

THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE PRESENT REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN NEW ENGLAND

JONATHAN EDWARDS



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Jonathan Edwards



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ABOUT THIS BOOK



Written at the height of the **Great Awakening**, this treatise defends the colonial revival as a genuine work of God while guiding both its friends and critics. Edwards argues for judging religious operations by Scripture rather than prior expectation, examines the danger of opposing such a season of grace, and addresses the proper conduct of ministers and laypeople. He champions **holy affections** as central to authentic Christianity while warning against fanaticism, censoriousness, and spiritual pride that threaten to corrupt the work.



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THE PREFACE



In the ensuing treatise, I condemn ministers assuming, or taking too much upon them, and appearing as though they supposed that they were the persons, to whom it especially belonged to dictate, direct and determine; but perhaps shall be thought to be very guilty of it myself: and some when they read this treatise, may be ready to say that I condemn this in others, that I may have the monopoly of it. I confess that I have taken a great deal of liberty freely to express my thoughts, concerning almost every thing appertaining to the wonderful work of God that has of late been carried on in the land, and to declare what has appeared to me to be the mind of God, concerning the duty and obligations of all sorts of persons, and even those that are my superiors and fathers, ministers of the gospel, and civil rulers: but yet I hope the liberty I have taken is not greater than can be justified. In a free nation, such liberty of the press is allowed, that every author takes leave without offense, freely to speak his opinion concerning the management of public affairs, and the duty of the legislature, and those that are at the head of the administration, though vastly his superiors. As now at this day, private subjects offer their sentiments to the public, from the press, concerning the management of the war with Spain; freely declaring what they think to be the

duty of the parliament, and the principal ministers of state, etc. We [illegible] New England are at this day engaged in [illegible] important war: and I'm sure, if we consider the sad jangling and confusion that has attended it, we shall confess that it is highly requisite that some body should speak his mind, concerning the way in which it ought to be managed: and that not only a few of the many particulars, that are the matter of strife in the land, should be debated, on the one side and the other, in pamphlets; (as has of late been done, with heat and fierceness enough;) which don't tend to bring the contention in general to an end, but rather to inflame it, and increase the uproar: but that something should be published, to bring the affair in general, and the many things that attend it, that are the subjects of debate, under a particular consideration. And certainly it is high time that this was done. If private persons may speak their minds without arrogance; much more may a minister of the kingdom of Christ speak freely about things of this nature, which do so nearly concern the interest of the kingdom of his Lord and Master, at so important a juncture. If some elder minister had undertaken this, I acknowledge it would have been more proper; but I have heard of no such thing a doing, or like to be done. I hope therefore I shall be excused for undertaking such a piece of work. I think that nothing that I have said can justly be interpreted, as though I would impose my thoughts upon any, or did not suppose that others have equal right to think for themselves, with myself. We are not accountable one to another for our thoughts; but we must all give an account to him who searches our hearts, and has doubtless his eye especially upon us at such an extraordinary season as this. If I have well confirmed my opinion concerning this work, and the way in which it should be acknowl-

edged and promoted, with Scripture and reason, I hope others that read it will receive it, as a manifestation of the mind and will of God. If others would hold forth further light to me in any of these particulars, I hope I should thankfully receive it. I think I have been made in some measure sensible, and much more of late than formerly, of my need of more wisdom than I have. I make it my rule to lay hold of light and embrace it, wherever I see it, though held forth by a child or an enemy. If I have assumed too much in the following discourse, and have spoken in a manner that savors of a spirit of pride, no wonder that others can better discern it than I myself. If it be so I ask pardon, and beg the prayers of every Christian reader, that I may have more light, humility and zeal; and that I may be favored with such measures of the divine Spirit, as a minister of the gospel stands in need of, at such an extraordinary season.

PART 1



The error of those who have had ill thoughts of the great religious operation on the minds of men, that has been carried on of late in New England, (so far as the ground of such an error has been in the understanding, and not in the disposition,) seems fundamentally to lie in three things; first, in judging of this work a priori; secondly, in not taking the Holy Scriptures as a whole rule whereby to judge of such operations; thirdly, in not justly separating and distinguishing the good from the bad.

1. They have greatly erred in the way in which they have gone about to try this work, whether it be a work of the Spirit of God or no, namely, in judging of it a priori; from the way that it began, the instruments that have been employed, the means that have been made use of, and the methods that have been taken and succeeded, in carrying it on. Whereas, if we duly consider the matter, it will evidently appear that such a work is not to be judged of a priori, but a posteriori: we are to observe the effect wrought; and if, upon examination of that, it be found to be agreeable to the word of God, we are bound without more ado to rest in it as God's work; and shall be like to be rebuked for our arrogance, if we refuse so to do till God shall explain to us how he has brought this effect to pass, or why he has made use of such and such means in doing of

it. Those texts are enough to cause us with trembling to forbear such a way of proceeding in judging of a work of God's Spirit (Isaiah 40:13-14): "Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counselor has taught him? With whom took he counsel? and who instructed him, and who taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" And (John 3:8): "The wind blows where it lists; and you hear the sound thereof; but cannot tell whence it comes, and where it goes." We hear the sound, we perceive the effect, and from thence we judge that the wind does indeed blow; without waiting, before we pass this judgment, first to be satisfied what should be the cause of the wind's blowing from such a part of the heavens, and how it should come to pass that it should blow in such a manner, at such a time. To judge a priori, is a wrong way of judging of any of the works of God. We are not to resolve that we will first be satisfied how God brought this or the other effect to pass, and why he has made it thus, or why it has pleased him to take such a course, and to use such and such means, before we will acknowledge his work, and give him the glory of it. This is too much for the clay to take upon it with respect to the potter. God gives not account of his matters: his judgments are a great deep: he has his way in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known; and who shall teach God knowledge, or enjoin him his way, or say unto him what do you? We know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so we know not the works of God who makes all. No wonder therefore if those that go this forbidden way to work, in judging of the present wonderful operation, are perplexed and confounded. We ought to take heed that we

don't expose ourselves to the calamity of those who pried into the ark of God, when God mercifully returned it to Israel, after it had departed from them.

Indeed God has not taken that course, nor made use of those means, to begin and carry on this great work, which men in their wisdom, would have thought most advisable, if he had asked their counsel; but quite the contrary. But it appears to me that the great God has wrought like himself, in the manner of his carrying on this work; so as very much to show his own glory, and exalt his own sovereignty, power and all-sufficiency, and pour contempt on all that human strength, wisdom, prudence and sufficiency, that men have been accustomed to trust, and to glory in; and so as greatly to cross, rebuke and chastise the pride and other corruptions of men; in a fulfillment of that (Isaiah 2:17): "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day." God does thus, in intermingling in his providence so many stumbling-blocks with this work; in suffering so much of human weakness and infirmity to appear; and in ordering so many things that are mysterious to men's wisdom: in pouring out his Spirit chiefly on the common people, and bestowing his greatest and highest favors upon them, admitting them nearer to himself than the great, the honorable, the rich and the learned, agreeable to that prophecy (Zechariah 12:7): "The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah." Those that dwelt in the tents of Judah were the common people, that dwelt in the country, and were of inferior rank. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were their citizens, their men of wealth and figure: and

Jerusalem also was the chief place of the habitation or resort of their priests, and Levites, and their officers and judges; there sat the great Sanhedrin. The house of David were the highest rank of all, the royal family, and the great men that were round about the king. It is evident by the context, that this prophecy has respect to something further than the saving the people out of the Babylonian captivity.

God in this work has begun at the lower end, and he has made use of the weak and foolish things of the world to carry on his work. The ministers that have been chiefly improved, some of them have been mere babes in age and standing, and some of them such as have not been so high in reputation among their fellows as many others; and God has suffered their infirmities to appear in the sight of others, so as much to displease them; and at the same time it has pleased God to improve them, and greatly to succeed them, while he has not so succeeded others that are generally reputed vastly their superiors. Indeed, there is reason to think that it has pleased God to make use of the infirmities and sins of some that he has improved and succeeded; as particularly their imprudent and rash zeal and censorious spirit, to chastise the deadness, negligence, earthly-mindedness and vanity, that have been found among ministers, in the late times of general declension and deadness, wherein wise virgins and foolish, ministers and people have sunk into such a deep sleep. These things in ministers of the gospel, that go forth as the ambassadors of Christ, and have the care of immortal souls, are extremely abominable to God; vastly more hateful in his sight than all the imprudence, and intemperate heats, wildness and distraction (as some call it) of these zealous preachers. A supine carelessness, and a vain, carnal, worldly spirit,

in a minister of the gospel, is the worst madness and distraction in the sight of God. God may also make use at this day, of the unchristian censoriousness of some preachers, the more to humble and purify some of his own children and true servants, that have been wrongfully censured, to fit them for more eminent service, and future honor that he designs them for.

2. Another foundation-error of those that don't acknowledge the divinity of this work, is not taking the Holy Scriptures as a whole, and in itself a sufficient rule to judge of such things by. They that have one certain consistent rule to judge by, are likely to come to some clear determination; but they that have half a dozen different rules to make the thing they would judge of agree to, no wonder that instead of justly and clearly determining, they do but perplex and darken themselves and others. They that would learn the true measure of any thing, and will have many different measures to try it by, and find in it a conformity to, have a task that they will not accomplish.

Those that I am speaking of, will indeed make some use of Scripture, so far as they think it serves their turn; but don't make use of it alone, as a rule sufficient by itself, but make as much, and a great deal more use of other things, diverse and wide from it, to judge of this work by. As particularly:

1. Some make philosophy instead of the Holy Scriptures, their rule of judging of this work; particularly the philosophical notions they entertain of the nature of the soul, its faculties and affections. Some are ready to say, there is but little sober solid religion in this work: it is little else but flash and noise. Religion nowadays all runs out into transports and high flights of the passions and affections. In their philosophy, the affections of the soul are something

diverse from the will, and not appertaining to the noblest part of the soul, but the meanest principles that it has, that belong to men as partaking of animal nature, and what he has in common with the brute creation, rather than any thing whereby he is conformed to angels and pure spirits. And though they acknowledge that there is a good use may be made of the affections in religion, yet they suppose that the substantial part of religion doesn't consist in them, but that they are rather to be looked upon as something adventitious and accidental in Christianity.

But I can't but think that these gentlemen labor under great mistakes, both in their philosophy and divinity. It is true, distinction must be made in the affections or passions. There's a great deal of difference in high and raised affections, which must be distinguished by the skill of the observer. Some are much more solid than others. There are many exercises of the affections that are very flashy, and little to be depended on; and oftentimes there is a great deal that appertains to them, or rather that is the effect of them, that has its seat in animal nature, and is very much owing to the constitution and frame of the body; and that which sometimes more especially obtains the name of passion, is nothing solid or substantial. But it is false philosophy to suppose this to be the case with all exercises of affection in the soul, or with all great and high affections; and false divinity to suppose that religious affections don't appertain to the substance and essence of Christianity: on the contrary, it seems to me that the very life and soul of all true religion consists in them.

I humbly conceive that the affections of the soul are not properly distinguished from the will, as though they were two faculties in the soul. All acts of the affections of the soul are in some sense

acts of the will, and all acts of the will are acts of the affections. All exercises of the will are in some degree or other, exercises of the soul's appetite or aversion; or which is the same thing, of its love or hatred. The soul wills one thing rather than another, or chooses one thing rather than another, no otherwise than as it loves one thing more than another; but love and hatred are affections of the soul: and therefore all acts of the will are truly acts of the affections; though the exercises of the will don't obtain the name of passions, unless the will, either in its aversion or opposition, be exercised in a high degree, or in a vigorous and lively manner.

All will allow that true virtue or holiness has its seat chiefly in the heart, rather than in the head: it therefore follows from what has been said already, that it consists chiefly in holy affections. The things of religion take place in men's hearts, no further than they are affected with them. The informing of the understanding is all vain, any further than it affects the heart; or, which is the same thing, has influence on the affections.

Those gentlemen that make light of these raised affections in religion, will doubtless allow that true religion and holiness, as it has its seat in the heart, is capable of very high degrees, and high exercises in the soul. As for instance; they will doubtless allow that the holiness of the heart or will, is capable of being raised to a hundred times as great a degree of strength as it is in the most eminent saint on earth, or to be exerted in a hundred times so strong and vigorous exercises of the heart; and yet be true religion or holiness still, but only in a high degree. Now therefore I would ask them, [illegible] what name they will call these high and [illegible] exercises of the will or heart? Aren't [illegible] high affections? What can they consist in, but in high acts of love; strong and vigorous ex-

ercises of benevolence and complacency; high, exalting and admiring thoughts of God and his perfections; strong desires after God, etc.? And now what are we come to but high and raised affections? Indeed, those very same high and raised affections that before they objected against, or made light of, as worthy of little regard?

I suppose furthermore that all will allow that there is nothing but solid religion in Heaven: but that there, religion and holiness of heart is raised to an exceeding great height, to strong, high, exalted exercises of heart. Now what other kinds of such exceeding strong and high exercises of the heart, or of holiness as it has its seat in their hearts, can we devise for them, but only holy affections, high degrees of actings of love to God, rejoicing in God, admiring of God, etc.? Therefore these things in the saints and angels in Heaven, are not to be despised and dismissed by the name of great heats and transports of the passions.

And it will doubtless be yet further allowed, that the more eminent the saints are on earth, and the stronger their grace is, and the higher its exercises are, the more they are like the saints in Heaven. That is (by what has been just now observed,) the more they have of high or raised affections in religion.

Though there are false affections in religion, and affections that in some respects are raised high, that are flashy, yet undoubtedly there are also true, holy and solid affections; and the higher these are raised, the better: and if they are raised to an exceeding great height, they are not to be thought meanly of or suspected, merely because of their great degree, but on the contrary to be esteemed and rejoiced in. Charity, or divine love, is in Scripture represented as the sum of all the religion of the heart; but this is nothing but a holy affection: and therefore in proportion as this is firmly fixed in

the soul, and raised to a great height, the more eminent a person is in holiness. Divine love or charity is represented as the sum of all the religion of Heaven, and that wherein mainly the religion of the church in its more perfect state on earth shall consist, when knowledge, and tongues, and prophesyings shall cease; and therefore the higher this holy affection is raised in the church of God, or in a gracious soul, the more excellent and perfect is the state of the church, or a particular soul.

If we take the Scriptures for our rule, then the greater and higher are the exercises of love to God, delight and complacency in God, desires and longings after God, delight in the children of God, love to mankind, brokenness of heart, abhorrence of sin, and self-abhorrence for sin; and the peace of God which passes all understanding, and joy in the Holy Spirit, joy unspeakable and full of glory; admiring thoughts of God, exulting and glorying in God; so much the higher is Christ's religion, or that virtue which he and his apostles taught, raised in the soul.

It is a stumbling to some that religious affections should seem to be so powerful, or that they should be so violent (as they express it,) in some persons: they are therefore ready to doubt whether it can be the Spirit of God, or whether this vehemence isn't rather a sign of the operation of an evil spirit. But why should such a doubt arise from no other ground than this? What is represented in Scripture, as more powerful in its effects, than the Spirit of God? which is therefore called the power of the highest (Luke 1:35). And its saving effect in the soul called the power of godliness. So we read of the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power (1 Corinthians 2:4). And it is said to operate in the minds of men with the exceeding greatness of divine power, and according to the

working of God's mighty power (Ephesians 1:19). So we read of the effectual working of his power (Ephesians 3:7). And of the power that works in Christians (Ephesians 3:20). And of the glorious power of God in the operations of the Spirit (Colossians 1:11). And of the work of faith, its being wrought with power (2 Thessalonians 1:11). And in (2 Timothy 1:7) the Spirit of God is called the Spirit of power, and love, and of a sound mind. So the Spirit is represented by a mighty wind, and by fire, things most powerful in their operation.

2. Many are guilty of not taking the Holy Scriptures as a sufficient and whole rule, whereby to judge of this work, whether it be the work of God, in that they judge by those things which the Scripture doesn't give as any signs or marks whereby to judge one way or the other, and therefore do in no wise belong to the Scripture-rule of judging, namely, the effects that religious exercises and affections of mind have upon the body. Scripture rules respect the state of the mind, and persons moral conduct, and voluntary behavior, and not the physical state of the body. The design of the Scripture is to teach us divinity, and not physic and anatomy. Ministers are made the watchmen of men's souls, and not their bodies; and therefore the great rule which God has committed into their hands, is to make them divines, and not physicians. Christ knew what instructions and rules his church would stand in need of better than we do; and if he had seen it needful in order to the church's safety, he doubtless would have given ministers rules to judge of bodily effects, and would have told them how the pulse should beat under such and such religious exercises of mind; when men should look pale, and when they should shed tears; when they should tremble, and whether or no they should

ever be faint or cry out; or whether the body should ever be put into convulsions: he probably would have put some book into their hands, that should have tended to make them excellent anatomists and physicians: but he has not done it, because he did not see it to be needful. He judged, that if ministers thoroughly did their duty as watchmen and overseers of the state and frame of men's souls, and of their voluntary conduct, according to the rules he had given, his church would be well provided for, as to its safety in these matters. And therefore those ministers of Christ and overseers of souls, that busy themselves, and are full of concern about the involuntary motions of the fluids and solids of men's bodies, and from thence full of doubts and suspicions of the cause, when nothing appears but that the state and frame of their minds, and their voluntary behavior is good, and agreeable to God's word; I say, such ministers go out of the place that Christ has set them in, and leave their proper business, as much as if they should undertake to tell who are under the influence of the Spirit by their looks, or their gait. I can't see which way we are in danger, or how the devil is likely to get any notable advantage against us, if we do but thoroughly do our duty with respect to those two things, namely, the state of persons minds, and their moral conduct, seeing to it that they be maintained in an agreeableness to the rules that Christ has given us. If things are but kept right in these respects, our fears and suspicions arising from extraordinary bodily effects seem wholly groundless.

The most specious thing that is alleged against these extraordinary effects on the body, is that the body is impaired and health wronged; and that it's hard to think that God, in the merciful influences of his Spirit on men, would wound their bodies, and impair

their health. But if it were so pretty commonly or in multiplied instances, (which I don't suppose it is,) that persons received a lasting wound to their health by extraordinary religious impressions made upon their minds, yet it is too much for us to determine that God shall never bring an outward calamity, in bestowing a vastly greater spiritual and eternal good. Jacob in doing his duty in wrestling with God for the blessing, and while God was striving with him, at the same time that he received the blessing from God, suffered a great outward calamity from his hand; God impaired his body so that he never got over it as long as he lived: he gave him the blessing, but sent him away halting on his thigh, and he went lame all his life after. And yet this is not mentioned as if it were any diminution of the great mercy of God to him, when God blessed him, and he received his name Israel, because as a prince he had power with God, and had prevailed.

But, say some, the operations of the Spirit of God are of a benign nature; nothing is of a more kind influence on human nature than the merciful breathings of God's own Spirit. But it has been a thing generally supposed and allowed in the church of God, till now, that there is such a thing as being sick of love to Christ, or having the bodily strength weakened by strong and vigorous exercises of love to him. And however kind to human nature the influences of the Spirit of God are, yet no body doubts but that divine and eternal things, as they may be discovered, would overpower the nature of man in its present weak state; and that therefore the body in its present weakness, is not fitted for the views and pleasures and employments of Heaven: and that if God did discover but a little of that which is seen by the saints and angels in Heaven, our frail natures would sink under it. Indeed I know not what per-

sons may deny now, to defend themselves in a cause they have had their spirits long engaged in; but I know these things don't use to be denied, or doubted of. Let us rationally consider what we profess to believe of the infinite greatness of the things of God, the divine wrath, the divine glory, and the divine infinite love and grace in Jesus Christ, and the vastness and infinite importance of the things of eternity; and how reasonable is it to suppose that if it pleases God a little to withdraw the veil, and let in light into the soul, and give something of a view of the great things of another world in their transcendent and infinite greatness, that human nature, that is as the grass, a shaking leaf, a weak withering flower, should totter under such a discovery? Such a bubble is too weak to bear the weight of a view of things that are so vast. Alas! what is such dust and ashes, that it should support itself under the view of the awful wrath or infinite glory and love of the LORD! No wonder therefore that it is said, no man can see me and live, and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That external glory and majesty of Christ which Daniel saw, when there remained no strength in him, and his comeliness was turned in him into corruption (Daniel 10:6-8), and which the apostle John saw, when he fell at his feet as dead; was but an image or shadow of that spiritual glory and majesty of Christ, which will be manifested in the souls of the saints in another world, and which is sometimes, in some degree, manifested to the soul in this world, by the influences of the Spirit of God. And if the beholding the image, and external representation of this spiritual majesty and glory, did so overpower human nature, is it unreasonable to suppose that a sight of the spiritual glory itself, which is the substance, of which that was but the shadow, should have as powerful an effect? The prophet

Habakkuk, speaking of the awful manifestations God made of his majesty and wrath, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, and at Mount Sinai, where he gave the law; and of the merciful influence, and strong impression God caused it to have upon him, to the end that he might be saved from that wrath, and rest in the day of trouble; says (Habakkuk 3:16): "When I heard my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble." Which is much such an effect as the discovery of the same majesty and wrath, in the same awful voice from Mount Sinai, has had upon many in these days; and to the same purposes, namely, to give them rest in the day of trouble, and save them from that wrath. The psalmist also speaks of very much such an effect as I have often seen on persons under religious affections of late (Psalm 119:131): "I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for your commandments."

God is pleased sometimes in dealing forth spiritual blessings to his people, in some respect to exceed the capacity of the vessel, in its present scantiness, so that he doesn't only fill it full, but he makes their cup to run over; agreeable to (Psalm 23:5). And pours out a blessing, sometimes, in such a manner and measure that there is not room enough to receive it (Malachi 3:10), and gives them riches more than they can carry away; as he did to Jehoshaphat, and his people in a time of great favor, by the word of his prophet Jahaziel in answer to earnest prayer, when the people blessed the LORD in the Valley of Berachah (2 Chronicles 20:25-26). It has been with the disciples of Christ, for a long time, a time of great emptiness upon spiritual accounts; they have gone hungry, and have been toiling in vain, during a dark season, a time

of night with the church of God; as it was with the disciples of old, when they had toiled all night for something to eat and caught nothing (Luke 5:5; John 21:3). But now, the morning being come, Jesus appears to his disciples, and takes a compassionate notice of their wants, and says to them, children have you any meat? And gives some of them such abundance of food, that they are not able to draw their net; indeed, so that their net breaks, and their vessel is overloaded, and begins to sink; as it was with the disciples of old (Luke 5:6-7; John 21:6).

We can't determine that God never shall give any person so much of a discovery of himself, not only as to weaken their bodies, but to take away their lives. It is supposed by very learned and judicious divines, that Moses's life was taken away after this manner; and this has also been supposed to be the case with some other saints. Indeed, I don't see any solid sure grounds any have to determine, that God shall never make such strong impressions on the mind by his Spirit, that shall be an occasion of so impairing the frame of the body, and particularly that part of the body, the brain, that persons shall be deprived of the use of reason. As I said before, it is too much for us to determine, that God will not bring an outward calamity in bestowing spiritual and eternal blessings: so it is too much for us to determine, how great an outward calamity he will bring. If God gives a great increase of discoveries of himself, and of love to him, the benefit is infinitely greater than the calamity, though the life should presently after be taken away; indeed though the soul should not immediately be taken to Heaven, but should lie some years in a deep sleep, and then be taken to Heaven: or, which is much the same thing, if it be deprived of the use of its faculties, and be inactive and unserviceable, as if it lay in

a deep sleep for some years, and then should pass into glory. We cannot determine how great a calamity distraction is, when considered with all its consequences, and all that might have been consequent, if the distraction had not happened; nor indeed whether, (thus considered) it be any calamity at all, or whether it be not a mercy, by preventing some great sin, or some more dreadful thing, if it had not been. It is a great fault in us to limit a sovereign all-wise God, whose judgments are a great deep, and his ways past finding out, where he has not limited himself, and in things, concerning which, he has not told us what his way shall be. It is remarkable, considering in what multitudes of instances, and to how great a degree, the frame of the body has been overpowered of late, that persons lives have notwithstanding been preserved, and that the instances of those that have been deprived of reason have been so very few, and those, perhaps, all of them, persons under the peculiar disadvantage of a weak, vapory habit of body. A merciful and careful divine hand is very manifest in it, that in so many instances where the ship has begun to sink, yet it has been upheld, and has not totally sunk. The instances of such as have been deprived of reason are so few, that certainly they are not enough to cause us to be in any fright, as though this work that has been carried on in the country, was likely to be of baneful influence; unless we are disposed to gather up all that we can to darken it, and set it forth in frightful colors.

There is one particular kind of exercise and concern of mind, that many have been overpowered by, that has been especially stumbling to some; and that is the deep concern and distress that they have been in for the souls of others. I am sorry that any put us to the trouble of doing that which seems so needless, as defending

such a thing as this. It seems like mere trifling in so plain a case, to enter into a formal and particular debate, in order to determine whether there be any thing in the greatness and importance of the case that will answer, and bear a proportion to the greatness of the concern that some have manifested. Men may be allowed, from no higher a principle than common ingenuity and humanity, to be very deeply concerned, and greatly exercised in mind, at the seeing others in great danger, of no greater a calamity than drowning, or being burnt up in a house on fire. And if so, then doubtless it will be allowed to be equally reasonable, if they saw them in danger of a calamity ten times greater, to be still much more concerned; and so much more still, if the calamity was still vastly greater. And why then should it be thought unreasonable, and looked upon with a very suspicious eye, as if it must come from some bad cause, when persons are extremely concerned at seeing others in very great danger of suffering the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, to all eternity? And besides it will doubtless be allowed that those that have very great degrees of the Spirit of God, that is a Spirit of love, may well be supposed to have vastly more of love and compassion to their fellow-creatures, than those that are influenced only by common humanity. Why should it be thought strange that those that are full of the Spirit of Christ, should be proportionably, in their love to souls, like to Christ? who had so strong a love to them and concern for them, as to be willing to drink the dregs of the cup of God's fury for them; and at the same time that he offered up his blood for souls, offered up also, as their High Priest, strong crying and tears, with an extreme agony, wherein the soul of Christ was as it were in travail for the souls of the elect; and therefore in saving them he is said to see of the travail of his soul.

As such a spirit of love to, and concern for souls was the spirit of Christ, so it is the spirit of the church; and therefore the church, in desiring and seeking that Christ might be brought forth in the world, and in the souls of men, is represented (Revelation 12) as a woman crying, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. The spirit of those that have been in distress for the souls of others, so far as I can discern, seems not to be different from that of the apostle, who travailed for souls, and was ready to wish himself accursed from Christ for others. And that of the psalmist (Psalm 119:53): "Horror has taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake your law." And (Psalm 119:136): "Rivers of waters run down my eyes, because they keep not your law." And that of the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 4:19): "My bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me! I cannot hold my peace! Because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war!" And so (Jeremiah 9:1; 13:17; 14:17; Isaiah 22:4). We read of Mordecai, when he saw his people in danger of being destroyed with a temporal destruction (Esther 4:1), that he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry. And why then should persons be thought to be distracted, when they can't forbear crying out, at the consideration of the misery of those that are going to eternal destruction?

3. Another thing that some make their rule to judge of this work by, instead of the Holy Scriptures, is history, or former observation. Herein they err two ways; first, if there be any thing new and extraordinary in the circumstances of this work, that was not observed in former times, that is a rule with them to reject this work as not the work of God. Herein they make that their rule, that

God has not given them for their rule; and limit God, where he has not limited himself. And this is especially unreasonable in this case: for whoever has well weighed the wonderful and mysterious methods of divine wisdom, in carrying on the work of the new creation, or in the progress of the work of redemption, from the first promise of the seed of the woman to this time, may easily observe that it has all along been God's manner to open new scenes, and to bring forth to view things new and wonderful, such as eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man or angels, to the astonishment of Heaven and earth, not only in the revelations he makes of his mind and will, but also in the works of his hands. As the old creation was carried on through six days, and appeared all complete, settled in a state of rest on the seventh; so the new creation, which is immensely the greatest and most glorious work, is carried on in a gradual progress, from the fall of man, to the consummation of all things, at the end of the world. And as in the progress of the old creation, there were still new things accomplished; new wonders appeared every day in the sight of the angels, the spectators of that work; while those morning stars sang together, new scenes were opened or things that they had not seen before, till the whole was finished; so it is in the progress of the new creation. So that that promise (Isaiah 64:4): "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen, O God, besides you, what he has prepared for him that waits for him." Though it had a glorious fulfillment in the days of Christ and the apostles, as the words are applied (1 Corinthians 2:9), yet it always remains to be fulfilled, in things that are yet behind, till the new creation is finished, at Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father. And we live in

those latter days, wherein we may be especially warranted to expect that things will be accomplished, concerning which it will be said, who has heard such a thing? who has seen such things?

And besides, those things in this work that have been chiefly complained of as new, are not so new as has been generally imagined: though they have been much more frequent lately, in proportion to the uncommon degree, extent and swiftness, and other extraordinary circumstances of the work, yet they are not new in their kind; but are things of the same nature as have been found and well approved of in the church of God before, from time to time.

We have a remarkable instance in Mr. Bolton, that noted minister of the Church of England, who being awakened by the preaching of the famous Mr. Perkins, minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, was subject to such terrors as threw him to the ground, and caused him to roar with anguish; and the pangs of the new birth in him were such, that he lay pale and without sense, like one dead; as we have an account in the Fulfilling of the Scripture, the 5th edition, p. 103, 104. We have an account in the same page of another, whose comforts under the sunshine of God's presence were so great, that he could not forbear crying out in a transport, and expressing in exclamations, the great sense he had of forgiving mercy and his assurance of God's love. And we have a remarkable instance in the Life of Mr. George Trosse, written by himself (who, of a notoriously vicious profligate liver, became an eminent saint and minister of the gospel,) of terrors occasioned by awakenings of conscience, so overpowering the body, as to deprive, for some time, of the use of reason.

