in their bearing on the great subject of salvation by grace, and feeling confident that a time

of general awakening to the interests of religion, instead of being unfavorable, was rather friendly to a serious consideration of the subject, he determined, in spite of the fears and in opposition to the counsels of many of his friends, to introduce the main branches of the controversy into the pulpit. He accordingly preached a series of able and solemn sermons on the subject, which, though severely censured at the time by some of his own people, and by a still greater number in the neighboring churches, ultimately produced a powerful and happy effect; and, instead of interrupting or diminishing the religious attention among the people of his charge, were instrumental in rendering it more deep and extensive. Among the discourses delivered on this occasion, were the well-known sermons afterwards printed, on "Justification by Faith alone;" "Pressing into the Kingdom of God;" "Ruth's Resolution," and "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners." It is not wonderful, that he should consider discourses of this kind as adapted to do good at any time, and especially in a moment of peculiar religious attention. They are indeed, in one sense, polemical in their character; for they are employed in "contending earnestly" for the fundamental truths of the gospel; but they have nothing of the acrimony of controversy. On the contrary, they are characterized by that power of evangelical reason-

ing, that awfulness of solemnity, and that tenderness of appeal, which might have been expected to become instrumental in commencing a revival of religion, instead of arresting one after it had begun.

Accordingly the effect was most manifest and happy. The religious attention, which had before disclosed a very promising character, now assumed an aspect of the most impressive and animating kind. It extended to every part of the town and neighborhood, and became the absorbing subject of attention and conversation in all companies. Scarcely a family or even an individual of the congregation remained unconcerned. Almost every house furnished one or more monuments of the power of divine grace. The most thoughtless and licentious, and even a number of the most systematic and determined opposers of religion, were arrested in their course, and made to bow to the power of the Gospel. Persons of all ages, ranks, and professions were among the hopeful subjects of sanctifying grace. The learned and the ignorant, the profligate and the decent, and about an equal number of both sexes, were hopefully brought into the kingdom of Christ. In the whole, more than three hundred persons from a state of carelessness became, as was hoped, real Christians in the course of a few months. This number, in a town not containing at that time

more than two hundred families, was certainly extraordinary.

The whole aspect of the town was changed. The power of religion, if it did not govern every heart, certainly exerted an influence in every house, and commanded a solemnity of attention unknown before. The habits of the young people, which had, for several preceding years, given so much uneasiness to the best part of the church, were entirely laid aside. Docility and order were now their reigning characteristics, even in those few cases in which piety had not taken possession of their hearts. The kingdom of God, in this case, remarkably verified the inspired description, "It was not in word, but in power;" a power which seemed, in some degree, to pervade the whole population. A careless person could scarcely be found in the whole neighborhood. The truth is, at the close of the revival, almost the whole adult population of the town was found in the communion of the church.

From the full and interesting account given of this work of grace by Mr. Edwards himself, it appears to have been conducted throughout in a calm, rational, Scriptural manner, without fanaticism or disorder, and to have resulted, as to the character of its fruits, to the honor of religion, and greatly to the edification of the church. He informs us also, that the doctrinal instruction which

was instrumental in commencing and extending this revival, was the sound, orthodox system which the Puritan fathers had been preaching for more than a hundred preceding years. The doctrines, the proclamation of which was so eminently blessed, he expressly tells us, were the total depravity of human nature; the entire moral impotence of the sinner; the sufferings and death of Christ as the substitute of his people; their justification solely by his imputed righteousness, received by faith alone; and the absolute sovereignty of God in the dispensation of his grace. These, he assures us, were the doctrines which he constantly preached, and which he ever found most effectual in awakening men to a sense of their danger, and leading them to the Savior.

Among those who advised Mr. Edwards to abstain from preaching on the Arminian controversy, was a wealthy and respectable family in a neighboring town, related to Mr. Edwards, but who had become strongly infected with Arminian errors, and felt unwilling to have them attacked. The course which he took in opposition to their advice, incurably offended and alienated them. They ceased not to be his bitter enemies, and to do all in their power to injure him as long as he lived.

Toward the close of 1735, the religious attention declined. The few, who had passed through

it unmoved, were hardened into still deeper indifference. Another class who had been excited and alarmed, but not sanctified, relapsed into their former carelessness; and the intense feeling even of the truly pious, which had been so long excited and kept on the stretch, in a considerable degree lost its intensity, and returned to its ordinary state. So much for what may be called the natural and ordinary causes of the decline in question. Besides these, there were, in the opinion of Mr. Edwards, some other considerations, which had an influence unfriendly to the continuance and extension of the revival. These were two or three instances of "enthusiastic delusion" in neighboring towns, which, in the view of some, threw discredit on the cause of vital piety; and an ardent controversy respecting the settlement of a minister, which arose in a town at some distance from Northampton, which not only agitated the church more immediately interested in the event, but extended its unhappy influence to some of the most remote churches of the colony.

It cannot be doubted that a scene such as has been described, brought a great increase of labor to Mr. Edwards, and put to a severe test his frail bodily health. His public labors in the pulpit and in the lecture-room were, of course, greatly multiplied; and his study was almost every day, for months together, constantly thronged with anxious

inquirers. Visiters from the neighboring towns also flocked to Northampton, and many of them resorted to the pastor for instruction and counsel. In addition to all this, the wonders of the scene attracted the attention of many pastors from adjacent as well as more distant churches, who very naturally sought the company and the counsel of him, who was permitted to enjoy so wonderful a share of ministerial success.

Seldom has a pastor been placed in circumstances more adapted to try his strength, and, indeed, to overwhelm him with an amount of labor beyond the power of any one to endure. But Mr. Edwards was wonderfully sustained under it all. With a constitution of extreme delicacy and feebleness, amidst all the accumulation of labors which he was called to endure, his health was mercifully preserved. He experienced most eminently the truth of that promise, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." That he was favored at this time with a large increase of Christian affection and zeal, there can be no doubt. Probably, indeed, as his spiritual stature was greater than that of any individual around him, so it may be supposed that he participated more largely than any other in that hallowed gratitude and joy which could not fail to be a constant and a richly sustaining cordial to the spirit.

But it would be unjust to the memory of one

of the most excellent of women not to say, that the unremitting attentions and care of Mrs. Edwards contributed greatly on this, as on all similar occasions, to promote the health and comfort of her husband, and, under God, the efficiency of his spiritual labors. Although she was at this time the mother of three children, and under the accumulating burden of those peculiar cares which occupy the faithful mother, she found time to aid her husband not a little at this interesting and trying season. She seems to have devoted herself to his comfort with an assiduity which never grew weary, and to have rendered him invaluable aid in meeting and conversing with the female portion of those, who visited him for conversation and counsel. Indeed, so intelligent and deep was her piety, so sound her understanding, and so winning her address, that probably few pastors were better qualified to converse with and counsel the anxious inquirer, than this excellent woman. She not only devoted herself every day to the work of doing good, but she appeared habitually to act under the impression, that there was no way in which she could more effectually and extensively promote the Redeemer's kingdom and glory, than by promoting the comfort, alleviating the burdens, and aiding the labors of the venerated minister of his church, with whom she was so closely allied.

With regard to the state of Mr. Edwards's own mind during this wonderful scene, and after it had closed, he has left a very distinct and ample record. He seems to have enjoyed religion during this period, as highly, if not more highly, than ever before. Perhaps, in deep humility; in fixed devotedness to the service and glory of Christ; in an habitual impression of the evil of sin, and the beauty and excellence of conformity to the will of God; in an adoring acquiescence in Jehovah's sovereignty, and in the largeness and depth of his views of the plan of salvation, he manifested a decisive increase of attainment. It was evident, that while the people of his charge had so extensively profited by the work of grace which they had been permitted to witness, their pastor himself had experienced a very perceptible addition to his spiritual stature from all that he had passed through.

It pleased God to employ this revival not only as a means of great good at home, but also of making Mr. Edwards more known abroad, and of introducing him to a foreign correspondence, which was evidently connected with no small benefit to him in the end. In May, 1735, in answer to a letter of inquiry from the Reverend Dr. Colman, of Boston, he wrote a brief account of the work of divine grace at Northampton, which was published by Dr. Colman, and immediately for-

warded to the Reverend Dr. Watts and the Reverend Dr. Guyse, of London. These latter gentlemen felt so much interest in the account, that they sought for more information. He was, therefore, induced to prepare a much larger account, also in the form of a letter to Dr. Colman, dated November, 1736, which was published in London under the title of a "Narrative of Surprising Conversions," with an Introduction by Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse, and extensively read by the friends of religion in England. In 1738, this "Narrative" was republished in Boston, with a highly commendatory Preface by four of the senior ministers of the town. The Boston edition was accompanied with five Discourses, four of which were before mentioned, on the following subjects, namely, "Justification by Faith alone; Ruth's Resolution; Pressing into the Kingdom of God; the Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners, and the Excellency of Jesus Christ." This volume was extensively circulated, and was supposed to have been followed by an influence in many cases highly important and salutary.

In the year 1739, Mr. Edwards commenced a series of discourses in his own pulpit, which formed the basis of his celebrated work, afterwards published, entitled "The History of the Work of Redemption." The whole series, consisting of thirty, was begun in March, and finished before

the close of the following August. These discourses do not seem to have been at first prepared with any view to publication, but solely for the benefit of his own people. There is abundant evidence, however, that the great subject to which they related was deeply interesting to his mind; that his views of it became more enlarged and interesting, the longer he considered it; and that he conceived the plan, if his life and health were spared, to reconstruct and prepare the whole with much care for the press. Indeed, his earnest desire to devote much time and labor in maturing this work is mentioned in his letter to the trustees of the College of New Jersey, as one objection to his accepting the presidency of that institution. It was never published during his life; and, although of great value, as it came from the press after his decease, he never had an opportunity of bestowing upon it that mature revision and completion, which he earnestly desired.

In the spring of 1740, a second extensive and powerful revival of religion commenced in Northampton. It again very much pervaded the town, and large numbers were added to the church. In the autumn of that year, the Reverend George Whitefield, whose apostolical and eminently useful labors in Europe and America will long be remembered with adoring gratitude, on his second visit to the American colonies, went to Northamp-

ton for the purpose of seeing and conversing with Mr. Edwards. Their interview was highly interesting. Mr. Whitefield spent four days with him, preached five sermons in his pulpit, and afterwards accompanied him, with some other friends, to East Windsor, for the purpose of paying their respects to Mr. Edwards's venerable father.

The labors of this wonderful man in Northampton were blessed to the spiritual benefit of many individuals, and were instrumental in continuing and extending that happy state of religious attention, which had preceded his seasonable visit. Mr. Edwards himself seems to have regarded this visit of the great English evangelist with peculiar pleasure, and to have attached no small importance to his labors at Northampton. His ministrations in other parts of New England were, beyond all doubt, eminently instrumental in promoting the interests of real religion.

In the course of the revival with which Northampton and a number of neighboring towns were favored, in 1740, and the two or three following years, the disorderly practice of *lay-preaching* commenced, and gained considerable ground in various parts of New England. Mr. Edwards set himself in opposition to it with all the decision and zeal, which might have been expected from that union of piety and wisdom, which he so eminently possessed. The following letter, addressed

by him, in 1742, to a beloved young friend, who had laid himself open to censure in this respect, is so instructive and excellent, that it is worthy of being here recorded.

"Northampton, 18 May, 1742.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I am fully satisfied by the account your father has given me, that you have gone out of the way of your duty, and done that which did not belong to you, *in exhorting a public congregation.* I know you to be a person of good judgment and discretion, and can, therefore, with the greater confidence put it to you, to consider with yourself what you can reasonably judge would be the consequence, if I and all other ministers should approve and publicly justify such things as laymen's taking it upon them to exhort *after this manner.* If one may, why may not another? And if there be no certain limits or bounds, but every one that pleases may have liberty, alas! what should we soon come to? If God had not seen it necessary that such things should have certain limits and bounds, he never would have appointed a certain particular order of men to that work and office, to be set apart to it in so solemn a manner in the name of God. The Head of the church is wiser than we, and knew how to regulate things in his church.

"It is no argument that such things are right, that they do a great deal of good for the present, and within a narrow sphere; when at the same time, if we look on them in the utmost extent of their consequences, and on the long run of events, they do ten times as much hurt as good. Appearing events are not our rule, but 'the law and the testimony.' We ought to be vigilant and circumspect, and look on every side, and as far as we can, to the further end of things. God may, if he pleases, in his sovereign providence, turn that which is most wrong to do a great deal of good for the present; for he does what he pleases. I hope you will consider the matter, and for the future avoid doing thus. You ought to do what good you can by private, brotherly, humble admonitions and counsels; but it is *too much* for you to *exhort public congregations*, or solemnly to set yourself, by a set speech, to counsel a room full of people, unless it be children, or those that are much your inferiors, or to speak to any in an authoritative way. Such things have done a vast deal of mischief in the country, and have hindered the work of God exceedingly.

"The Reverend Mr. Gilbert Tennent has lately written a letter to one of the ministers of New England, earnestly to dissuade from such things. Your temptations are exceeding great. You had need to have the prudence and humility of ten

men. If you are kept humble and prudent, you may be a great blessing in this part of the land; otherwise, you may do as much hurt in a few weeks as you can do good in four years. You might be under great advantages by your prudence to prevent these irregularities and disorders in *your* parts, that prevail and greatly hinder the work of God in other parts of the country. But, by such things as these, you will weaken your own hands, and fill the country with nothing but vain and fruitless and pernicious disputes. Persons, when very full of a great sense of things, are greatly exposed; for then they long to do something, and to do something extraordinary; and then is the Devil's time to keep them upon their heads, if they be not uncommonly circumspect and self-diffident.

"I hope these few lines will be taken in good part, from your assured friend,

"JONATHAN EDWARDS."

The letter of Mr. Tennent, to which Mr. Edwards refers, is also still extant, and is in the same strain of decisive and ardent exhortation against the disorder, which is the subject of his warning. Their remonstrances and exhortations ultimately prevailed. The irregularity in question was, gradually, though with no small difficulty, put down; but not until it had wellnigh been the

means of bringing the Gospel ministry, in many places, into contempt, and of pouring much discredit on the cause of religion. The most unfavorable anticipations of these eminent men were more than realized.

In the midst of the religious attention, with which Mr. Edwards was now surrounded, and which also prevailed in many other parts of New England, he attended the Commencement at New Haven, and, being there called upon to preach, he delivered his well-known and able sermon, entitled, "Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God." It was so highly approved by the clergy and other friends of religion who heard it, that a copy of it was immediately requested for the press. It was accordingly soon afterwards printed in Boston, with a warmly commendatory Preface by the Reverend Mr. Cooper, one of the ministers of that town; and, shortly after, was republished in Scotland with a similar Preface, from the pen of the Reverend Mr. Willison, one of the most venerable and excellent ministers of the church of Scotland. This sermon had a wide circulation, and was considered as eminently useful, by placing the cause of revivals of religion in a just and Scriptural light; guarding against lifeless formality on the one hand, and enthusiasm and fanaticism on the other.

The religious attention with which Northampton

was favored, and which the singular wisdom and piety of Mr. Edwards were instrumental, under the divine blessing, of guarding against any signal disorders, extended over a large part of the then American colonies. Mr. Whitefield travelled extensively in every part of the country, and preached incessantly; and his ministry was everywhere singularly blessed. The Reverend Messrs. Gilbert and William Tennent, both at that time pastors in New Jersey, also abounded at the same period in evangelical labors, both in New England and in the Middle colonies; while Mr. Buell of Long Island, Mr. Wheelock of Connecticut, and a number of other zealous and excellent ministers, itinerated extensively in preaching the Gospel, in company with Mr. Edwards, or at his request. He invited them to Northampton, where they labored with signal success; and he himself devoted a number of months to journeying and preaching in various parts of the country.

In consequence of the divine blessing on these ministrations of the word, a revival of religion more extensive and powerful than ever occurred, before or since, was vouchsafed to the American churches. The wonderful triumphs of Gospel truth with which the labors of those excellent men were attended, will long be remembered by the friends of piety, and can never be called to mind without gratitude and praise to Him, who has

"the residue of the Spirit." More than one hundred and fifty congregations in New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and as far south as South Carolina and Georgia, were visited and greatly blessed. Many thousands of individuals, there is reason to believe, were brought into the kingdom of Christ during that revival; many old churches were greatly enlarged, and new ones established in places before destitute of the means of grace; and a new impulse, and much more favorable aspect, given to the cause of religion in general in the American colonies.

Amidst these animating scenes, in which the enlightened friends of piety greatly rejoiced, some circumstances of an adverse and painful character occurred. On the one hand, the whole work was opposed and ridiculed with great zeal by the enemies of vital piety; and, on the other hand, it was disgraced by the enthusiasm and folly of some of its professed friends. Disorders were permitted to interpose, which exceedingly grieved many intelligent Christians, and exerted, in a number of places, a most unfavorable influence on the great interests of vital piety.

The unhappy effects of *lay-preaching* were before mentioned. This mischievous practice was indulged to a considerable extent in different parts of New England, and always with unfavorable

results. But lay-preaching was not the only disorder which crept in to mar the beauty, and diminish the power of this glorious work of grace. Bodily agitations, in some cases apparently voluntary; hideous and appalling outcries; enthusiastic addresses to the imagination; the praying and exhorting of *females* in public; and attempts to decide on the spiritual condition of individuals by the countenance, &c., were encouraged in various places, and exceedingly grieved the hearts of judicious Christians. The language of harsh censure, and of uncharitable denunciation, as "unconverted," as "blind leaders of the blind," as "devout conductors to hell," was directed against some of the best ministers of Christ in the community, because they disapproved of these irregularities.

Public *confessions* of *secret sins* were warmly urged, and actually made; and crimes altogether unsuspected brought to light, to the disgrace of Christian character, and the destruction of domestic peace. The consequence was, that scenes and measures which were, no doubt, intended to make a salutary impression, were made the subjects of unhallowed speculation, and the themes of a thousand tongues. All these were urged with the confidence of oracular wisdom; and whoever ventured to lisp any thing like doubt or opposition, was publicly stigmatized as an enemy to revivals, and an opposer of vital piety.

Among those who took the lead in this fanatical and disorderly conduct, one individual obtained such an unhappy preëminence, that his case ought not only to be recorded, but to be kept before the public mind as a salutary warning. This was the Reverend James Davenport, a great-grandson of the excellent and venerable John Davenport, the first minister of New Haven, and, at that time, pastor of a church at Southhold, on Long Island. Mr. Davenport was then a young man, and had been for some time esteemed a pious and faithful minister. Hearing of the signal effusions of the Holy Spirit with which God had been pleased to favor many parts of New England, he, about the year 1741, made a visit to Connecticut, and shortly afterwards to Massachusetts, everywhere preaching abundantly, and entering with warmth into the spirit of the prevailing revivals.

He soon, however, became animated by a furious zeal, and, imagining that he was called to take a *special lead* in the work, he began to set at nought all the rules of Christian prudence and order, and to give the most unrestrained liberty to his fanatical feelings. He raised his voice to the highest pitch in public services, and accompanied his unnatural vehemence and cantatory bawling with the most vehement agitations of body. He encouraged his hearers to give vent, without restraint, both to their distress and their joy, by

violent outcries in the midst of public assemblies. He pronounced those who were thus violently agitated, and who made these public outcries, to be, undoubtedly, converted persons. He openly encouraged his new converts to speak in public, and brought forward many ignorant and unqualified persons, young and old, to address large assemblies, in his own vehement and magisterial manner. He led his followers in procession through the streets, singing psalms and hymns. He claimed a kind of prescriptive right to sit in judgment on the character of ministers of the Gospel. He went from place to place undertaking to examine ministers as to their spiritual state, and to decide with confidence whether they were converted or not; and, when his judgment was unfavorable, he would often, in his public prayers, denounce them as graceless persons, and call upon the people to pray for their conversion. Those who refused to be examined by him, he, of course, placed on the reprobated list. He made his public prayers the medium of harsh and often indecent attack on these ministers and others, whom he felt disposed on any account to censure. He taught his followers to govern themselves by impulses and enthusiastic impressions, rather than by the word of God; and represented all public services, in which there was not some visible agitation, or some audible outcry,

as of no value. He warned the people against hearing the ministers whom he denounced as unconverted, representing it as a dreadful sin to do so; and, on more than one occasion, publicly refused to receive the sacramental symbols in particular churches where he was present at the communion, because he doubted the piety of the pastors. Congregations were exhorted to eject their ministers; and dissatisfied minorities were encouraged to break off, and form new churches; and in this way a number of congregations were greatly weakened, and others nearly destroyed.

In a number of churches, Mr. Davenport had his blind and servile imitators, who propagated and extended these disorders, and, by their unhallowed mixtures with the work of grace, filled the minds of many with prejudices against the whole, as fanaticism and delusion; made the very name of a revival odious in the ears of many intelligent Christians; distracted and divided many congregations; and gave rise to multiplied evils, which, in two thirds of a century afterwards, had not entirely disappeared.

Although Mr. Whitefield, who has been not improperly styled "the prince of preachers," was exceedingly active in the revival of religion which has been described, and was instrumental in doing extensive and incalculable good in the American churches; yet it cannot be denied that some, not

the worst indeed, but some of the irregularities referred to, received from him more countenance, especially in the early part of his ministry, than they ought to have done. This he and his co-adjutors afterwards confessed and lamented with Christian candor, and did all in their power to correct the error. There is ample evidence that Mr. Edwards saw this mistake in Mr. Whitefield at their first interview, and set himself modestly, but firmly, to bear testimony against it, but without immediate success. It was not until some of its unhappy fruits had begun to be disclosed, that the ardent mind of Mr. Whitefield recognised and corrected the irregularity.

It may well be supposed, that while Mr. Edwards rejoiced in the triumphs of divine grace which he was permitted to witness, he could not be an unconcerned spectator of the enthusiastic and fanatical aberrations which were evidently injuring the cause of vital piety. The scenes of irregularity and disorder, which have been described, greatly distressed him; and he remonstrated against them with the greatest zeal. For, although his own church was less infected with these disorders than almost any other, yet it was not wholly free from them. The infection of fanaticism, caught from irregular men in neighboring towns, could not be wholly shut out from Northampton. But, besides finding some portion

of the evil to be corrected among his own people, his love for the cause of truth, and for the welfare of souls, was so enlarged, disinterested, and ardent, that he could not remain idle while any thing was to be done, or any error remained to be corrected. In this exigency he wrote and published his "Thoughts concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England." It is probable that a more instructive and valuable work, on the subject to which it relates, was never presented to the religious public. It treats of the nature and evidences of genuine revivals of religion; of the errors and evils into which their ardent friends are apt to fall; and what ought to be done to promote them. And it is drawn up with so much practical wisdom; so much spiritual discernment; such remarkable acquaintance with the human heart; with such marked aversion to every thing like enthusiasm or extravagance; and, at the same time, with such rational and Scriptural ardor of pious affection, that it was received by the friends of vital piety, on its first appearance, with a degree of approbation seldom manifested toward any work so intimately connected with public feeling; and it has ever since been regarded as a *practical religious classic*, by a very large portion of the Christian public. Its fervent piety; its wonderful sagacity and discrimination; the absence of all extravagant feeling, though written in the midst of

strong excitement; and the clearness of its Scriptural instruction, have been the wonder and the praise of all succeeding times. It was published in 1742; and, amidst all the discussions and publications in regard to revivals which have attracted attention for nearly a hundred years, it has quietly, and by common consent, taken its place at the summit of all that has been written on that momentous subject.