Indeed, such extraordinary external effects of inward impressions have not only been to be found in here and there a single person, but there have also before now been times wherein many have been thus affected, in some particular parts of the church of God, and such effects have appeared in congregations, in many at once. So it was in the year 1625, in the west of Scotland, in a time of great outpouring of the Spirit of God. It was then a frequent thing for many to be so extraordinarily seized with terror in the hearing of the word, by the Spirit of God convincing them of sin, that they fell down, and were carried out of the church, who afterwards proved most solid and lively Christians; as the author of the Fulfilling of the Scripture informs us, p. 185. The same author in the preceding page, informs of many in France that were so wonderfully affected with the preaching of the gospel, in the time of those famous divines Farel and Viret, that for a time, they could not follow their secular business. And p. 186, of many in Ireland, in a time of great outpouring of the Spirit there, in the year 1628, that were so filled with divine comforts, and a sense of God, that they made but little use of either meat, drink or sleep, and professed that they did not feel the need thereof. The same author gives an account of very much such things in Mrs. Catherine Brettergh of Lancashire in England, (p. 391, 392,) as have been cried out of, here amongst us, as wild and distracted: how that after great distress, which very much affected her body, the sweat sometimes bursting out upon her, God did so break in upon her mind with light and discoveries of himself, that she was forced to burst out, crying, "O the joys, the joys, the joys, that I feel in my soul! O they be wonderful, they be wonderful! The place where I now am is sweet and pleasant! How comfortable is the sweetness I

feel, that delights my soul! The taste is precious; do you not feel it? Oh so sweet as it is!" And at other times, "O my sweet Savior, shall I be one with you, as you are one with the Father? And do you so love me that am but dust, to make me partaker of glory with Christ? O how wonderful is your love! And oh that my tongue and heart were able to sound forth your praises as I ought." At another time she burst forth thus: "Yes Lord, I feel your mercy, and I am assured of your love! And so certain am I thereof, as you are that God of truth: even so certainly do I know myself to be yours, O LORD my God; and this my soul knows right well!" Which last words she again doubled. To a grave minister, one Mr. Harrison, then with her, she said, "My soul has been encompassed with the terrors of death, the sorrows of hell were upon me, and a wilderness of woe was in me; but blessed, blessed, blessed be the LORD my God! he has brought me to a place of rest, even to the sweet running waters of life. The way I now go in is a sweet and easy way, strewed with flowers; he has brought me into a place more sweet than the garden of Eden. O the joy, the joy, the delights and joy that I feel! O how wonderful!"

Great outcries under awakenings were more frequently heard of in former times in the country than they have been of late, as some aged persons now living do testify: particularly I think fit here to insert a testimony of my honored father, of what he remembers formerly to have heard.

I well remember that one Mr. Alexander Allyn, a Scots gentleman of good credit, that dwelt formerly in this town, showed me a letter that came from Scotland, that gave an account of a sermon preached in the city of Edinburgh, (as I remember) in the time of the sitting of the general Assembly of Divines in that kingdom, that

so affected the people, that there was a great and loud cry made throughout the assembly. I have also been credibly informed, and how often I cannot now say, that it was a common thing, when the famous Mr. John Rogers of Dedham in England was preaching, for some of his hearers to cry out; and by what I have heard, I conclude that it was usual for many that heard that very awakening and rousing preacher of God's word, to make a great cry in the congregation. Windsor, May 5, 1742. Timothy Edwards.

Mr. Flavel gives a remarkable instance of a man that he knew, that was wonderfully overcome with divine comforts; which it is supposed he knew, as the apostle Paul knew the man that was caught up to the third heaven. He relates:

That as the person was travelling alone, with his thoughts closely fixed on the great and astonishing things of another world, his thoughts began to swell higher and higher, like the water in Ezekiel's vision, till at last they became an overflowing flood: such was the intenseness of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and such his full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost all sight and sense of this world, and the concerns thereof; and for some hours, knew not where he was, nor what he was about: but having lost a great quantity of blood at the nose, he found himself so faint, that it brought him a little more to himself. And after he had washed himself at a spring, and drunk of the water for his refreshment, he continued to the end of his journey, which was thirty miles; and all this while was scarce sensible: and says he had several trances of considerable continuance. The same blessed frame was preserved all that night, and in a lower degree, great part of the next day: the night passed without one wink of sleep; and yet he declares he never had a sweeter night's rest in all

his life. Still adds the story, the joy of the Lord overflowed him, and he seemed to be an inhabitant of another world. And he used for many years after to call that day one of the days of Heaven; and professed that he understood more of the life of Heaven by it, than by all the books he ever read, or discourses he ever entertained about it.

There have been instances before now, of persons crying out in transports of divine joy in New England. We have an instance in Capt. Clap's Memoirs, published by the Rev. Mr. Prince, not of a silly woman or child, but a man of solid understanding, that in a high transport of spiritual joy, was made to cry out aloud on his bed. His words p. 9 are, "God's holy Spirit did witness, (I do believe) together with my spirit; that I was a child of God, and did fill my heart and soul with such full assurance that Christ was mine, that it did so transport me, as to make me cry out upon my bed, with a loud voice, he is come, he is come!"

There has, before now, been both crying out and falling down, in this town, under awakenings of conscience, and in the pangs of the new birth, and also in some of the neighbor towns. In one of them, more than seven years ago, was a great number together that cried out and fell down, under convictions; in most of which, by good information, was a hopeful and abiding good issue. And the Rev. Mr. Williams of Deerfield gave me an account of an aged man in that town, many years before that, that being awakened by his preaching, cried out aloud in the congregation. There have been many instances in this and some neighbor towns, before now, of persons fainting with joyful discoveries made to their souls: once several together in this town. And there also formerly have been several instances here, of persons' flesh waxing cold and be-

numbed, and their hands clenched, indeed their bodies being set into convulsions, being overpowered with a strong sense of the astonishingly great and excellent things of God and the eternal world.

Secondly, another way that some err in making history and former observation their rule to judge of this work, instead of the Holy Scripture, is in comparing some external, accidental circumstances of this work, with what has appeared sometimes in enthusiasts; and as they find an agreement in some such things, so they reject the whole work, or at least the substance of it, concluding it to be enthusiasm. So, great use has been made to this purpose of many things that are found amongst the Quakers; however totally and essentially different in its nature this work is, and the principles it is built upon, from the whole religion of the Quakers. So, to the same purpose, some external appearances that were found amongst the French Prophets, and some other enthusiasts in former times, have been of late trumped up with great assurance and triumph.

4. I would propose it to be considered, whether or no, some instead of making the Scriptures their only rule to judge of this work, don't make their own experience the rule, and reject such and such things as are now professed and experienced, because they never felt them themselves. Are there not many, that chiefly on this ground, have entertained and vented suspicions, if not peremptory condemnations of those extreme terrors, and those great, sudden and extraordinary discoveries of the glorious perfections of God, and of the beauty and love of Christ; and such vehement affections, such high transports of love and joy, such pity and distress for the souls of others, and exercises of mind that have such great effects

on persons bodies, merely, or chiefly, because they knew nothing about them by experience? Persons are very ready to be suspicious of what they haven't felt themselves. It is to be feared many good men have been guilty of this error; which yet doesn't make it the less unreasonable. And perhaps there are some that upon this ground don't only reject these extraordinary things, but all such conviction of sin, and such discoveries of the glory of God, and excellency of Christ, and inward conviction of the truth of the gospel, by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, that are now supposed to be necessary to salvation.

These persons that thus make their own experiences their rule of judgment, instead of bowing to the wisdom of God, and yielding to his word as an infallible rule, are guilty of casting a great reflection upon the understanding of the most High.

3. Another foundation-error of those that reject this work, is their not duly distinguishing the good from the bad, and very unjustly judging of the whole by a part; and so rejecting the work in general, or in the main substance of it, for the sake of some things that are accidental to it, that are evil. They look for more in men that are divinely influenced, because subject to the operations of a good Spirit, than is justly to be expected from them for that reason, in this imperfect state, and dark world, where so much blindness and corruption remains in the best. When any profess to have received light and influence and comforts from Heaven, and to have had sensible communion with God, many are ready to expect that now they appear like angels, and not still like poor, feeble, blind and sinful worms of the dust. There being so much corruption left in the hearts of God's own children, and its prevailing as it sometimes does, is indeed a mysterious thing, and always was a stum-

bling-block to the world; but won't be so much wondered at by those that are well versed in, and duly mindful of, two things, namely, first, the word of God, which teaches us the state of true Christians in this world, and secondly, their own hearts, at least if they have any grace, and have experience of its conflicts with corruption. They that are true saints are most inexcusable in making a great difficulty of a great deal of blindness, and many sinful errors in those that profess godliness. If all our conduct, both open and secret, should be known, and our hearts laid open to the world, how should we be even ready to fly from the light of the sun, and hide ourselves from the view of mankind! and what great allowances would it be found that we should need, that others should make for us? perhaps much greater than we are willing to make for others.

The great weakness of the bigger part of mankind, in any affair that is new and uncommon, appears in not distinguishing, but either approving or condemning all in the lump. They that highly approve of the affair in general, can't bear to have any thing at all found fault with; and on the other hand, those that fasten their eyes upon some things in the affair that are amiss, and appear very disagreeable to them, at once reject the whole. Both which errors oftentimes arise from want of persons due acquaintance with themselves. It is rash and unjust when we proceed thus in judging either of a particular person, or a people, or of such an affair as the present wonderful influence on the minds of the people of this land. Many if they see any thing very ill in a particular person, a minister or private professor, will at once brand him as a hypocrite. And if there be two or three of a people or society that behave themselves very irregularly, the whole must bear the blame of

it. And if there be a few, though it may be not above one in a hundred, that professed, and had a show of being the happy partakers of what are called the saving benefits of this work, that prove naught, and give the world just grounds to suspect them, the whole work must be rejected on their account; and those in general, that make the like profession must be condemned for their sakes.

So careful are some persons lest this work should be defended, that now they will hardly allow that the influences of the Spirit of God on the heart, can so much as indirectly, and accidentally, be the occasion of the exercise of corruption, and commission of sin. Thus far is true, that the influence of the Spirit of God in his saving operations, won't be an occasion of the increase of the corruption of the heart in general, but on the contrary, of the weakening of it: but yet there is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that at the same time that it weakens corruption in general, it may be an occasion of the turning what is left into a new channel, and so of there being more of some certain kinds of the exercise of corruption than there was before; as that which tends to hinder and stop the course of a stream, if it doesn't do it wholly, may give a new course to so much of the water as gets by the obstacle. The influences of the Spirit, for instance, may be an occasion of new ways of the exercise of pride, as has been acknowledged by orthodox divines in general. That spiritual discoveries and comforts may, through the corruption of the heart, be an occasion of the exercises of spiritual pride, doesn't use to be doubted of, till now it is found to be needful to maintain the war against this work.

They that will hardly allow that a work of the Spirit of God can be a remote occasion of any sinful behavior or unchristian conduct, I suppose will allow that the truly gracious influences of the

Spirit of God, indeed and a high degree of love to God, is consistent with these two things, namely, a considerable degree of remaining corruption, and also many errors in judgment in matters of religion, and in matters of practice. And this is all that need to be allowed, in order to its being most demonstratively evident, that a high degree of love to God may accidentally move a person to that which is very wrong, and contrary to the mind and will of God. For a high degree of love to God will strongly move a person to do that which he believes to be agreeable to God's will; and therefore, if he be mistaken, and be persuaded that that is agreeable to the will of God, which indeed is very contrary to it, then his love will accidentally, but strongly, incline him to that, which is indeed very contrary to the will of God.

They that are studied in logic have learned that the nature of the cause is not to be judged of by the nature of the effect, nor the nature of the effect from the nature of the cause, when the cause is only *causa sine qua non*, or an occasional cause; indeed, that in such a case, oftentimes the nature of the effect is quite contrary to the nature of the cause.

True disciples of Christ may have a great deal of false zeal, such as the disciples had of old, when they would have fire called for from Heaven to come down on the Samaritans, because they did not receive them. And even so eminently holy, and great, and divine a saint as Moses, who conversed with God from time to time, as a man speaks with his friend, and concerning whom God gives his testimony, that he was very meek, above any man upon the face of the earth, yet may be rash and sinful in his zeal, when his spirit is stirred by the hard-heartedness and opposition of others, so as to speak very unadvisedly with his lips, and greatly to offend God,

and shut himself out from the possession of the good things, that God is about to accomplish for his church on earth; as Moses was excluded from Canaan, though he had brought the people out of Egypt (Psalm 106:32-33). And men, even in those very things wherein they are influenced by a truly pious principle, yet, through error and want of due consideration and caution, may be very rash with their zeal. It was a truly good spirit that animated that excellent generation of Israel that was in Joshua's time, in that affair that we have an account of in the 22nd chapter of Joshua; and yet they were rash and headstrong with their zeal, to go about to gather all Israel together to go up so furiously to war with their brethren of the two tribes and a half, about their building the altar Ed, without first, inquiring into the matter, or so much as sending a messenger to be informed. So the Christians that were of the circumcision, with warmth and contention condemned Peter for receiving Cornelius, as we have account (Acts 11). This their heat and censure was unjust, and Peter was wronged in it; but there is all appearance in the story that they acted from a real zeal and concern for the will and honor of God. So the primitive Christians, from their zeal for, and against unclean meats, censured and condemned one another: this was a bad effect, and yet the apostle bears them witness, or at least expresses his charity towards them, that both sides acted from a good principle, and true respect to the Lord (Romans 14:6). The zeal of the Corinthians with respect to the incestuous man, though the apostle highly commends it, yet at the same time saw that they needed a caution, lest they should carry it too far, to an undue severity, and so as to fail of Christian

meeekness and forgiveness (2 Corinthians 2:6-11; 7:11 to the end). Luther that great reformer had a great deal of bitterness with his zeal.

It surely cannot be wondered at by considerate persons, that at a time when multitudes all over the land have their affections greatly moved, that great numbers should run into many errors and mistakes with respect to their duty, and consequently into many acts and practices that are imprudent and irregular. I question whether there be a man in New England, of the strongest reason and greatest learning, but what would be put to it to keep master of himself, thoroughly to weigh his words, and consider all the consequences of his behavior, so as to behave himself in all respects prudently, if he were so strongly impressed with a sense of divine and eternal things, and his affections so exceedingly moved, as has been frequent of late among the common people. How little do they consider human nature, who look upon it so insuperable a stumbling-block, when such multitudes of all kinds of capacities, natural tempers, educations, customs and manners of life, are so greatly and variously affected, that imprudences and irregularities of conduct should abound; especially in a state of things so uncommon, and when the degree, extent, swiftness and power of the operation is so very extraordinary, and so new, that there has not been time and experience enough to give birth to rules for people's conduct, and so unusual in times past, that the writings of divines don't afford rules to direct us in such a state of things?

A great deal of noise and tumult, confusion and uproar, and darkness mixed with light, and evil with good, is always to be expected in the beginning of something very extraordinary, and very glorious in the state of things in human society, or the church of

God. As after nature has long been shut up in a cold dead state, in time of winter, when the sun returns in the spring, there is, together with the increase of the light and heat of the sun, very dirty and tempestuous weather, before all is settled calm and serene, and all nature rejoices in its bloom and beauty. It is in the new creation as it was in the old, the Spirit of God first moved upon the face of the waters, which was an occasion of great uproar and tumult, and things were gradually brought to a settled state, till at length all stood forth in that beautiful, peaceful order, when the heavens and the earth were finished, and God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. When God is about to bring to pass something great and glorious in the world, nature is in a ferment and struggle, and the world as it were in travail. As when God was about to introduce the Messiah into the world, and that new and glorious dispensation that he set up, he shook the heavens and the earth, and shook all nations. There is nothing that the church of God is in Scripture more frequently represented by than vegetables; as a tree, a vine, corn, etc., which gradually bring forth their fruit, and are first green before they are ripe. A great revival of religion is expressly compared to this gradual production of vegetables (Isaiah 61:11): "As the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." The church is in a special manner compared to a palm tree (Song of Solomon 7:7-8; Exodus 15:27; 1 Kings 6:29; Psalm 92:12). Of which tree this peculiar thing is observed, that the fruit of it, though it be very sweet and good when it is ripe, yet, before it has had time to ripen, has a mixture of poison.

The weakness of human nature has always appeared in times of great revival of religion, by a disposition to run to extremes and get into confusion; and especially in these three things, enthusiasm, superstition, and intemperate zeal. So it appeared in the time of the Reformation, very remarkably; and also in the days of the apostles; many were then exceedingly disposed to lay weight on those things that were very notional and chimerical, giving heed to fables and whimsies, as appears by (1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:10, 23; Titus 1:14; 3:9). Many, as ecclesiastical history informs us, fell off into the most wild enthusiasm, and extravagant notions of spirituality, and extraordinary illumination from Heaven beyond others; and many were prone to superstition, will-worship and a voluntary humility, giving heed to the commandments of men, being fond of an unprofitable bodily exercise, as appears by many passages in the apostles' writings: and what a proneness then appeared among professors to swerve from the path of duty, and the spirit of the gospel, in the exercises of a rash indiscreet zeal, censuring and condemning ministers and people; one saying, I am of Paul, another I of Apollos, another I of Cephas; judging one another for differences of opinion about smaller matters, unclean meats, holy days and holy places, and their different opinions and practices respecting civil intercourse and communication with their heathen neighbors? And how much did vain jangling and disputing and confusion prevail through undue heat of spirit, under the name of a religious zeal? (2 Timothy 6:4-5; 2 Timothy 2:16; Titus 3:9). And what a task had the apostles to keep them within bounds, and maintain good order in the churches? How often are they mentioning their irregularities? The prevailing of such like disorders seems to have been the special occasion of writing many

of their epistles. The church in that great effusion of the Spirit that was then, and the strong impressions that God's people were then under, was under the care of infallible guides, that watched over them day and night; but yet so prone were they, through the weakness and corruption of human nature, to get out of the way, that irregularity and confusion rose in some churches, where there was an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit, to a very great height, even in the apostles' lifetime, and under their eye. And though some of the apostles lived long to settle the state of things, yet presently after they were dead, the Christian church ran into many superstitions and childish notions and practices, and in some respects into a great severity in their zeal. And let any wise person that hasn't, in the midst of the disputes of the present day, got beyond the calmness of consideration, impartially consider to what lengths, we may reasonably suppose, many of the primitive Christians, in their heat of zeal, and under their extraordinary impressions, would soon have gone, if they had had no inspired guides; and whether or no it is not probable that the church of Corinth in particular, by an increase of their irregularities and contentions, would not in a little time have broke to pieces, and dissolved in a state of the utmost confusion? and yet this would have been no evidence that there had not been a most glorious and remarkable outpouring of the Spirit in that city. But as for us, we have no infallible apostle to guide and direct us, to rectify disorders, and reclaim us when we are wandering; but every one does what is right in his own eyes; and they that err in judgment, and are got into a wrong path, continue to wander, till experience of the mischievous issue convinces them of their error.

If we look over this affair, and seriously weigh it in its circumstances, it will appear a matter of no great difficulty to account for the errors that have been gone into, supposing the work in general to be from a very great outpouring of the Spirit of God. It may easily be accounted for, that many have run into great errors, and into just such errors as they have. It is known, that some that have been improved as great instruments to promote this work, have been very young; and how natural is it for such as are themselves newly waked out of sleep, and brought out of that state of darkness, insensibility and spiritual death, which they had been in ever since they were born; and have a new and wonderful scene opened to them; and have in view the reality, the vastness, and infinite importance, and nearness of spiritual and eternal things; and at the same time are surprised to see the world asleep about them; and haven't the advantage of age and experience, and have had but little opportunity to study divinity, or to converse with aged experienced Christians and divines; I say, how natural is it for such to fall into many errors with respect to the state of mankind, with which they are so surprised, and with respect to the means, and methods of their relief? Is it any wonder that they haven't at once learned how to make all the allowances that are to be made, and that they don't at once find out that method of dealing with the world, that is adapted to the mysterious state and nature of mankind? Is it any wonder that they can't at once foresee what the consequences of things will be, what evils are to be guarded against, and what difficulties are likely to arise, that are to be provided for?

We have long been in a strange stupor; the influences of the Spirit of God upon the heart have been but little felt, and the nature of them but little taught; so that they are in many respects

new to great numbers of those that have lately fallen under them. And is it any wonder that they that never before had experience of the supernatural influence of the divine Spirit upon their souls, and never were instructed in the nature of these influences, don't so well know how to distinguish one extraordinary new impression from another, and so (to themselves insensibly) run into enthusiasm, taking every strong impulse or impression to be divine? How natural is it to suppose, that among the multitudes of illiterate people (most of which are in their youth) that find themselves so wonderfully changed, and brought into such new, and before (to them) almost unheard of circumstances, that many should pass wrong, and very strange judgments of both persons and things that are about them; and that now they behold them in such a new light, they in their surprise should go further from the judgment that they were accustomed to make of them than they ought, and in their great change of sentiments, should pass from one extreme to another? And why should it be thought strange, that those that scarce ever heard of any such thing as an outpouring of the Spirit of God before; or if they did, had no notion of it; don't know how to behave themselves in such a new and strange state of things? And is it any wonder that they are ready to hearken to those that have instructed them, that have been the means of delivering them from such a state of death and misery as they were in before, or have a name for being the happy instruments of promoting the same work among others? Is it unaccountable that persons in these circumstances are ready to receive every thing they say, and to drink down error as well as truth from them? And why should there be all indignation and no compassion towards those that are thus misled?

When these persons are extraordinarily affected with a new sense, and recent discovery they have received, of the greatness and excellency of the divine being, the certainty and infinite importance of eternal things, the preciousness of souls, and the dreadful danger and madness of mankind, together with a great sense of God's distinguishing kindness and love to them; no wonder that now they think they must exert themselves, and do something extraordinary for the honor of God and the good of the souls of their fellow-creatures, and know not how to sit still, and forbear speaking and acting with uncommon earnestness and vigor. And in these circumstances, if they aren't persons of more than common steadiness and discretion, or haven't some person of wisdom to direct them, it is a wonder if they don't proceed without due caution, and do things that are irregular, and that will, in the issue, do much more hurt than good.

Censuring others is the worst disease with which this affair has been attended: but yet such a time as this is indeed a time of great temptation to this sinful error. When there has been such a time of great and long continued deadness, and many are brought out of a state of nature into a state of grace, in so extraordinary a manner, and filled with such uncommon degrees of light, it is natural for such to form their notions of a state of grace wholly from what they experience; many of them know no other way; for they never have been taught much about a state of grace, and the different degrees of grace, and the degrees of darkness and corruption that grace is consistent with, nor concerning the manner of the influences of the Spirit in converting a soul, and the variety of the manner of his operations: they therefore forming their idea of a state of grace only by their own experience, no wonder that it appears an insuperable

difficulty to them to reconcile such a state, of which they have this idea, with what they observe in professors that are about them. It is indeed in itself a very great mystery, that grace should be consistent with so much and such kind of corruption as sometimes prevails in the truly godly; and no wonder that it especially appears so to uninstructed new converts, that have been converted in an extraordinary manner.

Though censoriousness be a thing that is very sinful, and is most commonly found in hypocrites and persons of a pharisaical spirit, yet it is not so inconsistent with true godliness as some imagine. We have remarkable instances of it in those holy men that we have an account of in the book of Job: not only were Job's three friends, that seem to have been eminently holy men, guilty of it, in very unreasonably censuring the best man on earth, very positively determining that he was an unconverted man; but Job himself, that was not only a man of true piety, but excelled all men in piety, and particularly excelled in a humble, meek and patient spirit, was guilty of bitterly censuring his three friends, as wicked, vile hypocrites. (Job 16:9-11): "He tears me in his wrath who hates me, he gnashes upon me with his teeth; my enemy sharpens his eyes upon me: they have gaped upon me with their mouth. God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked." So he is very positive in it that they are hypocrites, and shall be miserably destroyed as such, in the next chapter (Job 17:2-4): "Are there not mockers with me? And does not my eye continue in their provocation? Lay down now, put me in surety with you; who is he that will strike hands with me? For you have hid their heart from understanding: therefore shall you not exalt them." And again (Job 17:8-10): "Upright men shall be aston-

ished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite: the righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. But as for you all, do you return and come now: for I cannot find one wise man (that is, one good man) among you."

Thus I think the errors and irregularities that attend this work, may be accounted for, from the consideration of the infirmity and weakness and common corruption of mankind, together with the circumstances of the work, though we should suppose it to be the work of God. And it would not be a just objection in any to say, if these powerful impressions and great affections are from the Spirit of God, why don't the same Spirit give strength of understanding and capacity in proportion, to those persons that are the subjects of them; so that strong affections may not, through their error, drive them to an irregular and sinful conduct? For I don't know that God has anywhere obliged himself to do it. The end of the influences of God's Spirit is to make men spiritually knowing, wise to salvation, which is the most excellent wisdom; and he has also appointed means for our gaining such degrees of other knowledge as we need, to conduct ourselves regularly, which means should be carefully used: but the end of the influence of the Spirit of God is not to increase men's natural capacities, nor has God obliged himself immediately to increase civil prudence in proportion to the degrees of spiritual light.

If we consider the errors that attend this work, not only as from man, and his infirmity, but also as from God, and by his permission and disposal, they are not strange, upon the supposition of its being, as to the substance of it, a work of God. If God intends this great revival of religion to be the dawning, or a forerunner of a

happy state of his church on earth, it may be an instance of the divine wisdom, in the beginning of it, to suffer so many irregularities and errors in conduct, to which he knew men, in their present weak state, were most exposed, under great religious affections, and when animated with great zeal. For it will be very likely to be of excellent benefit to his church, in the continuance and progress of the work afterwards: their experience in the first setting out, of the mischievous consequences of these errors, and smarting for them in the beginning, may be a happy defense to them afterwards, for many generations, from these errors, which otherwise they might continually be exposed to. As when David and all Israel went about to bring back the ark into the midst of the land, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjath-jearim, in the utmost borders of the land; they at first sought not the LORD after the due order, and they smarted for their error; but this put them upon studying the law, and more thoroughly acquainting themselves with the mind and will of God, and seeking and serving him with greater circumspection; and the consequence was glorious, namely, their seeking God in such a manner as was accepted of him; and the ark of God's ascending into the [illegible] of Zion, with those great and extraordinary rejoicings of the king and all the people, without any frown or rebuke from God intermixed; and God's dwelling thenceforth in the midst of the people, to those glorious purposes that are expressed in the 68th psalm.

And it is very analogous to the manner of God dealing with his people, to permit a great deal of error, and suffer the infirmity of his people much to appear, in the beginning of a glorious work of his grace for their felicity, to teach them what they be, to humble

them, and fit them for that glorious prosperity he is about to advance them to, and the more to secure to himself the honor of such a glorious work: for by man's exceeding weakness appearing in the beginning of it, it is evident that God doesn't lay the foundation of it in man's strength or wisdom.

And as we need not wonder at the errors that attend this work, if we look at the hand of men that are guilty of them, and the hand of God in permitting them, so neither shall we see cause to wonder at them, if we consider them with regard to the hand that Satan has in them. For as the work is much greater than any other outpouring of the Spirit that ever has been in New England, so no wonder that the devil is more alarmed and enraged, and exerts himself more vigorously against it, and does more powerfully endeavor to tempt and mislead those that are the subjects of it, or are its promoters.