This work was immediately republished in Scotland, and not only attracted the attention and the praise of a large number of the friends of truth and piety in that country, but also rendered the author, more than ever, an object of esteem and reverence among all at home and abroad, who had an opportunity of perusing it. Accordingly, in 1743, Mr. Edwards was introduced to an extensive epistolary intercourse with several distinguished ministers of the Church of Scotland, who, attracted by his writings, solicited a correspondence with him, which he maintained for a number of years with assiduity and interest. Of this number, his first correspondent was the Reverend John McLaurin, of Glasgow, one of the most eminent of them, both for talents and piety. To him succeeded the Reverend William McCulloch, of Cambuslang; the Reverend John Robe, of Kilsyth; the Reverend Thomas Gillespie, of Carnoch; the Reverend John Willison, of Dundee, and the

Reverend Dr. John Erskine, then minister of Kirkintilloch, afterwards of Edinburgh. These gentlemen seemed to enter with cordiality into the genuineness and glory of the American revivals of religion, and appear to have enjoyed something of the same blessing in their own respective congregations. Mr. Edwards's correspondence with the last-named gentleman did not begin quite so early as that which he maintained with the others; but it was peculiarly interesting, and continued as long as Mr. Edwards lived. Dr. Erskine was remarkable for qualities peculiarly suited to the taste and the habits of his American friend. To great ardor of piety, and to singular fidelity and diligence in his pastoral charge, he added an unusual thirst for knowledge, and unceasing diligence in the cultivation of his mind, even to old age. While, therefore, he received with the deepest interest the successive publications of Mr. Edwards, as they issued from the press, he was careful, on his part, to search out and send to Mr. Edwards such new and rare works as, at the distance of the latter from the great libraries of Europe, he might have found it difficult to procure. It is evident, from remaining records, that this correspondence was highly gratifying to both parties, and was deemed by each substantially profitable.

CHAPTER IV.

The Disorders which attended the Revival of Religion. — The Treatise on Religious Affections. — Memoirs of Brainerd. — European Correspondence continued.

It has been seen, in the preceding chapter, that the disorders, which, unhappily, crept in to grieve the pious, and disturb the peace of some of the churches, in the course of the revival of religion which has been described, gave rise to a number of ecclesiastical difficulties. Troublesome individuals, actuated by enthusiasm, or by spiritual pride, became schismatics, and greatly weakened the hands of ministers. Dissatisfied and turbulent minorities withdrew from the ministry of their pastors, and set up rival congregations. In these, and in a variety of other forms, weak, rash, and enthusiastic persons became instrumental in producing discord, strife, and division in churches before peaceful and happy.

In such difficulties, no man was resorted to for counsel more frequently, or had more influence in restoring peace and order, than Mr. Edwards. He became the counsellor and guide, not only of those who addressed him by letter from distant

congregations, but also of many who came to Northampton to consult him in person. Perhaps on no occasions do his ardent piety, his knowledge of human nature, and his practical wisdom and prudence appear more conspicuous, than in the manner in which he gave counsel in such perplexing cases. Lifted, by the grace of his Master, above the morbid excitement with which he was called to deal, he addressed both aggrieved and offending parties with such "meekness of wisdom," as seldom failed to produce a beneficial effect. In perusing the specimens that remain of these counsels, it is difficult to say, which ought most to be admired, — the calm and heavenly spirit which pervades them, or the comprehensive and judicious views of the laws and interests of the church of God, which constantly appear.

But this great and good man now felt himself called to attempt a more extensive and permanent service to the great cause of vital piety. The seasons of religious attention through which he had passed, and the various forms of delusion which he had witnessed, convinced him that there was an urgent demand for some popular treatise, more clear and discriminating than he had yet seen, for distinguishing true religion from its various counterfeits. On this subject he was aware that great diversity of opinion prevailed. Some, who adopted the formal and frigid Arminian sys-

tem of Dr. Whitby, scarcely admitted the need, or even the reality, of any thing which Edwards regarded as genuine heart religion. Others attached essential importance to strong impulses and visible excitement; and whenever they saw great apparent zeal and ardor of affection, whatever countervailing evils might appear, recognised the evidence of conversion as a matter of course. Some taught that real religion did not consist at all in the affections, but wholly in the external conduct; while others were not willing to sanction any evidence of piety but that which included, not merely internal exercises, but also the precise *time*, *place*, and *order* of certain prescribed feelings, which they were pleased to consider as indispensable. In fine, there were those who considered every thing which they had witnessed in the religious attention around them, however disorderly, as worthy of approbation, and nothing to be condemned; while not a few, disgusted by the irregularities which had occurred, pronounced the whole enthusiasm and delusion.

Amidst this diversity of opinion, it seemed desirable that some "master spirit," who had been "taught of God," and who to ardent piety added great natural discernment and rich experience, and who enjoyed a large measure of public confidence, should step forward, and enlighten and guide the religious public. Though Mr.

Edwards did not claim this character for himself, yet such he really was. Being firmly persuaded, on the one hand, that the religious attention, in which he had been allowed to participate, was a genuine work of God, in which the friends of piety had reason to rejoice; and, on the other, that much of a spurious and fatally deceptive character had, in various places, mingled with the work of the Holy Spirit; he resolved to devote particular attention to the distinguishing marks and evidences of true religion.

For this purpose, while the religious attention was still going on, he commenced in 1742, and finished early in 1743, a series of Sermons, founded on 1 Peter, i. 8. These were successively delivered in his own pulpit. Soon afterwards, the substance of these discourses was divested of its original dress, and thrown into the form of a continued and connected "Treatise concerning Religious Affections." This volume was first published in 1746. It was immediately republished in England and Scotland, and drew from the friends of enlightened, Scriptural piety, on both sides of the Atlantic, the warmest praises and thanks.

This work, as most of the friends of vital piety agree, is not only entitled to a place in the very first rank of treatises on practical religion, but many consider it as occupying the first place in

the list. It is certainly a noble monument of spiritual skill, wisdom, and fidelity. As a thorough, systematic, comprehensive, and richly instructive view of the subject of which it treats, it may be safely said, it has no superior. The first principles, as well as the practical details of vital piety, are delineated as by a workman that "needed not to be ashamed," and qualified "rightly to divide the word of truth." It is probable that the discriminating marks of true and false religion were never found drawn with a stronger, or a more distinct and faithful hand, in any uninspired volume, than in this work. The degree of favor which it has received for nearly a century among all evangelical denominations, and which, amidst all the changes of fashion and taste in reading, it retains to the present hour, and that in a measure rather increasing than diminishing, is certainly a very extraordinary attestation of its excellence.

The intimate friendship which subsisted between Mr. Edwards, and the celebrated Mr. David Brainerd, missionary to the Indians, is well known. Their acquaintance began in September, 1743, when Mr. Edwards was at New Haven, attending the annual Commencement. Mr. Brainerd had fallen under the severe discipline of the college, in consequence of some indiscreet remarks, uttered in the ardor of his religious zeal, respecting the opposition of two of the faculty to the preach-

ing of Mr. Whitefield. For these remarks, in those days of excitement and heat, he was publicly expelled. This event had occurred early in the winter of the preceding year, when he was in his third year in college. Brainerd was now at New Haven for the purpose of seeking a reconciliation with the faculty, and requesting the privilege of graduating with the class from which he had been ejected. For this purpose he made a very explicit and humble acknowledgment of his fault, and implored forgiveness. But, though his own request was fortified by the intercession of a number of respectable friends and graduates of the college, it failed of success. Mr. Edwards deeply sympathized with him in his wishes and his failure; and, in the course of their interviews, had so many opportunities of witnessing the humility, the meekness, and the deep and tender conscientiousness of this young servant of Christ, that a foundation was now laid for a most endeared friendship between them; a friendship which brought Mr. Brainerd to spend a considerable portion of his time in the family of Mr. Edwards, and finally, four years after their acquaintance began, to die under his hospitable roof.

In 1744, a number of ministers belonging to the Church of Scotland, among whom were all the correspondents of Mr. Edwards, deeply impressed with the conviction that the state of the church

and the world called loudly for united and extraordinary prayer to God, "that he would deliver the nations from their miseries, and fill the earth with his glory," communicated to Mr. Edwards a proposal for that purpose. The plan which they proposed was, that, for the ensuing *two years*, all Christians, universally, who chose to concur in the exercise, should set apart a portion of time, on Saturday evening and Sabbath morning, every week, to be spent in special and united prayer for the objects specified; and that they should still more solemnly observe a stated day in each quarter of the year, to be spent either in private, social, or public prayer, as the case might be, for the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the church and the world.

Mr. Edwards received this proposal with warm approbation, and immediately addressed himself to the task of communicating and earnestly recommending it to the American churches. The plan was adopted and acted upon by a number of the ministers and churches of New England. Toward the close of the two years, during which it was proposed to continue this united and extraordinary prayer, another communication came from Scotland, proposing the continuance of the sacred enterprise for an indefinite period. Mr. Edwards again heartily seconded the plan, and, in 1746, for the purpose of promoting it, first preached a

series of sermons on the subject to his own people, and soon afterwards published them, in the form of a treatise, entitled, "An Humble Attempt to promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union among God's People, in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion, and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture Promises and Prophecies concerning the Last Time." This work was immediately reprinted in England and in Scotland, and had a wide circulation there, as well as in this country. The union proposed was adopted and maintained by many of the American churches, for more than half a century; until, finally, the "Monthly Concert in Prayer," for the revival of religion, and the conversion of the world, was proposed by some pious ministers of England, in 1784, to be observed on the first Monday evening of every month; which gradually gained ground in the religious community, at home and abroad, until it has come to be extensively adopted by the churches in every quarter of the globe.

It might have been expected that a treatise designed to answer the purpose contemplated by the "Humble Attempt," just alluded to, would have been constructed on the principles of an ephemeral production, short, animating, and intended to arouse, rather than to instruct. But it really seemed as if Mr. Edwards was incapable of doing

any thing superficially, or upon a small scale. Whatever he undertook to discuss at all, he was constrained to discuss profoundly and thoroughly; presenting it in all its aspects; meeting all its difficulties; anticipating and answering all objections; prostrating all its adversaries; and not only appearing a conqueror, but "more than a conqueror." Charles the Second, of England, is reported to have said of the celebrated Dr. Barrow, that "he was the most unfair preacher he ever heard; for that, when he undertook to treat any subject in the pulpit, he never left any thing to be said by any other man." This remark really may be applied still more strongly to Mr. Edwards. Instead of making his "Humble Attempt" a pamphlet of twenty or thirty pages, as most men would have done, he made it a volume; rich, instructive, carefully reasoned, and of permanent value. He treats, with his wonted ability and care, of the nature and characteristics of the "Latter Day Glory"; of the certainty of its future occurrence; of the encouragements to pray and labor for its hastening, and of the objections which have been urged against a compliance with the duty recommended. No production of his pen was destined to "perish in the using." On all subjects, he wrote, not for his contemporaries alone, but for posterity.

Mr. David Brainerd, soon after Mr. Edwards's

acquaintance with him commenced in 1743, as before related, engaged in missionary labor among the Indians, in different settlements, in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. This labor he pursued, amidst the pressure of disease and many discouragements, for more than three years, with a zeal, diligence, self-denial, and perseverance, which have seldom had any parallel in the history of missions, and with a very gratifying measure of success, especially in regard to that portion of the Indians which was located at what is now called Crosswicks, in New Jersey.

In the month of May, 1747, that devoted young missionary, after taking leave of the Indians in the preceding March, in consequence of declining health, and visiting some of his relatives and friends in Connecticut, went to Northampton, having been invited by Mr. Edwards to take up his abode at his house. He spent a part of the ensuing summer in travelling for the benefit of his health; but, continuing to decline, he returned to Northampton, toward the close of the following July, and, gradually sinking under the power of a consumptive disease, closed his life in the bosom of Mr. Edwards's family, on the 9th of October, 1747, in the 30th year of his age. Mr. Edwards preached the sermon at his funeral, from 2 Cor. v. 8, which was speedily published, and which now appears in his collected "Works," under the

title, "True Saints, when absent from the Body, are present with the Lord."

The circumstances of Mr. Brainerd dying under Mr. Edwards's roof, and committing to his care his Diary and all his other papers, added to the warm Christian friendship which subsisted between them, naturally led Mr. Edwards to form the plan of writing and publishing an extended Memoir of that devoted young missionary. Accordingly, he undertook this service, and prepared the volume which was published at Boston in 1749, under the following title, "An Account of the Life of the late Reverend David Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians, from the Honorable Society in Scotland, for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge; and Pastor of a Church of Christian Indians in New Jersey." In this volume, as in all his other works, the author treats of nothing slightly or cursorily. His object evidently was to render it as richly instructive in practical Christianity, and as luminous and safe a guide to anxious inquirers, as possible.

Brainerd was, probably, one of the most deeply pious men of his time. No one can peruse his Diary, which makes up so considerable a portion of this volume, without perceiving that he had a depth of humility, an habitual tenderness of conscience, an elevation of sentiment and affection, and an insatiable thirst after the promotion of the

Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of men, which but few men have ever manifested. One feature of his character, and one only, seemed to demand special caution on the part of his biographer. His natural temperament was inclined to *melancholy*. This infirmity gave a tincture to most of his mental operations, and is distinctly perceptible in many of his religious exercises. This circumstance called for great caution and spiritual skill, in holding up his character to view for the instruction of others.

In executing his task, Mr. Edwards has acquitted himself in a manner equally honorable to his piety and his wisdom. He has exhibited Brainerd peculiarly self-denied, consecrated, and heavenly-minded as he was. He has shown him to us as an example of a mind "tremulously apprehensive of sin; loathing it in every form, and for its own sake; avoiding even the appearance of evil; rising habitually above all terrestrial considerations; daily advancing in holiness; finding his only enjoyment in seeking the glory of God;" and constrained by the love of Christ, as "the ruling passion" of his life; and, at the same time, has faithfully put his readers on their guard against the prominent infirmity of the character which he *undertook to delineate*. The "Reflections" on the Memoirs of Brainerd, are rich and masterly. And the whole work is one of those, which ought to be

studied by every minister of the Gospel, and every candidate for the sacred office. Few uninspired books are better adapted to expose enthusiasm and every kind of spurious religion, and to "try the spirits" of men, and especially of ministers of the gospel, "whether they are of God."

Mr. Edwards was now continuing to maintain a diligent and pleasant correspondence with a number of friends in Scotland, to which reference was before made. To Mr. McCulloch, Mr. Gillespie, Mr. Willison, and particularly to Dr. Erskine, he seems to have written about this time frequently and largely. The last-named gentleman, especially, entered with zeal and eagerness into all Mr. Edwards's plans of literary and theological enterprise; procured and sent him a number of books, which were not to be found in the American libraries or bookstores; and thus not a little facilitated his inquiries, and the prosecution of his labors as an author.

The influence of this correspondence too, on Mr. Edwards's own mind, was, no doubt, happy. He found, that his works were received with deep respect and gratitude on the other side of the Atlantic. To a mind so peculiarly modest as his, the numerous testimonies of this fact must have imparted a gratifying impulse, and given him new encouragement to proceed in his labors. The intelligence, also, which he was frequently receiving

from these correspondents, respecting the state of the churches in distant parts of the world, and the doctrinal instruction, and other means, by which genuine piety appeared to be promoted, served to enlarge his interest, as well as his knowledge, in regard to the Redeemer's kingdom, and greatly to confirm his confidence in that Scriptural system, to the propagation of which he had devoted his life. At the same time, while Mr. Edwards himself was thus benefited, it was made evident, by this correspondence, that the printed works and the letters of Mr. Edwards were doing much good in Great Britain, by promoting the cause of truth and of vital piety wherever they were read, and by strengthening the hands of those beyond the Atlantic, who were like-minded with himself; and who, by means of their American correspondent, were kept constantly informed of the deeply interesting scenes which were passing in the new world.

From this correspondence the fact is ascertained, that Mr. Edwards, several years before he left Northampton, had planned a work which resulted in his volume on the "Freedom of the Will." In his first letter to Dr. Erskine, dated in 1747, he says to his revered correspondent; "I have thought of writing something particularly and largely on the Arminian controversy, in distinct discourses on the various points in dispute, to be

published successively, beginning first with a *discourse* concerning the Freedom of the Will and Moral Agency; endeavoring fully and thoroughly to state and discuss those points of liberty and necessity, moral and physical inability, efficacious grace, and the ground of virtue and vice, reward and punishment, blame and praise, with regard to the dispositions and actions of reasonable creatures."

Such was the first intimation of the plan of that great work. And, as his well-known habit was to make abundant use of his pen in meditating on the subjects which occupied his attention, the probability is, that he began to write much on the subject of the work in question, even thus early; not in the actual composition of the treatise, as it afterwards appeared, but in collecting materials, noting down thoughts, and maturing his views on the great principles, which he afterwards placed in so strong a light. Such a mind as his could not be idle, when it had once formed so noble and interesting an outline.

In the month of June, 1749, Mr. Edwards was called to preach at the ordination of the Reverend Job Strong, in the town of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. On that occasion, he delivered a sermon on John xiii. 15, 16, entitled, "Christ the Example of Ministers." It was soon afterwards

published, and is to be found in the eighth volume of his works.

In the correspondence of Mr. Edwards with his Scottish friends, he was, about this time, involved in an amicable controversy with one of their number, the Reverend Mr. Gillespie, of Carnock, in respect to some of the sentiments taught in the volume on "Religious Affections." Mr. Gillespie called in question a number of the positions on practical subjects, taken by Mr. Edwards. This led to an extended epistolary discussion between the years 1746 and 1750, in which the clearness, the comprehensive views, and the excellent spirit of Mr. Edwards appear to great advantage. His superiority to his correspondent is very striking, and his defence of his own work highly instructive and satisfactory.

In the month of June, 1748, Colonel John Stoddard, a son of Mr. Edwards's grandfather and colleague, one of the most important members of the church at Northampton, was removed by death. On this occasion Mr. Edwards delivered a sermon from Ezekiel xix. 12, which was soon afterwards published under the following title; "God's awful Judgments in breaking the strong Rods of the Community." When the sermon was delivered and published, it is probable that neither the author nor those who solicited its pub-

lication, were adequately aware of the exemplification which was soon to be given of the justness of its title. Colonel Stoddard was one of the most venerable and influential men in Massachusetts. He was greatly distinguished for the vigor of his understanding, the energy and decision of his character, the fervor of his piety, and the steadfastness of his support of every thing friendly to evangelical truth and order. His removal was, indeed, taking away one of the main pillars of society. The greatness of his loss, and the want of men like-minded, the subject of this memoir was destined, in the course of a few short months, painfully to experience, in the troubles which arose to shake the church of Northampton to its centre.

CHAPTER V.

Origin and History of his Troubles at Northampton. — Publication of his Work on Church Communion. — Dismission from his Pastoral Charge. — Invitation to settle at Stockbridge.

Until the year 1744, Mr. Edwards seems to have had a firm hold of the confidence and affections of his congregation. The friends of piety among them regarded him with the warmest approbation and love, and considered themselves as eminently favored with the labors of an able and faithful minister of Christ. Large numbers of them owned him as their spiritual father, and felt toward him that peculiar attachment which such a filial relation is adapted to inspire. And even the worldly and impenitent part of his charge, while they felt themselves reproved by the holiness of his life, and the purity of his doctrine, were yet proud of their minister, as, by the acknowledgment of all, one of the greatest and best men in the country. His consort and family, too, had won the affections of the people, and were eminently popular. Up to the year just mentioned, perhaps no minister in New England could be considered as more likely to live and die be-

loved and honored by his congregation. But more than once have the loudest "hosannas" of praise been immediately succeeded by the furious denunciation, "Crucify! Crucify!" This versatility Mr. Edwards experienced. In the year just mentioned, an event occurred, which in some degree alienated from him a number of individuals, and which, though somewhat remotely, yet undoubtedly prepared the way for that rupture, which terminated in his departure from Northampton.

The occurrence alluded to was this. It being credibly reported, that a number of the young people, members of his church, had in their possession licentious books, which they were employing for immoral purposes, he thought it his duty to take notice of the rumor; and, being satisfied that it was well founded, he prepared and delivered a solemn and pointed sermon against the sin charged on the young people. After the sermon, he communicated to the members of the church the information which he had received. They voted, with great unanimity, that the matter ought to be judicially inquired into, and appointed a committee of their own number to coöperate with the pastor in making the inquiry. But when the pastor, after the appointment of this committee, publicly read the names of the persons who were requested to attend the meeting of the committee either as accused persons, or to bear

testimony against the accused, without discriminating the classes in which the persons named respectively stood, it appeared that there was scarcely a leading family in the whole town to which some of the persons summoned, either as inculpated, or as witnesses, did not belong, or were not nearly related.

This disclosure produced an immediate reaction. A majority of the church determined not to proceed in an inquiry which appeared likely to give pain to so many families, and to issue to the discredit of so many of their children; and, as attention to children furnishes one of the surest avenues to the hearts of their parents, so nothing is more apt to revolt and alienate, and even to produce intense hostility in the minds of parents, than any thing which threatens the character or the comfort of their children. The consequences were unhappy. A number of the young people were incurably disaffected to their pastor. Too many of their parents sympathized with this feeling. The discipline of the church was openly set at defiance. The hands of Mr. Edwards were greatly weakened. His ministry, from that time, was attended with but little success. The church manifestly declined both in zeal and in morals. And a foundation seemed thenceforward to be laid for that irritable and mutinous state of the popular feeling, which issued, in a few years, in

most extraordinary excitement and violence, and, finally, in the ejection from his pastoral charge of a great and good man, "of whom his people were not worthy."

Whether the course taken on this occasion by Mr. Edwards was the wisest that could have been adopted, or whether the revulsion which occurred in the minds of a body of parents, on finding so many of their children painfully implicated, was not such as ought to have been anticipated and guarded against, are questions, which it were now unavailing to ask, and not easy to answer. But that a people, who had witnessed so much evidence of the purity of their pastor's motives and the benevolence of his heart, a people who had seen so much evidence of a peculiar blessing attending on his ministry, should have been capable of treating him with so much harshness and injustice, especially when, a short time before, they had *unanimously* concurred with him in judgment that something ought to be done, is a memorable example of the blindness and violence of popular feeling, even in a population ordinarily of the most enlightened, sober, and reflecting character.

The rankling uneasiness and alienation produced by this case of discipline, or rather of frustrated discipline, was soon succeeded by another difficulty still more serious and intractable in its nature. The church of Northampton had been

originally founded, as all the early churches of New England were, on the principle of *strict communion*, that is, a profession of real friendship to Christ was considered as an indispensable qualification for communion. Of course, none were admitted to church-membership but those who were regarded, in a judgment of charity, as truly pious. The venerable Mr. Stoddard, the grandfather and colleague of Mr. Edwards, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, effected an alteration in the opinion and practice of the church in relation to this matter. He adopted and preached the opinion, that the Lord's Supper was designed to be a converting ordinance; that genuine piety was not necessary in order to a proper and acceptable approach to it; and consequently that persons who knew themselves to be entirely destitute of faith and repentance, if they were sober and moral, might, with propriety, unite themselves with the visible professing people of God. This doctrine, and a corresponding practice, Mr. Stoddard succeeded in establishing in his church, not, indeed, without considerable opposition both among his own people and from abroad. Some pious ministers, indeed, opposed it with warmth, as a most unhappy departure from the spirit and purity of Christian fellowship. But it was soon peaceably acquiesced in by the church of Northampton, and adopted by a number of other churches in New England.

For this change it is not difficult to account. Almost all the first settlers of New England were professedly pious men, and in full communion in the church. Especially were all the leaders and guides of society, as a matter of course, chosen from among the professors of religion. No one else was thought of for a public station. Hence, in process of time, church-membership came to be considered as an indispensable qualification for civil office. Not to be a communicant, was a kind of public stigma, which effectually prevented any one from being invested with the honors of the state, especially those of the higher grade. And therefore, when the spirit and prevalence of piety had greatly declined, the old habit rendered many who had no real love for religion, still desirous of being regularly enrolled as members of the church. This feeling, of course, as it probably had no small influence in giving birth to the lax doctrine in question, so it, no doubt, served to render that doctrine highly acceptable to worldly men. Nor can we wonder, not only that the doctrine in question should be highly popular among the votaries of secular ambition, but that the strongest worldly prejudices and interests should be embarked in its support, and that all attempts to set it aside should be, to a large portion of the community, peculiarly odious.

Facts of this kind are highly instructive and

admonitory. No alliance, however indirect or remote, between the church and the state, has ever existed without interfering with the purity of the church, and lowering the standard of piety. The moment a profession of religion becomes, in any way, either by direct civil enactment, or by the force of public sentiment, a qualification for civil office, a door is opened for imparting to the church a worldly bias, and subjecting it to a worldly influence. From that moment, the purity and simplicity of Christian truth cannot fail to be exposed, and seldom fails to be actually invaded and injured.

When Mr. Edwards became the colleague of his grandfather, he acquiesced in the lax doctrine which he found established, and continued to act in conformity with it for twenty years. We are told, indeed, that, from the first, he had doubts, and that these doubts painfully increased until the year 1749, when he formally disclosed to his church his change of opinion, and publicly vindicated it by his "Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God, concerning the Qualifications requisite to a complete Standing and full Communion in the visible Christian Church;" which came from the press in August of that year. This work is generally considered, both by friends and foes, as one of the ablest, perhaps the most complete and powerful, ever written in support of the

doctrine which it advocates. The public disclosure made by this treatise immediately threw the congregation into a flame, and he became the object of fierce, unbridled resentment. Though he manifested, in all that he said and did, the deepest conscientiousness; and though he vindicated himself, both from the pulpit and the press, with all the meekness and gentleness which so eminently shone in his character; still the opposition to him was heated and unrelenting to a wonderful degree.

Great pains were taken to prevent the circulation and reading of the book which he had published for explaining and vindicating his sentiments. Finding this, he proposed to undertake a more formal discussion of the matter in controversy than he had hitherto undertaken, in a series of sermons in his own pulpit. Such a discussion, however, the church, when consulted on the subject, refused to allow, or to hear. The clamor increased. The opposition became more ardent and extended. Every proposal which he made for a calm hearing, or for an amicable adjustment of the difficulty, by referring it to an appropriate ecclesiastical council, was met with a resolute and acrimonious refusal. Notwithstanding this refusal, he determined, with characteristic firmness, whether the people would hear, or whether they would forbear, to proceed and discuss the subject in controversy from his pulpit. He did

so at considerable length. But very few of the members of his own congregation attended the discussion. The church was indeed crowded with auditors; but they were chiefly drawn from the neighboring churches; a small portion, it is probable, by concurrence in sentiment with the preacher, and a deep interest in the prevalence of the principle for which he contended; but a great majority from very different motives.

This discussion, however, produced no favorable effect on the sentiments or feelings of the people. On the contrary, they manifested every day a stronger desire that Mr. Edwards should withdraw from his pastoral charge among them, and leave them at liberty to choose another minister. For this purpose, they urged that an ecclesiastical council should be called, according to the usage of the Congregational churches, to deliberate on the case, and to advise and sanction the dissolution of his pastoral relation. To this Mr. Edwards consented, on certain conditions of the most reasonable and equitable kind. These the congregation strenuously opposed, and the selection and assembling of a council was delayed for a number of months. At length, however, on the 22d of June, 1750, a mutual council met at Northampton, and, after deliberate inquiry and consideration of the subject, decided, by a majority of one, that the diversity of opinion between him and the

people of his charge concerning ecclesiastical communion, was so serious and fixed, that the pastoral relation between him and them could no longer with propriety be continued, and ought to be dissolved; and they accordingly dissolved it.

Against this decision the minority of the council entered a solemn protest, declaring, that, in their opinion, the difference between the parties was not so essential as to render a separation necessary; and also that the proper steps to heal the breach and bring about a reconciliation, had not been taken; and, at the same time, bearing a strong testimony to the ardent piety, faithfulness, and preëminent qualifications of Mr. Edwards as a pastor, and expressing a confident hope that, though painfully separated from the church at Northampton, he would be acceptable and made a rich and permanent blessing in some other part of the church.

In fomenting and extending this sad controversy, there were individuals out of Northampton who were bitterly opposed to Mr. Edwards, and exerted no small influence in exciting hostility against him. Among these were several members of a large, wealthy, and influential family in a neighboring town, kinsmen of his own, before alluded to, who had been totally alienated from him a number of years before, partly from private and personal pique, and partly from their opposition to his re-

ligious opinions. All the branches of this family manifested toward him, for a number of years, a most malignant spirit, and seemed to take peculiar delight in opposing and injuring him whenever it was in their power.

Through the whole of this agitating and distressing scene, the conduct of Mr. Edwards was a signal example of self-possession, meekness, and patience. That the treatment he received was in a high degree unjust and oppressive, all impartial beholders were agreed. This some of those, who had been leaders in the protracted course of excitement and popular violence, afterwards acknowledged with the strongest expressions of regret. He had a few friends in the congregation, who seem to have concurred with him in his offensive opinions, and who loved him still. But they were borne down by an infuriated and overwhelming majority. Nor was there any human tribunal of appeal to which the oppressed pastor could resort for the redress of his grievances. The Congregational system, in such cases, affords no adequate relief. For, although a council may be called for the purpose of adjusting differences, yet the case under consideration shows how difficult it is, and, in some cases, how impossible, to obtain any other than an *ex parte* council. And, even after it is formed and convened, such a body, in that system, has no real authority.

Its powers are merely *advisory*. Its advice may be followed or rejected by the parties at pleasure. And, although the council, in this case, could not strictly be called an *ex parte* one, in the technical sense of that phrase, yet it was so in reality, in spite of every effort that could be made to have it otherwise. It was made up of a majority of the known opposers of Mr. Edwards, and of some who had indulged the feelings of ardent adversaries. In all the proceedings, however, of the people and of the council, he was enabled "in patience to possess his soul." All his communications were marked with a degree of dignity, mildness, self-respect, and Christian equity, which, although they failed of making any favorable impression on the minds of an excited congregation at the time, have been ever since admired by the religious community as a noble monument of Christian forbearance and submission.

The ungrateful treatment which Mr. Edwards received from his people, and the unseemly violence with which he was ejected from his pastoral charge, have frequently, on account of his high reputation on both sides of the Atlantic, been adduced as furnishing a strong presumptive argument against those forms of church government which vest in the people the choice of their own ministers, and the power of dismissing them when they cease to be acceptable. Remarks to this

amount, very sweeping in their import, and very severe in their tone, have especially been made by British writers in reference to this case. There is, no doubt, some degree of truth in these remarks; and yet the use which has been made of Mr. Edwards's case, under this aspect of it, can be admitted only in part. For, on the one hand, that the body of the members of every church ought to have the privilege of choosing their own pastors, may be confidently maintained on the ground both of reason and Scripture; and that no people ought to be *compelled* to retain as their pastor one from whom they are alienated, and who no longer promotes their edification, must be regarded as an undoubted principle of pastoral settlement. The benefit of the many must ever be considered as more important than the convenience and comfort of an individual.

On the other hand, that there ought to be some regular, authoritative, and known provision for interposing between popular violence, in seasons of prejudice and passion, and an oppressed pastor, seems equally unquestionable. Not for the purpose of compelling an alienated people to retain a pastor whom they had ceased to respect or love; but to secure his rights, to protect him from injury, to guard the people from injuring themselves, and to effect his separation from them without an infringement of any of those laws,

which the King of Zion has laid down for the government of his church. Such a tribunal was needed in the case of this great and good man. He recognised the want of it in terms which evinced the most feeling sense of its importance. But it was not furnished by the system of ecclesiastical order with which he was connected, and of course he had no official protection from the violence of popular excitement.

There is no doubt, however, that the people of Northamption were far from acting in this affair from their own unprompted judgment and feelings alone. Many of the pastors and magistrates in the surrounding country, feeling their own principles and practice assailed by his published opinions, entered into this controversy against Mr. Edwards with no little warmth, and contributed, it is well known, in a considerable degree, to kindle the flame among his people, and to excite them to more unrelenting and violent measures than they would, probably, have otherwise adopted.

When the decision of the mutual council, declaring that, in their opinion, his pastoral relation ought to be immediately dissolved, was communicated to Mr. Edwards, he determined, at once, to acquiesce in it, and to take leave of a flock to which he had been so long bound by ties of the most solemn and interesting kind. For this painful event he began immediately to prepare, and

in a few days afterwards preached his farewell sermon, which was soon published at the request of some of the hearers, and which is found among his collected works. The deep, unaffected solemnity of this discourse; the elevation and fidelity of its sentiments; the pious solicitude which it manifests for the best interest of the people of his late charge, and its freedom from any thing like acerbity of language or spirit, place it in the very first rank of farewell sermons. Like the Master whom he served, he appeared, after all the unkind and violent treatment which he had received, to forget himself, and to be absorbed by the tenderest concern for the everlasting welfare of his adversaries. Indeed his whole conduct in this trying affair presented an example of disinterestedness and purity of principle which has seldom been equalled.

It may not appear obvious to some, why Mr. Edwards, when he found the members of his church so fixed and ardent in their opposition to his newly-disclosed sentiments, should still so earnestly desire, and so importunately urge them to attend to a further exhibition of them from the pulpit and the press. It was by no means his principal object to disarm their resentment, and retain his place. He considered the doctrine and practice, which they had hitherto adopted and pursued, and which he was now constrained to

oppose, as highly mischievous in their tendency; as adapted to corrupt the church; to inspire false hopes; to oppose the prevalence of genuine piety, and, of course, to destroy the souls of men. No wonder that, under these impressions, he earnestly desired to be heard in defence of his principles; that he besought the people with much entreaty to attend on the discussion; and that, finding their obstinacy invincible, he was more affected by their opposition to what he deemed important truth, than by a concern for his own comfort.

The situation in which Mr. Edwards was now placed was painful and discouraging in a very high degree. Ejected from his pastoral charge; deprived of his temporal support; thrown on the world with a large, increasing, and helpless family; frowned upon by most of the neighboring ministers, magistrates, and churches, and having no prospect of being invited to any other pastoral charge, his prospects were indeed dark and distressing. But the record of his feelings at the time displays great equanimity, founded in that humble trust in the sovereign wisdom and benignity of God, of which his whole life was an eminent example.

During these painful and protracted difficulties, which agitated, not Northampton merely, but a large number of the churches of New England, Mr. Edwards kept his correspondents in Scotland

constantly informed of his trials and prospects. And it is hardly necessary to say, that they took a deep interest in his affairs, not only on account of their high estimate of his personal character, but also on account of the important principles of church-membership involved in the controversy. Their letters to him on the occasion were expressive of the warmest regard and sympathy. Dr. Erskine, with characteristic zeal and public spirit, went further. He invited Mr. Edwards to Scotland, and urged him to take a pastoral charge in a church there, where his talents and worth would be likely to be more justly appreciated. To this proposal, the following is the reply of his persecuted American friend.

"You are pleased, dear Sir, very kindly to ask me whether I could sign the Westminster Confession of Faith, and submit to the Presbyterian form of church government; and to offer to use your influence to procure a call for me to some congregation in Scotland. I should be very ungrateful, if I were not thankful for such kindness and friendship. As to my subscribing to the substance of the Westminster Confession, there would be no difficulty; and as to the Presbyterian government, I have long been out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government in this land; and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the

word of God, and the reason and nature of things; though I cannot say that I think that the Presbyterian government of the Church of Scotland is so perfect, that it cannot, in some respects, be mended.*

"But as to my removing, with my numerous family, over the Atlantic, it is, I acknowledge, attended with many difficulties that I shrink at. Among other things, this is very considerable, that it would be on uncertainties, whether my gifts and administrations would suit any congregation, that should send for me without trial; and so great a thing as such a removal, had need be on some certainty as to that matter. If the expectations of a congregation were so great, and they were so confident of my qualifications, as to call me at a venture, having never seen nor heard me, their disappointment might possibly be so much the greater, and they the more uneasy, after acquaintance and trial. My own country is not so dear to me but that, if there were an evident prospect of being more serviceable to Zion's interests elsewhere, I could forsake it. And I think my wife is fully of this disposition."

For the reasons mentioned in this communication, Mr. Edwards did not comply with Dr. Erskine's proposal to remove to Scotland, but deter-

* He, no doubt, referred, in this remark, to its various points of connexion with the civil government.

mined to await the direction of Providence in his own country. He remained, with his family, at Northampton nearly six months after he was dismissed from his pastoral charge, not knowing whither to direct his course, or how to dispose of his evangelical labors.

During the earlier part of this period, when the church from which he had been dismissed was without a supply for its pulpit, Mr. Edwards was invited to preach; but still the invitation was always given with manifest reluctance, and with a marked purpose to avoid any engagement, from week to week, for more than a single Sabbath. After a short time, however, such was the hostile feeling of the people, that, toward the latter end of November following his dismission, the committee for supplying the pulpit called the congregation together for the purpose of ascertaining whether it was their wish that Mr. Edwards should be invited, *in any case*, to supply their pulpit. A large majority voted, "that it was not agreeable to their minds, that he should preach among them." From that time forth, when he was in the town, and there was no other minister to supply the pulpit, the members of the church carried on the devotional exercises of the sanctuary, and consented to be without preaching, rather than invite him to address them!

A number of those, who took the lead in this

course of malignant and shameful violence, were afterwards convinced of their error and sin, and acknowledged it with the deepest humiliation. One of them, especially, a lawyer of talents and eloquence, who was relied upon as the principal advocate of the infuriated majority, a few years afterwards, not only saw the mistake and the criminality of his course, but humbled himself before God and the church in a long letter, still on record, which breathes a spirit of self-reproach and contrition peculiarly marked and intense in its character.

Justice also requires that it be stated, that amidst these scenes of bitter and intractable opposition from the majority of the church, it is not to be understood that Mr. Edwards had no decided friends left among the people. This was by no means the case. There was a small but firm and affectionate minority, who adhered to him with strong and unalterable attachment, deeply lamented the unworthy treatment which he received, and had every disposition to sustain and comfort him to the utmost of their power. The number of his open friends and advocates in the congregation would, indeed, have been much larger, had not the rage and violence of the majority been such, that whoever appeared friendly to him, became immediately odious, and an object of much opposition, from the mass of the people.

But in the midst of all the odium attempted to be heaped upon them, the small and affectionate minority just referred to, continued his firm and active friends. They urged him to remain in the town; insisted that they were able and willing to support him; and proposed that they should form another church, of which he should take the pastoral charge. To this Mr. Edwards, though he had no other eligible prospect of settlement or support, strongly objected. He feared that it would be impossible for him to remain in the town, in any connexion, without perpetuating and increasing the spirit of strife and division, and thus doing more harm than there was a prospect of his doing good. Being desirous, however, to treat the wishes of his attached friends with all possible respect, he consented that an ecclesiastical council should be convened to judge of the propriety of forming a new church, and of his consenting to take charge of it.

A council was accordingly assembled for this purpose, on the 15th of May, 1751. The opponents of Mr. Edwards, imagining that the convening of this council was part of a plan for reversing the proceedings of the former council, and restoring him to his old pastoral charge, were exceedingly excited, gave way to great violence of feeling, and assailed the venerable council and Mr. Edwards in a manner equally unjust and offensive.

The council, after a deliberate survey of the whole ground, advised, agreeably to the judgment previously expressed by Mr. Edwards, that the plan of forming a new church, and constituting him its pastor, be abandoned, and that, for the sake of promoting the peace of the congregation, he should leave Northampton.

These devoted friends, however, though not permitted to retain this faithful and venerable man as their pastor, could not be prevented from testifying their gratitude and respect by much kindness. And, although they were by no means the most wealthy or conspicuous members of the civil community, they considered it as their privilege, as well as duty, to minister to his temporal wants. His friends in Scotland also, finding that he could not be induced to leave America, and take up his abode among them, with a Christian generosity and public spirit, as honorable to themselves as to the object of their attention, fearing that, amidst the persecution which he endured, he might, with his large and expensive family, be reduced to straits, contributed and sent to him a considerable sum of money for his relief.

In justice to the character of this great and good man, it ought to be stated, that, when he was conducting his inquiries concerning the qualifications for communion, and perceived the conclusion to which they were leading him, he foresaw the

difficulties in which, if he should follow his conscientious convictions, he might probably be involved. And when his mind was finally made up on the system which he thenceforward adopted, before it was publicly made known, he intimated to some of his friends, that, if he should disclose and maintain that system, his impression was, that it must issue in his dismission and disgrace; for that his new opinions would never be tolerated or forgiven by those whose habits, feelings, and station in the church bound them to an opposite belief.

He foresaw, that most of the neighboring clergy, and all the surrounding churches, would be against him; and that the people of his charge would probably cast him off, and leave him to want and beggary. Yet he went forward, without turning to the right hand or the left. How large a portion there was here of that spirit, which animated the primitive martyrs, and which impelled them fearlessly to pursue what they were convinced was the path of duty, at the risk, and sometimes at the expense of the certain forfeiture of all their temporal comforts, and even of life itself, it is unnecessary to remark. Jonathan Edwards had, evidently, drunk deep into that spirit, and was enabled, by the grace of God, to exemplify it with no small share of a martyr's fortitude.

In the month of December, 1750, six months

after his dismission from his pastoral charge, Mr. Edwards received proposals from the church in Stockbridge, a town in Massachusetts, about forty miles west of Northampton, to become their pastor, and, about the same time, an offer from the "Commissioners at Boston," acting in the name of "The Society in London, for propagating the Gospel in New England, and the Parts adjacent," to be employed by them as a missionary to the Housatounucks, a tribe of Indians, at that time located in Stockbridge and its immediate vicinity. For the purpose of judging whether it was his duty to accept these proposals, he went to Stockbridge early in the month of January, 1751, and remained there several months, ministering to the church in that place, which had invited him to be its pastor, and also preaching, by means of an interpreter, to the Indians. Soon after the close of this protracted visit, he declared his acceptance both of the pastoral charge to which he had been called, and of the Indian mission, and determined to remove to the scene of his future labors.

CHAPTER VI.

His Removal to Stockbridge. — Difficulties and Trials there. — Indefatigable Labors. — New and important Publications. — His Election to the Presidency of New Jersey College.

Mr. Edwards having declared, in the spring of 1751, his acceptance of the double charge to which he had been called at Stockbridge, returned to that place, and entered on its duties in the month of June, of that year. Early in the following August, he removed his family from Northampton to Stockbridge, and in a few days afterward was installed pastor of the church in the latter place.

Among the many testimonies of the high respect and affectionate sympathy which his treatment at Northampton had excited, one occurred about this time. He had scarcely been installed at Stockbridge, before a special messenger arrived with an invitation from a body of Presbyterians in Virginia, inviting him to become their pastor, and pledging to him a generous support. This invitation he would probably have accepted, had it arrived a few months, or even weeks, earlier. But, having been just installed, he did

not feel himself at liberty so soon to leave his new charge.

The congregation in Stockbridge was, at the time of his settlement in it, an infant and feeble one, in what was then a frontier settlement. It was made up partly of Indians, and partly of white settlers, who had been drawn thither by plans for the improvement of the Indians. The Reverend John Sergeant, a pious and faithful missionary, had occupied the same station for a number of years prior to Mr. Edwards's call thither, and had deceased in 1749.

Mr. Edwards found the white population of Stockbridge in a very divided and discordant state, and the Indian mission in a situation by no means desirable. An elder member of the same selfish and hostile family, which had sought to do him hurt during his troubles at Northampton, unhappily resided in Stockbridge, and, by his perverse and grasping policy, had rendered himself exceedingly odious both to the Indians and the white settlers around him. This man seems to have done all that he could to prevent Mr. Edwards from accepting the call to that place, and, after he was settled there, to weaken his hands, to diminish his influence, and, if it had been possible, to effect his removal from the mission. Indeed, that malignant family might be considered as the evil genius of this great and good man; as some

member of it seemed to be ever busy in contriving mischief against him, and throwing every possible obstacle in the way of his comfort and usefulness.

It was fortunate for Mr. Edwards, that this man's unjust and cruel conduct toward the Indians had destroyed his influence with them, and that his avaricious and arrogant disposition had alienated from him almost all the white inhabitants of the town. Still this adversary was constantly busy in schemes of encroachment and mischief, and was, for several years, one of the principal troublers of the mission and of the town, and especially of Mr. Edwards, whose sterling integrity and immovable firmness he found the greatest obstacle to the accomplishment of his plans. And although his power of doing personal mischief in his own immediate vicinity was very small, yet still his family influence in the Board of Commissioners at Boston, and through them, and his other connexions with the parent Society in London, enabled him, for a time, to thwart the measures of the real friends of the Indians, and greatly to impede the plans laid for their temporal and spiritual improvement. The wisdom, fidelity, and decision of Mr. Edwards, however, were constantly made, in the good providence of God, to foil and control this "troubler of Israel," until, at length, mortified and discouraged by his repeated defeats, he removed from the town.

The letters which Mr. Edwards wrote during these conflicts to Sir William Pepperell, whose attention had been strongly drawn to the Indians at Stockbridge, to the Commissioners at Boston, and to his correspondents in Scotland, give a most impressive view, on the one hand, of the untiring spirit of malignity and mischief with which he and the Indian mission were assailed; and, on the other, of the calm, Christian firmness and fidelity, with which he met his adversaries, and maintained the cause of humanity and righteousness. It was, truly, in this case, the friend of religion and of human happiness meeting the enemies of both, who were willing to sacrifice every thing to their cupidity, their ambition, and their pride, and putting them to flight by those weapons alone, which are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

In the dispensations of Providence toward this excellent man, while we see not a little that is mysterious and perplexing, we also see much, the wisdom and benignity of which we are able to discern. Had he remained in Northampton, especially had he continued in a pastoral relation to so large a church, while in a state so agitated and divided as during the last five or six years of his connexion with it, it may be doubted whether several of his most important publications would ever have been given to the world.

It was probably one of the designs of the Head of the church, in removing him from such a laborious and distracting scene, to afford him more of that calm retirement and leisure, which were so desirable for the completion of works requiring close and protracted thought, and much profound inquiry.

His unjust and cruel expulsion, therefore, from Northampton, however painful to his own feelings, and however disgraceful to the members of that church, and to the neighboring clergy, who were most active in effecting it, was evidently overruled for good. It not only drew the attention of a large portion of the American churches to a most important discussion, and held up his character in a conspicuous and highly interesting light to the religious public; but it became the means of introducing him to a scene of more retirement, more tranquil study, and also of giving his friends in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe, a deeper interest in his character and his works. It happened in this case, as it has happened a thousand times before, that every stroke inflicted upon him by the hand of error or of malice, did but serve to call into fuller view his intellectual and moral excellence, and thus to exalt his reputation, and extend his permanent usefulness.

The labors of Mr. Edwards in Stockbridge were multiplied and arduous. He preached twice in

each week to the white inhabitants of the town, and once, by an interpreter, to the Indians. Besides these duties, his numerous daily avocations of a more private nature, as pastor and as missionary, and especially in fulfilling the trust reposed in him with regard to the instruction and care of the Indian children, formed an amount of labor quite enough to employ the whole time of an ordinary man. In addition to these stated employments, the first two or three years of his residence in that town were marked with many vexatious attempts, on the part of certain persons already referred to, to turn the funds devoted to the Indians to their own aggrandizement, to injure Mr. Edwards himself, and, if possible, to remove him from his office; which laid him under the necessity of employing much time, in a variety of ways, to counteract these insidious arts, and to defend from oppression and cruelty his interesting charge.

Besides all this, he was seized in the month of June, 1754, with a severe fever, from which he did not recover until the following January, and which greatly enfeebled his constitution; to which may be added, that the war with the French and Indians which immediately succeeded, and was particularly distressing to the frontier settlements, and to Stockbridge among the rest, painfully nterrupted his favorite pursuits. The ordinary

arrangements of society in the town were broken up. Soldiers were quartered at his house, eating up his substance, and deranging the order of his family. Such was the series of vexations and trials to which this excellent man was subjected, even after his escape from the popular rage and injustice at Northampton.

Yet, even amidst these scenes, he found time for some of his most successful intellectual efforts. And during the last three or four years of his residence in Stockbridge, he enjoyed, perhaps, as favorable an opportunity for undisturbed study as in any period of his life.

The first product of his pen in this place was a reply to a publication of the Reverend Solomon Williams, of Lebanon, Connecticut, on the subject of Qualifications for Communion, which had created so much difficulty in Northampton. Mr. Williams had written, in answer to Mr. Edwards's "Humble Inquiry concerning the Qualifications for Full Communion in the visible Church," published in 1749, a pamphlet, which he entitled, "The true State of the Question concerning Qualifications for lawful Communion in the Christian Sacraments." This pamphlet had been printed at the expense of the church at Northampton, and carefully distributed among all the inhabitants of the town, for the purpose of invalidating the work of their old pastor. It seems never to have been

regarded by the public as very powerful; yet Mr Edwards deemed a reply to it advisable. Accordingly, in November, 1752, he published an answer, under the title of "Misrepresentations Corrected, and Truth Vindicated, in Reply to the Reverend Solomon Williams," &c. To this he added a Letter to his late flock at Northampton. This publication has generally been considered, like the original work, to which it is a sequel, as distinguished for fairness and force of reasoning, zeal for the truth, and tender concern for the everlasting welfare of those who had evil requited him for all his faithful and affectionate labors.