Whatever imprudences there have been, and whatever sinful irregularities; whatever vehemence of the passions, and heats of the imaginations, transports and ecstasies; and whatever error in judgment, and indiscreet zeal; and whatever outcries, and faintings, and agitations of body; yet it is manifest and notorious, that there has been of late a very uncommon influence upon the minds of a very great part of the inhabitants of New England, from one end of the land to the other, that has been attended with the following effects; namely, a great increase of a spirit of seriousness, and sober consideration of the things of the eternal world; a disposition to hearken to any thing that is said of things of this nature, with attention and affection; a disposition to treat matters of religion with solemnity, and as matters of great importance; a disposition to make these things the subject of conversation; and a great

disposition to hear the word of God preached, and to take all opportunities in order to it; and to attend on the public worship of God, and all external duties of religion in a more solemn and decent manner; so that there is a remarkable and general alteration in the face of New England in these respects. Multitudes in all parts of the land, of vain, thoughtless, regardless persons are quite changed, and become serious and considerate: there is a vast increase of concern for the salvation of the precious soul, and of that inquiry, what shall I do to be saved? The hearts of multitudes have been greatly taken off from the things of the world, its profits, pleasures and honors; and there has been a great increase of tenderness of conscience: multitudes in all parts have had their consciences awakened, and have been made sensible of the pernicious nature and consequences of sin, and what a dreadful thing it is to lie under guilt and the displeasure of God, and to live without peace and reconciliation with him: they have also been awakened to a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the reality of another world and future judgment, and of the necessity of an interest in Christ: they are more afraid of sin, more careful and inquisitive that they may know what is contrary to the mind and will of God, that they may avoid it, and what he requires of them, that they may do it; more careful to guard against temptations, more watchful over their own hearts, earnestly desirous of being informed what are the means that God has directed to, for their salvation, and diligent in the use of the means that God has appointed in his word, in order to it. Many very stupid, senseless sinners, and persons of a vain mind, have been greatly awakened. There is a strange alteration almost all over New England amongst young people: by a powerful, invisible influence on their minds, they have

been brought to forsake those things in a general way, as it were at once, that they were extremely fond of, and greatly addicted to, and that they seemed to place the happiness of their lives in, and that nothing before could induce them to forsake; as their frolicking, vain company-keeping, night-walking, their mirth and jollity, their impure language, and lewd songs: in vain did ministers preach against those things before, and in vain were laws made to restrain them, and in vain was all the vigilance of magistrates and civil officers; but now they have almost everywhere dropped them as it were of themselves. And there is a great alteration amongst old and young as to drinking, tavern-haunting, profane speaking, and extravagance in apparel. Many notoriously vicious persons have been reformed, and become externally quite new creatures: some that are wealthy, and of a fashionable, gay education; some great beaux and fine ladies, that seemed to have their minds swallowed up with nothing but the vain shows and pleasures of the world, have been wonderfully altered, and have relinquished these vanities, and are become serious, mortified and humble in their conversation. It is astonishing to see the alteration that is in some towns, where before was but little appearance of religion, or any thing but vice and vanity: and so remote was all that was to be seen or heard amongst them from any thing that savored of vital piety or serious religion, or that had any relation to it, that one would have thought, if they had judged only by what appeared in them, that they had been some other species from the serious and religious, that had no concern with another world, and whose natures were not made capable of those things that appertain to Christian experience, and pious conversation; especially was it thus among young persons: and now they are transformed into another form of

people; their former vain, worldly and vicious conversation and dispositions seem to be forsaken, and they are as it were, gone over to a new world: their thoughts, and their talk and their concern, affections and inquiries are now about the favor of God, an interest in Christ, a renewed sanctified heart, and a spiritual blessedness, and acceptance and happiness in a future world. And through the greater part of New England, the Holy Bible is in much greater esteem and use than it used to be; the great things that are contained in it are much more regarded, as things of the greatest consequence, and are much more the subjects of meditation and conversation; and other books of piety that have long been of established reputation, as the most excellent, and most tending to promote true godliness, have been abundantly more in use: the Lord's Day is more religiously and strictly observed: and abundance has been lately done at making up differences, and confessing faults one to another, and making restitution; probably more within this two years, than was done in thirty years before: it has been so undoubtedly in many places. And surprising has been the power of that Spirit that has been poured out on the land, in many instances, to destroy old grudges, and make up long continued breaches, and to bring those that seemed to be in a confirmed irreconcilable alienation, to embrace each other in a sincere and entire amity. Great numbers under this influence have been brought to a deep sense of their own sinfulness and vileness; the sinfulness of their lives, the heinousness of their disregard of the authority of the great God, and the heinousness of their living in contempt of a Savior: they have lamented their former negligence of their souls, and neglecting and losing precious time. Their sins of life have been extraordinarily set before them: and they have also had a great sense of

their sins of heart; their hardness of heart, and enmity against that which is good, and proneness to all evil; and also of the worthlessness of their own religious performances, how unworthy their prayers, praises, and all that they did in religion, was to be regarded of God: and it has been a common thing that persons have had such a sense of their own sinfulness, that they have thought themselves to be the worst of all, and that none ever was so vile as they: and many seem to have been greatly convinced that they were utterly unworthy of any mercy at the hands of God, however miserable they were, and though they stood in extreme necessity of mercy; and that they deserved nothing but eternal burnings: and have been sensible that God would be altogether just and righteous in inflicting endless damnation upon them, at the same time that they have had an exceeding affecting sense of the dreadfulfulness of such endless torments, and have apprehended themselves to be greatly in danger of it. And many have been deeply affected with a sense of their own ignorance and blindness, and exceeding helplessness, and so of their extreme need of the divine pity and help. And so far as we are worthy to be credited one by another, in what we say, (and persons of good understanding and sound mind, and known and experienced probity, have a right to be believed by their neighbors, when they speak of things that fall under their observation and experience,) multitudes in New England have lately been brought to a new and great conviction of the truth and certainty of the things of the gospel; to a firm persuasion that Christ Jesus is the Son of God, and the great and only Savior of the world; and that the great doctrines of the gospel touching reconciliation by his blood, and acceptance in his righteousness, and eternal life and salvation through him, are matters of undoubted truth; to-

gether with a most affecting sense of the excellency and sufficiency of this Savior, and the glorious wisdom and grace of God shining in this way of salvation; and of the wonders of Christ's dying love, and the sincerity of Christ in the invitations of the gospel, and a consequent affiance and sweet rest of soul in Christ, as a glorious Savior, a strong rock and high tower, accompanied with an admiring and exalting apprehension of the glory of the divine perfections, God's majesty, holiness, sovereign grace, etc., with a sensible, strong and sweet love to God, and delight in him, far surpassing all temporal delights, or earthly pleasures; and a rest of soul in him as a portion and the fountain of all good, attended with an abhorrence of sin, and self-loathing for it, and earnest longings of soul after more holiness and conformity to God, with a sense of the great need of God's help in order to holiness of life; together with a most dear love to all that are supposed to be the children of God, and a love to mankind in general, and a most sensible and tender compassion for the souls of sinners, and earnest desires of the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. And these things have appeared to be in many of them abiding now for many months, indeed more than a year and a half; with an abiding concern to live a holy life, and great complaints of remaining corruption, longing to be more free from the body of sin and death. And not only do these effects appear in new converts, but great numbers of those that were formerly esteemed the most sober and pious people, have, under the influence of this work, been greatly quickened, and their hearts renewed with greater degrees of light, renewed repentance and humiliation, and more lively exercises of faith, love and joy in the Lord. Many as I am well knowing, have of late been remarkably engaged to watch, and strive, and fight against sin, and cast out ev-

ery idol, and sell all for Christ, and give up themselves entirely to God, and make a sacrifice of every worldly and carnal thing to the welfare and prosperity of their souls. And there has of late appeared in some places an unusual disposition to bind themselves to it in a solemn covenant with God. And now instead of meetings at taverns and drinking houses, and meetings of young people in frolics and vain company, the country is full of meetings of all sorts and ages of persons, young and old, men, women and little children, to read and pray, and sing praises, and to converse of the things of God and another world. In very many places the main of the conversation in all companies turns on religion, and things of a spiritual nature. Instead of vain mirth amongst young people, there is now either mourning under a sense of the guilt of sin, or holy rejoicing in Christ Jesus; and instead of their lewd songs, are now to be heard from them songs of praise to God, and the Lamb that was slain to redeem them by his blood. And there has been this alteration abiding on multitudes all over the land, for a year and a half, without any appearance of a disposition to return to former vice and vanity. And under the influences of this work, there have been many of the remains of those wretched people and dregs of mankind, the poor Indians, that seemed to be next to a state of brutality, and with whom, till now, it seemed to be to little more purpose to use endeavors for their instruction and awakening, than with the beasts; whose minds have now been strangely opened to receive instruction, and have been deeply affected with the concerns of their precious souls, and have reformed their lives, and forsaken their former stupid, barbarous and brutish way of living; and particularly that sin to which they have been so exceedingly addicted, their drunkenness; and are become devout and se-

rious persons; and many of them to appearance brought truly and greatly to delight in the things of God, and to have their souls very much engaged and entertained with the great things of the gospel. And many of the poor negroes also have been in like manner wrought upon and changed. And the souls of very many little children have been remarkably enlightened, and their hearts wonderfully affected and enlarged, and their mouths opened, expressing themselves in a manner far beyond their years, and to the just astonishment of those that have heard them; and some of them from time to time, for many months, greatly and delightfully affected with the glory of divine things, and the excellency and love of the Redeemer, with their hearts greatly filled [illegible] and joy in him, and have continued to be serious and pious in their behavior.

The divine power of this work has marvelously appeared in some instances I have been acquainted with, in supporting and fortifying the heart under great trials, such as the death of [illegible] and extreme pain of body; wonderfully maintaining the serenity, calmness and joy of the soul, in an immovable rest in God, and sweet resignation to him. There also have been instances of some that have been the subjects of this work, that under the blessed influences of it have, in such a calm, bright and joyful frame of mind, been carried through the valley of the shadow of death.

And now let us consider: is it not strange that in a Christian, orthodox country, and such a land of light as this is, there should be many at a loss whose work this is, whether the work of God or the work of the devil? Is it not a shame to New England that such a work should be much doubted of here? Need we look over the histories of all past times, to see if there aren't some circumstances and external appearances that attend this work, that have been

formerly found amongst enthusiasts? Whether the Montanists had not great transports of joy, and whether the French Prophets had not agitations of body? Blessed be God! He doesn't put us to the toil of such inquiries. We need not say, who shall ascend into Heaven, to bring us down something whereby to judge of this work? Nor does God send us beyond the seas, nor into past ages, to obtain a rule that shall determine and satisfy us. But we have a rule near at hand, a sacred book that God himself has put into our hands, with clear and infallible marks, sufficient to resolve us in things of this nature; which book I think we must reject, not only in some particular passages, but in the substance of it, if we reject such a work as has now been described, as not being the work of God. The whole tenor of the gospel proves it; all the notion of religion that the Scripture gives us confirms it.

I suppose there is scarcely a minister in this land, but from Sabbath to Sabbath used to pray that God would pour out his Spirit, and work a reformation and revival of religion in the country, and turn us from our intemperance, profaneness, uncleanness, worldliness and other sins; and we have kept from year to year days of public fasting and prayer to God, to acknowledge our backslidings, and humble ourselves for our sins, and to seek of God forgiveness and reformation: and now when so great and extensive a reformation is so suddenly and wonderfully accomplished, in those very things that we have sought to God for, shall we not acknowledge it? Or when we do, do it, with great coldness, caution and reserve, and scarcely take any notice of it in our public prayers and praises, or mention it but slightly and cursorily, and in such a manner as carries an appearance as though we would contrive to say as little of it as ever we could, and were glad to pass from it?

And that because, (although indeed there be such a work attended with all these glorious effects, yet) the work is attended with a mixture of error, imprudences, darkness and sin; because some persons are carried away with impressions, and are indiscreet, and too censorious with their zeal; and because there are high transports of religious affection; and because of some effects on persons bodies that we don't understand the reason of?

I have been particularly acquainted with many persons that have been the subjects of the high and extraordinary transports of the present day; and in the highest transports of any of the instances that I have been acquainted with, and where the affections of admiration, love and joy, so far as another could judge, have been raised to a higher pitch than in any other instances I have observed or been informed of, the following things have been united, namely, a very frequent dwelling, for some considerable time together, in such views of the glory of the divine perfections, and Christ's excellencies, that the soul in the mean time has been as it were perfectly overwhelmed, and swallowed up with light and love and a sweet solace, rest and joy of soul, that was altogether unspeakable; and more than once continuing for five or six hours together, without any interruption, in that clear and lively view or sense of the infinite beauty and amiableness of Christ's person, and the heavenly sweetness of his excellent and transcendent love; so that (to use the person's own expressions) the soul remained in a kind of heavenly Elysium, and did as it were swim in the rays of Christ's love, like a little mote swimming in the beams of the sun, or streams of his light that come in at a window; and the heart was swallowed up in a kind of glow of Christ's love, coming down from Christ's heart in Heaven, as a constant stream of sweet light, at the

same time the soul all flowing out in love to him; so that there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing from heart to heart: the soul dwelt on high, and was lost in God, and seemed almost to leave the body; dwelling in a pure delight that fed and satisfied the soul; enjoying pleasure without the least sting, or any interruption; a sweetness that the soul was lost in; so that (so far as the judgment, and word of a person of discretion may be taken, speaking upon the most deliberate consideration,) what was enjoyed in each single minute of the whole space, which was many hours, was undoubtedly worth more than all the outward comfort and pleasure of the whole life put together; and this without being in any trance, or being at all deprived of the exercise of the bodily senses: and the like heavenly delight and unspeakable joy of soul, enjoyed from time to time, for years together; though not frequently so long together, to such a height: extraordinary views of divine things, and religious affections, being frequently attended with very great effects on the body, nature often sinking under the weight of divine discoveries, the strength of the body taken away, so as to deprive of all ability to stand or speak; sometimes the hands clenched, and the flesh cold, but senses still remaining; animal nature often in a great emotion and agitation, and the soul very often, of late, so overcome with great admiration, and a kind of overwhelming joy, as to cause the person (wholly unavoidably,) to leap with all the might, with joy and mighty exultation of soul; the soul at the same time being so strongly drawn towards God and Christ in Heaven, that it seemed to the person as though soul and body would, as it were of themselves, of necessity mount up, leave the earth and ascend there. These effects on the body did not begin now in this wonderful season, that they should be owing to the influence of the

example of the times, but about seven years ago; and began in a much higher degree, and greater frequency, near three years ago, when there was no such enthusiastic season, as many account this, but it was a very dead time through the land: they arose from no disorder caught from Mr. Whitefield, or Mr. Tennent, because they began before either of them came into the country; they began as I said, [illegible] three years ago, in a great increase, upon an extraordinary self-dedication, and renunciation of the world, and resignation of all to God, made in a great view of God's excellency, and high exercise of love to him, and rest and joy in him; since which time they have been very frequent; and began in a yet higher degree, and greater frequency, about a year and a half ago, upon another new resignation of all to God, with a yet greater fervency and delight of soul; since which time the body has been very often fainting, with the love of Christ; and began in a much higher degree still, the last winter, upon another resignation and acceptance of God, as the only portion and happiness of the soul, wherein the whole world, with the dearest enjoyments in it, were renounced as dirt and dung, and all that is pleasant and glorious, and all that is terrible in this world, seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing, and nothing to be left but God, in whom the soul was perfectly swallowed up, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness: since which time there have often been great agitations of body, and an unavoidable leaping for joy; and the soul as it were dwelling almost without interruption, in a kind of paradise; and very often, in high transports, disposed to speak of those great and glorious things of God and Christ, and the eternal world, that are in view, to others that are present, in a most earnest manner, and with a loud voice, so that it is next to impossible to avoid it: these effects on the body

not arising from any bodily disorder or weakness, because the greatest of all have been in a good state of health. This great rejoicing has been a rejoicing with trembling, that is, attended with a deep and lively sense of the greatness and majesty of God, and the person's own exceeding littleness and vileness: spiritual joys in this person never were attended, either formerly or lately, with the least appearance of any laughter or lightness of countenance, or manner of speaking; but with a peculiar abhorrence of such appearances in spiritual rejoicings, especially since joys have been greatest of all: these high transports when they have been past, have had abiding effects in the increase of the sweetness, rest and humility that they have left upon the soul; and a new engagedness of heart to live to God's honor, and watch and fight against sin. And these things not in one that is in the giddy age of youth, nor in a new convert, and inexperienced Christian, but in one that was converted above twenty-seven years ago; and neither converted, nor educated in that enthusiastic town of Northampton, (as some may be ready to call it,) but in a town and family that none that I know of suspected of enthusiasm; and in a Christian that has been long, in an uncommon manner, growing in grace, and rising, by very sensible degrees, to higher love to God, and weanedness from the world, and mastery over sin and temptation, through great trials and conflicts, and long continued struggling and fighting with sin, and earnest and constant prayer and labor in religion, and engagedness of mind in the use of all means, attended with a great exactness of life: which growth has been attended, not only with a great increase of religious affections, but with a wonderful alteration of outward behavior, in many things, visible to those who are most intimately acquainted, so as lately to have become as it were

a new person; and particularly in living so much more above the world, and in a greater degree of steadfastness and strength in the way of duty and self-denial, maintaining the Christian conflict against temptations, and conquering from time to time under great trials; persisting in an unmoved, untouched calm and rest, under the changes and accidents of time. The person had formerly in lower degrees of grace, been subject to unsteadiness, and many ups and downs, in the frame of mind; the mind being under great disadvantages, through a vapory habit of body, and often subject to melancholy, and at times almost borne down with it, it having been so even from early youth: but strength of grace, and divine light has of a long time, wholly conquered these disadvantages, and carried the mind in a constant manner, quite above all such effects of vapors. Since that resignation spoken of before, made near three years ago, every thing of that nature seems to be overcome and crushed by the power of faith and trust in God, and resignation to him; the person has remained in a constant uninterrupted rest, and humble joy in God, and assurance of his favor, without one hour's melancholy or darkness, from that day to this; vapors have had great effects on the body, such as they used to have before, but the soul has been always out of their reach. And this steadfastness and constancy has remained through great outward changes and trials; such as times of the most extreme pain, and apparent hazard of immediate death. What has been felt in late great transports is known to be nothing new in kind, but to be of the same nature with what was felt formerly, when a little child of about five or six years of age; but only in a vastly higher degree. These transporting views and rapturous affections are not attended with any enthusiastic disposition, to follow impulses, or

any supposed prophetic revelations; nor have they been observed to be attended with any appearance of spiritual pride, but very much of a contrary disposition, an increase of a spirit of humility and meekness, and a disposition in honor to prefer others: and it is worthy to be remarked, that at a time remarkably distinguished from all others, wherein discoveries and holy affections were evidently at the greatest height that ever happened, the greatness and clearness of divine light being overwhelming, and the strength and sweetness of divine love altogether overpouring, which began early in the morning of the holy Sabbath, and lasted for days together, melting all down in the deepest humility and poverty of spirit, reverence and resignation, and the sweetest meekness, and universal benevolence; I say, it is worthy to be observed, that there were these two things in a remarkable manner felt at that time, namely, a peculiar sensible aversion to judging others that were professing Christians of good standing in the visible church, that they were not converted, or with respect to their degrees of grace; or at all intermeddling with that matter, so much as to determine against and condemn others in the thought of the heart; it appearing hateful, as not agreeing with that lamb-like humility, meekness, gentleness and charity, which the soul then, above other times, saw the beauty of, and felt a disposition to. The disposition that was then felt was, on the contrary, to prefer others to self, and to hope that they saw more of God and loved him better; though before, under smaller discoveries, and feebler exercises of divine affection, there had been felt a disposition to censure and condemn others. And another thing that was felt at that time, was a very great sense of the importance of moral social duties, and how great a part of religion lay in them: there was such a new sense and conviction of this, be-

yond what had been before, that it seemed to be as it were a clear discovery then made to the soul: but in general, there has been a very great increase of a sense of these two things, as divine views and divine love have increased.

The things already mentioned have been attended also with the following things, namely, an extraordinary sense of the awful majesty and greatness of God, so as oftentimes to take away the bodily strength; a sense of the holiness of God, as of a flame infinitely pure and bright, so as sometimes to overwhelm soul and body; a sense of the piercing all-seeing eye of God, so as sometimes to take away the bodily strength; and an extraordinary view of the infinite terribleness of the wrath of God, which has very frequently been strongly impressed on the mind, together with a sense of the ineffable misery of sinners that are exposed to this wrath, that has been overbearing: sometimes the exceeding pollution of the person's own heart, as a sink of all manner of abomination, and a nest of vipers, and the dreadfulness of an eternal hell of God's wrath, opened to view both together; with a clear view of a desert of that misery, without the least degree of divine pity, and that by the pollution of the best duties; indeed, only by the pollution and irreverence, and want of humility that attended once speaking of the holy name of God, when done in the best manner that ever it was done; the strength of the body very often taken away with a deep mourning for sin, as committed against so holy and good a God, sometimes with an affecting sense of actual sin, sometimes especially indwelling sin, sometimes the consideration of the sin of the heart as appearing in a particular thing, as for instance, in that there was no greater forwardness and readiness to self-denial for God and Christ, that had so denied himself for us; indeed, some-

times the consideration of sin that was in only speaking one word concerning the infinitely great and holy God, has been so affecting as to overcome the strength of nature: a very great sense of the certain truth of the great things revealed in the gospel; an overwhelming sense of the glory of the work of redemption, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; the glorious harmony of the divine attributes appearing therein, as that wherein mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other; a sight of the fullness and glorious sufficiency of Christ, that has been so affecting as to overcome the body: a constant immovable trust in God through Christ, with a great sense of his strength and faithfulness, the sureness of his covenant, and the immutability of his promises, so that the everlasting mountains and perpetual hills have appeared as mere shadows to these things: sometimes the sufficiency and faithfulness of God as the covenant God of his people, appearing in these words, I AM THAT I AM, in so affecting a manner as to overcome the body: a sense of the glorious, unsearchable, unerring wisdom of God in his works, both of creation and providence, so as to swallow up the soul, and overcome the strength of the body: a sweet rejoicing of soul at the thoughts of God's being infinitely and unchangeably happy, and an exulting gladness of heart that God is self-sufficient, and infinitely above all dependence, and reigns over all, and does his will with absolute and uncontrollable power and sovereignty; a sense of the glory of the Holy Spirit, as the great Comforter, so as to overwhelm both soul and body; only mentioning the word the Comforter, has immediately taken away all strength; that word, as the person expressed it, seemed great enough to fill Heaven and earth: a most vehement and passionate desire of the honor and glory of God's

name; a sensible, clear and constant preference of it not only to the person's own temporal interest, but spiritual comfort in this world; and a willingness to suffer the hidings of God's face, and to live and die in darkness and horror if God's honor should require it, and to have no other reward for it but that God's name should be glorified, although so much of the sweetness of the light of God's countenance had been experienced: a great lamenting of ingratitude, and the lowness of the degree of love to God, so as to deprive of bodily strength; and very often vehement longings and faintings after more love to Christ, and greater conformity to him; especially longing after these two things, namely, to be more perfect in humility, and adoration; the flesh and heart, seems often to cry out for a lying low before God, and adoring him with greater love and humility: the thoughts of the perfect humility with which the saints in Heaven worship God, and fall down before his throne, have often overcome the body, and set it into a great agitation. A great delight in singing praises to God and Jesus Christ, and longing that this present life may be, as it were, one continued song of praise to God; longing, as the person expressed it, to sit and sing this life away; and an overcoming pleasure in the thoughts of spending an eternity in that exercise: a living by faith to a great degree; a constant and extraordinary distrust of own strength and wisdom; a great dependence on God for his help, in order to the performance of any thing to God's acceptance, and being restrained from the most horrid sins, and running upon God, even on his neck, and on the thick bosses of his bucklers: such a sense of the black ingratitude of true saints' coldness and deadness in religion, and their setting their hearts on the things of this world, as to overcome the bodily frame: a great longing that all the children of God might be

lively in religion, fervent in their love, and active in the service of God; and when there have been appearances of it in others, rejoicing so in beholding the pleasing sight, that the joy of soul has been too great for the body: taking pleasure in the thoughts of watching and striving against sin, and fighting through the way to Heaven, and filling up this life with hard labor, and bearing the cross for Christ, as an opportunity to give God honor; not desiring to rest from labors till arrived in Heaven, but abhorring the thoughts of it, and seeming astonished that God's own children should be backward to strive and deny themselves for God: earnest longings that all God's people might be clothed with humility and meekness, like the Lamb of God, and feel nothing in their hearts but love and compassion to all mankind; and great grief when any thing to the contrary seems to appear in any of the children of God, as any bitterness, or fierceness of zeal, or censoriousness, or reflecting uncharitably on others, or disputing with any appearance of heat of spirit; a deep concern for the good of others souls; a melting compassion to those that looked on themselves as in a state of nature, and to saints under darkness, so as to cause the body to faint: an universal benevolence to mankind, with a longing as it were to embrace the whole world in the arms of pity and love; ideas of suffering from enemies, the utmost conceivable rage and cruelty, with a disposition felt to fervent love and pity in such a case, so far as it could be realized in thought; fainting with pity to the world that lies in ignorance and wickedness; sometimes a disposition felt to a life given up to mourning alone in a wilderness over a lost and miserable world; compassion towards them being often to that degree, that would allow of no support or rest, but in going to God, and pouring out the soul in prayer for them; earnest desires that the

work of God, that is now in the land, may be carried on, and that with greater purity, and freedom from all bitter zeal, censoriousness, spiritual pride, hot disputes, etc.; a vehement and constant desire for the setting up of Christ's kingdom through the earth, as a kingdom of holiness, purity, love, peace and happiness to mankind: the soul often entertained with unspeakable delight, and bodily strength overborne, at the thoughts of Heaven, as a world of love, where love shall be the saints' eternal food, and they shall dwell in the light of love, and swim in an ocean of love, and where the very air and breath will be nothing but love; love to the people of God, or God's true saints, as such that have the image of Christ, and as those that will in a very little time shine in his perfect image, that has been attended with that endearment and oneness of heart, and that sweetness and ravishment of soul, that has been altogether inexpressible; the strength very often taken away with longings that others might love God more, and serve God better, and have more of his comfortable presence, than the person that was the subject of these longings, desiring to follow the whole world to Heaven, or that every one should go before, and be higher in grace and happiness, not by this person's diminution, but by others' increase: a delight in conversing of things of religion, and in seeing Christians together, talking of the most spiritual and heavenly things in religion, in a lively and feeling manner, and very frequently overcome with the pleasure of such conversation: a great sense often expressed, of the importance of the duty of charity to the poor, and how much the generality of Christians come short in the practice of it: a great sense of the need God's ministers have of much of the Spirit of God, at this day especially; and most earnest longings and wrestlings with God for them, so as to take

away the bodily strength: the greatest, fullest, longest continued, and most constant assurance of the favor of God, and of a title to future glory, that ever I saw any appearance of in any person, enjoying, especially of late, (to use the person's own expression) the riches of full assurance: formerly longing to die with something of impatience, but lately, since that resignation forementioned about three years ago, an uninterrupted entire resignation to God with respect to life or death, sickness or health, ease or pain, which has remained unchanged and unshaken, when actually under extreme and violent pains, and in times of threatenings of immediate death; but though there be this patience and submission, yet the thoughts of death and the day of judgment are always exceeding sweet to the soul: this resignation is also attended with a constant resignation of the lives of dearest earthly friends, and sometimes when some of their lives have been imminently threatened; often expressing the sweetness of the liberty of having wholly left the world, and renounced all for God, and having nothing but God, in whom is an infinite fullness. These things have been attended with a constant sweet peace and calm and serenity of soul, without any cloud to interrupt it; a continual rejoicing in all the works of God's hands, the works of nature, and God's daily works of providence, all appearing with a sweet smile upon them; a wonderful access to God by prayer, as it were seeing him, and sensibly immediately conversing with him, as much oftentimes, (to use the person's own expressions,) as if Christ were here on earth, sitting on a visible throne, to be approached to and conversed with; frequent, plain, sensible, and immediate answers [illegible] prayer; all tears wiped away, all former troubles and sorrows of life forgotten, and all sorrow and sighing fled away, excepting grief for past sins, and for re-

maintaining corruption, and that Christ is loved no more, and that God is no more honored in the world, and a compassionate grief towards fellow-creatures; a daily sensible doing and suffering every thing for God, for a long time past, eating for God, and working for God, and sleeping for God, and bearing pain and trouble for God, and doing all as the service of love, and so doing it with a continual, uninterrupted cheerfulness, peace and joy. Oh how good, says the person once, is it to work for God in the daytime, and at night to lie down under his smiles! High experiences and religious affections in this person have not been attended with any disposition at all to neglect the necessary business of a secular calling, to spend the time in reading and prayer, and other exercises of devotion: but worldly business has been attended with great alacrity, as part of the service of God: the person declaring that it being done thus, it is found to be as good as prayer. These things have been accompanied with an exceeding concern and zeal for moral duties, and that all professors may with them adorn the doctrine of God their Savior; and an uncommon care to perform relative and social duties, and a noted eminence in them; a great inoffensiveness of life and conversation in the sight of others; a great meekness, gentleness and benevolence of spirit and behavior; and a great alteration in those things that formerly used to be the person's failings; seeming to be much overcome and swallowed up by the late great increase of grace, to the observation of those that are most conversant and most intimately acquainted: in times of the brightest light and highest flights of love and joy, finding no disposition to any opinion of being now perfectly free from sin, (agreeable to the notion of the Wesleys and their followers, and some other high pretenders to spirituality in these days;) but exceedingly the contrary:

at such times especially, seeing how loathsome and polluted the soul is, soul and body and every act and word appearing like rottenness and corruption in that pure and holy light of God's glory: not slighting instruction or means of grace any more for having had great discoveries; on the contrary, never more sensible of the need of instruction than now. And one thing more may be added, namely, that these things have been attended with a particular dislike [illegible] placing religion much in dress, and spending much zeal about those things that in themselves are matters of indifference, or an affecting to show humility and devotion by a mean habit, or a demure and melancholy countenance, or any thing singular and superstitious.

Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be evermore possessed of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this [illegible] meek, beneficent, beatifical, glorious distraction. If agitations of body were found in the French Prophets, and ten thousand prophets more, it is little to their purpose who bring it as an objection against such a work as this, unless their purpose be to disprove the whole of the Christian religion. The great affections and high transports that others have lately been under, are in general of the same kind with those in the instance that has been given, though not to so high a degree, and many of them, not so pure and unmixed, and so well regulated. I have had opportunity to observe many instances here and elsewhere; and though there are some instances of great affections in which there has been a great mixture of nature with grace, and in some, a sad degenerating of religious affections; yet there is that uniformity observable, that it is easy to be seen that in general it is

the same Spirit from which the work in all parts of the land has originated. And what notions have they of religion, that reject what has been described as not true religion? What shall we find to answer those expressions in Scripture: the peace of God that passes all understanding; rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in believing in and loving an unseen Savior; all joy and peace in believing; God's shining into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ; with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit given to us; having the Spirit of God, and of glory rest upon us; a being called out of darkness into marvelous light; and having the day-star arise in our hearts? I say, if those things that have been mentioned, don't answer these expressions, what else can we find out that does answer them? Those that don't think such things as these to be the fruits of the true Spirit, would do well to consider what kind of Spirit they are waiting and praying for, and what sort of fruits they expect he should produce when he comes. I suppose it will generally be allowed that there is such a thing as a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God to be expected, to introduce very joyful and glorious times upon religious accounts; times wherein holy love and joy will be raised to a great height in true Christians: but if those things that have been mentioned be rejected, what is left that we can find wherewith to patch up a notion, or form an idea, of the high, blessed, joyful religion of these times? What is that any have a notion of, that is very sweet, excellent and joyful, of a religious nature, that is entirely of a different nature from these things?

Those that are waiting for the fruits in order to determine whether this be the work of God or no, would do well to consider two things: 1. What they are waiting for: whether it isn't this; to have this wonderful religious influence that is on the minds of people over and past, and then to see how they will behave themselves. That is, to have grace subside, and the acting of it in a great measure to cease, and to have persons grow cold and dead, and then to see whether after that, they will behave themselves with that exactness and brightness of conversation, that is to be expected of lively Christians, or those that are in the vigorous exercises of grace. There are many that will not be satisfied with any exactness or laboriousness in religion now, while persons have their minds much moved, and their affections are high; for they lay it to their flash of affections, and heat of zeal, as they call it; they are waiting to see whether they will carry themselves as well when these affections are over: that is, they are waiting to have persons sicken and lose their strength, that they may see whether they will then behave themselves like healthy strong men. I would desire that they would also consider whether they aren't waiting for more than is reasonably to be expected, supposing this to be really a great work of God, and much more than has been found in former great outpourings of the Spirit of God, that have been universally acknowledged in the Christian church? Don't they expect fewer instances of apostasy, and evidences of hypocrisy in professors, and those that for the present seem to be under the influences of the Spirit, than were after that great outpouring of the Spirit in the apostles' days, or that which was in the time of the Reformation? And don't they stand prepared to make a mighty argument of it against this work, if there should be half so many? And 2. They

would do well to consider how long they will wait to see the good fruit of this work, before they will determine in favor of it. Is not their waiting unlimited? The visible fruit that is to be expected of a pouring out of the Spirit of God on a country, is a visible reformation in that country: what reformation has lately been brought to pass in New England, by this work, has been before observed: and has it not continued long enough already, to give reasonable satisfaction? If God can't work on the hearts of a people after such a manner, as to show his hand so plainly, as reasonably to expect it should be acknowledged in a year and a half, or two years time; yet surely it is unreasonable, that our expectations and demands should be unlimited, and our waiting without any bounds.