In the month of September, 1752, Mr. Edwards visited Newark, in the State of New Jersey, where one of his daughters resided, who had been married, a few weeks before, to the Reverend Aaron Burr, President of the College of New Jersey, which was then established temporarily at Newark, and several years afterwards removed to Princeton. During this visit, which comprehended both the public Commencement in the college, and the annual meeting of the Synod of New York, he preached before the Synod a sermon of peculiar solemnity and excellence, from James ii. 19, entitled, "True Grace distinguished from the Experience of Devils," which was soon afterwards printed at the request of that body. This sermon is found among his collected works,

and will ever be regarded as a faithful, weighty, and impressive discourse.

Several years before Mr. Edwards left Northampton, he had planned, as we have seen in a preceding chapter, a Treatise on the Freedom of the Will, and Moral Agency, in opposition to the Arminian System. He had, no doubt, thought much on this subject, and probably committed some of his thoughts to writing before his dismission. Indeed, this great subject seems to have engaged his attention even while he was an undergraduate at college, and to have been a favorite object of attention ever since. And the probability is, that no month had passed, for a number of years, in which he had not written something in reference to it. But he was painfully diverted from the execution of his plan by the troubles at Northampton. These agitating troubles, together with the embarrassments which attended his mission for the first year or two at Stockbridge, had so engrossed his mind, that he made but little progress in the execution of his plan.

Toward the latter part of the summer of 1752, however, he resumed his attention to the subject, and about the middle of April, 1753, he announced to the Reverend Dr. Erskine of Scotland, that he had almost finished the first draft of his far-famed treatise on the "Freedom of the Will." The proposals for printing it were soon afterwards

issued in Boston; but, in consequence of waiting for the result of subscription papers sent to Scotland, the work was not actually published until the spring of 1754. Such a work, supposing it to be written with any degree of retired leisure that can be imagined, and after many years of close and persevering study, would do honor to the most powerful mind that ever engaged in mental labor. But when it is considered that the plan of it was formed in scenes of distraction and sorrow; that it was resumed and prosecuted in the midst of hindrances and interruptions, which would have discouraged a common man; and that the actual composition of the work seems to have been completed in less than half a year, it must be regarded as a most extraordinary example of intellectual power.

In the spring of 1755, after his recovery from the sickness which, during the latter half of the preceding year, had greatly distressed and enfeebled him, his active mind, instead of seeking repose, sought for new fields of indefatigable labor. To elucidate truth and duty for the benefit of his fellow-men was his ruling passion. He now commenced the composition of two treatises, which he considered as relating to fundamental points in the system of theology. The one was "A Dissertation on God's Last End in the Creation of the World;" and the other "A Dissertation on the

Nature of true Virtue." Neither of these Dissertations was published during the author's life; nor does either of them seem to have been entirely prepared for the press by himself. They were both published for the first time together, in Boston, in the year 1765, and, like all his writings, bear the stamp of his great mind.

The first of these Dissertations contains no new doctrine. That God's last end in the creation of the world was his own glory, is not only taught with great distinctness in the word of God; but had been recognised, for centuries before this time, in all evangelical systems of theology. But it is probable that this doctrine had never been so clearly illustrated, exhibited with so much philosophical accuracy, or fortified with such perfect demonstration, by any writer before Mr. Edwards. He touched nothing that he did not set in a new light, and establish with additional evidence. Some inferences since deduced from the doctrine of this Dissertation, he would, probably, never have sanctioned. But of this more hereafter.

If, among the works of this great man, there be any at which the sound theologian will hesitate, it is, perhaps, to be found in the *second* of these two Dissertations, namely, that on the "Nature of true Virtue." It is impossible, indeed, to peruse that Dissertation without perceiving the workmanship of the same acute and masterly mind, which

appears in all his other writings. But it may be doubted whether he has, with the same perfect success as in most other cases, established his main position, which is, that true virtue essentially consists in *a love to being in general;* in other words, that our love to every object ought to be in proportion to the *amount* or *quantity of its being*. The following objections to this doctrine, by the late Reverend Robert Hall, a great admirer of Edwards, and, undoubtedly, one of the most able and eloquent men that Great Britain has produced within the last half century, seem to have no small weight.

1. "The good of the *whole* (of *being in general)* is a motive so loose and indeterminate, and embraces such an infinity of relations, that, before we could be certain what action is prescribed, the season of action would be past.

2. "Virtue, on these principles, is an utter impossibility; for the system of being, comprehending the great Supreme, is infinite; and, therefore, to maintain the proper proportion, the force of particular attachment must be infinitely less than the passion for the general good; but the limits of the human mind are not capable of any emotion so infinitely different *in degree*.

3. "Since *our views* of the extent of the universe are capable of perpetual enlargement, admitting that the sum of existence is ever the same,

we must turn back at each step to diminish the strength of particular affections, or they will become disproportionate; so that the balance must be continually fluctuating, by the weights being taken out of one scale and put into the other.

4. "If virtue consist exclusively of love to being in general, or attachment to the general good, the particular affections are, to every purpose of virtue, useless, and even pernicious; for their immediate, nay, their necessary tendency is to attract to their objects a proportion of attention, which far exceeds their comparative value in the general scale. To allege that the general good is promoted by them, will be of no advantage to the defence of this system, but the contrary, by confessing that a greater sum of happiness is attained by a deviation from, than by an adherence to its principles, unless its advocates mean by the love of being in general the same thing as the private affections, which is to confound all the distinctions of language, as well as the operations of the mind. Let it be remembered, we have no dispute respecting what is the ultimate end of virtue, which is allowed on both sides to be the greatest sum of happiness in the universe. The question is merely, What is *virtue itself;* or, in other words, what are the means appointed for the attainment of that end?"

"There is little doubt," Mr. Hall adds, "from

some parts of Mr. Godwin's work entitled, '*Political Justice*,' as well as from his early habits of reading, that he was indebted to Mr. Edwards for his principal arguments against the private affections; though, with a daring consistence, he has pursued his principles to an extreme, from which that most excellent man would have revolted with horror. The fundamental error of the whole system arose, as I conceive, from a mistaken pursuit of simplicity; from a wish to construct a moral system, without leaving sufficient scope for the infinite variety of moral phenomena and mental combination; in consequence of which its advocates were induced to place virtue *exclusively* in some *one disposition* of mind; and, since the passion for the general good is undeniably the *noblest and most extensive* of all others, when it was once resolved to place virtue in any *one thing*, there remained little room to hesitate which should be preferred. It might have been worth while to reflect, that in the natural world there are two kinds of attractions; one which holds the several *parts* of individual bodies in contact; another, which maintains the union of bodies themselves with the general system; and that, though the union in the former case is much more *intimate* than in the latter, each is equally essential to the order of the world. Similar to this is the relation which the public and private affections

bear to each other, and their use in the moral system." *

The next important work which engaged the attention of Mr. Edwards, was his treatise on "Original Sin." When this work was begun, and how long he was employed in its composition, cannot now be certainly known. The date of the Author's Preface is May 26th, 1757. This is sufficient evidence that he had then prepared it for the press. A few of the first sheets were printed in the course of that year, and passed under the revision of the venerable author; but the whole work did not come from the press until the spring of the year 1758, a few weeks after his decease. This work has been considered by some as the greatest production of his pen. Though it is probable that such an estimate will hardly be sustained by the best judges, yet, in clearness, comprehensiveness, and force, it stands next to his work on the "Freedom of the Will."

The success of Mr. Edwards at Stockbridge, especially among the Indians, the most prominent and interesting part of his charge, was not great. This unfavorable result, considering a variety of circumstances attending his labors, was by no means wonderful. The Indians, during almost the whole time of his connexion with them, were placed in a situation very unfriendly to their moral

* Sermon on Modern Infidelity.

and spiritual improvement. The white people in their neighborhood were a constant source of embarrassment and corruption. Ardent spirits were furnished to them to a great extent by the unprincipled traders. The funds contributed for their benefit, both in Europe and America, were either embezzled or strangely perverted to the purposes of secular gain, by men who were unhappily vested with agencies for the management of their affairs; to which may be added, that the war which raged during several of the years which Mr. Edwards spent at Stockbridge, in which the French had contrived to engage many of the Indian tribes against Great Britain and the colonies, served to keep in an uneasy and agitated state the body of Indians belonging to this settlement, to diminish their confidence in those who professed to be their benefactors, and to turn away their attention from the best objects.

In fact, during the whole of Mr. Edwards's residence at this missionary station, there were constantly causes in unhappy operation, which tended to interrupt the tranquillity of the settlement, and to introduce the elements of suspicion, jealousy, and resentment among the Indians. And although Mr. Edwards himself was not only faithful both to their temporal and spiritual interests, but indefatigably employed in promoting both, to the extent of his power; and although he uni-

formly enjoyed their confidence and affection, they were continually so annoyed and injured by others, as to keep their minds in a state of constant excitement, and to fill them with prejudices against many who bore the Christian name. Whatever might have been the influence of these causes on their minds, the fact is, that few of them seem to have been brought under the power of the Gospel while Mr. Edwards was with them. Individuals, indeed, of their number, now and then became hopefully pious; but no general or extended revival of religion among them ever occurred under his ministry.

It may be doubted whether the history of the world has ever presented an example of a small community, existing in the bosom of a larger, and accounted inferior to the latter in intelligence and general standing, which, in these circumstances, continued to flourish, and to become, progressively, more numerous, intelligent, virtuous, and happy. Such a people, in spite of every effort to prevent it, are commonly despised and treated as inferiors. They most frequently come into contact with the most unprincipled and base of the superior community. They seldom fail to be oppressed and corrupted, and, therefore, weakened. They, of course, want that sense of character and self-respect, that generous emulation to rise to true excellence, which are so unspeakably useful,

and indeed indispensable in the social system. Hence they are apt, in these circumstances, to degenerate in character, to diminish in numbers, and finally to waste away, and either perish altogether, or feel compelled to remove.

This has ever been the case with a free black population surrounded by white people. And if any facts, supposed to wear a different aspect with respect to the Indians, have been presented under the labors of an Eliot, a Brainerd, and some more recent examples, it is believed they were only temporary appearances. Good was done; individuals were converted to the knowledge and love of the truth; a few cases of pure and elevated character appeared; but the stability, the purity, and the growth of the inferior community could not be maintained. It dwindled, or took refuge in a more remote and insulated situation. In these remarks nothing more is intended than to express an opinion on the intellectual and moral aspect of the subject. Whatever may be the plan of treatment pursued by the government of the superior community, whether it be wise or foolish, just or oppressive, the result may be hastened or retarded by circumstances peculiarly favorable or otherwise; but the general result, without a miracle, will be ever the same.

If this opinion be correct, we need not wonder that even under the ministry of Edwards, with all

his talents, wisdom, preëminent fidelity, and indefatigable diligence in the service of the Indians, his success was not greater; that in spite of every thing that human power could accomplish, such counteracting causes were continually in operation, as thwarted his efforts, and, except in a few cases, disappointed his hopes.

While Mr. Edwards was going on in his retired, studious course, fulfilling his official duties, and preparing works for the benefit of the church of God, and to bless millions in after-ages, an event occurred which was destined to give a new direction and most interesting aspect to his few remaining days. That event was the death of the Reverend Aaron Burr, president of the College of New Jersey, at Princeton. President Burr had married Esther, the third daughter of Mr. Edwards, in 1752. He had presided over the college nearly ten years with growing acceptance and honor, and had, a few months before, removed with the institution from Newark to Princeton, to take possession of the buildings just completed for its reception; when, in the meridian of life and of usefulness, it pleased God to remove him by death in the autumn of 1757, two days before the annual Commencement.

The trustees of the College, of course, came together at that anniversary; and, deliberating on the severe bereavement with which they had been

visited, they turned their attention without delay to the choice of a successor. Their suffrages were soon directed to Mr. Edwards, who had visited the college five years before, at a public Commencement; whose persecution in Northampton had given him a deep and general interest in the hearts of the religious public; whose invaluable writings were circulated in every part of the country; and whose connexion with their late President formed another attraction of no ordinary strength. He was elected to the Presidentship of the College on the 27th of September, 1757, and measures were immediately taken to inform him of his election, and to secure his acceptance of the office.

CHAPTER VII.

His Removal to Princeton. — Letter to the Board of Trustees. — Inauguration. — Sickness and Death. — His Epitaph. — His Family.

To effect the removal of Mr. Edwards to Princeton, it was not only necessary to obtain his own consent, but also that of the Commissioners in Boston, who had the charge of the Indian mission in Stockbridge, and in whose employment he had been for six years. The latter, by suitable representations, was soon effected. A gentleman of excellent character was recommended to the Board as a successor, and their consent obtained to release Mr. Edwards from his charge.

But to remove the difficulties, which existed in the mind of Mr. Edwards himself, was not so easily accomplished. In a letter which he wrote to the Board of Trustees of the College, in answer to their communication, announcing his appointment, and soliciting his acceptance of it, he expressed himself in a manner which indicated much mental conflict. As this letter has been referred to already, and will be alluded to again in the following pages; and as it is, on some accounts, one of the most characteristic productions

that ever came from the author's pen, it is judged best to give the greater part of it at length. It is in the following words.

"Stockbridge, 19 October, 1757.

"REVEREND AND HONORABLE GENTLEMEN,

"I was not a little surprised, on receiving the unexpected notice of your having made choice of me, to succeed the late President Burr, as the head of Nassau Hall. I am much in doubt, whether I am called to undertake the business, which you have done me the unmerited honor to choose me for. If some regard may be had to my outward comfort, I might mention the many inconveniences and great detriment, which may be sustained by my removing with my numerous family so far from all the estate I have in the world, (without any prospect of disposing of it, under present circumstances, but with great loss,) now when we have scarcely got over the trouble and damage, sustained by our removal from Northampton, and have but just begun to have our affairs in a comfortable situation for a subsistence in this place; and the expense I must immediately be at, to put myself into circumstances, tolerably comporting with the needful support of the honors of the office I am invited to; which will not well consist with my ability.

"But this is not my main objection. The chief

difficulties in my mind, in the way of accepting that important and arduous office, are these two;

"First, my own defects, unfitting me for such an undertaking, many of which are generally known; beside others of which my own heart is conscious. I have a constitution in many respects peculiarly unhappy, attended with flaccid solids, vapid, sizy, and scarce fluids, and a low tide of spirits; often occasioning a kind of childish weakness and contemptibleness of speech, presence, and demeanor, with a disagreeable dulness and stiffness, much unfitting me for conversation, but more especially for the government of a college. This makes me shrink at the thoughts of taking upon me, in the decline of life, such a new and great business, attended with such a multiplicity of cares, and requiring such a degree of activity, alertness, and spirit of government; especially as succeeding one so remarkably well qualified in these respects, giving occasion to every one to remark the wide difference. I am also deficient in some parts of learning, particularly in algebra, and the higher parts of mathematics, and in the Greek classics; my Greek learning having been chiefly in the New Testament.

"The other thing is this; that my engaging in this business will not well consist with those views, and that course of employ, in my study, which have long engaged and swallowed up my mind,

and been the chief entertainment and delight of my life.

"And here, 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 clue to my utmost, when any thing in reading, meditation, or conversation, has been suggested to my mind, that seemed to promise light in any weighty point; thus penning what appeared to me my best thoughts, on innumerable subjects, for my own benefit. The longer I prosecuted my studies in this method, the more habitual it became, and the more pleasant and profitable I found it. The farther I travelled in this way, the more and wider the field opened, which has occasioned my laying out many things in my mind, to do 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 control, when it appears so evident to me that there is truly no foundation for any of this

glorying and insult. I have already published something on one of the main points in dispute between the Arminians and Calvinists, and have it in view, God willing, (as I have already signified to the public,) in like manner to consider all the other controverted points, and have done much towards a preparation for it.

"But, beside these, I have had on my mind and heart (which I long ago began, not with any view to publication,) a great work which I call a 'History of the Work of Redemption,' a body of divinity in an entire new method, being thrown into the form of a history; considering the affair of Christian theology, as the whole of it, in each part, stands in reference to the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ, which I suppose to be, of all others, the grand design of God, and the *summum* and *ultimum* of all the divine operations and decrees; particularly considering all parts of the grand scheme in their historical order, the order of their existence, or their being brought forth to view in the course of divine dispensations, or the wonderful series of successive acts and events, beginning from eternity, and descending from thence to the great work and successive dispensations of the infinitely wise God, in time; considering the chief events coming to pass in the church of God, and revolutions in the world of mankind, affecting the state of the church and

the affair of redemption, which we have an account of in history or prophecy, till, at last, we come to the general resurrection, last judgment, and consummation of all things; when it shall be said, '*It is done; I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end;*' concluding my work, with the consideration of that perfect state of things which shall be finally settled, to last for eternity. This history will be carried on with regard to all three worlds, heaven, earth, and hell; considering the connected, successive events and alterations in each, so far as the Scriptures give any light; introducing all parts of divinity in that order which is most Scriptural and most natural, a method which appears to me the most beautiful and entertaining, wherein every divine doctrine will appear to the greatest advantage, in the brightest light, in the most striking manner, showing the admirable contexture and harmony of the whole.

"I have also, for my own profit and entertainment, done much towards another great work, which I call the 'Harmony of the Old and New Testament,' in three parts. The first, considering the prophecies of the Messiah, his redemption and kingdom; the evidences of their references to the Messiah, &c.; comparing them all one with another; demonstrating their agreement, true scope, and sense; also considering all the various

particulars wherein those prophecies have their exact fulfilment, showing the universal, precise, and admirable correspondence between predictions and events. The second part, considering the types of the Old Testament, showing the evidence of their being intended as representations of the great things 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 Scriptures; which may, in such a view, be explained in a method, which to me seems the most entertaining and profitable, best tending to lead the mind to a view of the true spirit, design, life, and soul of the Scriptures, as well as their proper use and improvement.

"I have also many other things in hand, in some of which I have made great progress, which I will not trouble you with an account of. Some of these things, if divine Providence favor, 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 incapability to pursue them any more in the future part of my life, to such a degree as I must, if I undertake to go through the same course of employ, in the office of president, that Mr. Burr did, instructing in all the languages, and taking the whole care of the instruction of one of the classes, in all parts of learning, besides his other 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 to be subservient to the school, as to their order and methods of study and instruction, assisting myself in the immediate instruction in the arts and sciences (as discretion should direct, and occasion serve, and the state of things require), especially of the senior class; and, added to all, should be willing to do the whole work of a professor of divinity in public and private lectures, proposing questions to be answered, and some to be discussed in writing and free conversation, in meetings of graduates and others, appointed, in proper seasons, for these ends. It would be now out of my way to spend time in a constant teaching of the languages, unless it be the Hebrew tongue, which I should be willing to improve myself in, by instructing others.

"On the whole, I am much at a loss, with respect to the way of duty, in this important affair;

I am in doubt, whether, if I should engage in it, I should not do what both you and I would be sorry for afterwards. Nevertheless, I think the greatness of the affair, and the regard due to so worthy and venerable a body, as that of the trustees of Nassau Hall, require 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 expectations from me, I shall proceed to ask advice of such as I esteem most wise, friendly, and faithful; if, after the mind of the Commissioners in Boston is known, it appears that they consent to leave me at liberty, with respect to the business they have employed me in here."

This letter is a very striking document. The unaffected and deep humility, which it manifests, is not more remarkable than the largeness of the views which it discloses, and the insatiable desire for improving in knowledge, and for serving his generation in that way for which he considered himself as best adapted, which it strongly expresses, and which seemed ever to fill his mind.

The objections which he urged, the trustees of the college endeavored to obviate, and urged him to dismiss. To their solicitations were added the opinions of some of his most enlightened and pious friends, whom he had consulted, and who

generally concurred in advising him to accept of the station offered him. These united influences finally prevailed. It was not, however, until the ecclesiastical council, summoned to consider the case, gave a decisive judgment in favor of his removal, that he declared his acceptance of the appointment.

This council met at Stockbridge, January 4th, 1758; and after having heard the representation of Mr. Edwards, and the objections to his removal offered by the people of his charge, on the one hand; and, on the other, the plea in behalf of his removal, presented and zealously urged by the Reverend Caleb Smith and the Reverend John Brainerd, who appeared in behalf of the college, they decided that it was his duty to accept of the presidency to which he was called. When the council publicly announced their judgment and advice to Mr. Edwards, and to the people of his church, he appeared much moved, and burst into tears, a thing very unusual with him in the presence of others; and soon afterwards remarked to the members of the council, that it was a matter of wonder to him, that they could so easily, as they appeared to have done, obviate the objections which he had urged against his removal. But, as he thought it his duty to be governed by their advice, he determined cheerfully to acquiesce in their decision, and repair to the scene of his future labor.

Accordingly in the month of January, 1758, in a few days after the decision of the council, he set out from Stockbridge for Princeton. He left his family in Stockbridge, with the intention of removing them to his new residence in the spring. He had with him two daughters, Mrs. Burr, the widow of the late president, and Lucy, his fifth daughter, who afterwards married Mr. Woodbridge. His arrival in Princeton was an event of great joy to the college and its friends; and, indeed, all who took an interest in the promotion of sound learning, in union with evangelical piety, were greatly rejoiced to see such a man taking charge of an important literary institution, and were ready to congratulate the guardians of the college on their happy choice.

In a few days after his arrival in Princeton, he received intelligence of the death of his venerable father, who departed this life on the 27th of January, in the eighty-ninth year of his age, after an unusually protracted ministry of great acceptance and usefulness.

Mr. Edwards spent several weeks in Princeton, before the board of trustees could conveniently come together, and, of course, before his formal introduction to the presidentship could take place. During this time, as the college was then in session, he preached every Sabbath in the college chapel, to the great acceptance of his hearers

His first sermon was on the "Unchangeableness of Christ," from Hebrews xiii. 8. The tradition is, that he was more than *two hours* in the delivery of the discourse; but that it was so peculiarly instructive and solemn, and delivered with so much earnestness, that his hearers, in their absorbed attention, were unconscious of the lapse of time, and surprised that it closed so soon.

He did nothing during this interval in the way of instruction in the college, except giving out some questions in theology to the senior class, to be answered before him; each one having an opportunity, and being expected, to study and write on each, for exhibition at a future meeting. When they came together to answer these questions, we are informed, they found their interviews so instructive and interesting, and especially the remarks of the President elect, so rich and original, that they spoke of those occasions with the greatest delight and admiration.

During this period, Mr. Edwards appeared to enjoy peculiar comfort in religion. He intimated to his daughters that he had suffered strong conflicts of mind, and many fears, with respect to his removal, and engaging in so arduous and responsible a sphere of labor; but that he had become fully persuaded, that he was called of God to do as he had done, and that he enjoyed the tranquil and confident assurance that he had followed the path of duty.

The board of trustees of the college met on the 16th day of February, 1758, on which day he was solemnly inaugurated as president, taking the oaths of office, and having the college publicly and formally committed to his charge. At the same time he was qualified as a trustee of the college, and took his seat accordingly.

Neither the President, nor either of his daughters then with him, had had the small-pox. Inoculation for that disease, though many years before introduced into America, was neither so common, nor deemed so safe, as it has since become. Cases of that complaint now existed at Princeton, and it was likely to spread. It was therefore judged best by the friends and physician of Mr. Edwards, that he and his daughters should submit to inoculation. The board of trustees of the college, being in session when the proposal was made, were consulted, and gave their consent to the measure. A skilful physician was engaged to come from Philadelphia for the special purpose of inoculating him and his daughters, which was accordingly performed on the 23d of February.

He appeared to have the disease favorably, and it was thought, after the lapse of the usual time from its commencement, that it had nearly completed its course, and that all danger was over. But a secondary fever supervened; and, by reason of the great number of pustules in his throat, the

obstruction was such that the necessary medicines and dietetic preparations could not be administered; the consequence of which was, that the disease went on gathering strength until it put an end to his life, on the 22d day of March, 1758, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and just five weeks after his introduction into office.

After he became sensible that he could not long survive, he called his daughter Lucy, who had faithfully and affectionately attended him in his illness, and addressed her in a few words, to the following effect. "Dear Lucy, it seems to me to be the will of God that I must shortly leave you; therefore give my kindest love to my dear wife, and tell her that the uncommon union which has so long subsisted between us, has been of such a nature as, I trust, is spiritual, and therefore will continue for ever; and I hope she will be supported under so great a trial, and submit cheerfully to the will of God. And as to my children, you are now like to be left fatherless; which I hope will be an inducement to you all to seek a Father who will never fail you. And as to my funeral, I would have it to be like Mr. Burr's; and any additional sum of money that might be expected to be laid out in that way, I would have disposed of to charitable uses."

President Burr, on his death-bed, had directed that his funeral should be conducted without pomp

or cost; that nothing should be expended but what was required by the dictates of Christian decency; and that the sum which would have been necessary for a fashionable funeral, beyond the cost of a plain and decent one, should be given to the poor out of his estate.

Mr. Edwards said very little during his illness, but set an admirable example of patience and resignation to the last. He enjoyed the uninterrupted exercise of his reason throughout the whole. Just at the close of life, as some persons who stood by, expecting he would breathe his last in a few minutes, were lamenting his death, not only as a great frown on the college, but as leaving a dark aspect on the interest of religion in general, to their surprise, not imagining that he heard, or would ever speak more, he said, "Trust in God, and ye need not fear." These were his last words. He, soon after, calmly, and without a struggle, fell asleep.

The physician who attended him and his family on this occasion, was Dr. William Shippen, of Philadelphia, a gentleman of great professional eminence, who felt with the deepest sympathy the value of the life which had been committed to his care, and the mournful character of the bereavement which had occurred to the college, to his family, and to the public. On the same day on which the decease of his illustrious patient

occurred, he addressed the following letter to the afflicted widow, at Stockbridge.

"Princeton, 22 March, 1758.

"MOST DEAR AND VERY WORTHY MADAM,

"I am heartily sorry for the occasion of my writing to you, by this express; but I know you have been informed, by a line from your excellent, lovely, and pious husband, that I was brought here to inoculate him and your dear daughter Esther, and her children, for the small-pox, which was then spreading fast in Princeton; and that, after the most deliberate and serious consultation with his nearest and most religious friends, he was accordingly inoculated, with them, the 23d of last month; and, although he had the small-pox favorably, yet, having a number of them in the roof of his mouth and throat, he could not possibly swallow a sufficient quantity of drink to keep off a secondary fever, which has proved too strong for his feeble frame; and this afternoon, between two and three o'clock, it pleased God to let him sleep in that dear Lord Jesus, whose kingdom and interest he has been faithfully and painfully serving all his life. And never did any mortal man more fully and clearly evidence the 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 fell asleep. Death had certainly lost its sting as to him.

"Your daughter, Mrs. Burr, and her children, through the mercy of God, are safely over the disease, and she desires me to send her duty to you, the best of mothers. She has had the small-pox the heaviest of all whom I have inoculated, and little Sally for the lightest. She has but three in her face. I am sure it will prove serviceable to her future health.

"I conclude with my hearty prayers, dear Madam, that you may be enabled to look to that God whose love and goodness you have experienced a thousand times, for direction and help, under this most afflictive dispensation of his providence, and under every other difficulty you may meet with here, in order to your being more perfectly fitted for the joys of Heaven hereafter.

"I am, dear Madam, your most sympathizing and affectionate friend, and very humble servant,

"WILLIAM SHIPPEN."

This letter reached Mrs. Edwards while in a very feeble state of health, when she was pre-

paring to pay a visit, first to a sister at West Springfield, and then to her mother-in-law at Windsor, who had lately become a widow, by the death of President Edwards's father. What her feelings were on receiving the unexpected and sad intelligence which it contained, may be more easily imagined than described. It is worthy of remark, however, that some time before, she had told some of her intimate friends, that, after many struggles and counter exercises, she had obtained, by God's grace, an habitual willingness to die herself, or to give up her nearest and dearest relatives whenever he might please to call for them. Accordingly, when this heavy trial came, she was enabled to sustain it with the most exemplary composure and submission. A few days after she received the intelligence, she addressed the following letter to her daughter, Mrs. Burr.

"Stockbridge, 3 April, 1758.

"MY VERY DEAR CHILD,

"What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud! Oh that we may kiss the rod, and lay our hands on our mouths! The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness that we had him so long. But my God lives; and he has my heart. Oh what a legacy my husband and your father has left us!

We are all given to God; and there I am, and love to be.

"Your ever affectionate mother,

"SARAH EDWARDS."

On the same sheet was the following letter from one of her daughters.

"Stockbridge, 3 April, 1758.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"My mother wrote this with a great deal of pain in her neck, which disabled her from writing any more. She thought you would be glad of these few lines from her own hand.

"O dear sister, how many calls have we, one upon the back of another! Oh, I beg your prayers, that we, who are young in the family, may be awakened and excited to call more earnestly on God, that he would be our father and friend for ever.

"My father took leave of all his people and family, as affectionately as if he knew he should not come again. On the Sabbath afternoon he preached from these words; *We have no continuing city; therefore let us seek one to come.* The chapter that he read was Acts the 20th. Oh how proper! What could he have done more? When he had got out of doors, he turned about and said, 'I commit you to God.' I doubt not

but God will take a fatherly care of us, if we do not forget him.

"I am your ever affectionate sister,

"SUSANNAH EDWARDS."

Mrs. Burr and her children were inoculated at the same time with her father, and had recovered prior to his death. But, after she was, to all appearance, perfectly recovered, she was suddenly seized with a violent disorder, which carried her off in a few days; and which the physician said he could call by no name but that of *a messenger, sent suddenly to call her out of the world.* She died April 7th, 1758, sixteen days after her father, in the 27th year of her age. She left two children, a son and a daughter. Her son was the late Aaron Burr, once Vice-President of the United States, who died in September, 1836. Her daughter afterwards married the Honorable Judge Reeve, of Connecticut, and died a number of years ago. Mrs. Burr was, in every respect, an ornament to her sex; being equally distinguished for her personal beauty, the suavity of her manners, her literary accomplishments, and her ardent piety. She combined a lively imagination, a delicate wit, and great intellectual acuteness, with a correct judgment. When only seven or eight years of age, she became hopefully pious, and made a profession of religion at a very early

period of life. Her conduct to the last adorned her profession. Her death was peaceful and happy. She left a number of manuscripts on interesting subjects, which it was hoped would be made public; but they are now lost.

Mrs. Edwards did not long survive her husband In the September following his death she set out, in good health, on a journey to Philadelphia, for the purpose of attending to her two orphan grandchildren, who were now in that city, under the hospitable roof of Dr. Shippen, where they had been since the death of Mrs. Burr. As they had no relatives there, Mrs. Edwards intended to take them into her own family. She arrived in Philadelphia, by way of Princeton, in safety, after a comfortable journey. But, in a few days after her arrival, she was seized with a violent dysentery, which, on the fifth day after her seizure, terminated her life, on the 2d day of October, 1758. Though exercised with severe pain during the greater part of her illness, she manifested great composure and resignation; and, when she became sensible that her end was approaching, she expressed an earnest desire to be entirely conformed to the will of God in all things, and to glorify him to the last. In this joyful and triumphant frame she departed. Her remains were carried to Princeton, and deposited with those of Mr. Edwards. They had lived together in the married state a little more than thirty years.

The trustees of the college assembled in a few days after the demise of their beloved and revered President, and, having passed a vote respecting his salary honorable to their liberality, ordered a monument to be placed over his grave, in the cemetery at Princeton, and provided for it the following inscription.

M. S.
Reverendi admodum Viri,
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.,
Collegii Novæ Cæsareæ Præsidis.
Natus apud Windsor, Connecticutensium,
V. Octobris,
A. D. MDCCIII. S. V.
Patre reverendo Timotheo Edwards oriundus;
Collegio Yalensi educatus;
Apud Northampton sacris initiatus, XV. Februarii,
MDCCXXVI — VII.
Illinc dimissus XXII. Junii, MDCCL.
Et Munus Barbaros instituendi accepit.
Præses Aulæ Nassovicæ creatus XVI. Februarii,
MDCCLVIII.
Defunctus in hoc Vico XXII. Martii sequentis, S. N.
Ætatis LV. heu nimis brevis!
Hic jacet mortalis pars.
Qualis Persona, quæris, Viator?
Vir corpore procero, sed gracili,
Studiis intentissimis, abstinentiâ, et sedulitate
Attenuato.
Ingenii acumine, Judicio acri, et Prudentiâ
Secundus nemini Mortalium.
Artium liberalium et Scientiarum peritiâ insignis,

Criticorum sacrorum optimus, Theologus eximius,
Ut vix alter æqualis; Disputator candidus;
Fidei Christianæ Propugnator validus et invictus;
Concionator gravis, serius, discriminans,
Et, Deo ferente, successu
Felicissimus.
Pietate præclarus, Moribus suis severus,
Ast aliis æquus et benignus.
Vixit dilectus, veneratus—
Sed, ah! lugendus
Moriebatur.
Quantos gemitus discedens ciebat!
Heu Sapientia tanta! heu Doctrina et Religio!
Amissum plorat Collegium, plorat et Ecclesia;
At, eo recepto, gaudet
Cœlum.
Abi, Viator, et pia sequere vestigia.

The person of Mr. Edwards, as will be gath ered from the foregoing epitaph, was tall and slen der. He was a little more than six feet in stature His countenance was strongly marked with intelligence and benignity; and his manners were peculiarly expressive of modesty, gentleness, and Christian dignity. His voice, in public speaking, was rather feeble, and he had little or no gesture. Yet such were the gravity of his manner, the weight and solemnity of his thoughts, and the evident earnestness of his delivery, that few preachers were listened to with more fixed attention, or left a more deep and permanent impression.

Mr. Edwards was the father of *eleven* children;

three sons and *eight daughters*. One of these, his second daughter, died eleven years before him, in the 17th year of her age. All the rest survived him, and some of them a number of years.* One only of his sons became a minister of the Gospel. This was his *second* son, *Jonathan*, who greatly resembled his venerable father in metaphysical acuteness, in ardent piety, and in the purest exemplariness of Christian deportment. But the resemblance to his illustrious parent did not stop here. There was a remarkable likeness in their whole history. Jonathan Edwards, Junior, took the pastoral charge of a church in New Haven, where he remained about twenty-seven years. At the end of that time, though bearing an unblemished and excellent Christian and ministerial character, he was dismissed by the desire of the people of his charge.

From New Haven he removed to Colebrook, a small congregation, in a remote, frontier part of Connecticut, not far from Stockbridge, of which he remained pastor about three years. At the end of this time, he was invited to the presidency of Union College, at Schenectady, which he accepted; from which office he was removed by death, in a few months after entering on its duties, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, — almost

* See Note A, at the end of this Memoir.

exactly the same age which his father had reached at the close of his course.*

* After his removal to Schenectady, a friend, one day, in conversation, reminded him of the remarkable similarity of his history, thus far, to that of his father. He recognised it as striking. Upon which his friend added, "Well, Sir, if the likeness is to be continued, your next removal will be to the grave." This prediction, if it may be so called, was realized in a few months.

CHAPTER VIII.

Estimate of his Character. — Estimate of Dr. Chalmers. — Robert Hall. — Dr. Erskine. — Sir Henry Moncreiff. — Sir James Mackintosh. — Professor Taylor. — Dugald Stewart. — Dr. Green. — Dr. Middleton. — Dr. Priestley. — General Statements.

THE most competent judges, in respect to both intelligence and impartiality, for the last fifty years, have been unanimous in ascribing to President Edwards a place in the very first rank of great men. Indeed his character was so singularly full-orbed and complete, that the most sober and faithful portrait of it must appear, to those who have not studied it, to encroach on the extravagance of eulogy. But those who had no partiality in his favor, and even those who must have been powerfully repelled by his theological creed, have indulged in unqualified praise. A few of the testimonies to this amount shall stand in the front of those views of the subject, which it is intended to present before we close our memoir of this extraordinary man.

The following estimate by the Reverend Dr. Chalmers, of Scotland, shall occupy the first place in our list of testimonials.

"We cannot take leave of EDWARDS without testifying the whole extent of the reverence that we bear him. On the *arena* of metaphysics, he stood *the highest of all his contemporaries*, and that, too, at a time when Hume was aiming his deadliest thrusts at the foundations of morality, and had thrown over the infidel cause the whole *éclat* of his reputation. The American divine affords, perhaps, the most wondrous example, in modern times, of one who stood richly gifted both in natural and in spiritual discernment; and we know not what most to admire in him, whether the deep philosophy that issued from his pen, or the humble and childlike piety that issued from his pulpit; whether when, as an author, he deals forth upon his readers the subtilties of profoundest argument, or when, as a Christian minister, he deals forth upon his hearers the simplicities of the Gospel; whether it is, when we witness the impression that he made, by his writings, on the schools and high seats of literature, or the impression that he made, by his unlabored addresses, on the plain consciences of a plain congregation.

"In the former capacity, he could estimate the genuineness of the Christianity, that had before been fashioned on the person of a disciple; but it was in the latter capacity, and speaking of him as an instrument, that he fashioned it, as it were, with his own hands. In the former capacity, he

sat in judgment as a critic, on the resemblance that there was between the seal of God's word, and the impression that had been made on the fleshly tablet of a human heart; in the latter capacity, he himself took up the seal, and gave the imprinting touch, by which the heart is conformed to the obedience of the faith. The former was a speculative capacity, by which he acted as a connoisseur, who pronounced on the accordancy that obtained between the doctrine of the Bible, and the character that had been submitted to its influence; the latter was an executive capacity, under which he acted as a practitioner, who brought about this accordancy, and so handled the doctrine of the Bible, as to mould and subordinate thereunto the character of the people with whom he had to deal. In the one he was an overseer, who inspected and gave his deliverance on the quality of another's work; in the other, he was the workman himself; and while, as the philosopher, he could discern, and discern truly, between the sterling and the counterfeit in Christianity; still it was as the humble and devoted pastor, that Christianity was made, or Christianity was multiplied, in his hands.

"Now conceive these two faculties, which were exemplified in such rare and happy combination in Edwards, to be separated the one from the other, and given respectively to two individuals.

One of these would then be so gifted, as that he could apply the discriminating tests, by which to judge of Christianity; and the other of them would be so gifted, as that, instrumentally speaking, he could make Christians. One of them could do what Edwards did from the pulpit; another of them could do what Edwards did from the press. Without such judges and overseers as the former, the faith of the Christian world might be occasionally disfigured by the excesses of fanaticism; but, without such agents as the latter, faith might cease to be formed, and the abuses be got rid of only by getting rid of the whole stock upon which such abuses are occasionally grafted."

"To judge of an impression requires one species of talent; to make an impression requires another. They both may exist in a very high degree, as in the case of Edwards. But they may also exist apart; and often, in particular, may the latter of the two be found in great efficiency and vigor, when the former of the two may be utterly wanting. The right way for a church is to encourage both these talents to the uttermost; and not to prevent the evils of a bad currency, by laying such an arrest on the exercise of the latter talent, as that we shall have no currency at all." *

* Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns, Vol. 1. pp. 318–322.

The celebrated Robert Hall, of England, undoubtedly one of the most profound and eloquent men that his country has produced for the last three quarters of a century, always spoke of Edwards as a most extraordinary man, as a profound and original thinker, and as decidedly a greater man than Dr. John Owen, with whom he has been often compared. He declared, that he had perused and reperused his works on the "Will," and on "Religious Affections," before he was nine years of age, with intense interest, and that he continued to study his works for sixty years, with undiminished pleasure.*

The venerable and learned Dr. Erskine, of Scotland, in a letter concerning Mr. Edwards's death, written to the Reverend Mr. McCulloch, of Cambuslang, speaks thus; "The loss sustained by his death, not only by the College of New Jersey, but by the church in general, is irreparable. I do not think our age has produced a divine of equal genius or judgment." †

The Reverend Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, also of Scotland, the contemporary, friend, and biographer of Dr. Erskine, speaking of Edwards's work on the Will, expresses the following opinion. "He was not indebted to any other writer for the most important part of his materials,

* Hall's Works, Vol. III. pp. 4, 65, 79.

† Erskine's Life, by Sir H. Moncreiff Wellwood, p. 224.

which he appears to have drawn almost entirely from his own reflections and resources. Though in many points he coincides with the opinions of authors, whose productions do not appear to have reached him, it is impossible to deny, that the structure and ingenuity of his arguments are his own, or to withhold from him the praise of an original writer." *

The estimate of Edwards by Sir James Mackintosh, the learned and eloquent advocate, and the friend of Robert Hall, is expressed in the following strong terms, speaking of himself and his beloved friend, when together at the University at Aberdeen, "We lived together in the same house, and were both very disputatious. He led me to the perusal of Jonathan Edwards's book on Free Will, which Dr. Priestley had pointed out before. I am sorry that I never yet read the other works of that most extraordinary man, who, in a metaphysical age or country, would certainly have been deemed as much the boast of America, as his great countryman, Franklin." † In another work he speaks of Edwards, by way of eminence, as "the metaphysician of America," and expresses the opinion that, "in the power of subtile argument, he was, perhaps, *unmatched*, certainly *unsurpassed among men*."‡

* Erskine s Life, p. 217.

† Memoirs of Sir J. Mackintosh, Vol. I. p. 22.

‡ Progress of Ethical Philosophy, p. 108.

Professor Taylor, the author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm," and other admired works, in his "Essay on the Application of Abstract Reasoning to the Christian Doctrines," prefixed to an edition of Edwards on the Will, speaks in the following language of that illustrious writer. "Whatever may, in the next age, be the fate of the 'Inquiry concerning the Freedom of the Will,' (in the *present* age it holds all its honors and authority,) it may be safely predicted, that at least as an instance of exact analysis, of profound or perfect abstraction, of conclusive logic, and of calm discussion, this celebrated essay will long support its reputation, and will continue to be used as a classic *material* in the business of intellectual education. If literary ambition had been, as certainly it was not, the active element of the author's mind, (as it was the single motive in the mind of his contemporary and admirer, Hume,) and if he could have foreseen the reputation of his 'Essay on Free Will,' he need have envied very few aspirants to philosophic fame. What higher praise could a scientific writer wish for, than that of having, by a small and single dissertation, reduced a numerous and a powerful party, in his own and other countries, and from his own day to the present time, to the sad necessity of making a blank protest against the argument and inference of the book, and of saying the reasoning of

Edwards *must* be a sophism, for it overthrows our ctrine? And then, if we turn from theology to science, from divines to philosophers, we see the modest pastor of the Calvinists of Northampton, assigned to a seat of honor among sages, and allowed (if he will lay aside his faith and his Bible) to speak, and to utter decisions, as a master of science."

"The *Life* of Edwards should be perused by every one who reads his 'Essay on Freedom of Will.' Let it be said, that his style of Christianity might have borne some corrections; and let it also be admitted, that in his modesty, and his low estimation of himself, and in his love of retirement, his melancholic temperament had an influence. After every deduction of this sort has been made, it must be granted, that this eminent man, whose intellectual superiority might have enabled him to shine in European colleges of learning, displayed a meek greatness of soul, which belongs only to those who derive their principles from the Gospel. How refreshing is the contrast of sentiments, which strikes us in turning from the private correspondence of men who thought of nothing beyond their personal fame as philosophers or writers, to the correspondence and diary of a man like Edwards! In the one case, the single, paramount motive, — literary or philosophic vanity, — lurks in every sentence; unblushingly shows

itself on many a page, and, when most concealed, is concealed by an affectation as loathsome as the fault it hides. But how much of this deformed self-love could the most diligent detractor cull from the private papers or works of the President of the College of New Jersey? We question if a single sentence, which could be fairly construed to betray the vanity or ambition of superior intelligence, is anywhere to be found in them. Edwards daily contemplated a glory, — an *absolute excellence*, which at once checked the swellings of pride, and sickened him of the praise, which his powers might have won from the world.

"Edwards (though, in listening to his own account of himself, one would not think it) was *a man of genius*. We mean imaginative, and open to all those moving sentiments, which raise high souls above the present scene of things. Among the reasons which inclined him to excuse himself from the proffered presidency, he alleges, first, his own defects, unfitting him for such an undertaking, 'many of which are generally known,' says he, 'besides others, which my own heart is conscious of. I have a constitution in many respects peculiarly unhappy, attended with flaccid solids, vapid, sizy, and scarce fluids; and a low tide of spirits, often occasioning a kind of childish weakness, and contemptibleness of speech, presence, and demeanor; with a disagreeable dulness

and stiffness, much unfitting me for conversation, but more especially for the government of a college.' This description of his mental conformation is curious, *physiologically*, as an anatomy of a mind so remarkable for its faculty of abstraction. May we not say, that this very poverty of constitution, this sluggishness and aridity, this feeble pulse of life, was *the very secret* of his extraordinary power of analysis? The supposition leads to speculations concerning the *physical* conditions of the mind, which must not here be pursued; but it may be remarked, in passing, that it must be from the copious collection, and right use, of facts of this sort, that progress will be made (if ever) in the science of mind.

"But, notwithstanding the apparent coldness of his temperament, Edwards was manifestly susceptible, and in no common degree, of those emotions which are rarely conjoined with the philosophic faculty. Let an instance be taken from his Diary. 'There seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, an 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 seemed greatly to fix my mind. *I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance*, and in the day spent much time

in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the 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. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural to me to sing or chant forth my meditations, or to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice.'

"That Edwards, by constitution of mind, was more than a dry and cold thinker, might be proved by many passages even in his 'Essay on Free Will,' as well as his less abstruse writings. He was master, in fact, of a simple eloquence of no mean order; — 'Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature, which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, and ravishment to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; 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 its bosom to receive the pleasant beams

of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrancy; standing peacefully and lovingly in the midst of other flowers round about; all, in like manner, opening their bosoms to drink in the light of the sun. There was no part of creature holiness that I had so great a sense of its loveliness, as humility, brokenness of heart, and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted, after this, to lie low before God, as in the dust, that I might be nothing, and that God might be *all*, that I might become as a little child.'

"These sentiments were not the exuberances of a youthful, melancholic ardor, but gave tone to the character and conduct of the man through life. To accomplish the will of God on earth was the ruling motive of his soul; and to have sought his own glory, he would have thought an enormous departure from true virtue. If his *definition* of true virtue be liable to objection, his *exemplification* of it showed him to have understood practically the secret of all substantial goodness." *

If these paragraphs have appeared long to the reader, let it be recollected that they express the opinion of one eminent man concerning another, still more eminent, whose character is worthy of being closely studied, and which, unless it be thus studied, will never be adequately appreciated.

* Essay on the Application, &c., Note A, pp. 18–21.

The judgment of the celebrated Dugald Stewart concerning one, whose writings hold so important a place in the philosophy of the human mind, will be regarded with respect by all competent critics. That distinguished man, after having spoken at large of the systems of Locke and Leibnitz, of Berkeley and Condillac, expresses himself thus concerning President Edwards; "There is, however, *one* metaphysician, of whom America has to boast, who, in logical acuteness and subtilty, does not yield to any disputant bred in the universities of Europe. I need not say that I allude to JONATHAN EDWARDS."

The Reverend Dr. Ashbel Green, one of the successors of the subject of this memoir in the presidency of New Jersey College, presents the following high estimate of the character of Edwards. "His own sentiments," meaning those of himself, the writer, "in contemplating the life and labors of President Edwards, are those of profound and affectionate veneration; so much so, that he knows not, that he has ever read or heard of a man, of whom he has been disposed to say, with more truth and ardor than of Mr. Edwards, 'I would wish to be *such a man*.' He was certainly the possessor of a mighty mind. As such, his reputation has been steadily advancing ever since his death; till at length the British writers, notwithstanding their tardiness in duly accrediting American genius and talents, have classed him

among the great masters of reasoning. But the highest excellence of his character was, that his great powers of mind were deeply sanctified, and unreservedly consecrated to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. He was, in the estimation of the writer, one of the most holy, humble, and heavenly-minded men, that the world has seen since the Apostolic age.

"His learning was not various. Having early devoted himself in the most unreserved manner to the service of God in the Gospel ministry, his studies always had a reference, either direct or collateral, to theology. But, thus employed, such a mind as his could not fail to acquire science and erudition, to a considerable extent; while, in its favorite pursuits, eminence of the first distinction would certainly be reached. In knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, and in every thing relating to theology, he had few equals. In reasoning on theological subjects, he had, in the day in which he lived, no superior. By saying this, the writer does not mean to subscribe to every conclusion in theology at which this great man arrived, any more than, in expressing his admiration of the powers of Mr. Locke, he would be understood to adopt all that is said in the 'Essay on the Human Understanding.' Mr. Edwards's manner or style of writing has no claims to elegance. His language is not select; he is utterly regardless of any

thing like harmony in the structure of his periods; and he takes little care to avoid a frequent repetition of the same words and phrases. His whole attention is given to his thoughts. But, in conveying these, he is wonderfully successful. His meaning is clearly communicated, and carefully guarded. And, in his practical writings, he is often both powerful and pathetic.