As there is the clearest evidence, from those things that have been observed, that this is the work of God, so it is evident that it is a very great and wonderful, and exceeding glorious work of God. This is certain that it is a great and wonderful event, a strange revolution, an unexpected, surprising overturning of things, suddenly brought to pass; such as never has been seen in New England, and scarce ever has been heard of in any land. Who that saw the state of things in New England a few years ago, the state that it was settled in, and the way that we had been so long going on in, would have thought that in so little a time there would be such a change? This is undoubtedly either a very great work of God, or a great work of the devil, as to the main substance of it. For though undoubtedly, God and the devil may work together at the same time, and in the same land; and when God is at work, especially if he be very remarkably at work, Satan will to his utmost endeavor to intrude, and by intermingling his work, to darken and hinder God's work; yet God and the devil don't work together in producing the

same event, and in effecting the same change in the hearts and lives of men: but it is apparent that there are some things wherein the main substance of this work consists, a certain effect that is produced, and alteration that is made in the apprehensions, affections, dispositions and behavior of men, in which there is a likeness and agreement everywhere: now this I say, is either a wonderful work of God, or a mighty work of the devil; and so is either a most happy event, greatly to be admired and rejoiced in, or a most awful calamity. Therefore if what has been said before, be sufficient to determine it to be as to the main, the work of God, then it must be acknowledged to be a very wonderful and glorious work of God.

Such a work is in its nature and kind, the most glorious of any work of God whatsoever; and is always so spoken of in Scripture. It is the work of redemption, (the great end of all other works of God, and of which the work of creation was but a shadow,) in the event, success and end of it: it is the work of new creation, that is infinitely more glorious than the old. I am bold to say, that the work of God in the conversion of one soul, considered together with the source, foundation and purchase of it, and also the benefit, end and eternal issue of it, is a more glorious work of God than the creation of the whole material universe: it is the most glorious of God's works, as it above all others manifests the glory of God: it is spoken of in Scripture as that which shows the exceeding greatness of God's power, and the glory and riches of divine grace, and wherein Christ has the most glorious triumph over his enemies, and wherein God is mightily exalted: and it is a work above all others glorious, as it concerns the happiness of mankind; more happiness, and a greater benefit to man, is the fruit of each single drop

of such a shower, than all the temporal good of the most happy revolution in a land or nation amounts to, or all that a people could gain by the conquest of the world.

And as this work is very glorious in its nature, so it is in its degree and circumstances. It will appear very glorious if we consider the unworthiness of the people that are the subjects of it; what obligations God has laid us under by the special privileges we have enjoyed for our souls good, and the great things God did for us at our first settlement in the land; and how he has followed us with his goodness to this day, and how we have abused his goodness; how long we have been revolting more and more, (as all confess,) and how very corrupt we were become at last; in how great a degree we had cast off God, and forsaken the fountain of living waters: how obstinate we have been under all manner of means that God has used with us to reclaim us; how often we have mocked God with hypocritical pretences of humiliation, as in our annual days of public fasting, and other things, while instead of reforming, we only grew worse and worse; how dead a time it was everywhere before this work began: if we consider these things, we shall be most stupidly ungrateful, if we don't acknowledge God's visiting of us as he has done, as an instance of the glorious triumph of free and sovereign grace.

The work is very glorious if we consider the extent of it; being in this respect vastly beyond any former outpouring of the Spirit that ever was known in New England. There has formerly sometimes been a remarkable awakening and success of the means of grace, in some particular congregation; and this used to be much taken notice of, and acknowledged to be glorious, though the towns and congregations round about continued dead: but now

God has brought to pass a new thing, he has wrought a great work of this nature, that has extended from one end of the land to the other, besides what has been wrought in other British colonies in America.

The work is very glorious in the great numbers that have to appearance, been turned from sin to God, and so delivered from a wretched captivity to sin and Satan, saved from everlasting burnings, and made heirs of eternal glory. How high an honor, and great reward of their labors, have some eminent persons, of note in the church of God, signified that they should esteem it, if they should be made the instruments of the conversion and eternal salvation of but one soul? And no greater event than that is thought worthy of great notice in Heaven, among the hosts of glorious angels, who rejoice and sing on such an occasion: and when there are many thousands of souls thus converted and saved, shall it be esteemed worth but little notice, and be mentioned with coldness and indifference here on earth, by those among whom such a work is wrought?

The work has been very glorious and wonderful in many circumstances and events of it, that have been extraordinary, wherein God has in an uncommon manner made his hand visible, and his power conspicuous; as in the extraordinary degrees of awakening, the suddenness of conversions in innumerable instances, in whom though the work was quick, yet the thing wrought is manifestly durable. How common a thing has it been for great part of a congregation to be at once moved, by a mighty invisible power; and for six, eight or ten souls to be converted to God, (to all appearance,) in an exercise, in whom the visible change still continues? How great an alteration has been made in some towns; indeed

some populous towns; the change still abiding: and how many very vicious persons have been wrought upon, so as to become visibly new creatures? God has also made his hand very visible, and his work glorious, in the multitudes of little children that have been wrought upon: I suppose there have been some hundreds of instances of this nature of late, any one of which formerly would have been looked upon so remarkable, [illegible] to be worthy to be recorded, and published through the land. The work is very glorious in its influences and effects on many that have been very ignorant and barbarous, as I before observed of the Indians and negroes.

The work is also exceeding glorious in the high attainments of Christians, in the extraordinary degrees of light, love and spiritual joy, that God has bestowed upon great multitudes. In this respect also, the land in all parts has abounded with such instances, any one of which, if they had happened formerly, would have been thought worthy to be taken notice of by God's people, throughout the British dominions. The New Jerusalem in this respect has begun to come down from Heaven, and perhaps never were more of the foretastes of Heaven's glory given upon earth.

There being a great many errors and sinful irregularities mixed with this work of God, arising from our weakness, darkness and corruption, don't hinder this work of God's power and grace from being very glorious. Our follies and sins that we mix, do in some respects manifest the glory of it: the glory of divine power and grace is set off with the greater luster, by what appears at the same time of the weakness of the earthen vessel. It is God's pleasure that there should be something remarkably to manifest the weakness and unworthiness of the subject, at the same time that he displays

the excellency of his power and riches of his grace. And I doubt not but some of those things that make some of us here on earth to be out of humor, and to look on this work with a sour displeased countenance, do heighten the songs of the angels, when they praise God and the Lamb for what they see of the glory of God's all-sufficiency, and the efficacy of Christ's redemption. And how unreasonable is it that we should be backward to acknowledge the glory of what God has done, because withal, the devil, and we in hearkening to him, have done a great deal of mischief.

PART 2



There are many things in the word of God, that show that when God remarkably appears in any great work for his church, and against his enemies, it is a most dangerous thing, and highly provoking to God, to be slow and backward to acknowledge and honor God in the work, and to lie still and not to put to a helping hand. Christ's people are in Scripture represented as his army; he is the LORD of hosts or armies: he is the Captain of the host of the Lord, as he called himself when he appeared to Joshua, with a sword drawn in his hand (Joshua 5:13-15). He is the Captain of his people's salvation; and therefore it may well be highly resented if they don't resort to him when he orders his banner to be displayed; or if they refuse to follow him when he blows the trumpet, and gloriously appears going forth against his enemies. God expects that every living soul should have his attention roused on such an occasion, and should most cheerfully yield to the call, and heedfully and diligently obey it (Isaiah 18:3): "All you inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see when he lifts up an ensign on the mountains; and when he blows the trumpet, hear." Especially should all Israel be gathered after their captain, as we read they were after Ehud, when he blew the trumpet in mount Ephraim, when he had slain Eglon king of Moab (Judges

3:27-28). How severe is the martial law in such a case, when any of an army refuses to obey the sound of the trumpet, and follow his general to the battle? God at such a time appears in peculiar manifestations of his glory, and therefore not to be affected and animated, and to lie still, and refuse to follow God, will be resented as a high contempt of him. If a subject should stand by, and be a spectator of the solemnity of his prince's coronation, and should appear silent and sullen, when all the multitude were testifying their loyalty and joy, with loud acclamations; how greatly would he expose himself to be treated as a rebel, and quickly to perish by the authority of the prince that he refuses to honor?

At a time when God manifests himself in such a great work for his church, there is no such thing as being neutral; there is a necessity of being either for or against the King that then gloriously appears: as when a king is crowned, and there are public manifestations of joy on that occasion, there is no such thing as standing by as an indifferent spectator; all must appear as loyal subjects, and express their joy on that occasion, or be accounted enemies: so it always is when God, in any great dispensation of his providence, does remarkably set his King on his holy hill of Zion, and Christ in an extraordinary manner comes down from Heaven to the earth, and appears in his visible church in a great work of salvation for his people: so it was when Christ came down from Heaven in his incarnation, and appeared on earth in his human presence; there was no such thing as being neutral, neither on his side nor against him: those that sat still and said nothing, and did not declare for him, and come and join with him, after he, by his word and works, had given sufficient evidence who he was, were justly looked upon as his enemies; as Christ says (Matthew 12:30): "He that is [illegi-

ble] with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me, scatters abroad." So it is in a time when Christ is remarkably spiritually present, as well as when he is bodily present; and when he comes to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it, as well as in the revelation and purchase. If a king should come into one of his provinces, that had been oppressed by its foes, where some of his subjects had fallen off to the enemy, and joined with them against their lawful sovereign and his loyal subjects; I say, if the lawful sovereign himself should come into the province, and should ride forth there against his enemies, and should call upon all that were on his side to come and gather themselves to him; there would be no such thing, in such a case, as standing neutral: they that lay still and stayed at a distance would undoubtedly be looked upon and treated as rebels. So in the day of battle, when two armies join, there is no such thing for any present as being of neither party, all must be on one side or the other; and they that aren't found with the conqueror in such a case, must expect to have his weapons turned against them, and to fall with the rest of his enemies.

When God manifests himself with such glorious power in a work of this nature, he appears especially determined to put honor upon his Son, and to fulfill his oath that he has sworn to him, that he would make every knee to bow, and every tongue to confess to him. God has had it much on his heart, from all eternity, to glorify his dear and only begotten Son; and there are some special seasons that he appoints to that end, wherein he comes forth with omnipotent power to fulfill his promise and oath to him: and these times are times of remarkable pouring out of his Spirit, to advance his kingdom; such a day is a day of his power, wherein his people shall

be made willing, and he shall rule in the midst of his enemies; these especially are the times wherein God declares his firm decree that his Son shall reign on his holy hill of Zion: and therefore those that at such a time don't kiss the Son, as he then manifests himself, and appears in the glory of his majesty and grace, expose themselves to perish from the way, and to be dashed in pieces with a rod of iron.

As such a time is a time wherein God eminently sets his King on his holy hill of Zion, so it is a time wherein he remarkably fulfills that in (Isaiah 28:16): "Therefore thus says the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Which the two apostles Peter and Paul (1 Peter 2:6-8 and Romans 9:33) join with that prophecy (Isaiah 8:14-15): "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and taken." As signifying that both are fulfilled together. Indeed both are joined together by the prophet Isaiah himself; as you may see in the context of that forementioned (Isaiah 28:16): in verse 13 preceding it is said, "But the word of the LORD [illegible] unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little, that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken." And accordingly it always is so, that when Christ is in a peculiar and eminent manner manifested and magnified, by a glorious work of God in his church, as a foundation and a sanctuary for some, he is remarkably a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, a gin and a snare to others. They that continue long to stumble,

and be offended and ensnared in their minds, at such a great and glorious work of Christ, in God's account, stumble at Christ, and are offended in him; for the work is that by which he makes Christ manifest, and shows his glory, and by which he makes the stone that the builders refused, to become the head of the corner. This shows how dangerous it is to continue always stumbling at such a work, for ever doubting of it, and forbearing fully to acknowledge it, and give God the glory of it: such persons are in danger to go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken, and to have Christ a stone of stumbling to them, that shall be an occasion of their ruin; while he is to others, a sanctuary, and a sure foundation.

The prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 29:14) speaks of God's proceeding to do a marvelous work and a wonder, which should stumble and confound the wisdom of the wise and prudent; which the apostle in (Acts 13:41) applies to the glorious work of salvation wrought in those days by the redemption of Christ, and that glorious outpouring of the Spirit to apply it that followed; the prophet in the context of that place in Isaiah 29 speaking of the same thing, and of the prophets and rulers and seers, those wise and prudent whose eyes God had closed, says to them (verse 9): "Stay yourselves and wonder." In the original it is, be slow and wonder. I leave it to others to consider whether it isn't natural to interpret it thus, wonder at this marvelous work; let it be a strange thing, a great mystery that you know not what to make of, and that you are very slow and backward to acknowledge, long delaying to come to a determination concerning it. And what persons are in danger of, that wonder, and are thus slow to acknowledge God in such a work, we learn by that of the apostle in that forementioned (Acts 13:41):

"Behold you despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

The church of Christ is called upon greatly to rejoice, when at any time Christ remarkably appears, coming to his church, to carry on the work of salvation, to enlarge his own kingdom, and to deliver poor souls out of the pit wherein there is no water, in (Zechariah 9:9-11): "Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem; behold your King comes unto you; he is just and having salvation, his dominion shall be from sea to sea, as for you also, by the blood of your covenant, I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." Christ was pleased to give a notable typical or symbolical representation of such a great event as is spoken of in that prophecy, in his solemn entry into the literal Jerusalem, which was a type of the church or daughter of Zion, there spoken of; probably intending it as a figure and prelude of that great actual fulfillment of this prophecy, that was to be after his ascension, by the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles, and that more full accomplishment that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church. We have an account, that when Christ made this his solemn entry into Jerusalem, and the whole multitude of the disciples were rejoicing and praising God, with loud voices, for all the mighty works that they had seen, the Pharisees from among the multitude said to Christ, master, rebuke your disciples; but we are told (Luke 19:39-40) Christ answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. Signifying that if Christ's professing disciples should be unaffected on such an occasion, and should not appear openly to acknowledge and rejoice in the glory

of God therein appearing, it would manifest such fearful hardness of heart, so exceeding that of the stones, that the very stones would condemn them. Should not this make those consider, who have held their peace so long, since Christ has come to our Zion having salvation, and so wonderfully manifested his glory in this mighty work of his Spirit, and so many of his disciples have been rejoicing and praising God with loud voices?

It must be acknowledged that so great and wonderful a work of God's Spirit, is a work wherein God's hand is remarkably lifted up, and wherein he displays his majesty, and shows great favor and mercy to sinners, in the glorious opportunity he gives them; and by which he makes our land to become much more a land of uprightness: therefore that place (Isaiah 26:10-11) shows the great danger of not seeing God's hand, and acknowledging his glory and majesty in such a work: "Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD. LORD, when your hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; indeed the fire of your enemies shall devour them."

It is not unlikely that this work of God's Spirit, that is so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or, at least, a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind. If we consider how long since, the things foretold, as what should precede this great event, have been accomplished; and how long this event has been expected by the church of God, and thought to be near by the most eminent men of God in the church: and withal consider what the state of things now is, and has for a considerable

time been, in the church of God, and world of mankind, we can't reasonably think otherwise, than that the beginning of this great work of God must be near. And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in America. It is signified that it shall begin in some very remote part of the world, that the rest of the world have no communication with but by navigation (Isaiah 60:9): "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far." It is exceeding manifest that this chapter is a prophecy of the prosperity of the church, in its most glorious state on earth, in the latter days; and I can't think that any thing else can be here intended but America by the isles that are far off, from whence the first-born sons of that glorious day shall be brought. Indeed, by the isles, in prophecies of gospel-times, is very often meant Europe: it is so in prophecies of that great spreading of the gospel that should be soon after Christ's time, because it was far separated from that part of the world where the church of God had till then been, by the sea. But this prophecy can't have respect to the conversion of Europe, in the time of that great work of God, in the primitive ages of the Christian church; for it was not fulfilled then: the isles and ships of Tarshish, thus understood, did not wait for God first; that glorious work did not begin in Europe, but in Jerusalem, and had for a considerable time, been very wonderfully carried on in Asia, before it reached Europe. And as it is not that work of God that is chiefly intended in this chapter, but that more glorious work that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church, therefore some other part of the world is here intended by the isles, that should be as Europe then was, far separated from that part of the world where the church had before been, by the sea, and with which it can have no commu-

nication but by the ships of Tarshish. And what is chiefly intended is not the British Isles, nor any isles near the other continent; for they are spoken of as at a great distance from that part of the world where the church had till then been. This prophecy therefore seems plainly to point out America, as the first fruits of that glorious day.

God has made as it were two worlds here below, the old and the new, (according to the names they are now called by,) two great habitable continents, far separated one from the other; the latter is but newly discovered, it was formerly wholly unknown, from age to age, and is as it were now but newly created: it has been, till of late, wholly the possession of Satan, the church of God having never been in it, as it has been in the other continent, from the beginning of the world. This new world is probably now discovered, that the new and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there; that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual respect, when he creates the new heavens and new earth.

God has already put that honor upon the other continent, that Christ was born there literally, and there made the purchase of redemption: so, as providence observes a kind of equal distribution of things, it is not unlikely that the great spiritual birth of Christ, and the most glorious application of redemption is to begin in this: as the elder sister brought forth Judah, of whom came Christ, and so she was the mother of Christ; but the younger sister, after long barrenness, brought forth Joseph and Benjamin, the beloved children. Joseph, that had the most glorious apparel, the coat of many colors, who was separated from his brethren, and was exalted to such glory out of a dark dungeon, and fed and saved the world,

when ready to perish with famine, and was as a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches ran over the wall, and was blessed with all manner of blessings and precious things, of Heaven and earth, through the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; and was, as by the horns of a unicorn, to push the people together, to the ends of the earth, that is, conquer the world (see Genesis 49:22, etc. and Deuteronomy 33:13, etc.). And Benjamin, whose portion was five times so great as that of any of his brethren, and to whom Joseph, that type of Christ, gave wealth and raiment far beyond all the rest (Genesis 45:22).

The other continent has slain Christ, and has from age to age shed the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and has often been as it were deluged with the church's blood: God has therefore probably reserved the honor of building the glorious temple to the daughter, that has not shed so much blood, when those times of the peace and prosperity and glory of the church shall commence, that were typified by the reign of Solomon.

The Gentiles first received the true religion from the Jews: God's church of ancient times, had been among them, and Christ was of them: but that there might be a kind of equality in the dispensations of providence, God has so ordered it, that when the Jews come to be admitted to the benefits of the evangelical dispensation, and to receive their highest privileges of all, they should receive the gospel from the Gentiles: though Christ was of them, yet they have been guilty of crucifying him; it is therefore the will of God, that that people should not have the honor of communicating the blessings of the kingdom of God in its most glorious state, to the Gentiles, but on the contrary they shall receive the gospel in the beginning of that glorious day, from the Gentiles. In some

analogy to this, I apprehend God's dealings will be with the two continents. America has received the true religion of the old continent; the church of ancient times has been there, and Christ is from thence: but that there may be an equality, and inasmuch as that continent has crucified Christ, they shall not have the honor of communicating religion in its most glorious state to us, but we to them.

The old continent has been the source and original of mankind, in several respects. The first parents of mankind dwelt there; and there dwelt Noah and his sons; and there the second Adam was born, and was crucified and rose again: and it is probable that, in some measure to balance these things, the most glorious renovation of the world shall originate from the new continent, and the church of God in that respect be from hence. And so it is probable that that will come to pass in spirituals, that has in temporals, with respect to America; that whereas, till of late, the world was supplied with its silver and gold and earthly treasures from the old continent, now it is supplied chiefly from the new, so the course of things in spiritual respects will be in like manner turned.

And it is worthy to be noted that America was discovered about the time of the Reformation, or but little before: which Reformation was the first thing that God did towards the glorious renovation of the world, after it had sunk into the depths of darkness and ruin, under the great antichristian apostasy. So that as soon as this new world is (as it were) created, and stands forth in view, God presently goes about doing some great thing to make way for the introduction of the church's latter-day glory, that is to have its first seat in, and is to take its rise from that new world.

It is agreeable to God's manner of working, when he accomplishes any glorious work in the world, to introduce a new and more excellent state of his church, to begin his work where his church had not been till then, and where was no foundation already laid, that the power of God might be the more conspicuous; that the work might appear to be entirely God's, and be more manifestly a creation out of nothing; agreeable to (Hosea 1:10): "And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, you are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, you are the sons of the living God." When God [illegible] about to turn the earth into a paradise, he doesn't begin his work where there is some good growth already, but in a wilderness, where nothing grows, and nothing is to be seen but dry sand and barren rocks; that the light may shine out of darkness, and the world be replenished from emptiness, and the earth watered by springs from a drought desert; agreeable to many prophecies of Scripture (Isaiah 32:15): "Until the Spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field." And (Isaiah 41:18-19): "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water: I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia tree, and the myrtle and the olive tree: I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together." And (Isaiah 43:20): "I will give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen." And many other parallel scriptures might be mentioned.

I observed before, that when God is about to do some great work for his church, his manner is to begin at the lower end; so when he is about to renew the whole habitable earth, it is probable

that he will begin in this utmost, meanest, youngest and weakest part of it, where the church of God has been planted last of all; and so the first shall be last, and the last first; and that will be fulfilled in an eminent manner in (Isaiah 24:16): "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous."

There are several things that seem to me to argue, that when the Sun of Righteousness, the Sun of the new heavens and new earth, comes to rise, and comes forth as the bridegroom of his church, rejoicing as a strong man to run his race, having his going forth from the end of Heaven, and his circuit to the end of it, that nothing may be hid from the light and heat of it, that the Sun shall rise in the west, contrary to the course of this world, or the course of things in the old heavens and earth. The course of God's providence shall in that day be so wonderfully altered in many respects, that God will as it were change the course of nature, in answer to the prayers of his church; as God changed the course of nature, and caused the sun to go from the west to the east, when Hezekiah was healed, and God promised to do such great things for his church, to deliver it out of the hand of the king of Assyria, by that mighty slaughter by the angel; which is often used by the prophet Isaiah, as a type of the glorious deliverance of the church from her enemies in the latter days: the resurrection of Hezekiah, the king and captain of the church, (as he is called in 2 Kings 20:5,) as it were from the dead, is given as an earnest of the church's resurrection and salvation (Isaiah 38:6), and is a type of the resurrection of Christ. At the same time there is a resurrection of the sun, or coming back and rising again from the west, where it had gone down; which is also a type of the Sun of Righteousness. The sun was brought back ten degrees; which probably brought it to the merid-

ian. The Sun of Righteousness has long been going down from east to west; and probably when the time comes of the [illegible] from her enemies, so often typified by the Assyrians, the light will rise in the west, till it shines through the world, like the sun in [illegible] meridian brightness. (It is evident that the Holy Spirit in those expressions in Psalm 19:4-6, has respect to something else besides the natural sun; and that an eye is had to the Sun of Righteousness, that by his light converts the soul, makes wise the simple, enlightens the eyes, and rejoices the heart; and by his preached gospel enlightens and warms the world of mankind. By the psalmist's own application in verse 7, and the apostle's application of verse 4 in Romans 10:13.)

The same seems also to be represented by the course of the waters of the sanctuary (Ezekiel 4), which was from west to east; which water undoubtedly represents the Holy Spirit, in the progress of his saving influences, in the latter ages of the world: for it is manifest that the whole of those last chapters of Ezekiel, are concerning the glorious state of the church that shall then be.

And if we may suppose that this glorious work of God shall begin in any part of America, I think, if we consider the circumstances of the settlement of New England, it must needs appear the most likely of all American colonies, to be the place from which this work shall principally take its rise.

And if these things are so, it gives us more abundant reason to hope that what is now seen in America, and especially in New England, may prove the dawn of that glorious day: and the very uncommon and wonderful circumstances and events of this work, seem to me strongly to argue that God intends it as the beginning or forerunner of something vastly great.

I have thus long insisted on this point, because if these things are so, it greatly manifests how much it concerns us to encourage and promote this work, and how dangerous it will be to forbear to do so.

It is very dangerous for God's professing people to lie still, and not to come to the help of the Lord, whenever he remarkably pours out his Spirit, to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it; but above all, when he comes forth in that last and greatest outpouring of his Spirit, to introduce that happy day of God's power and salvation, so often spoken of. That is especially the appointed season of the application of the redemption of Christ: it is the proper time of the kingdom of Heaven upon earth, the appointed time of Christ's reign: the reign of Satan as god of this world lasts till then: this is the proper time of actual redemption, or new creation, as is evident by (Isaiah 65:17-18; 66:12; Revelation 21:1). All the outpourings of the Spirit of God that are before this, are as it were by way of anticipation.

There was indeed a glorious season of the application of redemption, in the first ages of the Christian church, that began at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost; but that was not the proper time of ingathering; it was only as it were the feast of the first fruits; the ingathering is at the end of the year, or in the last ages of the Christian church, as is represented (Revelation 14:14-16), and will probably as much exceed what was in the first ages of the Christian church, though that filled the Roman Empire, as that exceeded all that had been before, under the old testament, confined only to the land of Judea.

The great danger of not appearing openly to acknowledge, rejoice in, and promote that great work of God, in bringing in that glorious harvest, is represented in (Zechariah 14:16-19): "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left, of all the nations, which come against Jerusalem, shall even go up, from year to year, to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoever will not come up, of all the families of the earth, unto Jerusalem, to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike the heathen, that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." It is evident by all the context, that the glorious day of the church of God in the latter ages of the world, is the time spoken of: the feast of tabernacles here seems to signify that glorious spiritual feast, which God shall then make for his church, the same that is spoken of (Isaiah 25:6), and the great spiritual rejoicings of God's people at that time. There were three great feasts in Israel, at which all the males were appointed to go up to Jerusalem; the feast of the Passover; and the feast of the first fruits, or the feast of Pentecost; and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, or the feast of tabernacles. In the first of these, namely, the feast of the Passover, was represented the purchase of redemption by Jesus Christ, the paschal lamb, that was slain at the time of that feast. The other two that followed it, were to represent the two great seasons of the application of the purchased redemption: in the former of them, namely, the feast of the first fruits, which was called the feast of Pentecost, was represented that time

of the outpouring of the Spirit, that was in the first ages of the Christian church, for the bringing in the first fruits of Christ's redemption, which began at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost. The other, which was the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, which the children of Israel were appointed to keep on occasion of their gathering in their corn and their wine, and all the fruit of their land, and was called the feast of tabernacles, represented the other more joyful and glorious season of the application of Christ's redemption, which is to be in the latter days; the great day of ingathering of the elect, the proper and appointed time of gathering in God's fruits, when the angel of the covenant shall thrust in his sickle, and gather the harvest of the earth; and the clusters of the vine of the earth shall also be gathered. This was upon many accounts the greatest feast of the three: there were much greater tokens of rejoicing in this feast, than any other: the people then dwelt in booths of green boughs, and were commanded to take boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and to rejoice before the Lord their God: which represents the flourishing, beautiful, pleasant state the church shall be in, rejoicing in God's grace and love, triumphing over all her enemies, at the time typified by this feast. The tabernacle of God was first set up among the children of Israel, at the time of the feast of tabernacles; but in that glorious time of the Christian church, God will above all other times set up his tabernacle amongst men (Revelation 21:3): "And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The world is supposed to have been created about the time of year wherein the

feast of tabernacles was appointed; so in that glorious time, God will create a new Heaven, and a new earth. The temple of Solomon was dedicated at the time of the feast of tabernacles, when God descended in a pillar of cloud, and dwelt in the temple; so at this happy time, the temple of God shall be gloriously built up in the world, and God shall in a wonderful manner come down from Heaven to dwell with his church. Christ is supposed to have been born at the feast of tabernacles; so at the commencement of that glorious day, Christ shall be born; then above all other times shall the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, that is in travail, and pained to be delivered, bring forth her son, to rule all nations (Revelation 12, at the beginning). The feast of tabernacles, was the last feast that Israel had in the whole year, before the face of the earth was destroyed by the winter; presently after the rejoicings of that feast were past, a tempestuous season began (Acts 27:9): "Sailing was now dangerous, because the feast was now already past." So this great feast of the Christian church will be the last feast she shall have on earth: soon after it is past, this lower world will be destroyed. At the feast of tabernacles, Israel left their houses to dwell in booths or green tents, which signifies the great weanedness of God's people from the world, as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and their great joy therein. Israel were prepared for the feast of tabernacles, by the feast of trumpets, and the day of atonement both on the same month; so way shall be made for the joy of the church of God, in its glorious state on earth, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel, and deep repentance and humiliation for past sins, and the great and long continued deadness and carnality of the visible church. Christ at the great feast of tabernacles, stood in Jerusalem, and cried, saying, if any

man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: he that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters: signifying the extraordinary freedom and riches of divine grace towards sinners, at that day, and the extraordinary measures of the Holy Spirit that shall be then given; agreeable to (Revelation 21:6; 22:17).

It is threatened here in this 14th chapter of Zechariah, that those who at that time shall not come to keep this feast; that is, that shall not acknowledge God's glorious works, and praise his name, and rejoice with his people, but should stand at a distance, as unbelieving and disaffected; upon them shall be no rain; and that this shall be the plague with which they shall all be struck: that is, they shall have no share in that shower of divine blessing that shall then descend on the earth, that spiritual rain spoken of (Isaiah 44:3), but God would give them over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind.

The curse is yet in a more awful manner denounced against such as shall appear as opposers at that time (Zechariah 14:12): "And this shall be the plague, with which the LORD shall strike all the people that have fought against Jerusalem, their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth." Here also in all probability it is a spiritual judgment, or a plague and curse from God upon the soul, rather than upon the body, that is intended; that such persons, who at that time shall oppose God's people in his work, shall in an extraordinary manner be given over to a state of spiritual death and ruin, that they shall remarkably appear dead while alive, and shall be as walking rotten corpses, while they go about amongst men.