"Is not such a writer, all other considerations notwithstanding, really eloquent? That calm, and close, and patient thinking, of which his works give such abundant proof, seem to indicate a temperament not easily excited. Yet the fact was otherwise. His Resolutions and Diary show, that he was a man of great sensibility, and of ardent affections. When those whom he consulted on the propriety of his accepting the presidency of the College, unanimously advised his acceptance, he burst into tears in their presence; and it appears that he frequently retired to his study, to conceal from others the emotions which he felt." *

The Reverend Erasmus Middleton, the compiler of the "Evangelical Biography," in his sketch of Mr. Edwards's life, expresses himself thus; "We are now to speak of a man of whom it is not easy to speak with justice, without seeming to border on adulation! The strength of his

* Discourses delivered in the College of New Jersey, Notes, pp. 317, 318.

mind overcame what are usually insuperable difficulties in the way of the generality. Perhaps his genius acted more forcibly from not being fettered with academical clogs, which other geniuses, of an elevated rank, could never endure. I need only mention Milton, Dryden, and Swift, in confirmation of such an opinion. He was certainly not in the highest class of *learned* men; for his times, his duties, and his means did not allow of such an attainment; but he was far more happily employed, both for himself and for others; and he has given such proofs of a mind uncommonly invigorated and enlightened, that it is matter of joy it was not engrossed by studies, which would have only rendered him the admiration of a few, instead of allowing him to be the instructer of all. He had, in short, the best and sublimest sort of knowledge, without being too much encumbered with what was unnecessary to, or beneath, his calling." *

Even the celebrated Dr. Priestley, with all the decision and ardor of his opposition to the theology of Edwards, speaks of his work on the Will, in the following strong language; "If any person at a proper time of life, with his mind divested of vulgar prejudice, possessed of the necessary preparatory knowledge, and likewise of some degree of *fortitude*, which is certainly necessary for the steady contemplation of great and

* Evangelical Biography, Vol. IV.

interesting subjects, should choose to inquire seriously into this business, (the doctrine of *necessity*,) I would recommend to him, besides the *study* (for the mere *perusal* is saying and doing nothing at all) of Dr. Hartley's 'Observations on Man,' Mr. Jonathan Edwards's Treatise on 'Free Will.' This writer discusses the subject with great clearness and judgment, obviating every shadow of objection to it; and, in my opinion, his work is unanswerable." *

Dr. Priestley, indeed, while he speaks thus, strenuously opposes the Calvinistic conclusions which Edwards deduces from the leading doctrine of his book, and thinks it much better adapted to sustain those of the Socinian school. This, however, might have been expected from his known bias and feelings in relation to the whole subject.

Such is a specimen of the manner in which some of the most competent and impartial judges speak of the subject of this memoir. We are now prepared to take a general survey of a character, which will be more venerated the more it is studied, and which has been seldom equalled in any age or country.

That his *intellectual powers* were of the highest order, as before said, is agreed on all hands. Those who are hostile to his theological opin-

* Examination of Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind," Preface.

ions, as well as those who concur in them, are unanimous in awarding to him this honor. Dr. Green did but speak the language of all competent judges, when he said, as quoted in the foregoing extract, "He had a mighty mind." In comprehension and vigor of intellect, in acuteness of perception, in the power of close attention, and of profound and thorough abstraction, and in the rare talent of being able to hold a subject before his mind, until it was patiently and fully examined, he had, perhaps, no superior in any age.

Sir Isaac Newton is said to have modestly remarked concerning himself, that if he excelled common men in any thing, it was chiefly in the power of continuous, patient thought, until the subject of thought was thoroughly explored. It is probable that Edwards, had he been interrogated concerning himself, would have been disposed to give the same modest account of his own mind. But both he, and the illustrious British philosopher, deserved a higher character. He possessed, in an eminent degree, not only the power of patient thought, but also a depth of penetration, a clearness of perception, and a compass and force of mental grasp, which have seldom been exceeded.

To these powers were added those of a remarkably solid and correct judgment, a capacious and retentive memory, and an imagination which,

though it never aimed to dazzle and fascinate by the creation of splendid pictures, did really sometimes form pictures of the most skilful, touching, and beautiful character. The example of this produced by Professor Taylor, in a preceding page, is very striking; and many others, no less impressive, are to be found in various parts of his writings, both in those of his youth, and those composed in more advanced age. While the qualities of sedateness and profundity might be said preëminently to have characterized his mind, he was by no means, as Taylor observes, a mere 'dry and cold thinker.' He was, in no small degree, imaginative, and capable of that delightful exercise of fancy, and of those strongly impulsive emotions, which are seldom found united with a large share of the philosophic temperament.

But while this extraordinary man rose so high in the scale of intellectual greatness, his *moral and religious elevation* was still more remarkable. It may be doubted whether the annals of Christian character, since the days of apostolic devotion, have presented an example of more intelligent, fervent, governing piety, than that which appeared to reign in the heart, and to guide the life, of this excellent man. In all the records of his religious views and exercises which he left, there is manifest a degree of sincerity and child-like simplicity, and, at the same time, that heav-

enly ardor of affection, and that honest yielding of the whole heart and life to the influence of sanctified principle, which marked a man supremely in earnest in what he professed to feel.

His recorded Resolutions and his Diary, taken in connexion with the known temper and habits of his life, exhibit such entire consecration to the will and glory of God; such deep humility and meekness; such humble, tender, and habitual reliance on the righteousness and strength of the Redeemer; such an affectionate sense of dependence on the aid of the Holy Spirit; such abounding and delight in prayer, and in all the duties of the closet; such peculiar vigilance and candor of self-examination; and such evidence of a fixed, undeviating resolution to do what he thought right, whatever self-denial or sacrifice it might cost him, —as marked a strength of holy principle, an habitual elevation of sentiment and affection, and an unreservedness of consecration to God, truly rare even among eminently pious men. We sometimes witness a fervor of devotion almost rapturous, which does not seem to be borne out by the habitual temper and life. This was not the case with Edwards. There was in the daily habit of his mind, and of his conduct, a degree of sacred conformity to what he deemed truth and duty, even in the face of opposition, that to most men would have been appalling, which may, without

impropriety, be styled the majesty of Christian integrity and of Christian conscientiousness.

The tendency of elevated piety to enlarge, as well as to purify the mind, has been often and justly maintained. When intellectual and moral excellence are united, they mutually strengthen, balance, and adorn each other. This interesting fact, it is believed, was remarkably exemplified in the history of President Edwards. His peculiar piety evidently shed on his whole character, and on all his powers, a grandeur of glory, the influence of which will last as long as his memory. "His fervent piety early and constantly directed his powers to objects above all others suited to expand and exalt them. It summoned him, by the strongest motives, to diligence in the improvement of time, and of advantages for intellectual culture. It purified his mental vision from the corruptions of prejudice, and the bias of unholy inclinations and passions. And it gave him a peace of mind, which left his powers undiverted and unoppressed by the common anxieties of mankind." * It was, in a word, the habitual employment of his great powers on objects worthy of his rational and immortal nature, and adapted to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of his fellow-men, which at once augmented his diligence, elevated his

* Christian Spectator, New Series, Vol. V. p. 357.

affections, nourished a sublime disinterestedness, girded him with a strength, patience, and perseverance almost superhuman, in the midst of pressing difficulties, and prepared him for some of the greatest services by which it is given to man to benefit the church and the world.

It was this union of great talents with eminent piety, that rendered this excellent man so wise and safe a counsellor in all cases of doubt and difficulty. Perhaps there was no man in the country, whose advice was more frequently solicited, or more highly prized than his. And, if we may judge by the specimens which remain of the way in which he fulfilled this duty, he seldom failed to discharge it in an able and edifying manner. On the one hand, the known fervor of his piety was such as to give his judgment great weight with the friends of vital religion; and, on the other, such was the public confidence in his experience, discernment, and practical wisdom, that he was enabled with success to oppose enthusiasm and fanaticism whenever they appeared, and thus to render the most important service to the interests of religion, in a day when such service was peculiarly needed.

To this important service rendered to the church in his day, the venerable President Green referred, when, in treating on the importance of the union of piety and science, he alluded to his excellent predecessor in office, in the following terms.

"Of these attainments our own Dickinson and Edwards were illustrious examples. Among the very first men of their time in this country, for intellectual strength and furniture, they were still more distinguished for piety than for learning. In their day enthusiasm appeared in the church to which they belonged. Few other men could gain an audience of the deluded; but these men obtained it, because the reality and eminence of their piety were questioned by none. They spoke and wrote so as happily to correct the spreading evil, and the good which they effected was great and lasting." *

The record of these services forms a very important chapter in the ecclesiastical history of the United States.

Mr. Edwards's *thirst for knowledge* was peculiar and insatiable. Though placed, throughout the whole of his college course, in circumstances extremely unfavorable to literary improvement; and though situated, during the greater part of his professional life, in a retired and comparatively obscure country town, remote from large libraries, of which, indeed, the American colonies then contained few of even tolerable size; yet, such was his love of knowledge and his indefatiga-

* Discourses delivered in the College of New Jersey, pp. 13, 14.

ble diligence, that he far outstripped most of his clerical brethren on this side of the Atlantic in solid learning. His learning, indeed, was not either so extensive or so various as that of some of his contemporaries; but in all the branches of knowledge which he studied in his collegial course, he was a more than ordinary proficient. In Hebrew literature, as well as in Latin and Greek, he was unusually accomplished; and in metaphysical, moral, and theological science, he had probably read and thought more profoundly than any other American divine.

And although mathematical science might not be supposed to be one of those, which lie very much in the way of a man, who was zealously devoted to the labors of the Gospel ministry, yet so great was his love of all knowledge that could possibly be turned to a useful account, and so just his estimate of the tendency of this branch of science to discipline and improve all the intellectual powers, that we are told he continued to retain and extend his knowledge of mathematics, and of several auxiliary departments of study, to the end of life.

But his devotion to growth in knowledge was not bounded by these early and general efforts to improve his mind. For many years, when at home, and in his usual health, he spent more than half of every twenty-four hours in his study. He

devoured with eagerness every important book, relating to his favorite branches of study, which he could procure from any quarter. He constantly made his correspondence with learned friends, both in Europe and America, subservient to this pursuit. And even in those letters which he wrote to his friends in Scotland, during the pendency of what might be supposed to be his absorbing troubles, both in Northampton and Stockbridge, his desire to obtain information of all new or useful books, and of every thing relating to the state and prospects of the Christian church, was manifested in a very striking manner. As the pagan conqueror of old "thought nothing done, while any thing remained to be done," so this illustrious devotee to knowledge and to duty appeared to think that he knew nothing, as long as any thing remained to be known, and within the reach of human industry.

His *character as a preacher* was very high, but altogether peculiar. In solidity, instructiveness, and solemnity in the pulpit, it is probable no occupant of that sacred place ever excelled him. His voice, indeed, was feeble; he made very little use of gesture; and of the refinements of rhetoric in composition, and of the graces of oratory in delivery, he was in a great measure destitute. Yet, notwithstanding all this, he was an eminently popular preacher. His services, in this character,

were eagerly sought after far and near; and wherever he went, the impression which he made was great, and sometimes wonderful.

Cases are recorded in which sermons of two hours in length were listened to with a solemnity, and followed by an impression, of the most extraordinary kind. Though in the graces and power of a most wonderful delivery, he could not be compared with his contemporary and friend, Mr. Whitefield; yet occasions not unfrequently occurred in which the point, the weight, and the awful solemnity of his discourses, left an impression on large assemblies quite as strong, and quite as permanent, as most of the sermons of that most extraordinary man.

The truth is, Mr. Edwards might be called, without any abuse of terms, an eloquent preacher. That public speaker may, undoubtedly, be said to be eloquent, who habitually makes a deep impression on a popular assembly. It is vain to oppose theory to facts. The most impressive speaker is ever the most eloquent.

If it should be asked, then, Was Edwards an eloquent preacher? we answer, if by eloquence be meant the power of gratifying the taste, and pleasing the imagination, and moving the natural affections of an audience, and by these means exciting the highest admiration of the speaker, probably no man had ever less of eloquence, who

had at the same time so great a power over the minds of his hearers. But, if eloquence is to be understood in its appropriate signification, as the *art or power of persuading;* if it is to be measured by its effects on the understanding, the conscience, and the will, or by the arguments and motives it addresses to men, as rational and moral agents, we certainly do not know the preacher who has a juster title to the appellation. Notwithstanding his manner of delivery, like that of his writing, was plain, and he stood almost motionless in the pulpit, and rarely raised his eyes from his notes, and did not affect the modulations of voice which aim at emotion, yet would he fix the eyes and attention of his audience by the weight of his matter, and the deep solemnity and earnestness of his manner, for an hour together, while his words pierced the soul, and left impressions which were not soon effaced, and which were often followed by the most salutary consequences.

When he was invited to preach at Enfield, the inhabitants of the town were in such a state of religious indifference, that, in the language of the historian of Connecticut, "when they (the neighboring clergymen) went to the meeting-house, the appearance of the assembly was thoughtless and vain. The people hardly conducted themselves with common decency. When Mr. Edwards preached, before the sermon was ended, the

assembly seemed deeply impressed and bowed down with an awful conviction of their sin and danger. There was such a breathing of distress and weeping, that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence, that he might be heard." *

The *incessant, persevering diligence* of Mr. Edwards was another feature in his character, worthy of notice and commemoration. Though endowed with incomparably more talent than most men, he did not allow himself to rely on talents alone for securing their great end. His whole life seems to have been one continued scene of indefatigable effort to make progress in every species of improvement, intellectual, literary, and moral, that might qualify him more perfectly to answer the great end of his being. His application to the great duties of his office, and especially to those of his study, was incessant and wonderful. He considered the price of his time as "above rubies"; and the methods, which he employed to guard against the waste of a moment, are worthy of imitation.

Besides all the hours which he ordinarily spent in his study, he made all his rides or walks for exercise, as related in a preceding chapter, tributary to his studious habits. He took his pen, ink,

* Christian Spectator, Old Series, Vol. III., p. 313. — Trumbull's History of Connecticut, p. 145.

and paper always with him, and in the shady grove in which he alighted or walked, he committed to writing, perhaps, some of his most interesting trains of thought. He frequently arose in the middle of the night, to record something which had occurred to his mind, and which he feared he might lose if it were not then secured. And in all his journeys, whether taken for relaxation or on business, he was continually endeavoring to gather up the means of improvement or of usefulness, with as much greediness as that with which the miser gathers up gold. In short, his aim seems to have been never to be for a moment idle, and never to allow himself to be occupied about matters not likely to turn to some useful account in advancing those great interests for which alone he considered it as desirable to live. One is ready to wonder how a person with so feeble and delicate a frame as his, could endure such incessant and long-continued sedentary labor, and accomplish such an amount of writing, amidst all those perplexing anxieties and trials, which would have disqualified most men for any connected intellectual exercise whatever.

The habits of Edwards, in this respect, may be strikingly compared with those of the venerable Calvin. They began to publish about the same time of life, and they died almost precisely at the same age. The following picture of the labors

of the latter is drawn by the Reverend Dr. Hoyle, Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, Dublin, in a work dedicated to Archbishop Usher, his friend and patron. After remarking, that of "that great instrument of God's glory, John Calvin, he had almost said, as once it was of Moses, that there arose not a prophet since like him in Israel, nor since the Apostles' days was before him," he adds;

"What shall I speak of his indefatigable industry, almost beyond the power of nature, which, paralleled with our loitering, will, I fear, exceed all credit? It may be the truest object of admiration, how one lean, worn, spent, and wearied body could hold out. He read every week of the year through three divinity lectures. Every other week, over and above, he preached every day, so that (as Erasmus said of Chrysostom) I know not whether more to admire his constancy, or theirs that heard him. Some have reckoned his yearly *lectures* to be *one hundred and eighty-six*, and his yearly *sermons* to be *two hundred and eighty-six*. Every Thursday he sat in the presbytery. Every Friday, when the ministers met to confer upon difficult texts, he made as good as a lecture. Besides all this, there was scarce a day that exercised him not in answering, either by word of mouth, or writing, the doubts and questions of different churches and pastors; yea, sometimes, more at once; so

that he might say, with Paul, *the care of all the churches lieth upon me.* And not a year passed, wherein, over and above all these former employments, some great volume in folio or other came not forth." *

It may be asked, how did men so peculiarly frail and feeble endure and accomplish so much? How did such men as Calvin, and Baxter, and Edwards, who would scarcely have been thought to have bodily strength enough to bear them out in writing a single volume, contrive to write more almost than some literary men can find time to read? It is well known of all three of these illustrious men, that they were as remarkable, not merely for their *temperance*, but for their peculiar habits of *abstinence*, as they were for their industry. But, no doubt, one great reason, under God, why they were borne above their exhausting habits of study, is to be sought in a different consideration. Why is it that some great military commanders, brought up in luxury, and accustomed all their lives to self-indulgence, have been found capable, in seasons of great danger and exposure, of bearing more exhausting toil than the most hardy private soldier under their command? The reason is, undoubtedly, to be found in the fact, that the commander has *more mind* and more

* Middleton's Biographia Evangelica, Vol. II. p. 57.

numerous *intellectual* and *moral stimulants* applied to that mind, than has the private soldier. His intelligence, courage, zeal, and ambition bear him onward in efforts and sufferings, under which another, destitute of the same excitements, would sink.

The same principle applies to men of the character just mentioned, in the great field of moral and spiritual action. If Calvin, Baxter, or Edwards had possessed less elevated piety; less ardor of zeal; less comprehension of mental vision, to discern the importance of the subjects on which they wrote; less moral courage; less holy confidence in the principles which they espoused; less absorbing interest in the great matters in which they labored, their strength would sooner have given way, and their productions would have been far inferior, in quantity as well as in quality, to those with which the Master blessed his church by their instrumentality.

With all the meekness and benevolence of President Edwards, he was more than once involved *in controversy;* and hence several of his most important works are controversial in their character. In his polemical labors, he appears to quite as much advantage as in his didactic; or rather his peculiar powers as a reasoner shine with a brighter lustre in the former than in the latter. His spirit as a controvertist was unusually exem-

plary. Perhaps there never was a more candid or fair disputant, or one whose governing aim more habitually was, not victory, but simply the discovery and establishment of truth. Hence, while he treats his adversaries not only with decorum, but with much of the Christian spirit, he demolishes their strongest fortifications, and hunts them out of all their retreats and fastnesses, with a skill and a force scarcely ever exceeded; anticipates objections more numerous and more plausible than even his opponents themselves imagined; demonstrates the truth, by showing the inconsistency and absurdity of the opposite error, and brings a variety of trains of argument to bear on the same point with combined and overwhelming power; and all this with a gravity, a seriousness, and an evident abhorrence of sophistry or evasion, which make as deep an impression as his arguments.

It has been alleged by some, that in his single controversy with Mr. Williams, respecting "Qualifications for Communion," he is sometimes unnecessarily severe. But, probably, few impartial judges will be of this opinion. If he fastens absurdity on his adversary, could he fairly avoid it? The annals of controversy, it is believed, furnish few examples of a disputant more free from personality or irascible temper, who more uniformly manifests the sincerity and the force of

honest conviction, or who more fairly meets and refutes the strongest arguments of his adversaries.

The *domestic character* of Edwards was eminently amiable and exemplary. In the relations of husband, father, and the authoritative head of a family, his habits were all highly ornamental to the Christian profession. As he was singularly happy, as before stated, in the conjugal relation, being blessed with a companion whose intelligence, piety, prudence, and affectionate attention to his comfort, and to all the affairs of her household, peculiarly fitted her to promote his happiness; so his treatment of her was uniformly respectful and affectionate. It was his constant practice to pray with her in his study at least once every day.

Nor was his attention to his children less vigilant or affectionate. It was his habit when at home, every evening, after tea, to sit an hour with his family in pleasant conversation, entering with interest into the feelings and concerns of his children, and striving to render his intercourse with them at once gratifying and instructive. In this conversation the great subject of religion never failed, in a greater or less degree, to occupy a place. And, although he was accustomed to leave the entire management of all his temporal concerns to his wife, who was admirably fitted to conduct them in the wisest and happiest manner, yet, in the government and discipline of their children,

he did not, as many studious men have too often done, leave his wife to toil and struggle alone; but, when attention to this subject became necessary, he entered into it with all the zeal of a tender, sympathizing husband and an anxious father; manifesting a readiness to share the burden, and a desire to discharge the duty, of a faithful parent. And it is a pleasing comment on this fact, to state, that almost all his children manifested the fruit of his pious fidelity by consecrating themselves in heart and life to the God of their father.

One signal and mournful exception, in the case of his youngest son, is well known, and will probably occur to most of the readers of these pages. He was deprived of both his parents at the age of eight years, and, of course, knew nothing of either their example or instruction when he stood most in need of both. Though high in talent, and honorable in office, he never walked in the ways of his venerable father.

The conduct of President Edwards with respect to *his temporal affairs* was worthy of his elevated character. It has been already more than once stated, that every thing pertaining to the secular concerns of his family was committed entirely to Mrs. Edwards. And although his pecuniary circumstances were always narrow, yet, by her prudence, economy, and singular skill in management, the family was made comfortable, and

the children were educated in a manner becoming their station in life. Mr. Edwards was so unreservedly devoted to his pastoral labors and to his beloved studies, that he knew scarcely any thing respecting the revenues or the expenditures of his household. Nay, in regard to some portions of his property and circumstances, many of his parishioners and friends were much better informed than himself.

It is not intended to recommend this entire abstraction from domestic provisions and cares to every minister of the Gospel. In many cases, it would inevitably lead to the grossest disorder, injustice, and bankruptcy. But it *is* intended to recommend the *general spirit* of this great and good man, in regard to worldly affairs, to every incumbent of the sacred office. The spirit of worldly acquisition, whether directed to petty gains, or to large and grasping accumulation, has been fatal to the character and usefulness of thousands of ministers of the Gospel in every age, and is, in its own nature, adapted to destroy their influence, in all cases, as ministers of religion.

Will the mass of mankind really believe an ambassador of Christ to be in earnest, who, while he exhorts them to live above the world; to "look, not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are not seen and eternal;" in a word, to have their treasure and their hearts in

Heaven, and to be daily ascending thither in holy contemplation and spiritual desires, — at the same time sets a striking example in his own person of an inordinate disposition to gather and to lay up treasures upon earth? In fact, if a minister can possibly avoid even the ordinary and justifiable degree of attention to his worldly affairs; if he can, by any means, without suffering, or doing wrong, keep himself entirely aloof from secular matters, he will be more likely to make a salutary impression, and to add force to all his professional labors.

In every age of the church, the most useful ministers have been poor. To say nothing of the Apostle Paul, who, while he strongly and steadfastly maintained, that ministers of the Gospel were entitled to a comfortable support, declined, in some cases, to receive one himself, but "labored, working with his own hands, that he might not be chargeable" to those to whom he ministered; — to say nothing of this, as resting upon an extraordinary principle, it is a notorious fact, that by far the greater number of those ministers, who have been most distinguished for their services to the cause of truth and of piety, have voluntarily submitted to poverty. Augustine, probably the most eminently useful man that lived, from the days of the Apostles to the days of Luther, with abundant opportunities of gaining wealth, preferred poverty. Luther himself, and

Melancthon, and Calvin were all destitute of property, and willingly so, and lived, from year to year, upon the scantiest stipend.*

It seems to be an important part of the purpose of God, concerning such men, that they should be divested of all worldly anxieties and cares, and that their undivided attention should be given to their "work of faith, and labor of love." Edwards manifested his wisdom in standing aloof from every thing like worldly gain, and even from worldly care. The spirit of it seemed to be dead in him. The consequence was, that he enjoyed religion far more than he could otherwise have done; that his mind was in a more favorable state for examining and embodying truth; that his writings were more numerous, and rich in their character; and that he was incomparably more useful to his generation than he could have been, had be been characterized even by the ordinary amount of the worldly spirit. Happy would it be for the church, and for themselves, if the ministers of religion, at all times, bore a nearer resemblance to Edwards, in this as well as in other respects. The desire of money-making is disgraceful to their

* Luther, on one occasion, when he thought himself about to die, solemnly thanked God that he had always kept him poor, and had given him nothing to bequeath to his family. Nor did Calvin appear to be at all less indifferent to wealth.

character, and has been found, in all ages, most injurious to the interests of religion. No matter how learned, how eloquent, how active a clergyman may be, if he be infected with the spirit of sordid gain, it will be "like dead flies in the apothecary's ointment," offensive and ruinous to his whole influence.