The great danger of not joining with God's people at that glorious day is also represented (Isaiah 60:12): "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; indeed those nations shall be utterly wasted."

Most of the great temporal deliverances that were wrought for Israel of old, as divines and expositors observe, were typical of the great spiritual works of God for the salvation of men's souls, and the deliverance and prosperity of his church, in the days of the gospel; and especially did they represent that greatest of all deliverances of God's church, and chief of God's works of actual salvation, that shall be in the latter days; which as has been observed is above all others, the appointed time, and proper season of actual redemption of men's souls. But it may be observed that if any appeared to oppose God's work in those great temporal deliverances; or if there were any of his professing people, that on such occasions lay still, and stood at a distance, and did not arise and acknowledge God in his work, and appear to promote it; it was what in a remarkable manner incensed God's anger, and brought his curse upon such persons.

So when God wrought that great work of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, (which was a type of God's delivering his church out of the spiritual Egypt, at the time of the fall of Antichrist, as is evident by Revelation 11:8 and 15:3,) how highly did God resent it, when the Amalekites appeared as opposers in that affair? and how dreadfully did he curse them for it? (Exodus 17:14-16): "And the LORD said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-Nissi; for

he said, because the LORD will have war with Amalek, from generation to generation." And accordingly we find that God remembered it a long time after (1 Samuel 15:3). And how highly did God resent it in the Moabites and Ammonites, that they did not lend a helping hand, and encourage and promote the affair? (Deuteronomy 23:3-4): "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation, shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD forever; because they met you not with bread and with water, in the way when you came forth out of Egypt." And how were the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh threatened, if they did not go and help their brethren in their wars against the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 32:20-23): "And Moses said unto them, if you will do this thing, if you will go armed before the LORD to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan, before the LORD, until he has driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before the LORD, then afterward you shall return and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the LORD: but if you will not do so, behold you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out."

That was a glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, when he delivered them from the Canaanites, by the hand of Deborah and Barak: almost every thing about it showed a remarkable hand of God. It was a prophetess, one immediately inspired by God, that called the people to the battle, and conducted them in the whole affair: the people seem to have been miraculously animated and encouraged in the matter, when they willingly offered themselves, and gathered together to the battle; they jeoparded

their lives in the high places of the field, without being pressed or hired; when one would have thought they should have but little courage for such an undertaking; for what could a number of poor, weak, defenseless slaves do, without a shield or spear to be seen among forty thousand of them, to go against a great prince, with his mighty host, and nine hundred chariots of iron. And the success did wonderfully show the hand of God; which makes Deborah exultingly to say (Judges 5:21): "O my soul, you have trodden down strength!" Christ with his heavenly host was engaged in that battle; and therefore it is said (Judges 5:20): "They fought from Heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The work of God therefore in this victory and deliverance that Christ and his host wrought for Israel, was a type of that victory and deliverance which he will accomplish for his church in that great battle, that last conflict that the church shall have with her open enemies, that shall introduce the church's latter-day glory; as appears by (Revelation 16:16) (speaking of that great battle): "And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon," that is, the mountain of Megiddo; alluding, as is supposed by expositors, to the place where the battle was fought with the host of Sisera (Judges 5:19): "The kings came and fought, the kings of Canaan, in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo." Which can signify nothing else, than that this battle, which Christ and his church shall have with their enemies, is the antitype of the battle that was fought there. But what a dreadful curse from Christ, did some of God's professing people Israel, bring upon themselves, by lying still at that time, and not putting to a helping hand? (Judges 5:23): "Curse Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they [illegible] not to the help of the

LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty." The angel of the Lord was the captain of the host; he that had led Israel, and fought for them in that battle, who is very often called the angel of the Lord, in Scripture; the same that appeared to Joshua with a sword drawn in his hand, and told him that he was come as the captain of the host of the Lord; and the same glorious captain that we have an account of, as leading forth his hosts to that battle, of which this was the type (Revelation 19:11, etc.). It seems the inhabitants of Meroz were unbelieving concerning this great work, nor would they hearken to Deborah's claims, nor did it enter into them that such a poor defenseless company, should ever prevail against those that were so mighty; they did not acknowledge the hand of God, and therefore stood at a distance, and did nothing to promote the work: but what a bitter curse from God, did they bring upon themselves by it!

It is very probable that one great reason why the inhabitants of Meroz were so unbelieving concerning this work, was that they argued a priori; they did not like the beginning of it, it being a woman that first led the way, and had the chief conduct in the affair; nor could they believe that such despicable instruments, as a company of unarmed slaves, were ever likely to effect so great a thing; and pride and unbelief wrought together, in not being willing to follow Deborah to the battle.

It was another glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, in the victory that was obtained by Gideon over the Midianites and Amalekites, and the children of the east, when they came up against Israel like grasshoppers, a multitude that could not be numbered. This also was a remarkable type of the victory of Christ and his church over his enemies, by the pouring out of the Spirit

with the preached gospel, as is evident by the manner of it, which Gideon was immediately directed to of God; which was not by human sword or bow, but only by blowing of trumpets, and by lights in earthen vessels. We read that on this occasion, Gideon called the people together to help in this great affair; and that accordingly, great numbers resorted to him, and came to the help of the LORD (Judges 7:23-24). But there were some also at that time, that were unbelieving, and would not acknowledge the hand of God in that work, though it was so great and wonderful, nor would they join to promote it; and they were the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel: Gideon desired their help, when he was pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna; but they despised his claims, and his confidence of the LORD's being on his side, to deliver those two great princes into the hands of such a despicable company, as he and his three hundred men, and would not own the work of God, nor afford Gideon any assistance: God proceeded in this work in a way that was exceeding contrary to their pride. And they also refused to own the work, because they argued a priori; they could not believe that God would do such great things by such a despicable instrument; one of such a poor, mean family in Manasseh, and he the least in his father's house; and the company that was with him appeared very wretched, being but three hundred men, and they weak and faint: but we see how they suffered for their folly, in not acknowledging, and appearing to promote this work of God. Gideon when he returned from the victory, took them, and taught them with the briers and thorns of the wilderness, and beat down the tower of Penuel, (he brought down their pride, and their false confidence,) and slew the men of the city (Judges chapter 8). This in all proba-

bility Gideon did, as moved and directed by the angel of the LORD, that is Christ, that first called him, and sent him forth in this battle, and instructed and directed him, in the whole affair.

The return of the ark of God to dwell in Zion, in the midst of the land of Israel, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjath-jearim, in the utmost borders of the land, did lively represent the return of God to a professing people, in the spiritual tokens of his presence, after long absence from them; as well as the ark's ascending up into a mountain, typified Christ's ascension into heaven. It is evident by the psalms that were penned on that occasion, especially the 68th Psalm, that the exceeding rejoicings of Israel on that occasion, represented the joy of the church of Christ, on his returning to it, after it has been in a low and dark state, to revive his work, bringing his people back, as it were from Bashan, and from the depth of the sea, scattering their spiritual enemies, and causing that though they had lain among the pots, yet they should be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold; and giving the blessed tokens of his presence in his house, that his people may see the goings of God their King in his sanctuary; and that the gifts which David, with such royal bounty, distributed amongst the people on that occasion (2 Samuel 6:18-19; 1 Chronicles 16:2-3) represent spiritual blessings, that Christ liberally sends down on his church, by the outpourings of his Spirit. See (Psalm 68:1, 3, 13, 18-24). And we have an account how that all the people, from Shihor of Egypt, even to the entering in of Hamath, gathered together, and appeared to join and assist in that great affair; and that all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with

cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps (1 Chronicles 13:2, 5; 15:28). And not only the men, but the women of Israel, the daughters of Zion appeared as publicly joining in the praises and rejoicings that were on that occasion (2 Samuel 6:19). But we read of one of David's wives, even Michal, Saul's daughter, whose heart was not engaged in the affair, and did not appear with others to rejoice and praise God on this occasion, but kept away, and stood at a distance, as disaffected, and disliking the managements; she despised and ridiculed the transports, and extraordinary manifestations of joy that then were; and the curse that she brought upon herself by it, was that, of being barren to the day of her death. Let this be a warning to us: let us take heed, in this day of the bringing up of the ark of God, that while we are in visibility and profession the spouse of the spiritual David, we do not show ourselves to be indeed the children of false-hearted and rebellious Saul, by our standing aloof, and not joining in the joy and praises of the day, and disliking and despising the joys and affections of God's people, because they are to so high a degree, and so bring the curse of perpetual barrenness upon our souls.

Let us take heed that we are not like the son of the bond-woman, that was born after the flesh, that persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, and mocked at the feasting and rejoicings that were made for Isaac when he was weaned; lest we should be cast out of the family of Abraham, as he was (Genesis 21:8-9). That affair contained spiritual mysteries, and was typical of things that come to pass in these days of the gospel; as is evident by the apostle's testimony (Galatians 4:22 to the end). And particularly it seems to have been typical of two things. 1. The weaning of the church from its milk of carnal ordinances, ceremonies, shadows,

and beggarly elements, upon the coming of Christ, and pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles. The church of Christ, in the times of the Old Testament, was in its minority, and was a babe; and the apostle tells us that babes must be fed with milk, and not with strong meat; but when God weaned his church from these carnal ordinances, on the ceasing of the legal dispensation, a glorious gospel feast was provided for souls, and God fed his people with spiritual dainties, and filled them with the Spirit, and gave them joy in the Holy Ghost. Ishmael, in mocking at the time of Isaac's feast, by the apostle's testimony, represented the carnal Jews, the children of the literal Jerusalem, who when they beheld the rejoicings of Christians, in their spiritual and evangelical privileges, were filled with envy, deriding, contradicting and blaspheming (Acts 2:13; 13:45; 18:6). And therefore were cast out of the family of Abraham, and out of the land of Canaan, to wander through the earth. 2. This weaning of Isaac's seems also to represent the conversion of sinners, which is several times represented in Scripture by the weaning of a child; as in (Psalm 131; Isaiah 28:9). Because in conversion, the soul is weaned from the enjoyments of the world, which are as it were the breast of our mother earth; and is also weaned from the covenant of our first parents, which we as naturally hang upon, as a child on its mother's breasts: and the great feast that Abraham made on that occasion, represents the spiritual feast, the heavenly privileges, and holy joys and comforts, which God gives souls at their conversion. Now is a time when God is in a remarkable manner bestowing the blessings of such a feast. Let every one take heed that he does not now show himself to be the son of the bond-woman, and born after the flesh, by standing and deriding, with mocking Ishmael; lest they be cast

out as he was, and it be said concerning them, these sons of the bond-woman, shall not be heirs with the sons of the free-woman. Do not let us stumble at the things that have been, because they are so great and extraordinary; for if we have run with the footmen, and they have wearied us, how shall we contend with horses? There is doubtless a time coming when God will accomplish things vastly greater and more extraordinary than these.

And that we may be warned not to continue doubting and unbelieving concerning this work, because it is so great and extraordinary, let us consider how the unbelieving lord in Samaria was punished for his unbelief, when God was about to do so great a thing for Israel, as suddenly to turn the terrible famine they were under, into great plenty. When God's prophet told of this wonderful work that God would do the very next day, he could not believe it; he said, though the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he saw it with his eyes, but was not to eat of it; he was trodden down in the gate (2 Kings 7).

When God redeemed his people from their Babylonian captivity, and led them back to Jerusalem, to rebuild the city and temple, it was a glorious type of the spiritual redemption of God's church. Those that were disposed to mock at that work, and those that despised it, were like those that God most remarkably executed his displeasure upon. Those who ridiculed it were like those who said, 'Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?' And like Sanballat and Tobiah, who laughed God's people to scorn, and said, 'What do these feeble Jews?' And when the people of God wept for the destruction of the temple, and yet shouted for joy when the foundation of the new temple was laid, so that the noise of the weeping and the shouting was mixed, and

could not be distinguished — those who were round about them, who were not of them, could not understand what the mixture of weeping and joy meant. So now in the present work, there is a mixture of weeping and joy, which those who are not acquainted with the nature of true religion cannot understand. And those that are strangers to this work are in danger, like those enemies of Israel, of opposing it, and seeking to hinder it, and bringing God's displeasure upon themselves.

As people will greatly expose themselves to the curse of God, by opposing, or standing at a distance, and keeping silence at such a time as this; so for persons to arise, and readily to acknowledge God, and honor him in such a work, and cheerfully and vigorously to exert themselves to promote it, will be to put themselves much in the way of the divine blessing. What a mark of honor does God put upon those in Israel, that willingly offered themselves, and came to the help of the Lord against the mighty, when the angel of the Lord led forth his armies, and they fought from heaven against Sisera (Judges 5:2, 9, 14, 15, 17, 18)? And what a great blessing is pronounced on Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, for her appearing on the Lord's side, and for what she did to promote this work (verse 24) — which was no less than the curse pronounced in the preceding verse against Meroz for lying still: 'Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.' And what a blessing is pronounced on those which shall have any hand in the destruction of Babylon, which was the head city of the kingdom of Satan, and of the enemies of the church of God (Psalm 137:9): 'Happy shall he be, that takes, and dashes your little ones against the stones.' What a particular and honorable notice is taken, in the records of God's

Word, of those that arose, and appeared as David's helpers, to introduce him into the kingdom of Israel, in the 12th chapter of 1 Chronicles. The host of those that thus came to the help of the Lord, in that work of his, and glorious revolution in Israel, by which the kingdom of that great type of the Messiah was set up in Israel, is compared to the host of God (verse 22): 'At that time, day by day, there came to David, to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God.' And doubtless it was intended to be a type of that host of God, that shall appear with the spiritual David, as his helpers, when he shall come to set up his kingdom in the world; the same host that we read of in Revelation 19:14. The Spirit of God then pronounced a special blessing on David's helpers, as those that were coworkers with God (verse 18): 'Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Yours are we, David, and on your side, you son of Jesse; peace, peace be to you, and peace be to your helpers, for your God helps you.' So we may conclude that God will much more give his blessing to such as come to the help of the Lord, when he sets his own dear Son as King on his holy hill of Zion; and they shall be received by Christ, and he will put peculiar honor upon them, as David did on those his helpers, as we have an account in the following words (verse 18): 'Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.' It is particularly noted of those that came to David to Hebron, ready armed to the war, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the Word of the Lord, that they were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do (verses 23 and 32). In this they differed from the Pharisees and other Jews, that did not come to the help of the Lord, at the time that the great Son of David appeared to set up his kingdom in the

world, whom Christ condemns, that they had not understanding of those times (Luke 12:56): 'You hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it, that you do not discern these times?' So it always will be, when Christ remarkably appears on earth, on a design of setting up his kingdom here, there will be many that will not understand the times, nor what Israel ought to do, and so will not come to turn about the kingdom to David.

The favorable notice that God will take of such as appear to promote the work of God, at such a time as this, may also be argued from such a very particular notice being taken in the sacred records, of those that helped in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, upon the return from the Babylonian captivity (Nehemiah chapter 3).

At such a time as this, when God is setting his King on his holy hill of Zion, or establishing his dominion, or showing forth his regal glory from there, he expects that his visible people, without exception, should openly appear to acknowledge him in such a work, and bow before him, and join with him. But especially does he expect this of civil rulers: God's eye is especially upon them, to see how they behave themselves on such an occasion. If a new king comes to the throne, when he comes from abroad, and enters into his kingdom, and makes his solemn entry into the royal city, it is expected that all sorts should acknowledge him; but above all others is it expected that the great men, and public officers of the nation should then make their appearance, and attend on their sovereign, with suitable congratulations, and manifestations of respect and loyalty. If such as these stand at a distance, at such a time, it will be much more taken notice of, and will awaken the prince's jealousy and displeasure much more, than such behavior in the

common people. And thus it is, when that eternal Son of God, and heir of the world, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, whom his Father has appointed to be King of kings, comes as it were from far, and in the spiritual tokens of his presence, enters into the royal city Zion; God has his eye at such a time, especially upon those princes, nobles and judges of the earth, spoken of in Proverbs 8:16, to see how they behave themselves, whether they bow to him, that he has made the head of all principality and power. This is evident by Psalm 2:6-7, 10-12: 'Yet have I set my King, upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord has said to me, you are my Son, this day have I begotten you. Be wise now therefore, O you kings, be instructed, you judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.' There seems to be in the words, an allusion to a new king's coming to the throne, and making his solemn entry into the royal city — as Zion was the royal city in Israel — when it is expected that all, especially men in public office and authority, should manifest their loyalty, by some open and visible token of respect, by the way, as he passes along; and those that refuse or neglect it are in danger of being immediately struck down, and perishing from the way, by which the king goes in solemn procession.

The day on which God does in an eminent manner send forth the rod of Christ's strength out of Zion, that he may rule in the midst of his enemies, the day of his power in which his people shall be made willing, is also eminently a day of his wrath, especially to such rulers as oppose him, or won't bow to him; a day in which he shall strike through kings, and fill the places with the dead bodies, and wound the heads over many countries (Psalm 110). And thus it

is, that when the Son of God girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and his majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth, meekness and righteousness, his right hand teaches him terrible things. It was the princes of Succoth especially, that suffered punishment, when the inhabitants of that city refused to come to the help of the Lord, when Gideon was pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna; we read that Gideon took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness, and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. It is especially taken notice of that the rulers, and chief men of Israel, were called upon to assist in the affair of bringing up the Ark of God; they were chiefly consulted, and were principal in the management of the affair (1 Chronicles 13:1): 'And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader.' And in chapter 15:25: 'So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, out of the house of Obed-Edom, with joy.' So also in 2 Samuel 6:1, and when the Ark was brought into the temple in 1 Kings 8:1, 3 and 2 Chronicles 5:2, 4.

And as rulers, by neglecting their duty at such a time, will especially expose themselves to God's great displeasure, so by fully acknowledging God in such a work, and by cheerfully and vigorously exerting themselves to promote it, they will especially be in the way of receiving peculiar honors and rewards at God's hands. It is noted of the princes of Israel, that they especially appeared to honor God with their princely offering, on occasion of the setting up the tabernacle of God, in the congregation of Israel — which I have observed already was done at the time of the feast of tabernacles, and was a type of the tabernacle of God's being with men, and his dwelling with men in the latter days — and with what abundant

particularity is it noted of each prince, how much he offered to God on that occasion, for their everlasting honor, in the 7th chapter of Numbers? And so with how much favor and honor does the Spirit of God take notice of those princes in Israel, that came to the help of the Lord, in the war against Sisera (Judges 5:9): 'My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people.' And in verse 14: 'Out of Machir came down governors.' And verse 15: 'And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah.' And in the account that we have of the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, in the 3rd chapter of Nehemiah, it is particularly noted what a hand one and another of the rulers had in this affair; we have an account that such a part of the wall was repaired by the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of the other half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Mizpah, and such a part by the ruler of the half part of Beth-zur; and such a part by the ruler of Mizpah (verses 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19). And there it is particularly noted of the rulers of one of the cities, that they put not their necks to the work of the Lord, though the common people did; and they are stigmatized for it, in the sacred records, to their everlasting reproach (verse 5): 'And next to them, the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord.' So the Spirit of God, with special honor, takes notice of princes and rulers of several tribes, that assisted in bringing up the Ark (Psalm 68:27).

And I humbly desire that it may be considered, whether we don't have reason to fear that God is provoked with this land, that no more notice has been taken of this glorious work of the Lord, that has been lately carried on, by the civil authority; that there has

no more been done by them, as a public acknowledgment of God in this work, and no more improvement of their authority to promote it, either by appointing a day of public thanksgiving to God, for so unspeakable a mercy, or a day of fasting and prayer, to humble ourselves before God, for our past deadness and unprofitableness under the means of grace, and to seek the continuance and increase of the tokens of his presence; or so much as to enter upon any public consultation, what should be done to advance the present revival of religion, and great reformation that is begun in the land. Is there not danger that such behavior, at such a time, will be interpreted by God, as a denial of Christ? If but a new governor comes into a province, how much is there done, especially by those that are in authority, to put honor upon him, to arise, and appear publicly, and go forth to meet him, to address and congratulate him, and with great expense to attend upon him, and aid him? If the authority of the province, on such an occasion, should all sit still, and say and do nothing, and take no notice of the arrival of their new governor, would there not be danger of its being interpreted by him, and his prince that sent him, as a denial of his authority, or a refusing to receive him, and honor him as their governor? And shall the head of the angels, and Lord of the universe, come down from heaven, in so wonderful a manner, into the land, and shall all stand at a distance, and be silent and inactive on such an occasion? I would humbly recommend it to our rulers, to consider whether God does not now say to them, 'Be wise, now, you rulers, be instructed, you judges of New England; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way.'

It is prophesied in Zechariah 12:8, that in the glorious day of the Christian church, the house of David, or the rulers in God's Israel, shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord, before his people. But how can such rulers expect to have any share in this glorious promise, that don't so much as openly acknowledge God in the work of that Spirit, by which the glory of that day is to be accomplished? The days are coming, so often spoken of, when the saints shall reign on earth, and all dominion and authority shall be given into their hands: but if our rulers would partake of this honor, they ought at such a day as this, to bring their glory and honor into the spiritual Jerusalem, agreeable to Revelation 21:24.

But above all others, is God's eye upon ministers of the gospel, as expecting of them, that they should arise, and acknowledge, and honor him in such a work as this, and do their utmost to encourage and promote it: for to promote such a work, is the very business which they are called and devoted to. It is the office to which they are appointed, as coworkers with Christ, and as his ambassadors and instruments, to awaken and convert sinners, and establish, build up and comfort saints; it is the business they have been solemnly charged with, before God, angels and men, and that they have given up themselves to, by the most sacred vows. These especially, are the officers of Christ's kingdom, that above all other men upon earth, do represent his person, into whose hands Christ has committed the sacred oracles, and holy ordinances, and all his appointed means of grace, to be administered by them; they are the stewards of his household, into whose hands he has committed its provision; the immortal souls of men are committed to them, as a flock of sheep are committed to the care of a shepherd, or as a master commits a treasure to the care of a servant, of which he

must give an account. It is expected of them, above all others, that they should have understanding of the times, and know what Israel ought to do; for it is their business to acquaint themselves with things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and to teach and enlighten others in things of this nature. We that are employed in the sacred work of the gospel ministry, are the watchmen over the city, to whom God has committed the keys of the gates of Zion; and if when the rightful King of Zion comes, to deliver his people from the enemy that opposes them, we refuse to open the gates to him, how greatly shall we expose ourselves to his wrath? We are appointed to be the captains of the host in this war: and if a general will highly resent it in a private soldier, if he refuses to follow him when his banner is displayed, and his trumpet blown; how much more will he resent it in the officers of his army? The work of the gospel ministry, consisting in the administration of God's Word and ordinances, is the principal means that God has appointed, for carrying on his work on the souls of men; and it is his revealed will, that whenever that glorious revival of religion, and reformation of the world, so often spoken of in his Word, is accomplished, it should be principally by the labors of his ministers; and therefore how heinous will it be in the sight of God, if when a work of that nature is begun, we appear unbelieving, slow, backward and disaffected? There was no sort of persons among the Jews that was in any measure treated with such manifestations of God's great displeasure, and severe indignation, for not acknowledging Christ, and the work of his Spirit, in the days of Christ and his apostles, as the ministers of religion. See how Christ deals with them for it, in the 23rd chapter of Matthew; with what gentleness did Christ treat tax collectors and harlots, in comparison of them?

When the tabernacle was erected in the camp of Israel, and God came down from heaven to dwell in it, the priests were above all others concerned, and busily employed in the solemn transactions of that occasion (Leviticus chapters 8 and 9). And so it was at the time of the dedication of the temple of Solomon (1 Kings chapter 8 and 2 Chronicles chapters 5, 6, and 7), which was at the time of the feast of tabernacles, at the same time that the tabernacle was erected in the wilderness. And the Levites were primarily, and most immediately concerned in bringing up the Ark into Mount Zion; the business properly belonged to them, and the Ark was carried upon their shoulders (1 Chronicles 15:2): 'Then David said, None ought to carry the Ark of God but the Levites; for them has the Lord chosen to carry the Ark of God, and to minister to him forever.' And in verses 11-12: 'And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Aminadab, and said to them, You are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both you, and your brothers, that you may bring up the Ark of the Lord God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it.' So we have an account that the priests led the way, in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, after the Babylonian captivity (Nehemiah 3, at the beginning).

If ministers preach never so good doctrine, and are never so diligent and laborious in their work, yet, if at such a day as this, they show to their people, that they are not well affected to this work, but are very doubtful and suspicious of it, they will be very likely to do their people a great deal more hurt than good. For the very fame of such a great and extraordinary work of God, if their people were allowed to believe it to be his work, and the example

of other towns, together with what preaching they might hear occasionally, would be likely to have a much greater influence upon the minds of their people, to awaken them and animate them in religion, than all their labors with them. And besides, their minister's opinion will not only cause in them a suspicion of the work they hear of abroad, whereby the mighty hand of God that appears in it loses its influence upon their minds, but it will also tend to create a suspicion of every thing of the like nature, that shall appear among themselves, as being something of the same disorder that has become so common in the land; and that is, in effect, to create a suspicion of all vital religion, and to put the people upon talking against it, and discouraging it, wherever it appears, and knocking it in the head, as fast as it rises. And we that are ministers, by looking on this work, from year to year, with a displeased countenance, shall effectually keep the sheep from their pasture, instead of doing the part of shepherds to them, by feeding them; and our people had a great deal better be without any settled minister at all, at such a day as this.

We that are in this sacred office had need to take heed what we do, and how we behave ourselves at this time: a less thing in a minister will hinder the work of God, than in others. If we are very silent, or say but little about the work, in our public prayers and preaching, or seem carefully to avoid speaking of it in our conversation, it will, and justly may be interpreted by our people, that we who are their guides, to whom they are to look for spiritual instruction, are suspicious of it; and this will tend to raise the same suspicions in them; and so the before-mentioned consequences will follow. And if we really hinder, and stand in the way of the work of God, whose business above all others it is to promote it,

how can we expect to partake of the glorious benefits of it? And by keeping others from the benefit of it, we shall keep them out of heaven; therefore those awful words of Christ to the Jewish leaders, should be considered by us (Matthew 23:13): 'Woe to you, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven — for you neither go in yourselves, neither do you allow those that are entering, to go in.' If we keep the sheep from their pasture, how shall we answer it to the great Shepherd, that has bought the flock with his precious blood, and has committed the care of them to us? I would humbly desire of every minister that has thus long remained disaffected to this work, and has had contemptible thoughts of it, to consider whether he has not hitherto been like Michal, without any child, or at least in a great measure barren and unsuccessful in his work: I pray God it may not be a perpetual barrenness as hers was.

The times of Christ's remarkably appearing, in behalf of his church, and to revive religion, and advance his kingdom in the world, are often spoken in the prophecies of Scripture, as times in which he will remarkably execute judgments on such ministers or shepherds, as don't feed the flock, but hinder their being fed, and so deliver his flock from them, as in Jeremiah 23 throughout, and Ezekiel 34 throughout, and Zechariah 10:3 and Isaiah 56:7-9. I observed before that Christ's solemn, magnificent entry into Jerusalem, seems to be designed, as a representation of his glorious coming into his church, the spiritual Jerusalem; and therefore it is worthy to be noted, to our present purpose, that Christ at that time, cast out all those that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those that sold doves; signifying that when he should come to set up his kingdom on earth, he would cast out those out of his house, who,

instead of being faithful ministers, officiated there only for worldly gain. Not that I determine that all ministers that are suspicious of this work, do so; but I mention these things to show that it is to be expected, that a time of a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God to revive religion, will be a time of remarkable judgments on those ministers that don't serve the end of their ministry.

The example of the unbelieving lord in Samaria, should especially be for the warning of ministers and rulers. At the time when God turned an extreme famine into a great plenty, by a wonderful work of his, the king appointed this lord to have the charge of the gate of the city; where he saw the common people, in multitudes, entering with great joy and gladness, loaded with provision, to feed and feast their almost famished bodies; but he himself, though he saw it with his eyes, never had one taste of it, but being weak with famine, sank down in the crowd, and was trodden to death, as a punishment of God, for his not giving credit to that great and wonderful work of God, when sufficiently manifested to him, to require his belief. Ministers are those, that the King of the church has appointed to have the charge of the gate, at which his people enter into the kingdom of heaven, there to be entertained and satisfied with an eternal feast; ministers have the charge of the house of God, which is the gate of heaven.

Ministers should especially take heed of a spirit of envy toward other ministers, that God is pleased to make more use of to carry on this work, than they; and that they don't, from such a spirit, reproach some preachers, that have the true Spirit, as though they were influenced by a false spirit, or were bereft of reason, and were mad, and were proud, false pretenders, and deserved to be put in prison or the stocks, as disturbers of the peace; lest they expose

themselves to the curse of Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, who envied the prophet Jeremiah, and in this manner reviled him, in his letter to Zephaniah the priest (Jeremiah 29:26-27): 'The Lord has made you priest, in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that you should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and makes himself a prophet, that you should put him in prison, and in the stocks. Now therefore, why have you not reprov'd Jeremiah of Anathoth, which makes himself a prophet to you?' His curse is denounced in verse 32: 'Therefore, thus says the Lord, Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed; He shall not have a man to dwell among his people, neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, says the Lord, because he has taught rebellion against the Lord.' All those that are others' superiors or elders, should take heed, that at this day they are not like the elder brother, who could not bear it, that the prodigal should be made so much of, and should be so sumptuously entertained, and would not join in the joy of the feast; was like Michal, Saul's daughter, offended at the music and dancing that he heard; the transports of joy displeas'd him; it seem'd to him to be an unseemly and unseasonable noise and commotion that was made; and therefore stood at a distance, sullen, and much offended, and full of complaints against the young prodigal.

It is our wisest and best way, fully, and without reluctance, to bow to the great God in this work, and to be entirely resigned to him, with respect to the manner in which he carries it on, and the instruments he is pleas'd to make use of, and not to show ourselves out of humor, and sullenly to refuse to acknowledge the work, in the full glory of it, because we haven't had so great a hand in promoting it, or haven't shared so largely in the blessings of it,

as some others; and not to refuse to give all that honor, that belongs to others, as instruments, because they are young, or are upon other accounts, much inferior to ourselves, and many others, and may appear to us very unworthy, that God should put so much honor upon them. When God comes to accomplish any great work for his church, and for the advancement of the kingdom of his Son, he always fulfills that Scripture in Isaiah 2:17: 'And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.' If God has a design of carrying on this work, every one, whether he be great or small, must either bow to it, or be broken before it: it may be expected that God's hand will be upon every thing that is high, and stiff, and strong in opposition, as in Isaiah 2:12-15: 'For the day of the Lord of hosts, shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall.'