It is worthy of remark, however, that, narrow as were the pecuniary circumstances of this distinguished man, he always found something to give to the cause of religion, and to his suffering fellowmen. But in the true spirit of the Gospel, he did this without ostentation, and often with studied concealment. Some of the most remarkable examples of his beneficence came to light after his death.

The *social character* of Mr. Edwards was exemplary and amiable. His manners and habits, indeed, were not of that polished and easy sort, which naturally results from spending much time in social circles. He seldom visited his people, unless they were sick or otherwise afflicted, or, for some peculiar reason, desired his presence. His devotion to study was wholly inconsistent with the employment of much time in indiscriminate visits. These habits cannot be recommended to pastors in general; but it is difficult to see how he could have accomplished the great objects for which he

was so peculiarly fitted, had he taken any other course.

In mixed society, and especially with those with whom he was imperfectly acquainted, he was reserved, and appeared rather distant. But with his intimate friends he was free, cheerful, and pleasant. To that flow of animal spirits, which is the parent of vivacity, he was in a great measure a stranger. His habitual appearance in company was that of the grave, contemplative, heavenly-minded man, gentle, retiring, dignified, and of few words, unless drawn out by inquiries, which opened a door for instruction, of which he was ever ready to avail himself. He never appeared so well as when he had an opportunity of enlightening the ignorant, or counselling inquirers on the most important of all subjects.

There was one striking trait in the character of Mr. Edwards, which, as it rendered him less fond of mixed companies, so it made him more reserved and silent, and often, of course, less interesting, when he happened to be thrown into them. This was his sacred regard to the government of the tongue, and his deep impression of the multiplied and endless evils flowing from vain and unbridled conversation. He had discernment enough from his youth, to perceive, that those who joined freely in conversation in mixed companies, in which the characters of the absent were frequently

discussed, and principles and subjects of great delicacy hastily pronounced upon, must often be involved in circumstances of strong temptation, if not of serious embarrassment. He had the wisdom, too, to feel, as he advanced in life, that men in public stations, especially in the sacred profession, were often most painfully implicated by a single unguarded word uttered in a social circle. Hence, in this respect, he was peculiarly cautious. Perhaps no man ever more sacredly governed his tongue by the laws of Christian prudence and benevolence. His aim was, never to speak evil of another, but upon the most obvious and undoubted call of duty; and never to listen to any thing of the kind from others, if he could possibly avoid it. He was, therefore, "slow to speak"; and, when he did speak, his "words were few and well ordered."

These habits were of incalculable benefit to him in all his social intercourse. He was, of course, seldom involved in litigation; was seldom called to the trouble of defending or explaining what he had spoken; and seldom had the mortification of finding that he had wounded feelings, or injured character, by unguarded conversation. The importance of these things is acknowledged by all; but is seldom felt, and really made a rule of life, but by the eminently wise.

Such is the character left by Jonathan Edwards to the church and the world. Some

distinguished men have been so unhappy as to waste the first years of their lives in folly and profligacy, and to devote only the latter half of their course, and sometimes even less than half, to the cause of truth and righteousness. This was the case, as is well known, with Cyprian, one of the early fathers of the church; with the celebrated Augustine; and, in later times, with the excellent John Newton, one of the highest modern examples of devoted, active piety, to say nothing of many others who might be mentioned. No such disadvantage marked the life of the subject of this memoir. His course, from his early youth to the day of his death, was exemplary, luminous, and useful. He was never chargeable with wasting his time and talents in the pursuits of sin. If not truly pious at the early age of twelve or thirteen years, he at least had the appearance and the general demeanor of true religion; and, from the close of his collegiate course until the termination of his earthly pilgrimage, his life presented one continued series of faithful labors for "serving his generation by the will of God." It pleased God to bear him on, from the beginning to the end of life, without a spot; and to enable him, while he was engaged in intellectual and moral exercises of the highest importance, to exhibit a purity and wisdom of deportment adapted to adorn and set the stamp of truth on all his labors. Perhaps no uninspired

man, since the days of the Apostle Paul, could, with more truth, adopt the language of that eminent minister of Jesus Christ; "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*" It may be doubted whether a man of purer character ever lived.

Other men have, no doubt, excelled him in particular qualities or accomplishments. There have been far more learned men; far more eloquent men; far more enterprising and active men, in the out-door work of the sacred office. But, in the assemblage and happy union of those high qualities, intellectual and moral, which constitute finished excellence, as a Man, a Christian, a Divine, and a Philosopher, he was, undoubtedly, one of the greatest and best men that have adorned this, or any other country, since the Apostolic age.

CHAPTER IX.

His Writings. — Remarks on his Style. — "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion." — "Treatise on Religious Affections." — "Memoirs of Brainerd." — "Essay on the Freedom of the Will." — "On Original Sin." — "History of Redemption." — "Qualifications for Communion." — "Last End of the Creation." — "Nature of True Virtue." — Sermons. — Other Posthumous Works. — General Views.

THE writings of President Edwards are numerous; more voluminous, it is believed, than those of any other American divine. The last and fullest edition of his works is comprised in nine large and closely printed octavo volumes;* which, if printed in a type worthy of them, and in the best modern style, would make at least twenty full-sized volumes of the same class.

And as his writings are more voluminous than those of any other American divine;† so there

* Edited by the Reverend Sereno E. Dwight, D. D., a great-grandson of President Edwards, in ten volumes, 8vo. (the first containing a new and enlarged Life of the author,) New York, 1829.

† See Note B, at the end of this Memoir.

is no risk in asserting, that they bear a higher reputation, have been more extensively read, and have held a more commanding authority in public estimation, than any other. Indeed, for the last half century, it may be safely affirmed, that no other American writer on the subject of theology has been so frequently quoted, or had any thing like such deference manifested to his opinions, as President Edwards. By the pen of this extraordinary man, *one* work has been furnished, which serves as a text-book in colleges and universities; *several*, which the profoundest divines regard as the ablest, on their respective subjects, in any language; and a large number, which have found a place on the shelves of almost all the families in the United States, in which a taste for sound doctrine and intelligent piety prevails.

And yet it is well known, that this high character and extensive circulation of his writings have not arisen, as in some other cases, from any thing peculiarly attractive in their style. To this point he never seems, especially in early life, to have directed particular attention. Intent only on his weighty and important thoughts, he was not solicitous about the dress in which they were presented. Hence his style is circuitous, sometimes tedious, never elegant, and often loaded and perplexed. Both his choice and his arrangement of terms are frequently untasteful; he repeats the

same words and phrases in the same paragraph again and again, without scruple; he is in a great measure regardless, both of euphony and harmony of diction; and the result of the whole is, in many cases, less distinct and impressive than is desirable. His biographer tells us, that he had never paid any attention to his style, until a short time before he left Northampton, when a copy of "Sir Charles Grandison," one of Richardson's novels, having been sent to him, he read it with no small interest, admired its beautiful, flowing language, and, for the first time, received an impression of the importance of style, after which he directed more particular attention to the subject. In the judgment of that gentleman, those works which, after the time just mentioned, he himself prepared for the press, manifested increased and successful attention to this point.

Still, however, it is worthy of notice, that, although the style of this great man is destitute of many of those qualities which would have invested with far greater attraction his rich and weighty matter, yet few writers have more perfectly succeeded in conveying their meaning. Though the language in which he clothes his thoughts is seldom neat or attractive, yet he seems incapable of quitting a subject until he has exhibited it so plainly, that it is impossible to misapprehend his ideas. Though circuitous in expressing his meaning, it is

ultimately made precise and clear; though sometimes tedious in his process, he never fails to reach his conclusion in the most distinct manner; and, though the reader is sometimes wearied with the number and minuteness of the subterfuges into which he traces his opponents, it is plainly seen, in the end, to be the best means of ultimately saving time, of anticipating cavil, and of attaining truth.

Justice also requires, that another remark be made on the style of this eminent writer, especially in relation to that of his Sermons. There is something in it, as there was in his manner of delivering in the pulpit what he had written, altogether peculiar. Though destitute of gracefulness and elegance, there is about it an unaffected solemnity and earnestness, adapted to take hold of the mind with singular force. It is impossible not to see, that the writer forgets himself; forgets the judgment or approbation of those whom he addresses; and is intent only on conveying and impressing truth for their everlasting benefit. It is presumed that no one can deliberately peruse his well-known Sermon, entitled, "Sinners in the Hands of an angry God," or that entitled, "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners," and feel at all surprised, that he, who was capable of the awful representations and pathetic pleadings exhibited in those discourses, should be regarded as a most solemn and impressive preacher.

In reviewing the writings of this distinguished divine, it is not intended to make a minute estimate of all his publications in detail, but only of those leading works, which have held the highest place in public esteem, and been considered as most eminently useful.

Of these, the earliest in order is that entitled, "Some Thoughts concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England," &c. It is generally supposed that this is the most complete, judicious, and satisfactory work on the subject of which it treats, in the English or any other language. In deep spiritual discernment, in fervent piety, in sober, cautious, practical wisdom, it stands unrivalled. While the author manifests himself to be a warm friend to revivals of religion, and an enlightened judge of what deserves this character, he discovers peculiar skill in "separating the precious from the vile," and in laying down those principles which may enable his readers to discriminate, not only between genuine and spurious revivals of religion, but also between those things in genuine revivals, which are from God, and ought to be encouraged, and those which, though connected with a genuine work of grace, ought to be regarded as blemishes of the work, and, of course, to be discouraged and avoided.

Of the deep piety and peculiar spiritual skill manifested in this work, the eloquent Dr. Chal-

mers, of Scotland, speaks in the following strong language.

"If human talent be available to the purpose of demonstrating the character of the seal, it is also, in so far, available to the purpose of judging on the accuracy of the impression. The work, perhaps, which best exemplifies this, is that of President Edwards on the conversions of New England, and in which he proposes to estimate their genuineness, by comparing the marks that had been left on the person of the disciple, with the marks that are inscribed on the book of the law and of the testimony. He was certainly much aided, in his processes of discrimination on this subject, by the circumstance of being a genuine convert himself, and so of being furnished with materials for the judgment in his own heart, and that stood immediately submitted to the eye of his own consciousness. But yet no one could, without the metaphysical faculty wherewith nature had endowed him, have conducted so subtile, and, at the same time, so sound and just an analysis, as he has done; and no one, without his power of insight among the mysteries of our nature, (a power which belonged to his mind, according to its original conformation,) could have so separated the authentic operation of the word upon the character, from the errors and the impulses of human fancy.

"It is true that none but a spiritual man could have taken so minute a survey of that impression which the Holy Ghost was affirmed to have made, through the preaching of the word, upon many, in a season of general awakening. But few, also, are the spiritual men, who could have taken so masterly a survey; and that, just because they wanted the faculties, which could accomplish their possessor for a shrewd and metaphysical discernment among the *penetralia* of the human constitution. It is thus that, by the light of nature, one may trace the characters which stand out upon the seal; and, by the light of nature, one may be helped, at least, to trace the characters that are left upon the human subject, in consequence of this supernal application. Fanaticism is kept in check by human reason, and the soberness of the faith is vindicated. The extravagance of all pretenders to a spiritual revelation is detected and made manifest; and the true disciple stands the test he is submitted to, even at the bar of the natural understanding." *

The next work in chronological order, which demands our notice, is the well-known "Treatise concerning Religious Affections." In this work, the author treats, first, of the nature of the affections, and their importance in religion; secondly,

* The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns. Vol. I. p. 316–318.

of what are no certain signs that religious affections are gracious, or that they are not; and, thirdly, of what *are* distinguishing signs of truly gracious and holy affections. The great excellence of this treatise is not that it lays down new or original marks of Christian character. For the author, in delineating the negative and positive signs of true religious affections, constantly refers to Calvin, Ames, Burgess, Shepard, Flavel, Owen, Stoddard, and others, as having taught, long before, the same doctrine with himself on the great evidences of practical piety. But, although all the leading thoughts are such as are found in the Word of God, and adopted and urged from time to time by other writers, the distinguishing excellence of the work of Edwards is, that it is more *full, systematic, and complete than any preceding treatise on the same subject; that it takes more* deep, clear, and comprehensive views, and searches out hypocrisy and self-deception from their lurking-places, with more skill, fidelity, and persevering patience.

The style of this treatise is by no means attractive. Few works would more advantageously admit of abridgment. The original is, in some of its parts, unnecessarily extended, and is occasionally too abstruse for many readers. Accordingly, the Managers of the American Tract Society, deeply impressed with the peculiar excellence

of this work, have caused it to be judiciously abridged, and, in this form, have adopted it as one of the bound volumes acceptable and honored among all denominations of Christians, which they have resolved, as far as possible, to circulate throughout the world, wherever the English language is known.

The following remarks on this work by the Reverend Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, of Edinburgh, will serve to show the impartial estimate of a distinguished foreigner.

"In point of language, this book is undoubtedly defective, like all the writings of Jonathan Edwards. Though his ideas are always precise, his sentences are often embarrassed, and his reasoning, though it goes deep into the human character, and very successfully lays open the secret recesses of the human heart, is frequently more intricate and metaphysical than his subject required, or than is suited to the capacity of every reader. But, with all its defects, his treatise on Religious Affections, though he had never written any thing besides, would have placed him in the first order of enlightened and practical divines. It requires an intimate knowledge of the human heart, as well as of practical religion, to enable a reader to appreciate its value. But, the more attentively the argument contained in it is considered, and is ap-

plied to real characters, it will always appear so much the more interesting and conclusive." *

Of the "Memoir of David Brainerd," which comes next in order, so much was said in the chapter which records the date of its publication, that there is no need of adding more here. It is one of those standard works, the value of which no subsequent productions of the same class have superseded or impaired. It ought to be read by every Christian who can obtain access to it. But every minister of the Gospel, and, above all, every missionary, ought to *study* it with intense interest and prayer.

But no publication of President Edwards has been so universally lauded and honored as his "Essay on the Freedom of the Will." Thousands who took no interest in his theological opinions, and who felt no regard for his portrait of practical piety, have been filled with admiration by the metaphysical acuteness, and the power of profound and subtile argument, which so highly distinguish that work. This, undoubtedly, of all the productions of his pen, places his intellectual character in the strongest and most striking light. It cannot be denied, indeed, that some of the indiscreet friends of this great man have claimed for him the honor of more entire originality, as to

* Life of Erskine, p. 198.

the main doctrines of this Essay, than can with justice be awarded to him.

The fundamental doctrines which he undertakes to establish, are, that the only rational idea of human freedom is, the power of doing as we please; and that the acts of the will are rendered certain by some other cause than the mere power of willing; in other words, that they are not brought about by the mere "self-determining power of the will." Now, with regard to neither of these positions can it be justly said that our author was strictly original. Both these doctrines were taught, with considerable distinctness, by Augustine, in his controversy with Pelagius; by Luther, in his work *De Servo Arbitrio;* and by Turretin, and almost all the Calvinistic writers of Geneva and Holland, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The essential features of the same philosophical doctrine were also presented by Hobbes, in his "Letter on Liberty and Necessity," soon after the middle of the seventeenth century; by Leibnitz, in his controversy with Dr. Clarke, and his other metaphysical writings, early in the eighteenth century; and still more luminously and strongly by Anthony Collins, in his "Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty," which had been published more than thirty years prior to the appearance of the work of Edwards.

It is certain, however, that he had never seen

the publication of Hobbes, and it is highly probable that that of Collins was equally unknown to him. But it can hardly be supposed that what had been said on the same subject, by some other writers, had entirely escaped his notice. Yet, after all, in making this statement, we deny to our illustrious countryman but a small portion of the honor which his most partial friends would wish to award him. So much remains which may justly be ascribed to him, that we subtract little from his substantial fame. His great mind was nobly and most powerfully exercised in enlarging the territory and increasing the light of truth. He certainly appears an original in the invention and exhibition of arguments against error, but not in discovering the main truth which he states respecting the liberty of the will. The connexion between motives and volitions, the liberty of choice in man, and the certainty of the futurition of human voluntary actions, in short, every thing in moral necessity consistent with free agency, were understood and embraced before his day. Still they had never been either so clearly presented, or so successfully demonstrated, as they were by him. He certainly stated and sustained them with a degree of novelty, acuteness, depth, precision, and force of reasoning, which no one of his predecessors, nor all together, had ever reached. Hence, when his book appeared, his correspon-

dents, and others, in Great Britain, considered him as having rendered a great and essential service to the cause of truth; and some of the learned divines of Holland communicated to him their warmest thanks for having thrown new and important light on one of the most interesting portions of mental and theological science.

Dr. Priestley, indeed, incautiously tells us, that "Edwards hit upon the true philosophical doctrine of *necessity*, which he scruples not to assert, that no other Calvinist ever did before." * If Dr. Priestley had been as well acquainted with Calvinistic writers as he was with those of some other classes, he would not have made such an assertion. It is a mistake. Many Calvinistic writers before Edwards had espoused, substantially, his leading doctrine. It is well known, that the views of Leibnitz were adopted by many of the continental as well as other Calvinistic divines; of which Stapfer, to name no others, was a conspicuous example. It is possible that Edwards was the first Calvinistic divine, who, in his speculations on this subject, freely employed the word *necessity*, though even this is not certain; but, at any rate, all the chief ideas, which he indicated by this term, were recognised before, and it may be doubted whether his use of that term tended to promote the cause of truth.

* Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry, &c. Preface.

When it is said that Hobbes, Collins, and several other philosophical writers, who lived before Edwards, taught, substantially, the same doctrine concerning human liberty as he did, it is always to be remembered, that those writers agreed with him only in some leading philosophical principles; that their inferences from those principles, and the practical use which they made of them, were widely different from his; indeed such as he not only rejected, but regarded with abhorrence. They, and others who have joined their ranks since, deduced from their radical doctrine either an infidel or semi-infidel system, of the most mischievous character. Whereas Edwards demonstrated that the orthodox system of free grace, taught so luminously in the New Testament, revived by Augustine, maintained by the witnesses of the truth through the dark ages, and finally brought again to light, and inculcated with so much zeal by Luther, Calvin, and the other reformers, could not be successfully maintained without assuming his leading doctrine.

It cannot indeed be denied, that, a little before Mr. Edwards's book appeared, some pious men deemed in the main orthodox, such, for example, as Watts, Doddridge, and others, of the same school, whose writings had great circulation in America, had taught a doctrine concerning human liberty altogether untenable, and wholly subver-

sive of some most precious theological truths. The weak and absurd theory of Archbishop King was evidently adopted by these eminent men, and exerted an injurious influence. Mr. Edwards saw and lamented this. He perceived, in his own neighborhood, that Arminian principles were evidently gaining ground, both among ministers and people, from the simple admission of the self-determining power of the will. He saw that, as long as men entertain the opinion, that all their moral acts are independent of God, that all genuine moral agency must be self-originated, and that unless they have the power themselves of originating all holy acts, they cannot be free or responsible, they could neither appreciate nor receive the Gospel as a system of grace. He, therefore, justly supposed that it would be rendering a most important service to the cause of philosophical truth, as well as of practical Christianity, to show the true and essential nature of the freedom of the will, what is necessary to lay a just foundation for praise or blame, and the real character of that inability to obey the commands of God, under which unrenewed men labor. This he undertook, and this he performed with the most triumphant success, with a degree of success which has been the admiration of the most competent judges from the hour in which his Essay was published to the present time.

The work on the "Freedom of the Will" has now been before the public more than eighty years, but has never yet received any thing that deserved to be called an answer. The Reverend Dr. James Dana, of New Haven, and the Reverend Dr. Samuel West, of New Bedford, each attempted a refutation of it in a volume of considerable size, but, in the opinion of all competent judges, without approaching the attainment of their object.* Dr. Reid and Dugald Stewart, of Scotland, have also, like some other inferior men, attempted to set aside the doctrine of Edwards, and establish an opposite system; but so feebly, and with so little success, that the cause of opposition to the illustrious American may be considered as desperate.

"Edwards," says the author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm," "Edwards achieved, indeed, his immediate object, that of exposing to contempt in all its evasions the *Arminian* notion of contingency, as the blind law of human volitions; and he did more,—he effectively redeemed the doctrines called Calvinistic from that scorn

* The attack of Dr. West was ably repelled by Jonathan Edwards, Jr., D. D., the second son of President Edwards, and himself afterwards President of Union College. Dr. Edwards's reply also included a notice of Dr. Dana's attack.

with which the irreligious party within and without the pale of Christianity would fain have overwhelmed them. He taught the world to be less flippant; and there is reason also to surmise, (though the facts are not to be distinctly introduced,) that, in the reaction which of late has counterpoised the once triumphant Arminianism of English Episcopal divinity, the influence of Edwards has been much greater, than those who have yielded to it have always confessed."

"Calvinism, as distinguished from Arminianism, encircles or involves *great truths*, which, whether dimly or clearly discerned, whether defended in Scriptural simplicity of language or deformed by grievous perversions, will never be abandoned while the Bible continues to be devoutly read, and which, if they might indeed be subverted, would drag to the same ruin every doctrine of revealed religion. Zealous, dogmatical, and sincere Arminians little think how much they owe to the writer, who, more than any other in modern times, has withstood their inconsiderate endeavors to impugn certain prominent articles of the Reformation. Nay, they think not, that to the existence of Calvinism they owe their own, as Christians. Yet as much as this might be affirmed and made good, even though he who should undertake the task were so to conduct his argu-

ment, as might make six Calvinists in ten his enemies." *

"This celebrated treatise must be allowed to have achieved an important service for Christianity, inasmuch as it has stood like a bulwark in front of principles which, whether or not they may have hitherto been stated in the happiest manner, are of such consequence, that if they were once and universally abandoned by the church, the church itself would not long make good its opposition to infidelity.

"The diffidence and the Christian humility, or the retired habits, of the American divine prevented, perhaps, his entertaining the thought, that he might be listened to by philosophers, as well as by his brethren, the ministers of religion. Supposing himself to write only for those, who acknowledged, as cordially as he did, the authority of Scripture, he scrupled not to make out his chain of reasoning, indifferently, of abstractions and of texts, and, especially in the latter portion of his treatise, readily took the short Scriptural road to a conclusion, which must have been circuitously reached in any other way. Just and peremptory as these conclusions may be, they

* Essay on the Application of Abstract Reasoning to the Christian Doctrines, originally published as an Introduction to Edwards on the Will, p 20. — The writer of this Essay is a layman of the Church of England.

commanded no respect out of the pale of the church; nay, they rather excited the scorn of those who naturally said, 'If these principles could have been established by abstract argument, a thinker so profound as Edwards, and so fond of metaphysics, would not have proved them by the Bible.'

"Skeptics of all classes (it has ever been the practice and policy of the powers of evil to build with plundered materials,) availing themselves greedily of the abstract portions of the inquiry, and contemning its Biblical connectives and conclusions, carried on the unfinished reasoning in their own manner; and, when they had completed their edifice of gloom and fear, turned impudently to the faithful, and said, 'Nay, quarrel not with our labors; the foundations were laid by one of yourselves.'" *

The work of Edwards next in order, both of time and importance, is entitled, "The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin defended." This volume was in the press at the time of the author's decease; and, although the whole of it had not received his final correction, yet he intended and prepared it for publication.

Of this work, the Reverend Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, of Edinburgh, in his life of Dr.

* Ibid., pp. 18, 19.