Not only magistrates and ministers, but every living soul, is now obliged to arise, and acknowledge God in this work, and put to his hand to promote it, as they would not expose themselves to God's curse. All sorts of persons, throughout the whole congregation of Israel, great and small, rich and poor, men and women, helped to build the tabernacle in the wilderness; some in one way, others in another; each one according to his capacity: every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing. All sorts contributed, and all sorts were employed in that affair, in labors of their hands, both men and women: some

brought gold and silver, others blue, purple and scarlet, and fine linen; others offered an offering of brass; others, with whom was found acacia wood, brought it an offering to the Lord: the rulers brought onyx stones, and spice, and oil; and some brought goats' hair; and some rams' skins, and others badgers' skins (Exodus 35:20, etc.). And we are told in verse 29: 'The children of Israel brought a willing offering to the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing.' And thus it ought to be in this day of building the tabernacle of God; with such a willing and cheerful heart, ought every man, woman, and child, to do something to promote this work: those that have not onyx stones, or are not able to bring gold or silver, yet may bring goats' hair.

As all sorts of persons were employed in building the tabernacle in the wilderness, so the whole congregation of Israel were called together to set up the tabernacle in Shiloh, after they came into Canaan (Joshua 18:1). And so again, the whole congregation of Israel were gathered together, to bring up the Ark of God, from Kiriath-jearim; and again, they were all assembled to bring it up, out of the house of Obed-Edom into Mount Zion; so again, all Israel met together to assist in the great affair of the dedication of the temple, and bringing the Ark into it. So we have an account, how that all sorts assisted in the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, not only the proper inhabitants of Jerusalem, but those that dwelt in other parts of the land; not only the priests and rulers, but the servants and merchants, farmers and craftsmen, and women (Nehemiah 3:5, 12, 26, 31, 32). And we have an account of one and another, that he repaired over against his house (verses 10, 23, 28), and of one that repaired over against his chamber (verse 30). So now, at this time of the rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, every

one ought to promote the work of God within his own sphere, and by doing what belongs to him, in the place in which God has set him: men in a private capacity, may repair over against their houses; and even those that have not the government of families, and have but part of a house belonging to them, should repair, each one over against his chamber. And every one should be engaged to do the utmost that lies in his power, laboring with the utmost watchfulness, care and diligence, with united hearts, and united strength, and the greatest readiness, to assist one another in this work: as God's people rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem; who were so diligent in the work, that they worked from break of day, until the stars appeared, and did not so much as put off their clothes in the night; and worked with that care and watchfulness, that with one hand they worked in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon; besides the guard they set to defend them; and were so well united in it, that they took care, that one should stand ready, with a trumpet in his hand, that if any were assaulted in one part, those in the other parts, at the sound of the trumpet, might resort to them, and help them (Nehemiah 4, at the latter end).

Great care should be taken that the press should be used for no purpose contrary to the interest of this work. We read that when God fought against Sisera, for the deliverance of his oppressed church, 'They that handle the pen of the writer came to the help of the Lord in that affair' (Judges 5:14). Whatever sort of men in Israel they were that were intended, yet as the words were indited by a Spirit, that had a perfect view of all events to the end of the world, and had a special eye on this song, to that great event of the deliverance of God's church, in the latter days, of which this deliv-

erance of Israel was a type, it is not unlikely that they have respect to authors, those that should fight against the kingdom of Satan, with their pens. Those therefore that publish pamphlets, to the disadvantage of this work, and tending either directly or indirectly to bring it under suspicion, and to discourage or hinder it, would do well thoroughly to consider whether this be not indeed the work of God; and whether if it be, it is not likely that God will go forth as fire, to consume all that stands in his way, and so burn up those pamphlets; and whether there be not danger that the fire that is kindled in them, will scorch the authors.

When a people oppose Christ in the work of his Holy Spirit, it is because it touches them, in something that is dear to their carnal minds; and because they see the tendency of it is to cross their pride, and deprive them of the objects of their lusts. We should take heed that at this day we are not like the Gadarenes, who when Christ came into their country, in the exercise of his glorious power and grace, triumphing over a legion of devils, and delivering a miserable creature, that had long been their captive, were all alarmed, because they lost their swine by it, and the whole multitude of the country came, and begged him to depart out of their region: they loved their filthy swine, better than Jesus Christ; and had rather have a legion of devils in their country, with their herd of swine, than Jesus Christ without them.

This work may be opposed, not only by directly speaking against the whole of it: persons may say that they believe there is a good work carried on in the country; and may sometimes bless God, in their public prayers, in general terms, for any awakenings or revivals of religion, there have lately been in any parts of the land; and may pray that God would carry on his own work, and

pour out his Spirit more and more; and yet, as I apprehend, be in the sight of God, great opposers of his work. Some will express themselves after this manner, that are so far from acknowledging and rejoicing in the infinite mercy, and glorious grace of God, in causing so happy a change in the land, that they look upon the religious state of the country, take it in the whole of it, much more sorrowful than it was ten years ago; and whose conversation, to those that are well acquainted with them, evidently shows, that they are more out of humor with the state of things, and enjoy themselves less, than they did before ever this work began. If it be manifestly thus with us, and our talk and behavior with respect to this work, be such as has, though but, an indirect tendency, to cause ill thoughts and suspicions in others concerning it, we are opposers of the work of God.

Instead of coming to the help of the Lord, we shall actually fight against him, if we are abundant in insisting on, and setting forth the blemishes of the work, so as to manifest that we rather choose, and are more forward to take notice of what is amiss, than what is good and glorious in the work. Not but that the errors that are committed, ought to be observed and lamented, and a proper testimony borne against them, and the most probable means should be used to have them amended; but an insisting much upon them, as though it were a pleasing theme, or speaking of them with more appearance of heat of spirit, or with ridicule, or an air of contempt, than grief for them, has no tendency to correct the errors; but has a tendency to darken the glory of God's power and grace, appearing in the substance of the work, and to cause jealousies and ill thoughts in the minds of others, concerning the whole of it. Whatever errors many zealous persons have run into, yet if the

work, in the substance of it, be the work of God, then it is a joyful day indeed; it is so in heaven, and ought to be so, among God's people on earth, especially in that part of the earth, where this glorious work is carried on. It is a day of great rejoicing with Christ himself, the good Shepherd, when he finds his sheep that was lost, lays it on his shoulders rejoicing, and calls together his friends and neighbors, saying 'Rejoice with me': if we therefore are Christ's friends, now it should be a day of great rejoicing with us. If we viewed things in a just light, so great an event as the conversion of such a multitude of sinners, would draw and engage our attention, much more than all the imprudences and irregularities that have been; our hearts would be swallowed up with the glory of this event, and we should have no great disposition to attend to any thing else. The imprudences and errors of poor feeble people don't hinder or prevent great rejoicing, in the presence of the angels of God, over so many poor sinners that have repented; and it will be an argument of something very ill in us, if they prevent our rejoicing.

Who loves in a day of great joy and gladness, to be much insisting on those things that are uncomfortable? Would it not be very improper, on a king's coronation day, to be much in taking notice of the blemishes of the royal family? Or would it be agreeable to the bridegroom, on the day of his espousals, the day of the gladness of his heart, to be much insisting on the blemishes of his bride? We have an account, how that at the time of that joyful dispensation of providence, the restoration of the church of Israel, after the Babylonian captivity, and at the time of the feast of tabernacles, many wept at the faults that were found among the people, but were reprov'd for taking so much notice of the blemishes of

that affair, as to overlook the cause of rejoicing (Nehemiah 8:9-12): 'And Nehemiah, which is the governor, and Ezra the priest, the scribe, and the Levites, that taught the people, said to all the people, This day is holy to the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep; for all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law. Then he said to them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord; neither be you sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy, neither be you grieved. And all the people went their way, to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.'

God doubtless now expects, that all sorts of persons in New England, rulers, ministers and people, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, should take great notice of his hand, in this mighty work of his grace, and should appear to acknowledge his glory in it, and greatly to rejoice in it, every one doing his utmost, in the place that God has set them in, to promote it. And God, according to his wonderful patience, seems to be still waiting, to give us opportunity, thus to acknowledge and honor him. But if we finally refuse, there is not the least reason to expect any other, than that his awful curse will pursue us, and that the pourings out of his wrath will be proportionable to the despised outpourings of his Spirit and grace.

PART 3



This work that has lately been carried on in the land, is the work of God, and not the work of man. Its beginning has not been of man's power or device, and its being carried on, depends not on our strength or wisdom; but yet God expects of all, that they should use their utmost endeavors to promote it, and that the hearts of all should be greatly engaged in this affair, and that we should employ our utmost strength in it, however vain human strength is without the power of God. And so he no less requires that we should employ our utmost care, wisdom and prudence, though human wisdom, of itself, be as vain as human strength. Though God is accustomed to carry on such a work, in such a manner, as many ways, to show the weakness and vanity of means and human endeavors, in themselves; yet at the same time, he carries it on in such a manner, as to encourage diligence and vigilance, in the use of proper means and endeavors, and to punish the neglect of them. Therefore in our endeavors to promote this great work, we ought to use the utmost caution, vigilance and skill, in the measures we take in order to it. A great affair should be managed with great prudence: this is the most important affair that ever New England was called to be concerned in. When a people are engaged in war with a powerful and crafty nation, it con-

cerns them to manage an affair of such consequence with the utmost discretion. Of what vast importance then must it be, that we should be vigilant and prudent, in the management of this great war that New England now has, with so great a host of such subtle and cruel enemies, in which we must either conquer or be conquered, and the consequence of the victory, on one side, will be our eternal destruction, in both soul and body in hell, and on the other side, our obtaining the kingdom of heaven, and reigning in it in eternal glory? We need always to stand on our watch, and to be well versed in the art of war, and not to be ignorant of the devices of our enemies, and to take heed lest by any means we be beguiled through their subtlety.

Though the devil be strong, yet in such a war as this, he depends more on his craft than his strength: and the course he has chiefly taken, from time to time, to hinder and overthrow revivals of religion in the church of God, has been by his subtle, deceitful management, to beguile and mislead those that have been engaged in them; and in such a course God has been pleased, in his holy and sovereign providence, to allow him to succeed, often times, in a great measure, to overthrow that, which in its beginning appeared most hopeful and glorious. The work that is now begun in New England is, as I have shown, eminently glorious, and if it should go on and prevail, would make New England a kind of heaven upon earth: is it not therefore a great pity, that it should be overthrown, through wrong and improper management, that we are led into by our subtle adversary, in our endeavors to promote it?

In treating of the methods that ought to be taken to promote this work, I would: first, take notice, in some instances, in which fault has been found with the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of it, or have been zealous to promote it, as I apprehend, beyond just cause; second, show what things ought to be corrected or avoided; and third, show positively, what ought to be done to promote this glorious work of God.

First, I would take notice of some things, at which offense has been taken without, or beyond just cause.

One thing that has been complained of, is ministers addressing themselves, rather to the affections of their hearers, than to their understandings, and striving to raise their passions to the utmost height, rather by a very affectionate manner of speaking, and a great appearance of earnestness, in voice and gesture, than by clear reasoning, and informing their judgment: by which means, it is objected, that the affections are moved, without a proportionable enlightening of the understanding.

To which I would say, I am far from thinking that it is not very profitable, for ministers in their preaching, to endeavor clearly and distinctly to explain the doctrines of religion, and unravel the difficulties that attend them, and to confirm them with strength of reason and argumentation, and also to observe some easy and clear method and order, in their discourses, for the help of the understanding and memory; and it is very probable that these things have been of late, too much neglected, by many ministers. Yet I believe that the objection that is made, of affections raised without enlightening the understanding, is in a great measure built on a mistake, and confused notions that some have about the nature and cause of the affections, and the manner in which they depend

on the understanding. All affections are raised either by light in the understanding, or by some error and delusion in the understanding; for all affections do certainly arise from some apprehension in the understanding; and that apprehension must either be agreeable to truth, or else be some mistake or delusion; if it be an apprehension or notion that is agreeable to truth, then it is light in the understanding. Therefore the thing to be inquired into is, whether the apprehensions or notions of divine and eternal things, that are raised in people's minds, by these affectionate preachers, from which their affections are excited, be apprehensions that are agreeable to truth, or whether they are mistakes. If the former, then the affections are raised the way they should be, that is, by informing the mind, or conveying light to the understanding. They go away with a wrong notion, that think that those preachers can't affect their hearers, by enlightening their understandings, that don't do it by such a distinct, and learned handling of the doctrinal points of religion, as depends on human learning, or the strength of natural reason, and tends to enlarge their hearers' learning, and speculative knowledge in divinity. The manner of preaching without this, may be such as shall tend very much to set divine and eternal things, in a right view, and to give the hearers such ideas and apprehensions of them as are agreeable to truth, and such impressions on their hearts, as are answerable to the real nature of things: and not only the words that are spoken, but the manner of speaking, is one thing that has a great tendency to this. I think an exceedingly affectionate way of preaching about the great things of religion, has in itself no tendency to cause false apprehensions of them; but on the contrary a much greater tendency to cause true apprehensions of them, than a moderate, dull, indifferent way of

speaking of them. An appearance of affection and earnestness, in the manner of delivery, if it be very great indeed, yet if it be agreeable to the nature of the subject, and not beyond a proportion to its importance, and worthiness of affection, and there be no appearance of its being feigned or forced, has so much the greater tendency to cause true ideas or apprehensions in the minds of the hearers, of the subject spoken of, and so to enlighten the understanding. And that for this reason, that such a way or manner of speaking of these things, does in fact, more truly represent them, than a more cold and indifferent way of speaking of them. If the subject be in its own nature, worthy of very great affection, then a speaking of it with very great affection, is most agreeable to the nature of that subject, or is the truest representation of it, and therefore has most of a tendency to cause true ideas of it, in the minds of those, to whom the representation is made. And I don't think ministers are to be blamed, for raising the affections of their hearers too high, if that which they are affected with, be only that which is worthy of affection, and their affections are not raised beyond a proportion to their importance, or worthiness of affection. I should think myself in the way of my duty, to raise the affections of my hearers as high as possibly I can, provided that they are affected with nothing but truth, and with affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of what they are affected with. I know it has long been fashionable to despise a very earnest and heartfelt way of preaching; and those preachers only have been valued, that have shown the greatest extent of learning, and strength of reason, and correctness of method and language: but I humbly think it has been for want of understanding, or duly considering human nature, that such preaching has been thought to have the greatest

tendency to answer the ends of preaching; and the experience of the present and past ages abundantly confirms the same. Though, as I said before, clearness of distinction and illustration, and strength of reason, and a good method, in the doctrinal handling of the truths of religion, is many ways needful and profitable, and not to be neglected, yet an increase in speculative knowledge in divinity, is not what is so much needed by our people, as something else. Men may abound in this sort of light and have no heat: how much has there been of this sort of knowledge, in the Christian world, in this age? Was there ever an age, in which strength and penetration of reason, extent of learning, exactness of distinction, correctness of style, and clearness of expression, did so abound? And yet was there ever an age, in which there has been so little sense of the evil of sin, so little love to God, heavenly-mindedness, and holiness of life, among the professed members of the true religion? Our people don't so much need to have their heads stored, as to have their hearts touched; and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching, that has the greatest tendency to do this.

Those texts in Isaiah 58:1 — 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins' — and Ezekiel 6:11 — 'Thus says the Lord God, strike with your hand, and stamp with your foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel!' — I say these texts, however the use that some have made of them has been laughed at, will fully justify, a great degree of earnestness, and manifestation of zeal and fervor in preaching the Word of God. They may indeed be abused, to justify that which would be odd and unnatural, among us, not making due allowance for difference of manners and customs, in different ages and nations; but let us

interpret them how we will, they at least imply, that a most affectionate and earnest manner of delivery, in many cases, becomes a preacher of God's Word.

Preaching of the Word of God, is commonly spoken of in Scripture, in such expressions, as seem to suggest a loud and earnest speaking; as in Isaiah 40:2: 'Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry to her, that her iniquity is pardoned.' And verse 3: 'The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord.' Verse 6: 'The voice said, Cry: And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof, as the flower of the field.' Jeremiah 2:2: 'Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says the Lord.' Jonah 1:2: 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it.' Isaiah 61:1-2: 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me, to preach good tidings to the meek — to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the year of vengeance of our God.' Isaiah 62:11: 'Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the world, say to the daughter of Zion, behold your salvation comes.' Romans 10:18: 'Their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.' Jeremiah 11:6: 'Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear the words of this covenant, and do them.' So also Jeremiah 19:2 and 7:2. Proverbs 8:1: 'Does not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice?' Verses 3-4: 'She cries at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors; to you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men!' And chapter 1:20: 'Wisdom cries without, she utters her voice in the streets.' Chapter 9:3: 'She has sent forth her maidens, she cries upon the

high places of the city.' John 7:37: 'In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.'

It seems to be foretold, that the gospel should be especially preached in a loud and earnest manner, at the introduction of the prosperous state of religion, in the latter days. Isaiah 40:9: 'O Zion, that brings good tidings, get up into the high mountain! O Jerusalem, that brings good tidings, lift up your voice with strength! Lift up, and be not afraid! Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God!' Isaiah 52:7-8: 'How beautiful upon the mountains, are the feet of him that brings good tidings! Your watchmen shall lift up the voice.' Isaiah 27:13: 'And it shall come to pass, in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish.' And this will be one way, that the church of God will cry at that time, like a woman in travail, when Christ mystical is going to be brought forth, as in Revelation 12 at the beginning. It will be by ministers, that are her mouth: and it will be this way, that Christ will then cry like a woman in travail, as in Isaiah 42:14: 'I have long time held my peace: I have been still, and restrained myself; now will I cry, like a travailing woman.' Christ cries by his ministers, and the church cries by her officers. And it is worthy to be noted, that the word commonly used in the New Testament, that we translate preach, properly signifies to proclaim aloud like a herald.

Another thing that some ministers have been greatly blamed for, and I think unjustly, is speaking terror to those, that are already under great terrors, instead of comforting them. Indeed, if ministers in such a case, go about to terrify persons with that which is not true, or to frighten them by representing their case

worse than it is, or in any respect otherwise than it is, they are to be condemned; but if they terrify them only by still holding forth more light to them, and giving them to understand more of the truth of their case, they are altogether to be justified. When sinners' consciences are greatly awakened by the Spirit of God, it is by light imparted to the conscience, enabling them to see their case to be, in some measure, as it is; and if more light be let in, it will terrify them still more: but ministers are not therefore to be blamed that they endeavor to hold forth more light to the conscience, and don't rather alleviate the pain they are under, by intercepting and obstructing that light that shines already. To say anything to those who have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, to represent their case any otherwise than exceedingly terrible, is not to preach the Word of God to them; for the Word of God reveals nothing but truth, but this is to delude them. Why should we be afraid to let persons, that are in an infinitely miserable condition, know the truth, or bring them into the light, for fear it should terrify them? It is light that must convert them, if ever they are converted. The more we bring sinners into the light, while they are miserable, and the light is terrible to them, the more likely it is, that by and by, the light will be joyful to them. The ease, peace and comfort, that unregenerate men enjoy, have their foundation in darkness and blindness; therefore as that darkness vanishes, and light comes in, their peace vanishes, and they are terrified: but that is no good argument, why we should endeavor to maintain their darkness, that we may maintain their comfort. The truth is, that as long as men reject Christ, and don't savingly believe in him, however they may be awakened, and however strict, and conscientious, and laborious they may be in religion, they have the wrath of God abiding on

them, they are his enemies, and the children of the devil — so as the Scripture calls all that are not savingly converted (Matthew 13:38, 1 John 3:10) — and it is uncertain whether they shall ever obtain mercy; God is under no obligation to show them mercy, nor will he be, if they fast and pray and cry never so much; and they are then especially provoking God, under those terrors, that they stand it out against Christ, and won't accept of an offered Savior, though they see so much need of him: and seeing this is the truth, they should be told so, that they may be sensible what their case indeed is.

To blame a minister, for thus declaring the truth to those who are under awakenings, and not immediately administering comfort to them, is like blaming a surgeon, because when he has begun to thrust in his lance, and has already put his patient to great pain, and he shrinks and cries out with anguish, he is so firm that he won't stay his hand, but goes on, to thrust it in further, until he comes to the core of the wound. Such a compassionate physician, who as soon as his patient began to flinch, should withdraw his hand, and go about immediately to apply a plaster, to skin over the wound, and leave the core untouched, would be one that would heal the hurt slightly, crying peace, peace, when there is no peace.

Indeed something else besides terror, is to be preached to those, whose consciences are awakened: the gospel is to be preached to them. They are to be told that there is a Savior provided, that is excellent and glorious, who has shed his precious blood for sinners, and is every way sufficient to save them, that stands ready to receive them, if they will heartily embrace him; for this is also the truth, as well as that they now are in an infinitely dreadful condition. This is the Word of God. Sinners at the same

time that they are told how miserable their case is, should be earnestly invited to come and accept of a Savior, and yield their hearts to him, with all the winning, encouraging arguments, for them so to do, that the gospel affords; but this is to induce them to escape from the misery of the condition that they are now in: but not to make them think their present condition less miserable than it is, or at all to abate their uneasiness and distress, while they are in it; that would be the way to quiet them, and fasten them in it, and not to excite them to flee from it. Comfort, in one sense, is to be held forth, to sinners under awakenings of conscience, that is, comfort is to be offered to them in Christ, on condition of their fleeing from their present miserable state, to him: but comfort is not to be administered to them, in their present state, as anything that they have now any title to, or while out of Christ. No comfort is to be administered to them, from anything in them, any of their qualifications, prayers or other performances, past, present or future; but ministers should, in such cases, strive to their utmost to take all such comforts from them, though it greatly increases their terror. A person that sees himself ready to sink into hell, is ready to strive, some way or other, to lay God under some obligation to him; but he is to be beaten off from every thing of that nature, though it greatly increases his terror, to see himself wholly destitute, on every side, of any refuge, or any thing of his own to lay hold of; as a man that sees himself in danger of drowning, is in terror, and endeavors to catch hold on every twig within his reach, and he that pulls away those twigs from him, increases his terror; yet if they are insufficient to save him, and by being in his way, prevent his looking to that which will save him, to pull them away, is necessary to save his life.

If sinners are in any distress, from any error that they embrace, or mistake they are under, that is to be removed: for instance, if they are in terror, from an apprehension that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that those things have happened to them that are certain signs of reprobation, or any other delusion, such terrors have no tendency to do them any good; for these terrors are from temptation, and not from conviction. But that terror which arises from conviction, or a sight of truth, is to be increased; for those that are most awakened, have great remaining stupidity, they have a sense of but little of that which is; and it is from remaining blindness and darkness, that they see no more; and that remaining blindness is a disease, that we ought to endeavor to remove. I am not afraid to tell sinners, that are most sensible of their misery, that their case is indeed as miserable as they think it to be, and a thousand times more so; for this is the truth. Some may be ready to say that though it be the truth; yet the truth is not to be spoken at all times, and seems not to be seasonable then: but it seems to me, such truth is never more seasonable than at such a time, when Christ is beginning to open the eyes of conscience. Ministers ought to act as coworkers with him; to take that opportunity, and to the utmost to improve that advantage, and strike while the iron is hot, and when the light has begun to shine then to remove all obstacles, and use all proper means, that it may come in more fully, and the work be done thoroughly. And experience abundantly shows, that to take this course, is not harmful, but very much the contrary: I have seen, in very many instances, the happy effects of it, and often times a very speedy happy outcome, and never knew any ill consequence, in case of real conviction, and when distress has been only from it.

I know of but one case, in which the truth ought to be withheld from sinners in distress of conscience, and that is the case of melancholy: and it is not to be withheld from them then, because the truth tends to do them hurt, but because if we speak the truth to them, sometimes they will be deceived, and led into error by it, through that strange disposition there is in them, to take things wrong. So that, that which as it is spoken, is truth, as it is heard and received, and applied by them, is falsehood; as it will be, unless the truth be spoken with abundance of caution and prudence, and consideration of their disposition and circumstances. But the most awful truths of God's Word, ought not to be withheld from public congregations, because it may happen that some such melancholy persons may be in it — no more than the Bible is to be withheld from the Christian world, because it is manifest that there are a great many melancholy persons in Christendom, that exceedingly abuse the awful things contained in the Scripture, to their own wounding. Nor do I think that to be of weight, which is made use of by some, as a great and dreadful objection against the awakening preaching that has of late been in New England, namely, that there have been some instances of melancholy persons that have so abused it, that the outcome has been the murder of themselves. The objection from this is no stronger against awakening preaching, than it is against the Bible itself: there are hundreds, and probably thousands of instances, that might be produced, of persons that have murdered themselves, under religious melancholy. These murders, probably never would have been, if it had not been for the Bible, or if the world had remained in a state of heathen darkness. The Bible has not only been the occasion of these sad effects, but of thousands, and I suppose millions, of

other cruel murders, that have been committed, in the persecutions that have been raised, that never would have been, if the gospel never had been preached in the world. It is not a good objection against any kind of preaching, that some men abuse it greatly to their hurt. It has been acknowledged by all divines, as a thing common in all ages, and all Christian countries, that a very great part of those that sit under the gospel, do so abuse it, that it only proves an occasion of their far more aggravated damnation, and so of men's eternally murdering their souls; which is an effect infinitely more terrible than the murder of their bodies. It is as unjust to lay the blame of these self-murders, to those ministers who have declared the awful truths of God's Word, in the most lively and affecting manner they were capable of, as it would be to lay the blame of hardening men's hearts, and blinding their eyes, and their more dreadful eternal damnation, to the prophet Isaiah, or Jesus Christ, because this was the consequence of their preaching, with respect to many of their hearers (Isaiah 6:10; John 9:39; Matthew 13:14). Though a very few have abused the awakening preaching that has lately been, to so sad an effect as to be the cause of their own temporal death; yet it may be, to one such instance, there have been hundreds, yes thousands, that have been saved, by this means, from eternal death.

What has more especially given offense to many, and raised a loud cry against some preachers, as though their conduct were intolerable, is their frightening poor innocent children, with talk of hell-fire, and eternal damnation. But if those that complain so loudly of this, really believe, what is the general profession of the country, namely, that all are by nature the children of wrath, and heirs of hell; and that every one that has not been born again,

whether he be young or old, is exposed, every moment, to eternal destruction, under the wrath of Almighty God; I say, if they really believe this, then such a complaint and cry as this, reveals a great deal of weakness and lack of thought. As innocent as children seem to be to us, yet, if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers, and are infinitely more hateful than vipers, and are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons; and they are naturally very senseless and unresponsive, being born as the wild donkey's foal, and need much to awaken them. Why should we conceal the truth from them? Will those children that have been dealt tenderly with, in this respect, and lived and died insensible of their misery, until they come to feel it in hell, ever thank parents, and others, for their tenderness, in not letting them know what they were in danger of? If parents' love toward their children was not blind, it would affect them much more to see their children, every day, exposed to eternal burnings, and yet senseless, than to see them suffer the distress of that awakening, that is necessary in order to their escape from them, and that tends to their being eternally happy, as the children of God. A child that has a dangerous wound, may need the painful lance, as well as grown persons; and that would be a foolish pity, in such a case, that should hold back the lance, and throw away the life. I have seen the happy effects of dealing plainly, and thoroughly with children, in the concerns of their souls, without sparing them at all, in many instances; and never knew any ill consequence of it, in any one instance.

Another thing, that a great deal has been said against, is having so frequent religious meetings, and spending so much time in religion. And indeed, there are none of the outward aspects of reli-

gion, but what are capable of excess: and I believe it is true, that there has not been a due proportion observed in religion of late. We have placed religion too much in the external duties of the first table; we have abounded in religious meetings, and in praying, reading, hearing, singing, and religious conversation; and there has not been a proportionable increase of zeal for deeds of charity, and other duties of the second table; though it must be acknowledged that they are also much increased. But yet it appears to me, that this objection of persons spending too much time in religion, has been in the general groundless. Though worldly business must be done, and persons ought not to neglect the business of their particular callings, yet it is to the honor of God, that a people should be so much in outward acts of religion, as to carry in it, a visible, public appearance, of a great engagement of mind in it, as the main business of life. And especially is it fitting, that at such an extraordinary time, when God appears unusually present with a people, in wonderful works of power and mercy, that they should spend more time than usual in religious exercises, to put honor upon that God that is then extraordinarily present, and to seek his face; as it was with the Christian church in Jerusalem, on occasion of that extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit, soon after Christ's ascension (Acts 2:46): 'And they continued daily, with one accord, in the temple, and breaking bread, from house to house.' And so it was at Ephesus, at a time of great outpouring of the Spirit there; the Christians there attended public religious exercises, every day, for two years together (Acts 19:8-10): 'And he went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly, for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God: but when some were hardened, and believed not; but spoke evil of that

way, before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily, in the school of one Tyrannus; and this continued, by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia, heard the Word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.' And as to the grand objection, of 'six days shall you labor,' all that can be understood by it, and all that the very objectors themselves understand by it, is that we may follow our secular labors in those six days, that are not the sabbath, and ought to be diligent in them: not but that sometimes, we may turn from them, even within those six days, to keep a day of fasting, or thanksgiving, or to attend a lecture; and that more frequently or rarely, as God's providence, and the state of things, shall call us, according to the best judgment of our discretion.

Though secular business, as I said before, ought not to be neglected, yet I can't see how it can be maintained, that religion ought not to be attended, so as in the least to injure our temporal affairs, on any other principles than those of unbelief. No one objects against injuring one temporal affair for the sake of another temporal affair of much greater importance; and therefore, if eternal things are as real as temporal things, and are indeed of infinitely greater importance; then why may we not voluntarily suffer, in some measure, in our temporal concerns, while we are seeking eternal riches, and immortal glory? It is looked upon no way improper for a whole nation, to spend considerable time, and much of their outward substance, on some extraordinary temporal occasions, for the sake only of the ceremonies of a public rejoicing; and it would be thought dishonorable to be very exact, about what we spend, or careful lest we injure our estates, on such an occasion: and why should we be exact only with Almighty God, so that it

should be a crime to be otherwise than scrupulously careful, lest we injure ourselves in our temporal interest, to put honor upon him, and seek our own eternal happiness? We should take heed that none of us be in any wise like Judas, who greatly complained of needless expense, and waste of outward substance, to put honor upon Christ, when Mary broke her box, and poured the precious ointment on his head: he had indignation within himself on that account, and cried out, 'Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor' (Mark 14:3-5; John 12:4-5).