Erskine, thus speaks; "This book, for ingenuity or originality, or for vigorous and acute argument, is inferior to nothing else which the author has written. It is common, indeed, to reject without examination, the doctrine which he maintains, as either untenable or absurd. But it will not be easy to produce a publication, in which his argument has been fairly met by those who have most affected to despise his conclusions." *

The Reverend George Hill, D. D., Principal of St. Mary's College, Aberdeen, in treating on the subject of original sin, also speaks of this work, in the following terms. "This opinion is supported in all the Calvinistic systems of divinity by nearly the same arguments. But, in stating the grounds of it, I shall take, as my principal guide, Mr. Edwards, formerly president of the College of New Jersey, in America, who has written able treatises upon the different branches of the Calvinistic system, and whose defence of the doctrine of original sin contains the fullest and acutest answers that I have seen to the objections commonly urged against that doctrine." †

In this work, as in the preceding, the originality and power of the author appear, not in teaching any thing absolutely new; for he teaches the old Calvinistic doctrine, as exhibited by the Reformers,

* Life of Erskine, pp. 225, 226.

† Lectures on Theology, Vol. II. p. 336, 8vo ed.

and by the venerable men who succeeded them in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe, and is careful at every step to produce abundant testimony not only from the Word of God, but also from the works of preceding writers. He distinguishes between *original* and *actual* sin. He represents the former as consisting in a moral taint or corrupt nature, anterior to all moral acts, and expressly denominates that corrupt nature *sinful.* And he also maintains the *imputation* of Adam's first sin to his posterity. The following short quotations will place this statement beyond all doubt.

In the first sentence of his treatise he says, "By *original sin,* as the phrase has been most commonly used by divines, is meant the innate sinful depravity of the heart. But yet, when the doctrine of original sin is spoken of, it is vulgarly understood in that latitude, as to include not only the *depravity of nature,* but *the imputation of Adam's first sin;* or, in other words, the liableness or exposedness of Adam's posterity, *in the divine judgment,* to partake of the *punishment* of that sin. So far as I know, most of those who hold one of these, have maintained the other, and most of those who have opposed one, have opposed the other. And it may, perhaps, appear in our future consideration of the subject, that they are closely connected, and that the arguments which prove the one, establish the other; and that

there are no more difficulties attending the allowing of one than the other."

That Edwards represents innate depravity of heart as universal, and that he does not scruple to call this depravity *sinful*, will be doubted by none who are acquainted with his work. To establish this, no specific quotations are deemed necessary.

But he also maintains that the *imputation* of Adam's first sin to all his posterity, is *taught with great plainness in Holy Scripture*. On Romans v. 12–21, he remarks, "As this place in general is very full and plain, so the doctrine of the corruption of nature derived from Adam, and also the *imputation of his first sin*, are both clearly taught in it. The *imputation* of Adam's one transgression is indeed most directly and frequently asserted. We are here assured that by *one man's sin, death passed upon all;* all being adjudged to this punishment, as having sinned in that one man's sin; and it is repeated, over and over, that *all are condemned*, that *many are dead, many made sinners*, &c., *by one man's offence, by the disobedience of one, by one offence*. And the doctrine of *original depravity* is also here taught, when the Apostle says, *By one man sin entered into the world*, having a plain respect to that universal corruption and wickedness, *as well as guilt*, which he had before largely treated of." *

* See Treatise on Original Sin, Part II. Chap. 4.

Again he says; "Though the word *impute* is not used with respect to Adam's sin; yet it is said, *All have sinned*, which, respecting infants, can be true only of their sinning by this sin. And it is said, *By his disobedience many were made sinners*; and that *judgment came upon all men by that sin*; and that, by this means, *death* (the wages of sin) *passed upon all men*. Which phrases amount to full and precise explanations of the word *impute*; and do therefore more certainly determine the point really insisted on." *

And that President Edwards, in this work, contends for the *immediate imputation* of Adam's sin to his posterity, is evident from a variety of passages. He expressly says, "Both guilt or exposedness to punishment, and also depravity of heart, came upon Adam's posterity just as they came upon him, as much as if he and they had all coexisted, like a tree with many branches; allowing only for the difference necessarily resulting from the place Adam stood in, as head or root of the whole, and being first and most immediately dealt with, and most immediately acting and suffering. Otherwise, it is as if, in every step of proceeding, every alteration in the root had been attended, at the same instant, with the same steps and alterations throughout the whole tree, in each individual branch. I think this will naturally follow on

* Ibid., Part IV. Chap. 4.

the supposition of there being a constituted *oneness* or *identity* of Adam and his posterity in this affair." *

And this *oneness* or *identity* of Adam and his posterity, he distinctly explains, not as a *natural* or *personal*, but as a *moral* or *covenant* identity, laying a foundation for the undoubted fact, revealed in Scripture, that, while the personal acts of Adam did not, and could not become the personal acts of his posterity, the *liabilities* or *responsibilities* of the one attached to the other.

These statements are due to the cause of truth, and to the memory of President Edwards. Perhaps the sentiments of few men in modern times have been more misrepresented than his. It is one of the many testimonies to the peculiar elevation and weight of his character in public esteem, that so many errorists take shelter under his wing, and are fond of claiming to agree with him. In this way opinions have been ascribed to that great and good man, which are not only not to be found in his writings, but which he has solemnly and in express terms repudiated; and which, had they been ascribed to him while living, he would have renounced with abhorrence.

On the whole, this work, though it affects no novelties, will, doubtless, be regarded by every competent judge, as by far the most comprehen-

* Ibid., Part IV. Chap. 3.

sive, complete, profound, and demonstrative work on the subject of which it treats, to be found in any language. Like all the principal works of the author, it goes to the bottom of the subject; wields every argument with the hand of a master; guards every avenue of hostile approach; arrays and answers more numerous and plausible objections than even his adversaries had ever adduced; and all with a candor and earnestness, which exhibit an advocate at once sincere in his convictions, and confident in the importance and prevalence of truth.

Another systematic work of this excellent man has deservedly enjoyed a high degree of public esteem, and will be more admired, the more it is examined. The work referred to is "The History of Redemption." It has been already stated, that this volume was not prepared by the author for the press; and that it was not published until many years after his decease. The substance of it was originally delivered, in the form of a series of sermons, at Northampton, in 1739. In his letter to the trustees of the College, he speaks of his plan of digesting and extending it in such a manner as to form a complete body of divinity, extending from the beginning to the end of the world, and combining a complete view of Gospel truth, illustrated by sacred and profane history. It was left wholly unfinished at his death. The

manuscript, many years after the author's decease, was remitted by his son, then residing at New Haven, to Dr. Erskine, of Edinburgh, who reduced it from the form of sermons to that of a treatise, and first published it in that city, in 1777.

Although this work appears under all the disadvantages which its history, just given, must obviously imply, it is regarded, by all competent judges, as a noble structure, the excellence of which, while it enlightens and gratifies, excites deep regret that the author did not live to finish it. The plan is admirable; the outline, sublime; the spirit, devout and elevating; and the whole result, adapted to enlarge the views and raise the devotion of the theological inquirer. The way in which the author combines sacred and profane history is at once striking and delightful. The use which he makes of historical facts, for elucidating and confirming truth, is highly interesting. And the happy manner, in which he illustrates the providence by the word of God, shows the hand of a workman abundantly furnished in divine as well as human knowledge.

Had the venerable author been permitted to complete this work on the plan which he proposed, it would probably have been the best system of divinity ever presented to the church; rich in truth; truth teeming with the life of historical incident; truth standing forth in all the prominence,

solemnity, and power of Jehovah's recorded dealings with his church and people; exhibiting his works and his word uniting their testimony to show forth his glory. As it is, however, it deserves to be read again and again by every Christian, and especially by every candidate for the holy ministry; as presenting the inspired history in a new light; as evincing a deep acquaintance with Scripture; as suggesting trains of thought, and connexions of truth, of the most instructive and interesting kind; as leading to views of the Redeemer's kingdom, at once simple and obvious, yet invested with a grandeur and glory of no ordinary character; and the whole resplendent with a spirit of practical piety, as pure as it is elevating.

The next publication in size and importance, made by Mr. Edwards, is his treatise on "Qualifications for full Communion in the visible Church." This work, the reader will recollect, was occasioned by the well-known difference of opinion between him and the people of Northampton, in regard to the proper candidates for church communion, and which finally led to the dissolution of his pastoral relation among them. It has ever been regarded as holding the very first rank among those works, which support that side of the question which it maintains. No adequate answer to it has ever been given. That of Mr. Williams,

to which Mr. Edwards, as before stated, wrote a reply, was generally regarded as feeble and altogether unsuccessful. It is not recollected that any thing more worthy of notice has since appeared. But what places the power of this work in the strongest light, is the consideration of its actual *effects*. Although, at the time of its publication, the doctrine of lax communion, as held by the venerable Stoddard, which it opposed, was general in New England, and maintained not only with zeal, but with zeal of the most ardent and uncompromising kind; yet, in a few years after the appearance of this treatise, an entire revolution was effected in almost all the evangelical churches of New England, so that, in spite of all the prejudice and interest which plead so powerfully against the introduction of his doctrine, it is now as rare to find an orthodox church in that part of the United States, which does not adopt and act upon it, as it once was to find one, that regarded it with any degree of approbation. That the work of Edwards had a principal instrumentality in effecting this change, there can be no doubt.

The Dissertations of Edwards on "God's Last End in the Creation of the World," and on "The Nature of True Virtue," next claim our attention. These works, though no doubt intended for the press, yet, as before mentioned, were not fully

prepared for publication by the venerable author, and were not actually made public until nearly thirty years after his decease. In the former, he maintains that God's "last end in the creation of the world, was *the manifestation of his own glory in the highest happiness of his creatures;*" and in the latter, that "the essence of true virtue consists in the *love of Being in general.*" These Dissertations bear the impress of the author's profound and powerful mind, and are well worthy of an attentive perusal. Yet it may be seriously doubted whether their general influence on the theology of our country has not been on the whole unfavorable.

It is true, the great principle, that God made all things for his own glory, is as old as the Bible, and has made a very distinct and important part of the system of every orthodox divine from the days of the Apostles to the present time. As to this point, there is nothing new in the Dissertation of Edwards, except, perhaps, that he has placed it in a stronger light, and established it by more abundant, profound, extended, and irrefragable reasoning, than any preceding writer. But with this incontrovertible doctrine he combined speculations and conclusions concerning the highest happiness of the creatures of God, which some of the most judicious divines, both in Europe and America, have been constrained to regard as open-

ing the way to questionable and unsafe results. If his doctrine be considered as naturally leading to the theory of Optimism, that is, to the doctrine that God, in the work of creation, has formed a system, which will secure the greatest amount of happiness that is possible, a doctrine which has entered so largely into the plan of many American theologians since his day, it cannot be regarded as having forwarded the great interests of sober and Scriptural theology. It would be unfair, however, to make him responsible for the inferences drawn by others from a work which he never lived to finish, and which, had he foreseen, he would probably have been ready to reject.

With regard to the Dissertation on the "Nature of True Virtue," one of the most learned and able divines, who have adorned the American church within the last thirty years, once said, in the hearing of the writer of these pages, that there was no human leader whom he was more disposed to venerate and to follow, than President Edwards; but that, at the doctrine of this work alone, among all his writings, he was compelled to hesitate. We have seen, in a preceding page, the estimate made of its leading doctrine by the acute and eloquent Robert Hall, of Great Britain. If the theory be liable to the objections urged by that eminent man, they are certainly most serious in their import. Perhaps, too, we may trace to the leading doctrine

of this Dissertation, the position, that, to constitute real piety, "disinterested affection" must be carried so far as to amount to a "willingness to be damned for the glory of God"; a position which, though not recognised by Edwards, has been so prominent in the system of many American divines who professed to regard him as their theological leader. There can be no doubt that his profound and benevolent mind would have rejected such an unreasonable and revolting inference. But it really seems difficult to stop short of this position, if his theory of virtue or holiness be fully adopted.

The aberrations of small men are commonly productive of little mischief, excepting to themselves. But it not unfrequently happens, that even the minor mistakes of those great and good men, who have shone as lights of the first magnitude in their respective generations, betray their less discerning admirers into errors of a still more serious character than their own. Few men can be charged, with less propriety than President Edwards, with not foreseeing all the consequences of their respective theories; but it is confidently believed, that, if he had foreseen the use which has been since made of the doctrine of this Dissertation, he would either have shrunk from its publication, or have guarded its various aspects with additional care.

With respect to the *Sermons* of our author, they bear a peculiar and strongly-marked character. It might have been expected, that the pulpit discourses of so profound a metaphysician would have abounded much more in cold and chilling abstraction and demonstration, than in pathetic and solemn appeals to the conscience and the heart. But this is by no means the case. Though their style, as we have seen, is not remarkable for either polish or brevity, but rather the reverse; and though their structure is far from being generally conformed to the most established canons of sacred rhetoric; yet, in weight of thought, in richness of instruction, in solemnity and tenderness of appeal, and in skill and pungency of application, they are equalled by few discourses in any language. When read at the present day, they render perfectly credible all the accounts which his biographers give us of the deep impression often made by them on popular assemblies.

Several of these Sermons are worthy of special notice. Among this class are *five* in the fifth volume, most of which were preached during the most remarkable and powerful revival of religion by which his ministry was ever distinguished. Of these Sermons, one of the most striking features is their full and zealous maintenance of the old Calvinistic doctrines, particularly that of the native moral impotence of man, the sovereignty of

God in the dispensations of his grace, and justification solely by the imputed righteousness of Christ. These were the doctrines, which he did not scruple to teach in the old, established language of the Bible and the Reformers, and which he found most "quick and powerful" in awakening, convincing, and converting the impenitent, and in building up believers in faith and holiness. And the same doctrines were prominent in the ministry of Whitefield and of all the able men, who were contemporary and coöperated with Edwards, and whose preaching was, perhaps, more extensively blessed to the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, than that of any individuals since their day. To the denial of a federal relation between Adam and his posterity, and between Christ and his people, and to the unscriptural dream of an indefinite atonement, it is evident that Edwards and his friends were entire strangers.

The remaining works of this eminent man are chiefly those which were published many years after his decease, and which would seem never to have been intended by him for publication. These are "Miscellaneous Observations on Important Theological Subjects," "Miscellaneous Remarks on Important Theological Controversies," "Types of the Messiah," and "Notes on the Bible." In all of them there is weighty, important matter, and many marks of the great mind of the author.

In the two first-named articles, especially, there is much matter of great value, of the propriety of publishing which there could be no doubt. But, with respect to the two latter, it is by no means probable that the author himself, if it had been possible to consult him, would have consented to their publication. Nevertheless, we do not regret that his friends have judged otherwise. Every thing from the pen of such a man is worthy of attention, and of being treasured in the memory. And if the circumstances, in which these parts of his works were first committed to the press, could be constantly borne in mind, no injury would ever accrue to his venerated memory.

In estimating the influence of the writings of Edwards, there may be some room to doubt whether it has been altogether and throughout that of unmixed good. It has been questioned whether the writings of this distinguished man have not promoted a spirit of abstruse, metaphysical speculation in discussing Christian doctrine, in the pulpit and from the press, among the clergy in a large part of the United States. To him, this mode of discussion appeared to be natural. He loved to look at every subject with the acuteness of metaphysical precision. And although he seldom allowed the abstruse plan of investigation to intrude in examining plain and practical subjects, yet, with all his wisdom, he sometimes fell into this error.

It has been already hinted, that one of the faults of his profound and noble work on "Religious Affections," is, that in some of its parts it is altogether too abstruse for many readers. From admiration of his invaluable writings, the transition was easy to an imitation of his manner. And imitators, it is well known, are much more apt to copy that which is faulty, than that which is commendable. His imitators were not always so careful as he, for the most part, was to confine metaphysics to their appropriate field. The spirit of speculation began to be inordinately indulged. A fondness for philosophizing in religion became almost as rife as in the days of Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas. Inferences have been deduced from his writings which he never sanctioned; until, at length, principles have been openly imputed to him, which it was one of the main objects of his laborious life to oppose and put down.

The general influence, however, of his writings was benign and happy. They probably did more for half a century after his decease to stem the flood of Arminian and Pelagian errors, which, when he published his work on the Will, was setting in on the American churches, especially in New England, than all other uninspired writings put together. Their influence is great still. And although not a few of his professed admirers are, insidiously, attempting to turn his heavy artillery

against that very citadel which it was his honor to have long and successfully defended, yet the imposition, it is hoped, will soon terminate, and public credulity be effectually disabused.

But the powerful influence of the writings of Edwards extended far beyond the native country of their author. Of this, abundant proof has already been given. The fact is, these writings have given a complexion to the theology of Great Britain, as well as of America, to an extent not easy to be definitely measured. Their important influence in modifying the opinions of the celebrated Dr. Andrew Fuller, Dr. John Ryland, and several eminent evangelical men in the English establishment, is too well known to need more specific details. Many of the most profound and learned divines, who have adorned the old as well as the new world for the last three quarters of a century, have not been ashamed to acknowledge themselves largely indebted to the subject of this memoir in regard to all the great departments of theology on which he has written.

Such is a brief and rapid survey of the writings of one of the most extraordinary men that ever appeared in any age or nation. That a man situated as he was, in a retired residence, far from the literary retreats and ample libraries of the learned; without a neighbor who could materially aid him in his inquiries; ever exposed to the interruptions

of a busy, an active, and generally of a troubled life, should, in spite of such obstacles, produce so many works adapted to instruct the most learned, to aid the most industrious, and to bless the church of God in its most precious interests and its most distant generations, is one of those remarkable occurrences, which the literary as well as the pious man is called upon to contemplate with admiration and gratitude. The minister of religion, whatever may be his creed or his denomination, will, of course, consider the history and character of this distinguished ornament of his profession, as worthy of careful study, and in some respects, unquestionably, of studious imitation. But there is something, in the character which has been exhibited, adapted to profit every one who looks upon it, and especially every *young man* who is beginning to cultivate the powers which God has given him, and to prepare for serving his generation and posterity in a manner most honorable to his rational nature, and best fitted to enable him to live when he is dead.

The pious patriot, when he looks back with grateful acknowledgments on Washington, and other great benefactors of the community, whom God has raised up to accomplish his merciful purposes toward our beloved country, feels that he is cherishing sentiments as reasonable as they are dutiful. Equally rational and becoming is it to

acknowledge the benignant purpose of God in regard to the moral and religious interests of mankind, when he raises up men eminently endowed to instruct the church and the world, to resist the encroachments of fanaticism and error, and to prepare the way, by writing, by preaching, and by example, for the extended establishment of truth and righteousness. When those who cherish these sentiments shall direct their attention to one and another, to whom the reflection is applicable, they will see, it is believed, peculiar reason to rejoice and be grateful for the life and the labors of JONATHAN EDWARDS.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

Children and Descendants of President Edwards.

I. Sarah, born August 25th, 1728. She was married, June 11th, 1750, to Elihu Parsons, Esquire. They had *eleven* children; four sons and seven daughters. Their residence was first at Stockbridge, and afterwards at Goshen, Massachusetts. She died at Goshen, May 15th, 1805, in the 76th year of her age.

II. Jerusha was born April 26th, 1730, and died unmarried, February 14th, 1747, in the 17th year of her age.

III. Esther was born February 13th, 1732; was married to the Reverend Aaron Burr, President of the College of New Jersey, June 20th, 1752; had *two* children, a daughter and a son; the former married to the Honorable Tapping Reeve, Judge of the Supreme Court of Connecticut; the latter, Aaron Burr, late Vice-President of the United States. Mrs. Burr died April 7th, 1758.

IV. Mary was born April 7th, 1734, and was married to Timothy Dwight, Esquire, of Northampton, November 8th, 1750. She had *thirteen* children, of whom the eldest was the Reverend Timothy Dwight, D. D., LL. D.,

President of Yale College. She died at Northampton, in February, 1807, aged 73.

V. Lucy was born August 31st, 1736, and was married to Jahleel Woodbridge, Esquire, in June, 1764. She had *seven* children, and died at Stockbridge, in October, 1786, aged 50.

VI. Timothy was born July 25th, 1738, and was married to Rhoda Ogden, September 25th, 1760. He had *fifteen* children, and died at Stockbridge, in the autumn of 1813, in the 76th year of his age.

VII. Susannah was born June 20th, 1740, and was married to Eleazer Porter, Esquire, of Hadley, in September, 1761. She had *five* children, and died at Hadley, in 1802, aged 61.

VIII. Eunice was born May 9th, 1743, and was married to Thomas Pollock, Esquire, of Elizabethtown, New Jersey. She had *five* children, and died at Newbern, North Carolina, 1822, aged 79.

IX. Jonathan was born May 26th, 1745, and was married to Sarah Porter, in 1770. He was for many years pastor of a church in New Haven, and afterwards President of Union College, at Schenectady. He had *four* children, and died at Schenectady, August 1st, 1801, in the 56th year of his age.

X. Elizabeth was born May 6th, 1747, and died, unmarried, at Northampton, January 1st, 1762, aged 14.

XI. Pierrepont was born April 8th, 1750, and was married to Frances Ogden, in May, 1769. He was an eminent Counsellor at Law, and afterwards Judge of the United States Court for the District of Connecticut. He had *ten* children, of whom one, the Honorable Henry W. Edwards, is Governor of Connecticut, and another, the Honorable Ogden Edwards, is a Judge in the city of New York. He died at Bridgeport, Connecticut, April 14th, 1826, aged 76.

(B.)

List of the Works of President Edwards.

1. *Published by Himself.*

I. God glorified in Man's Dependence; a Sermon on 1 Corinthians i. 29–31. Boston, 1731.

II. A Divine and Supernatural Light imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God; a Sermon on Matthew xvi. 17. Boston, 1734.

III. Curse ye Meroz; a Sermon on Judges v. 23. Boston, 1735.

IV. A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of many hundred Souls in Northampton, &c. London, 1736. Boston, 1738.

V. Five Discourses, prefixed to the first American edition of the preceding work.

VI. Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God; a Sermon on Deuteronomy xxxii. 35. Boston, 1741.

VII. Sorrows of the Bereaved spread before Jesus; a Sermon at the Funeral of the Reverend William Williams, on Matthew xiv. 12. Boston, 1741.

VIII. Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the True Spirit; a Sermon on 1 John iv. 1, preached at New Haven, September 10th, 1741. Boston, 1741.

IX. Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, in 1740. Boston, 1742.

X. The Watchman's Duty and Account; a Sermon on Hebrews xiii. 17, preached at the Ordination of the Reverend Jonathan Judd. Boston, 1743.

XI. The True Excellency of a Gospel Minister; a Sermon on John v. 35, preached at the Ordination of the Reverend Robert Abercrombie. Boston, 1744.

XII. A Treatise concerning Religious Affections. Boston, 1746.

XIII. An Humble Attempt to promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union among God's People, in Extraordinary Prayer, &c. Boston, 1746.

XIV. True Saints, when absent from the Body, present with the Lord; a Sermon on 2 Corinthians, v. 8, preached at the Funeral of the Reverend David Brainerd. Boston, 1747.

XV. God's Awful Judgments in breaking the Strong Rods of the Community; a Sermon on the Death of Colonel John Stoddard. Boston, 1748.

XVI. Life and Diary of the Reverend David Brainerd. Boston, 1749.

XVII. Christ the Example of Gospel Ministers; a Sermon on John xiii. 15, preached at the Ordination of the Reverend Job Strong. Boston, 1749.

XVIII. Qualifications for Full Communion in the Visible Church. Boston, 1749.

XIX. Farewell Sermon to the People of Northampton. Boston, 1750.

XX. Misrepresentation Corrected, and Truth Vindicated, in a Reply to the Reverend Mr. Solomon Williams's Book on Qualifications for Communion. To which is added a Letter from Mr. Edwards to his late Flock at Northampton. Boston, 1752.

XXI. True Faith distinguished from the Experience of Devils; a Sermon from James ii. 19, preached before the Synod of New York, at Newark, September, 1752. New York, 1752.

XXII. Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will. Boston, 1754.

XXIII. The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin defended. Boston, 1758.

2. *Posthumous.*

XXIV. Eighteen Sermons, annexed to the Life of Edwards, by Dr. Hopkins. Boston, 1765.

XXV. The History of Redemption. Edinburgh, 1777.

XXVI. Nature of True Virtue. Boston, 1788.

XXVII. God's Last End in the Creation. Boston, 1788.

XXVIII. Practical Sermons. Edinburgh, 1788.

XXIX. Twenty Sermons. Edinburgh, 1789.

XXX. Miscellaneous Observations on Important Theological Subjects. Edinburgh, 1793.

XXXI. Remarks on Important Theological Controversies. Edinburgh, 1796.

XXXII. Types of the Messiah. 1829.

XXXIII. Notes on the Bible. 1829.