And besides, if the matter be justly considered and examined, I believe it will be found, that the country has lost no time from their temporal affairs, by the late revival of religion, but have rather gained time; and that more time has been saved from carousing, and tavern-haunting, idleness, unprofitable visits, vain talk, fruitless pastimes, and needless diversions, than has lately been spent in extraordinary religion; and probably five times as much has been saved in persons' estates, at the tavern, and in their apparel, as has been spent by religious meetings.

The great complaint that is made against so much time spent in religion, can't be in general from a real concern that God may be honored, and his will done, and the best good of men promoted; as is very manifest from this, that now there is a much more earnest and zealous outcry made in the country, against this extraordinary religion, than was before, against so much time spent in tavern-haunting, vain company-keeping, night-walking, and other things, which wasted both our time and substance, and injured our moral virtue.

The frequent preaching that has lately been, has in a particular manner been objected against as unprofitable and prejudicial. It is objected that when sermons are heard so very often, one sermon tends to push out another; so that persons lose the benefit of all: they say, two or three sermons in a week is as much as they can remember and digest. Such objections against frequent preaching, if they are not from an enmity against religion, are for want of duly considering the way that sermons usually profit a congregation. The main benefit that is obtained by preaching, is by impression made upon the mind in the time of it, and not by any effect that arises afterward by a remembrance of what was delivered. And though an after remembrance of what was heard in a sermon, is oftentimes very profitable; yet, for the most part, that remembrance is from an impression the words made on the heart in the time of it; and the memory profits, as it renews and increases that impression; and a frequent repeating of the more important things of religion in preaching, has no tendency to erase such impressions, but to increase them, and fix them deeper and deeper in the mind, as is found by experience. It never used to be objected against, that persons, upon the sabbath, after they have heard two sermons that day, should go home, and spend the remaining part of the sabbath in reading the Scriptures, and printed sermons; which, in proportion as it has a tendency to affect the mind at all, has as much of a tendency to drive out what they have heard, as if they heard another sermon preached. It seems to have been the practice of the apostles to preach every day, in places where they went; yes though sometimes they continued long in one place (Acts 2:42, 46; Acts 19:8-10). They did not avoid preaching one day, for fear they should push out of the minds of their hearers

what they had delivered the day before; nor did Christians avoid going every day to hear, for fear of any such bad effect, as is evident by Acts 2:42, 46.

There are some things in Scripture that seem to suggest that there should be preaching in an extraordinary frequency, at the time when God should be about to introduce that flourishing state of religion that should be in the latter days; as that in Isaiah 62 at the beginning: 'For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest; until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burns: and the Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory.' And verses 5-6: 'For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. I have set watchmen upon your walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night.' The destruction of the city of Jericho, is evidently, in all its circumstances, intended by God, as a great type of the overthrow of Satan's kingdom; the priests blowing with trumpets at that time, represents ministers preaching the gospel; the people went around the city seven days, the priests blowing the trumpets; but when the day was come that the walls of the city were to fall, the priests were more frequent and abundant in blowing their trumpets; there was as much done in one day then, as had been done in seven days before; they went around the city seven times that day, blowing their trumpets, until at length it came to one long and perpetual blast, and then the walls of the city fell down flat. The extraordinary preaching that shall be at the beginning of that glorious jubilee of the church, is represented by the extraordinary sounding of trumpets, throughout the land of Canaan, at the

beginning of the year of jubilee; and by the reading of the law, before all Israel, in the year of release, at the feast of tabernacles. And the crowing of the cock, at break of day, which brought Peter to repentance, seems to me to be intended to signify, the awakening of God's church out of their lethargy, in which they had denied their Lord, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel, that shall be at the dawning of the day of the church's light and glory. And there seems at this day to be an uncommon hand of divine providence, in animating, enabling, and upholding some ministers, in such abundant labors.

Another thing, in which I think some ministers have been injured, is in being very much blamed for making so much of cries, faintings, and other bodily effects; speaking of them as tokens of the presence of God, and arguments of the success of preaching; seeming to strive to their utmost to bring a congregation to that pass, and seeming to rejoice in it, even blessing God for it, when they see these effects.

Concerning this I would observe, in the first place, that there are many things, with respect to cries, falling down, etc. that are charged on ministers, that they are not guilty of. Some would have it, that they speak of these things as certain evidences of a work of the Spirit of God on the hearts of their hearers, or that they esteem these bodily effects themselves to be the work of God, as though the Spirit of God took hold of, and agitated the bodies of men; and some are charged with making these things essential, and supposing that persons can't be converted without them; whereas I never yet could find the person that held either of these things.

But for speaking of such effects as probable tokens of God's presence, and arguments of the success of preaching, it seems to me they are not to be blamed; because I think they are so indeed: and therefore when I see them excited by preaching the important truths of God's Word, urged and enforced by proper arguments and motives, or are consequent on other means that are good, I don't scruple to speak of them, and to rejoice in them, and bless God for them as such. And that for this, as I think, good reason, namely, that from time to time, upon proper inquiry and examination, and observation of the consequence and fruits, I have found that there are all evidences that the persons in whom these effects appear, are under the influences of God's Spirit, in such cases. Cries, in such a manner, and with such circumstances, as I have seen them from time to time, is as much an evidence to me, of the general cause it proceeds from, as language: I have learned the meaning of it, the same way that persons learn the meaning of language, namely, by use and experience. I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held forth to them that are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it, much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a show of affection by weeping; and that because when there have been those cries, I have found from time to time, a much greater and more excellent effect. To rejoice that the work of God is carried on calmly, without much ado, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power, or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit: for though the degree of the influence of the Spirit of God, on particular persons, is by no means to be judged of by the degree of external appearances, because of the different constitution, tempera-

ments, and circumstances of men; yet if there be a very powerful influence of the Spirit of God on a mixed multitude, it will cause some way or other, a great visible commotion.

And as to ministers aiming at such effects, and striving by all means to bring a congregation to that pass, that there should be such an uproar among them; I suppose none aim at it any otherwise, than as they strive to raise the affections of their hearers to such a height, as very often appears in these effects; and if it be so, that those affections are commonly good, and it be found by experience that such a degree of them commonly has a good effect, I think they are to be justified in so doing.

Again, some ministers have been blamed for keeping persons together, that have been under great affections, which have appeared in such extraordinary outward manifestations. Many think this promotes confusion, that persons in such circumstances do but discompose each other's minds, and disturb the minds of others; and that therefore it is best they should be dispersed, and that when any in a congregation are strongly seized, so that they can't forbear outward manifestations of it, they should be removed that others' minds may not be diverted.

But I can't but think that those that thus object go upon quite wrong notions of things: for though persons ought to take heed that they don't make an ado without necessity; for this will be the way in time, to have such appearances lose all their effect; yet the unavoidable manifestations of strong religious affections tend to a happy influence on the minds of bystanders, and are found by experience to have an excellent and durable effect. And so to arrange and order things, that others may have opportunity and advantage to observe them, has been found to be blessed, as a great means to

promote the work of God; and to prevent their being in the way of observation, is to prevent the effect of that, which God makes use of, as a principal means of carrying on his work, at such an extraordinary time, namely, example. Example is often spoken of in Scripture, as one of the chief means by which God would carry on his work, in the time of the prosperity of religion in the latter days: I have mentioned some texts already to this purpose, in what I published before, of the marks of a work of the true Spirit; but would here mention some others. In Zechariah 9:15-16, those that in the latter days should be filled, in an extraordinary manner with the Holy Spirit, so as to appear in outward manifestations, and making a noise, are spoken of as those that God, in these uncommon circumstances, will set up to the view of others, as a prize or standard, by their example and the excellency of their attainments, to animate and draw others, as men gather around a standard, and run for a prize, a crown and precious jewels, set up in their view. The words are: 'And they shall drink, and make a noise, as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar: and the Lord their God shall save them, in that day, as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as a standard upon his land.' But I shall have occasion to say something more of this Scripture afterward. Those that make the objection I am upon, instead of allowing this prize or standard to be in public view, are for having it removed, and hidden in some corner. To the like purpose is that in Isaiah 62:3: 'You shall be a crown of glory, in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem, in the hand of your God.' Here it is observable, that it is not said, you shall be a crown upon the head, but in the hand of the Lord — that is, held forth, in your beauty and excellency, as a prize, to be be-

stowed upon others that shall behold you, and be animated by the brightness and luster which God shall endow you with. The great influence of the example of God's people, in their bright and excellent attainments, to propagate religion, in those days, is further signified, in Isaiah 60:3: 'And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.' With verse 22: 'A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.' And Zechariah 10:8-9: 'And they shall increase, as they have increased; and I will sow them among the people.' And Hosea 2:23: 'And I will sow her to me in the earth.' So Jeremiah 31:27.

Another thing that gives great displeasure to many, is the disposition that persons show, under great affections, to speak so much, and, with such earnestness and vehemence, to be setting forth the greatness and wonderfulness and importance of divine and eternal things; and to be so passionately warning, inviting and entreating others.

Concerning which I would say, that I am far from thinking that such a disposition should be wholly without any limits or regulation, as I shall more particularly show afterward; and I believe some have erred, in setting no bounds, and indulging and encouraging this disposition without any kind of restraint or direction. But yet, it seems to me, that such a disposition in general, is what both reason and Scripture will justify. Those that are offended at such things, as though they were unreasonable, are not fair: upon examination it will probably be found, that they have one rule of reasoning about temporal things, and another about spiritual things. They won't at all wonder, if a person on some very great and affecting occasion, of extraordinary danger or great joy, that eminently and immediately concerns him and others, is disposed

to speak much, and with great earnestness, especially to those to whom he is united, in the bonds of dear affection, and great concern for their good. And therefore, if they were fair, why would they not allow it in spiritual things? and much more in them, agreeably to the vastly greater importance, and more affecting nature of spiritual things, and the concern which true religion causes in men's minds for the good of others, and the disposition it gives and excites to speak God's praises, to show forth his infinite glory, and talk of all his glorious perfections and works?

That a very great sense, of the right kind, of the importance of the things of religion, and the danger sinners are in, should sometimes cause an almost irresistible disposition to speak and warn others, is agreeable to Jeremiah 6:10-11: 'To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold the Word of the Lord is to them, a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged, with him that is full of days.' And that true Christians, when they come to be as it were waked out of sleep, and to be filled with a sweet and joyful sense of the excellent things of religion, by the preaching of the gospel, or by other means of grace, should be disposed to be much in speaking of divine things, though before they were dumb, is agreeable to what Christ says to his church in Song of Songs 7:9: 'And the roof of your mouth is like the best wine, for my beloved, that goes down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.' The roof of the church's mouth, is the officers in the church, that preach the gospel; their

word is to Christ's beloved, like the best wine, that goes down sweetly; extraordinarily refreshing and enlivening the saints, causing them to speak, though before they were mute and asleep. It is said by some, that the people that are the subjects of this work, when they get together, talking loud and earnestly, in their supposed great joys, several in a room, talking at the same time, make a noise just like a company of drunken persons. On which I would observe, that it is foretold that God's people should do so, in that before-mentioned place, Zechariah 9:15-17, which I shall now take more particular notice of: the words are as follows: 'The Lord of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise, as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar: and the Lord their God shall save them in that day, as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up, as a standard, upon his land: for how great is his goodness! and how great is his beauty! Grain shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the young women.' The words are very remarkable: here it is foretold, that at the time when Christ shall set up a universal kingdom upon earth, the children of Zion shall drink, until they are filled like the vessels of the sanctuary: and if we would know what they shall be thus filled with, the prophecy does, in effect, explain itself. They shall be filled, as the vessels of the sanctuary that contained the drink offering, which was wine; and yet the words imply, that it shall not literally be wine that they shall drink, and be filled with, because it is said, 'they shall drink, and make a noise, as through wine' — as if they had drunk wine: which implies that they had not literally done it; and therefore we must understand the words, that they shall drink into that, and be

filled with that, which the wine of the drink offering represented, or was a type of, which is the Holy Spirit, as well as the blood of Christ, that new wine that is drunk in our heavenly Father's kingdom. They shall be filled with the Spirit, which the apostle sets in opposition to a being drunk with wine (Ephesians 5:18). This is the new wine spoken of in verse 17. It is the same with that best wine, spoken of in Song of Songs, that goes down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak. It is here foretold, that the children of Zion, in the latter days, should be filled with that which should make them cheerful, and cause them to make a noise as through wine, and by which these joyful happy persons that are thus filled, shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as a standard upon God's land, being made joyful, in the extraordinary manifestations of the beauty and love of Christ: as it follows, 'How great is his goodness! and how great is his beauty!' And it is further remarkable that it is here foretold, that it should be thus especially among young people: 'Grain shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the young women.' It would be ridiculous to understand this of literal bread and wine: without doubt, the same spiritual blessings are signified by bread and wine here, which were represented by Melchizedek's bread and wine, and are signified by the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. One of the marginal readings is, 'shall make the young men to speak'; which is agreeable to that in Song of Songs, of the best wine's causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

We ought not to be, in any measure, like the unbelieving Jews, in Christ's time, who were displeased both with crying out with distress, and with joy. When the poor blind man cried out, before all the multitude, 'Jesus, you Son of David, have mercy on me!' and

continued instantly thus doing, the multitude rebuked him, and charged him that he should hold his tongue (Mark 10:46-48; Luke 18:38-39). They looked upon it to be a very indecent noise that he made; a thing very ill-becoming him to cause his voice to be heard, so much, and so loud, among the multitude. And when Christ made his solemn and triumphant entry into Jerusalem — which, I have before observed, was a type of the glory and triumph of the latter days — the whole multitude of the disciples, of all sorts, especially young people, began to rejoice and praise God, with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!' The Pharisees said to Christ, 'Master, rebuke your disciples.' They did not understand such great transports of joy; it seemed to them a very unsuitable and indecent noise and clamor that they made, a confused uproar, many crying out together, as though they were out of their senses; they wondered that Christ would tolerate it. But what says Christ? 'I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.' The words seem to intimate as much, as that there was cause enough to constrain those whose hearts were not harder than the very stones, to cry out, and make a noise; which is something like that other expression, of causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

When many under great religious affections, are earnestly speaking together, of divine wonders, in various parts of a company, to those that are next to them; some attending to what one says, and others to another, there is something very beautiful in it, provided they don't speak so many as to drown each other's voices, that none can hear what any say; there is a greater and more af-

fecting appearance of a joint engagement of heart, in the love and praises of God. And I had rather see it, than to see one speaking alone, and all attending to what he says; it has more of the appearance of conversation. When a multitude meets on any occasion of temporal rejoicing, freely and cheerfully to converse together, they are not accustomed to observe the ceremony, of but one speaking at a time, while all the rest, in a formal manner, set themselves to attend to what he says; that would spoil all conversation, and turn it into the formality of set speeches, and the solemnity of preaching. It is better for lay persons, when they speak one to another of the things of God, when they meet together, to speak after the manner of Christian conversation, than to observe the formality of but one speaking at a time, the whole multitude silently and solemnly attending to what he says; which would carry in it too much of the air, of the authority and solemnity of preaching. What the apostle says in 1 Corinthians 14:29-31 — 'Let the prophets speak, two, or three, and let the other judge: if any thing be revealed to another that sits by, let the first hold his peace: for you may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted' — I say, this does not reach this case; because what the apostle is speaking of, is the solemnity of their religious exercises, in public worship, and persons speaking in the church, by immediate inspiration, and in the use of the gift of prophecy, or some gift of inspiration, in the exercise of which, they acted as extraordinary ministers of Christ.

Another thing that some have found fault with, is abounding so much in singing, in religious meetings. Objecting against such a thing as this, seems to arise from a suspicion already established of this work: they doubt of the supposed extraordinary love and joys

that attend this work, and so find fault with the manifestations of them. If they thought persons were truly the subjects of an extraordinary degree of divine love, and heavenly rejoicing in God, I suppose they would not wonder at their having a disposition to be much in praise. They won't object against the saints and angels in heaven singing praises and hallelujahs to God, without ceasing, day or night; and therefore doubtless will allow that the more the saints on earth are like them in their dispositions, the more they will be disposed to do like them. They will readily own that the generality of Christians have great reason to be ashamed that they have so little thankfulness, and are no more in praising God, whom they have such infinite cause to praise. And why therefore, should Christians be found fault with, for showing a disposition to be much in praising God, and manifesting a delight in that heavenly exercise? To complain of this, is to be too much like the Pharisees, who were displeased when the multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and, with loud voices, to praise God, and cry hosanna, when Christ was entering into Jerusalem.

There are many things in Scripture, that seem to indicate that praising God, both in speeches and songs, will be what the church of God will very much abound in, in the approaching glorious day. So on the seventh day of going around the walls of Jericho, when the priests blew with the trumpets, in an extraordinary manner, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall of the city fell down flat. So the Ark was brought back from its banishment, with extraordinary shouting and singing of the whole congregation of Israel. And the places in the prophecies of Scripture, that signify that the church of God, in that glorious jubilee that is foretold, shall greatly abound in singing and shouting forth the praises of

God, are too many to be mentioned. And there will be cause enough for it: I believe it will be a time in which both heaven and earth, will be much more full of joy and praise, than ever they were before.

But what is more especially found fault with in the singing that is now practiced, is making use of hymns of human composition. And I am far from thinking that the book of Psalms should be thrown aside in our public worship, but that it should always be used in the Christian church, to the end of the world: but I know of no obligation we are under to confine ourselves to it. I can find no command or rule of God's Word, that does any more confine us to the words of the Scripture in our singing, than it does in our praying; we speak to God in both: and I can see no reason why we should limit ourselves to such particular forms of words, that we find in the Bible, in speaking to him by way of praise, in meter, and with music, than when we speak to him in prose, by way of prayer and supplication. And it is really needful that we should have some other songs besides the Psalms of David: it is unreasonable to suppose that the Christian church, should forever, and even in times of her greatest light in her praises of God and the Lamb, be confined only to the words of the Old Testament, in which all the greatest and most glorious things of the gospel, that are infinitely the greatest subjects of her praise, are spoken of under a veil, and not so much as the name of our glorious Redeemer, ever mentioned, but in some dark figure, or as hidden under the name of some type. And as to our making use of the words of others, and not those that are composed by ourselves, it is no more than we do

in all our public prayers; the whole worshipping assembly, excepting one only, makes use of the words that are composed by him that speaks for the rest.

Another thing that many have disliked, is the religious meetings of children, to read and pray together, and perform religious exercises by themselves. What is objected is children's want of that knowledge and discretion, that is requisite, in order to a decent and profitable management of religious exercises. But it appears to me the objection is not sufficient: children, as they have the nature of men, are inclined to society; and those of them that are capable of society one with another, are capable of the influences of the Spirit of God, in its active fruits; and if they are inclined by a religious disposition, that they have from the Spirit of God, to improve their society one with another, in a religious manner, and to religious purposes, who should forbid them? If they don't have discretion to observe method in their religious performances, or to speak sense in all that they say in prayer, they may nonetheless have a good meaning, and God understands them, and it doesn't spoil or interrupt their devotion one for another. We that are grown persons, have defects in our prayers, that are a thousand times worse in the sight of God, and are a greater confusion, and more absurd in his eyes, than their childish indiscretions. There is not so much difference before God, between children and grown persons, as we are ready to imagine; we are all poor, ignorant, foolish babes, in his sight: our adult age doesn't bring us so much nearer to God, as we are apt to think. God in this work has shown a remarkable regard to little children; never was there such a glorious work among persons in their childhood, as has been of late, in New England: he has been pleased in a wonderful manner to perfect praise out of

the mouths of babes and infants; and many of them have more of that knowledge and wisdom, that pleases him, and renders their religious worship acceptable, than many of the great and learned men of the world. It is they, in the sight of God, that are the ignorant and foolish children: these young ones are grown men, and a hundred years old, in comparison with them; and it is to be hoped that the days are coming, prophesied of in Isaiah 65:20, when the child shall die a hundred years old.

I have seen many happy effects of children's religious meetings; and God has seemed often remarkably to own them in their meetings, and really descended from heaven to be among them: I have known several probable instances of children's being converted at such meetings. I should therefore think, that if children appear to be really moved to it, by a religious disposition, and not merely from a childish fondness of imitating grown persons, they ought by no means to be discouraged or discountenanced: but yet it is fitting that care should be taken of them, by their parents, and pastors, to instruct and direct them, and to correct imprudent conduct and irregularities, if they are perceived; or anything by which the devil may pervert and destroy the design of their meetings. All should take heed that they don't find fault with, and despise the religion of children, from an evil principle, lest they should be like the chief priests and scribes, who were greatly displeased at the religious worship and praises of little children, and the honor they gave Christ in the temple. We have an account of it, and of what Christ said upon it, in Matthew 21:15-16: 'And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were greatly displeased, and said to him, Do you hear

what these say? And Jesus said to them, Yes; have you never read,
Out of the mouths of babes and infants, you have perfected
praise?'

PART 4



Having thus observed, in some instances, in which the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of this work, or have been zealous to promote it, has been objected against or complained of, without or beyond just cause, I proceed now in the

Second place, to show what things ought to be corrected or avoided.

Many that are zealous for this glorious work of God, are heartily sick of the great noise there is in the country, about imprudences and disorders; they have heard it so often from the mouths of opposers that they are prejudiced against the sound; and they look upon it that what is called being prudent and regular, which is so much insisted on, is no other than being asleep, or cold and dead in religion, and that the great imprudence that is so much cried out of, is only a being alive, and engaged in the things of God: and they are therefore rather confirmed in any practice, than brought off from it, by the clamor they hear against it, as imprudent and irregular. And to tell the truth, the cry of irregularity and imprudence has been much more in the mouths of those that have been enemies to the main of the work than others; for they have

watched for the stumbling of the zealous, and eagerly caught at anything that has been wrong, and have greatly insisted on it, made the most of it, and magnified it; especially have they watched for errors in zealous preachers, that are much in reproof and condemning the wickedness of the times. They would therefore do well to consider that Scripture in Isaiah 29:20-21: 'The scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off, that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproves in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nothing.' They have not only too much insisted on, and magnified real errors, but have very unjustly charged them as guilty, in things in which they have been innocent, and have done their duty. This has so prejudiced the minds of some, that they have been ready to think that all that has been said about errors and imprudences, was unjust and from an ill spirit; and has confirmed them in it, that there is no such thing as any prevailing imprudences; and it has made them less cautious and watchful of themselves, lest they should err. In this the devil has had an advantage put into his hands, and has taken the advantage; and, doubtless, has been too subtle for some of the true friends of religion. It would be a strange thing indeed, if in so great a commotion and revolution, and such a new state of things, in which so many have been engaged, none have been guilty of any imprudence; it would be such a revival of religion, as never was yet, if among so many men, not guided by infallible inspiration, there had not been prevailing a good many notable errors in judgment and conduct; our young preachers, and young converts, must in general vastly exceed Luther, the head of the Reformation, who was guilty of a great many excesses, in that great affair, in which God made him the chief instrument.

If we look back into the history of the church of God in past ages, we may observe that it has been a common device of the devil, to overturn a revival of religion, when he finds he can keep men quiet and secure no longer, then to drive them to excesses and extravagances. He holds them back as long as he can, but when he can do it no longer, then he'll push them on, and if possible, run them off course. And it has been by this means chiefly, that he has been successful, in several instances, to overthrow most hopeful and promising beginnings: yes, the principal means by which the devil was successful, by degrees, to overturn that grand religious revival of the world, that was in the primitive ages of Christianity, and in a manner, to overthrow the Christian church throughout the earth, and to make way for, and bring on the great antichristian apostasy, that masterpiece of all the devil's work, was to use the indiscreet zeal of Christians, to drive them into those three extremes, of enthusiasm, superstition, and severity toward opposers; which should be enough for an everlasting warning to the Christian church.

Though the devil will do his diligence to stir up the open enemies of religion, yet he knows what is for his interest so well, that in a time of revival of religion, his main strength shall be tried with the friends of it, and he'll chiefly exert himself in his attempts upon them, to mislead them. One truly zealous person, in the time of such an event, that seems to have a great hand in the affair, and draws the eyes of many upon him, may do more, through Satan's being too subtle for him, to hinder the work, than a hundred great, and strong, and open opposers.

In the time of a great work of Christ, his hands with which he works, are often wounded in the house of his friends; and his work hindered chiefly by them: so that if any one inquires, as in Zechariah 13:6, 'What are those wounds in your hands?' He may answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'

The errors of the friends of the work of God, and especially of the great promoters of it, give vast advantage to the enemies of such a work. Indeed there are many things that are no errors, but are only duties faithfully and thoroughly done, that wound the minds of such persons more, and are more contrary to them, than real errors: but yet one real error gives opposers as much advantage, and hinders and holds back the work, as much as things that are only supposed errors. Real errors don't chafe and gall the enemies of religion so much as those things that are strictly right, but they encourage them more; they give them liberty, and open a gap for them; so that some that before kept their enmity burning in their own hearts, and dared not show themselves, will on such an occasion take courage, and give themselves vent, and their rage will be like that of an enemy let loose; and those that lay still before, having nothing to say, but what they would be ashamed of — agreeable to Titus 2:8 — when they have such a weapon put into their hands, will fight with all violence. And indeed the enemies of religion would not know what to do for weapons to fight with, were it not for the errors of the friends of it; and so must soon fall before them. And besides, in real errors, things that are truly disagreeable to the rules of God's Word, we can't expect the divine protection, and that God will appear on our side, as if our errors were only supposed ones.

Since therefore the errors of the friends and promoters of such a glorious work of God, are of such dreadful consequence; and seeing the devil, being sensible of this, is so diligent, and watchful and subtle in his attempts with them, and has thereby been so successful to overthrow religion heretofore, certainly such persons ought to be exceedingly careful and vigilant, distrustful and watchful of themselves, and humbly dependent on the guidance of the good Shepherd. 1 Peter 4:7: 'Be sober, and watch to prayer.' And chapter 5:8: 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about.' For persons to go on resolutely, in a kind of heat and vehemence, despising admonition and correction, being confident that they must be in the right, because they are full of the Spirit, is directly contrary to the import of these words, 'be sober, be vigilant.'

It is a mistake, I have observed in some, by which they have been greatly exposed, to their wounding, that they think they are in no danger of going astray, or being misled by the devil, because they are near to God; and so have no watchful eye upon themselves, and neglect vigilance and circumspection, as needless in their case. They say, they don't think that God will leave them to dishonor him, and wound religion, as long as they keep near to him: and I believe so too, as long as they keep near to God in that respect, that they maintain a universal and diligent watch, and care to do their duty, and avoid sin and snares, with distrust in themselves, and humble dependence and prayerfulness. But not merely because they are near to God, in that respect, that they now are receiving blessed communications from God, in refreshing views of him; if at the same time they let down their watch, and are not watchful over their own hearts, by reason of their remaining

blindness and corruption, and a subtle adversary. It is a grand error, for persons to think they are out of danger of the devil, and a corrupt, deceitful heart, even in their highest flights, and most elevated frames of spiritual joy. For persons in such a confidence, to cease to be watchful of themselves, and to neglect watchfulness and care, is a presumption by which I have known many woefully ensnared. However highly we may be favored with divine discoveries and comforts, yet as long as we are in the world, we are in the enemy's country; and therefore that direction of Christ to his disciples is never out of date in this world (Luke 21:36): 'Watch and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man.' It was not out of date with the disciples, to whom it was given, after they came to be filled so full of the Holy Spirit, and out of their hearts flowed rivers of living water, by that great outpouring of the Spirit upon them, that began on the day of Pentecost. And though God stands ready to protect his people, especially those that are near to him, yet he expects great care and labor of all; and that we should put on the whole armor of God, that we may stand in the evil day: and whatever spiritual privileges we are raised to, we have no warrant to expect protection in any other way; for God has appointed this whole life, as a state of labor, to be all, as a race or a battle; the state of rest, in which we shall be so out of danger, as to have no need of watching and fighting, is reserved for another world. I have known it in abundance of instances, that the devil has come in very remarkably, even in the midst of the most exalted frames: it may seem a great mystery that it should be so; but it is no greater mystery, than that Christ should be taken by the devil, and carried into the wilderness, immediately after the heavens had been opened to

him, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove upon him, and he heard that comfortable, joyful voice from the Father, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' In like manner Christ in the heart of a Christian, is oftentimes as it were taken by the devil, and carried captive into a wilderness, presently after heaven has been, as it were opened to the soul, and the Holy Spirit has descended upon it like a dove, and God has been sweetly owning the believer, and testifying his favor to him as his beloved child.

It is therefore a great error, and sin in some persons, at this day, that they are fixed in their way, in some things that others account errors, and won't hearken to admonition and counsel, but are confident that they are in the right of it, in those practices that they find themselves disposed to, because God is much with them, and they have great degrees of the Spirit of God. There were some such in the apostles' days: the apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, was sensible that some of them would not be easily convinced that they had been in any error, because they looked upon themselves as spiritual, or full of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 14:37-38): 'If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you, are the commandment of the Lord; but if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.'

And although those that are spiritual among us, have no infallible apostle to admonish them, yet let me entreat them, by the love of Christ, calmly and impartially to weigh what may be said to them, by one that is their hearty and earnest friend, though an inferior person, in giving his humble opinion, concerning the errors

that have been committed, or that we may be exposed to, in methods or practices that have been, or may be fallen into, by the zealous friends or promoters of this great work of God.

In speaking of the errors that have been, or that we are in danger of, I would in the

first place, take notice of the causes from which the errors that attend a great revival of religion usually arise; and as I go along, take notice of some particular errors that arise from each of those causes.

Secondly, observe some errors, that some have lately gone into, that have been owing to the influence of several of those causes jointly.

As to the first of these, the errors that attend a great revival of religion, usually arise from these three things: first, undiscerned spiritual pride; second, wrong principles; third, ignorance of Satan's advantages and devices.

The first, and the worst cause of errors, that prevail in such a state of things, is spiritual pride. This is the main door, by which the devil comes into the hearts of those that are zealous for the advancement of religion. It is the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit, to darken the mind, and mislead the judgment: this is the main handle by which the devil has hold of religious persons, and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces, to hinder a work of God. This cause of error is the main spring, or at least the main support of all the rest. Until this disease is cured, medicines are in vain applied to heal other diseases. It is by this that the mind defends itself in other errors, and guards itself against light, by which it might be corrected and reclaimed. The

spiritually proud man is full of light already, he doesn't need instruction, and is ready to despise the offer of it. But if this disease be healed, other things are easily rectified. The humble person is like a little child, he easily receives instruction; he is watchful over himself, sensible how liable he is to go astray; and therefore if it be suggested to him that he does so, he is ready most narrowly and impartially to inquire. Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach, as humility, and so prepares the mind for true divine light, without darkness, and so clears the eye to look on things, as they truly are. Psalm 25:9: 'The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.' Therefore we should fight, neither with small nor with great, but with the King of Israel: our first care should be to rectify the heart, and pull the beam out of our eye, and then we shall see clearly.

I know that a great many things at this day, are very unjustly laid to the pride of those that are zealous in the cause of God. When any person appears, in any respect, remarkably distinguished in religion from others, if he professes those spiritual comforts and joys that are greater than ordinary, or if he appears distinguishingly zealous in religion, if he exerts himself more than others do, in the cause of religion, or if he seems to be distinguished with success, ten to one, but it will immediately awaken the jealousy of those that are about him; and they'll suspect, whether they have cause or no, that he is very proud of his goodness, and that he affects to have it thought that no one is so good as he; and all his talk is heard, and all his behavior beheld, with this prejudice. Those that are themselves cold and dead, and especially such as never had any experience of the power of godliness

on their own hearts, are ready to entertain such thoughts of the best Christians; which arises from a secret enmity against vital and fervent piety.

But then those that are zealous Christians should take heed that this unjustness of those that are cold in religion, doesn't prove a snare to them, and the devil doesn't take advantage from it, to blind their eyes from beholding what there is indeed of this nature in their hearts, and make them think, because they are charged with pride wrongfully, and from an ill spirit, in many things, that therefore it is so in every thing. Alas, how much pride have the best of us in our hearts! It is the worst part of the body of sin and death: it is the first sin that ever entered into the universe, and the last that is rooted out; it is God's most stubborn enemy!

The corruption of nature may all be resolved into two things, pride and worldly-mindedness, the devil and the beast, or self and the world. These are the two pillars of Dagon's temple, on which the whole house leans. But the former of these is every way, the worst part of the corruption of nature; it is the firstborn son of the devil, and his image in the heart of man chiefly consists in it; it is the last thing in a sinner that is overcome by conviction, in order to conversion; and here is the saint's hardest conflict; it is the last thing that he obtains a good degree of conquest over, and freedom from; it is that which most directly militates against God, and is most contrary to the Spirit of the Lamb of God; and it is most like the devil its father, in a serpentine deceitfulness and secrecy; it lies deepest, and is most active, is most ready secretly to mix itself with everything.

And of all kinds of pride, spiritual pride is upon many accounts the most hateful; it is most like the devil; it is most like the sin that he committed in a heaven of light and glory, where he was exalted high in divine knowledge, honor, beauty and happiness. Pride is much more difficultly discerned than any other corruption, for that reason, that the nature of it does very much consist in a person's having too high a thought of himself: but no wonder that he that has too high a thought of himself, doesn't know it; for he necessarily thinks that the opinion he has of himself, is what he has just grounds for, and therefore not too high; if he thought such an opinion of himself was without just grounds, he would therein cease to have it. But of all kinds of pride, spiritual pride is the most hidden, and difficultly discovered; and that for this reason, because those that are spiritually proud, their pride consists, much in a high conceit of those two things, namely, their light, and their humility; both of which are a strong prejudice against a discovery of their pride. Being proud of their light, that makes them not watchful of themselves; he that thinks a clear light shines around him, is not suspicious of an enemy lurking near him, unseen: and then being proud of their humility, that makes them least of all watchful of themselves in that particular, namely, as being under the prevalence of pride. There are many sins of the heart that are very secret in their nature, and difficultly discerned. The psalmist says in Psalm 19:12: 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults.' But spiritual pride is the most secret of all sins. The heart is so deceitful and unsearchable in nothing in the world, as it is in this matter, and there is no sin in the world, that men are so confident in, and so difficultly convinced of: the very nature of it is to work self-confidence, and drive away self-distrust, and jeal-

ousy of any evil of that kind. There is no sin so much like the devil, as this, for secrecy and subtlety, and appearing in a great many shapes, undiscerned and unsuspected, and appearing as an angel of light: it takes occasion to arise from everything; it perverts and abuses everything, and even the exercises of real grace, and real humility, as an occasion to exert itself. It is a sin that has, as it were, many lives; if you kill it, it will live still; if you mortify and suppress it in one shape, it rises in another; if you think it is all gone, yet it is there still: there are a great many kinds of it, that lie in different forms and shapes, one under another, and encompass the heart like the layers of an onion; if you pull off one there is another underneath. We have need therefore to have the greatest watch imaginable, over our hearts, with respect to this matter, and to cry most earnestly to the great Searcher of hearts for his help. He that trusts his own heart is a fool.

God's own people should be the more watchful of themselves, with respect to this particular, at this day, because the temptations that many have to this sin are exceedingly great: the great and distinguishing privileges to which God admits many of his saints, and the high honors that he puts on some ministers, are great trials of persons in this respect. It is true that great degrees of the spiritual presence of God tends greatly to mortify pride and all corruption; but yet, though in the experience of such favors there be much to restrain pride one way, there is much to tempt and provoke it another; and we shall be in great danger thereby without great watchfulness and prayerfulness. There was much in the circumstances that the angels that fell, were in, in heaven, in their great honors and high privileges, in beholding the face of God, and view of his infinite glory, to cause in them exercises of humility, and to

keep them from pride; yet through want of watchfulness in them, their great honor and heavenly privilege proved to be to them, an undoing temptation to pride, though they had no principle of pride in their hearts to expose them. Let no saint therefore, however eminent, and however near to God, think himself out of danger of this: he that thinks himself most out of danger, is indeed most in danger. The apostle Paul, who doubtless was as eminent a saint as any are now, was not out of danger, even just after he was admitted to see God in the third heavens, by the information he himself gives us in 2 Corinthians 12. And yet doubtless, what he saw in heaven of the ineffable glory of the divine Being, had a direct tendency to make him appear exceedingly little and vile in his own eyes.

Spiritual pride in its own nature is so secret, that it is not so well discerned by immediate observation on the thing itself, as by the effects and fruits of it; some of which, I would mention, together with the contrary fruits of pure Christian humility.

Spiritual pride disposes to speak of other persons' sins, their enmity against God and his people, the miserable delusion of hypocrites and their enmity against vital piety, and the deadness of some saints, with bitterness, or with laughter and levity, and an air of contempt; whereas pure Christian humility rather disposes, either to be silent about them, or to speak of them with grief and pity.

Spiritual pride is very apt to suspect others; whereas a humble saint is most watchful of himself, he is so suspicious of nothing in the world as he is of his own heart. The spiritually proud person is apt to find fault with other saints, that they are low in grace, and to be much in observing how cold and dead they be, and crying out of

them for it, and to be quick to discern and take notice of their deficiencies: but the eminently humble Christian has so much to do at home, and sees so much evil in his own heart, and is so concerned about it, that he is not apt to be very busy with others' hearts; he complains most of himself, and cries out of his own coldness and lowness in grace, and is apt to esteem others better than himself, and is ready to hope that there is no one but what has more love and thankfulness to God than he, and can't bear to think that others should bring forth no more fruit to God's honor than he. Some that have spiritual pride mixed with high discoveries and great transports of joy, that dispose them in an earnest manner to talk to others, are apt, in such frames, to be calling upon other Christians that are about them, and sharply reprovng them for their being so cold and lifeless. And there are some others that behave themselves very differently from these, who in their raptures are overwhelmed with a sense of their own vileness; and when they have extraordinary discoveries of God's glory, are all taken up about their own sinfulness; and though they also are disposed to speak much and very earnestly, yet it is very much in crying out of themselves, and exhorting fellow Christians, but in a charitable and humble manner. Pure Christian humility disposes a person to take notice of every thing that is in any respect good in others, and to make the best of it, and to diminish their failings; but to have his eye chiefly on those things that are bad in himself, and to take much notice of every thing that aggravates them.

In a contrariety to this, it has been the manner in some places, or at least the manner of some persons, to speak of almost every thing that they see amiss in others, in the most harsh, severe and terrible language. It is frequent with them to say of others' opin-

ions or conduct or advice, or of their coldness, their silence, their caution, their moderation, and their prudence, and many other things that appear in them, that they are from the devil, or from hell; that such a thing is devilish or hellish or cursed, and that such persons are serving the devil or the devil is in them, that they are soul-murderers and the like; so that the words devil and hell are almost continually in their mouths. And such kind of language they will commonly use, not only toward wicked men, but toward those that they themselves allow to be the true children of God, and also toward ministers of the gospel and others that are very much their superiors. And they look upon it a virtue and high attainment thus to behave themselves. 'Oh,' say they, 'we must be plain-hearted and bold for Christ, we must declare war against sin wherever we see it, we must not mince the matter in the cause of God and when speaking for Christ.' And to make any distinction in persons, or to speak the more tenderly, because that which is amiss is seen in a superior, they look upon as very poor for a follower of Christ when speaking in the cause of his Master.

What a strange device of the devil is here, to overthrow all Christian meekness and gentleness, and even all show and appearance of it, and to defile the mouths of the children of God, and to introduce the language of common sailors among the followers of Christ, under a cloak of high sanctity and zeal and boldness for Christ! And it is a remarkable instance of the weakness of the human mind, and how much too cunning the devil is for us!

The grand defense of this way of talking is, that they say no more than what is true; they only speak the truth without mincing the matter; and that true Christians that have a great sight of the evil of sin, and acquaintance with their own hearts know it to be

true, and therefore won't be offended to hear such harsh expressions made use of concerning them and their sins; it is only, say they, hypocrites, or cold and dead Christians, that are provoked and feel their enmity rise on such an occasion.

But it is a grand mistake to think that we may commonly use concerning one another all such language as represents the worst of each other, according to strict truth. It is really true, that every kind of sin, and every degree of it, is devilish and from hell, and is cursed, hellish, and condemned: and if persons had a full sight of their hearts they would think no terms too hard for them; they would look like beasts, like serpents and like devils to themselves; they would be at a loss for language to express what they see in themselves, the worst terms they could think of would seem as it were faint to represent what they see in themselves. But shall a child therefore, from time to time, use such language concerning an excellent and eminently holy father or mother, as that the devil is in them, that they have such and such devilish, cursed dispositions, that they commit every day hundreds of hellish, damned acts, and that they are cursed dogs, hell-hounds and devils? And shall the meanest of the people be justified, in commonly using such language concerning the most excellent magistrates, or their most eminent ministers? I hope no one has gone to this height: but the same pretenses of boldness, plain-heartedness, and declared war against sin, will as well justify these things as the things they are actually made use of to justify. If we proceed in such a manner, on such principles as these, what a face will be introduced upon the church of Christ, the little beloved flock of that gentle Shepherd the Lamb of God? What a sound shall we bring into the house of God, into the family of his dear little children? How far off

shall we soon banish that lovely appearance of humility, sweetness, gentleness, mutual honor, benevolence, kindness, and an esteem of others above themselves, which ought to clothe the children of God all over? Not but that Christians should watch over one another, and in any wise reprove one another, and be much in it and do it plainly and faithfully; but it doesn't follow that dear brothers and sisters in the family of God, in rebuking one another, should use worse language than Michael the archangel dared use when rebuking the devil himself.

Christians that are but fellow worms ought at least to treat one another with as much humility and gentleness as Christ that is infinitely above them treats them. But how did Christ treat his disciples when they were so cold toward him and so regardless of him, at the time when his soul was exceedingly sorrowful even to death, and he in a dismal agony was crying and sweating blood for them, and they would not watch with him and allow him the comfort of their company one hour in his great distress, though he once and again desired it of them? One would think that then was a proper time if ever to have reproved them for a devilish, hellish, cursed and damnable slothfulness and deadness. But after what manner does Christ reprove them? Behold his astonishing gentleness! Says he, 'What, could you not watch with me one hour? The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' And how did he treat Peter when he was ashamed of his Master, while he was made a mocking-stock and a spitting-stock for him? Why he looked upon him with a look of love, and melted his heart.

And though we read that Christ once turned and said to Peter, on a certain occasion, 'Get behind me, Satan'; and this may seem like an instance of harshness and severity in reproofing Peter; yet I

humbly think that this is by many taken wrong, and that this is indeed no instance of Christ's severity in his treatment of Peter, but on the contrary, of his wonderful gentleness and grace, distinguishing between Peter and the devil in him, not laying the blame of what Peter had then said, or imputing it to him, but to the devil that influenced him. Christ saw the devil then present, secretly influencing Peter to do the part of a tempter to his Master; and therefore Christ turned to Peter, in whom the devil then was, and spoke to the devil, and rebuked him. Thus the grace of Christ does not see iniquity in his people, imputes not what is amiss in them to them, but to sin that dwells in them, and to Satan that influences them.

But to return,

Spiritual pride often disposes persons to singularity in external appearance, to affect a singular way of speaking, to use a different sort of language from others, or to be singular in voice, or air of countenance or behavior: but he that is an eminently humble Christian, though he will be firm to his duty, however singular he is in it; he'll go in the way that leads to heaven alone, though all the world forsakes him; yet he delights not in singularity for singularity's sake, he doesn't affect to set up himself to be viewed and observed as one distinguished, as desiring to be accounted better than others, or despising their company, or a union and conformity to them; but on the contrary is disposed to become all things to all men, and to yield to others, and conform to them and please them, in every thing but sin. Spiritual pride commonly occasions a certain stiffness and inflexibility in persons, in their own judgment and their own ways; whereas the eminently humble person, though he be inflexible in his duty, and in those things in

which God's honor is concerned; and with regard to temptation to those things he apprehends to be sinful, though in never so small a degree, he is not at all of a yielding spirit, but is like a wall of bronze; yet in other things he is of a pliable disposition, not disposed to set up his own opinion, or his own will; he is ready to pay deference to others' opinions, and loves to comply with their inclinations, and has a heart that is tender and flexible, like a little child.

Spiritual pride disposes persons to affect separation, to stand at a distance from others, as better than they, and loves the show and appearance of the distinction: but on the contrary the eminently humble Christian is ready to look upon himself as not worthy that others should be united to him, to think himself more brutish than any man, and worthy to be cast out of human society, and especially unworthy of the society of God's children. And though he will not be a companion with one that is visibly Christ's enemy, and delights most in the company of lively Christians, will choose such for his companions, and will be most intimate with them, and doesn't at all delight to spend away much time in the company of those that seem to relish no conversation but about worldly things; yet he doesn't love the appearance of an open separation from visible Christians, as being a kind of distinct company from them, that are one visible company with him by Christ's appointment, and will as much as possible shun all appearances of a superiority, or distinguishing himself as better than others. His universal benevolence delights in the appearance of union with his fellow creatures, and will maintain it as much as he possibly can, without giving open countenance to iniquity, or wounding his own soul; and in this he follows the example of his meek and lowly

Redeemer, who did not keep up such a separation and distance as the Pharisees, but freely ate with tax collectors and sinners, that he might win them.

The eminently humble Christian is as it were clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and behavior, and with a soft, sweet, condescending, winning air and manner; these things are just like garments to him, he is clothed all over with them (1 Peter 5:5; Colossians 3:12): 'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.'

Pure Christian humility has no such thing as roughness, or contempt, or fierceness, or bitterness in its nature; it makes a person like a little child, harmless and innocent, and that none need to be afraid of; or like a lamb, destitute of all bitterness, wrath, anger and clamor, agreeable to Ephesians 4:31.

With such a spirit as this ought especially zealous ministers of the gospel to be clothed, and those that God is pleased to use as instruments in his hands of promoting his work: they ought indeed to be thorough in preaching the Word of God, without mincing the matter at all; in handling the sword of the Spirit, as the ministers of the Lord of hosts, they ought not to be mild and gentle in searching and awakening the conscience but should be sons of thunder. The Word of God, which is in itself sharper than any two-edged sword, ought not to be sheathed by its ministers, but so used that its sharp edges may have their full effect, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow; provided they do it without judging particular persons, leaving it to conscience and the Spirit of God to make the particular application. But all their conversation should savor of nothing but lowliness and good will,

love and pity to all mankind; so that such a spirit should be like a sweet odor diffused around them wherever they go, or like a light shining about them, their faces should as it were shine with it; they should be like lions to guilty consciences, but like lambs to men's persons. This would have no tendency to prevent the awakening of men's consciences, but on the contrary would have a very great tendency to awaken them; it would make way for the sharp sword to enter; it would remove the obstacles, and make a bare heart for the arrow. Yes, the amiable, Christ-like conversation of such ministers, in itself would terrify the consciences of men, as well as their terrible preaching; both would cooperate one with another, to subdue the hard, and bring down the proud heart. If there had been, constantly and universally observable such a behavior as this in itinerant preachers, it would have terrified the consciences of sinners, ten times as much as all the harsh condemnations, and the censorious talk there has been concerning particular persons, for their opposition, hypocrisy, delusion, Pharisaism, etc. These things in general have rather hardened sinners' consciences; they take them up, and make use of them as a shield, wherewith to defend themselves from the sharp arrows of the Word, that are shot by these preachers: the enemies of the present work have been glad of these things with all their hearts. Many of the most bitter of them are probably such as in the beginning of this work had their consciences somewhat pricked and terrified with it; but these errors of awakening preachers are the things they chiefly make use of as plasters to heal the wound that was made in their consciences.

Spiritual pride takes great notice of opposition and injuries that are received, and is apt to be often speaking of them, and to be much in taking notice of the aggravations of them, either with an

air of bitterness or contempt: whereas pure, unmixed Christian humility, disposes a person rather to be like his blessed Lord, when reviled, silent, not opening his mouth, but committing himself in silence to him that judges righteously. The eminently humble Christian, the more clamorous and furious the world is against him, the more silent and still will he be; unless it be in his closet, and there he will not be still. Our blessed Lord Jesus seems never to have been so silent, as when the world compassed him round, reproaching, buffeting and spitting on him, with loud and virulent cries, and horrible cruelties.

There has been a great deal too much talk of late, among many of the true and zealous friends of religion, about opposition and persecution. It becomes the followers of the Lamb of God, when the world is in an uproar about them, and full of clamor against them, not to raise another noise to answer it, but to be still and quiet: it is not beautiful, at such a time, to have pulpits and conversation ring with the sound, 'persecution, persecution,' or with abundant talk about Pharisees, carnal persecutors, and the seed of the serpent.

Meekness and quietness among God's people, when opposed and reviled, would be the surest way to have God remarkably appear for their defense. It is particularly observed of Moses, on the occasion of Aaron and Miriam their envying him, and rising up in opposition against him, that he was very meek, above all men upon the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3). Doubtless because he remarkably showed his meekness on that occasion, being wholly silent under the abuse. And how remarkable is the account that follows of God's being as it were suddenly roused to appear for his vindication? And what high honor did he put upon Moses? And

how severe were his rebukes of his opposers? The story is very remarkable, and worth every one's observing. Nothing is so effectual to bring God down from heaven in the defense of his people, as their patience and meekness under sufferings. When Christ girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, his right hand teaching him terrible things, it is because of truth and meekness and righteousness (Psalm 45:3-4). God will cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth shall fear and be still, and God will arise to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth (Psalm 76:8-9). He will lift up the meek, and cast the wicked down to the ground (Psalm 147:6). He will reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth, and will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips will slay the wicked (Isaiah 11:4). The great commendation that Christ gives the church of Philadelphia, is that, 'You have kept the word of my patience' (Revelation 3:10). And we may see what reward he promises her, in the preceding verse: 'Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship at your feet, and to know that I have loved you.' And thus it is, that we might expect to have Christ appear for us, if under all reproaches we are loaded with, we behaved ourselves with a lamb-like meekness and gentleness; but if our spirits are raised, and we are vehement and noisy with our complaints under color of Christian zeal, this will be to take upon us our own defense, and God will leave it with us, to vindicate our cause as well as we can: yes, if we go on in a way of bitterness, and high censuring, it will be the way to have him rebuke us, and put us to shame before our enemies.

Here some may be ready to say, it is not in our own cause, that we are thus vehement, but it is in the cause of God; and the apostle directed the primitive Christians to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. But how was it that the primitive Christians contended earnestly for the faith? They defended the truth with arguments, and a holy conversation; but yet gave their reasons with meekness and fear: they contended earnestly for the faith, by fighting violently against their own unbelief, and the corruptions of their hearts, yes they resisted to blood striving against sin; but the blood that was shed in this earnest strife, was their own blood, and not the blood of their enemies. It was in the cause of God, that Peter was so fierce, and drew his sword, and began to strike with it; but Christ bids him put up his sword again, telling him that they that take the sword shall perish by the sword; and while Peter wounds, Christ heals. They contend the most violently, and are the greatest conquerors in a time of persecution, who bear it with the greatest meekness and patience.

Great humility improves even the reflections and reproaches of enemies, to put upon serious self-examination, whether or no there be not some just cause, whether they haven't in some respect given occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully: whereas spiritual pride uses such reflections to make them the more bold and confident, and to go the greater lengths in that for which they are found fault with. I desire it may be considered whether there has been nothing amiss of late, among the true friends of vital piety in this respect; and whether the words of David, when reviled by Michal, haven't been misinterpreted and misapplied to justify them in it, when he said 'I will be yet more vile, and will be base in my own sight.' The import of his words is that he would humble

himself yet more before God, being sensible that he was far from being sufficiently abased; and he signifies this to Michal, and that he longed to be yet lower, and had designed already to abase himself more in his behavior: not that he would go the greater length, to show his disregard of her revilings; that would be to exalt himself, and not more to abase himself, as more vile in his own sight.

Another effect of spiritual pride is a certain unsuitable and self-confident boldness before God and men. Thus some in their great rejoicings before God, haven't paid a sufficient regard to that rule in Psalm 2:11. They haven't rejoiced with a reverential trembling, in a proper sense of the awful majesty of God, and the awful distance between God and them. And there has also been an improper boldness before men, that has been encouraged and defended, by a misapplication of that Scripture in Proverbs 29:25: 'The fear of man brings a snare.' As though it became all persons, high and low, men, women and children, in all religious conversation, wholly to divest themselves of all manner of modesty, or reverence toward man; which is a great error, and quite contrary to Scripture. There is a fear of reverence that is due to some men (Romans 13:7): 'Fear, to whom fear; honor, to whom honor.' And there is a fear of modesty and respectfulness, in inferiors toward superiors, that is admirable, and required by Christian rules (1 Peter 3:2): 'While they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear.' And 1 Timothy 2:9: 'In like manner also, that women adorn themselves, in modest apparel, with modesty and sobriety.' And the apostle means that this virtue shall have place, not only in civil communication, but also in spiritual communication, and in our religious concerns and behavior, as is evident by what follows (verses 11-12): 'Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection.'

But I do not allow a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.' Not that I would infer from this that women's mouths should be shut up from Christian conversation; but all that I mean from it at this time is, that modesty, or respectfulness, and reverence toward men, ought to have some place, even in our religious communication one with another. The same is also evident by 1 Peter 3:15: 'Be ready always to give an answer, to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.' It is well if that very fear and modesty, which the apostle recommends, hasn't sometimes been condemned, under the name of a cursed fear of man.

It is beautiful for persons when they are at prayer as the mouth of others, to make God only their fear and their dread, and to be wholly forgetful of men that are present, who let them be great or small, are nothing in the presence of the great God. And it is beautiful for a minister, when he speaks in the name of the Lord of hosts, to be bold, and put off all fear of men. And it is beautiful in private Christians, though they are women and children, to be bold in professing the faith of Christ, and in the practice of all religion, and in owning God's hand in the work of his power and grace, without any fear of men, though they should be reproached as fools and madmen, and frowned upon by great men, and cast off by parents and all the world. But for private Christians, women and others, to instruct, rebuke and exhort, with a like sort of boldness as becomes a minister when preaching, is not beautiful.

Some have been bold in some things that have really been errors; and have gloried in their boldness in practicing them, though cried out against as odd and irregular. And those that have gone the greatest lengths in these things, have been by some most

highly esteemed, as those that come out, and appear bold for the Lord Jesus Christ, and fully on his side; and others that have professed to be godly, that have condemned such things, have been spoken of as enemies of the cross of Christ, or at least very cold and dead; and many that of themselves, were not inclined to such practices, have by this means been driven on, being ashamed to be behind, and accounted poor soldiers for Christ.

Another effect of spiritual pride is presumption: it oftentimes makes it natural to persons so to act and speak, as though it in a special manner belonged to them to be taken notice of and much regarded. It is very natural to a person that is much under the influence of spiritual pride, to accept all that respect that is paid him: if others show a disposition to submit to him, and yield him the deference of a teacher, he is open to it, and freely admits it; yes, it is natural for him to expect such treatment, and to take much notice of it if he fails of it, and to have a poor opinion of others that don't pay him that which he looks upon as his prerogative. He is apt to think that it belongs to him to speak, and to clothe himself with a judicial and dogmatical air in conversation, and to take it upon him as what belongs to him, to give forth his sentence, and to determine and decide: whereas pure Christian humility does not boast of itself, does not behave itself unseemly, and is apt to prefer others in honor. One under the influence of spiritual pride is more apt to instruct others, than to inquire for himself, and naturally puts on the airs of a master: whereas one that is full of pure humility, naturally has on the air of a disciple; his voice is, 'What shall I do? What shall I do that I may live more to God's honor? What shall I do with this wicked heart?' He is ready to receive instruction from anybody, agreeable to James 1:19: 'Wherefore, my beloved

brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak.' The eminently humble Christian thinks he needs help from every body, whereas he that is spiritually proud thinks that every body needs his help. Christian humility, under a sense of others' misery, entreats and beseeches; spiritual pride affects to command, and warn with authority.

There ought to be the utmost watchfulness against all such appearances of spiritual pride, in all that profess to have been the subjects of this work, and especially in the promoters of it, but above all in itinerant preachers: the most eminent gifts, and highest tokens of God's favor and blessing, will not excuse them. Alas! what is man at his best estate! what is the most highly favored Christian, or the most eminent and successful minister, that he should now think he is sufficient for something, and somebody to be regarded, and that he should go forth, and act among his fellow creatures, as if he were wise and strong and good!

Ministers that have been the principal instruments of carrying on this glorious revival of religion, and that God has made use of, as it were to bring up his people out of Egypt, as he did of Moses, should take heed that they don't provoke God as Moses did, by assuming too much to themselves, and by their intemperate zeal, to shut them out from seeing the good things that God is going to do for his church in this world. The fruits of Moses's unbelief, which provoked God to shut him out of Canaan, and not to allow him to partake of those great things God was about to do for Israel on earth, were chiefly these two things. First, his mingling bitterness with his zeal: he had a great zeal for God, and he could not bear to see the intolerable stubbornness of the people, that they did not acknowledge the work of God, and were not convinced by all his

wonders that they had seen: but human passion was mingled with his zeal (Psalm 106:32-33): 'They angered him also at the waters of strife; so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips.' 'Hear now, you rebels,' says he, with bitterness of language. Secondly, he behaved himself, and spoke with a presumptuous air: he assumed too much to himself; 'Hear now, you rebels, must we fetch water out of this rock?' Spiritual pride worked in Moses at that time: his temptations to it were very great, for he had had great discoveries of God, and had been privileged with intimate and sweet communion with him, and God had made him the instrument of great good to his church; and though he was so humble a person, and, by God's own testimony, meek above all men upon the face of the whole earth, yet his temptations were too strong for him: which surely should make our young ministers, that have of late been highly favored, and have had great success, exceedingly careful, and distrustful of themselves. Alas! how far are we from having the strength of holy, meek, aged Moses! The temptation at this day is exceedingly great, to both those errors that Moses was guilty of; there is great temptation to bitterness and corrupt passion with zeal; for there is so much unreasonable opposition made against this glorious work of God, and so much stubbornness manifested in multitudes of this generation, notwithstanding all the great and wonderful works in which God has passed before them, that it greatly tends to provoke the spirits of such as have the interest of this work at heart, so as to move them to speak unadvisedly with their lips. And there is also great temptation to a presumptuous behavior in some persons: when a minister is greatly succeeded, from time to time, and so draws the eyes

of the multitude upon him, and he sees himself flocked after, and resorted to as an oracle, and people are ready to adore him, and to offer sacrifice to him, as it was with Paul and Barnabas, at Lystra, it is almost impossible for a man to avoid taking upon him the airs of a master, or some extraordinary person; a man had need to have a great stock of humility, and much divine assistance, to resist the temptation. But the greater our dangers are, the more ought to be our watchfulness and prayerfulness, and distrust of ourselves, lest we bring ourselves into mischief. Fishermen that have been very successful, and have caught a great many fish, had need to be careful that they don't at length begin to burn incense to their net. And we should take warning by Gideon, who after God had highly favored and exalted him, and made him the instrument of working a wonderful deliverance for his people, at length made a god of the spoils of his enemies, which became a snare to him and to his house, so as to prove the ruin of his family.

All young ministers in this day of the bringing up the Ark of God, should take warning by the example of a young Levite in Israel, namely Uzza the son of Abinadab. He seemed to have a real concern for the Ark of God, and to be zealous and engaged in his mind, on that joyful occasion of bringing up the Ark, and God made him an instrument to bring the Ark out of its long continued obscurity in Kiriath-jearim, and he succeeded to bring it a considerable way toward Mount Zion; but for his want of humility, reverence and circumspection, and assuming to himself, or taking too much upon him, God broke forth upon him, and struck him for his error, so that he never lived to see, and partake of the great joy of his church, on occasion of the carrying up the Ark into Mount Zion, and the great blessings of heaven upon Israel, that were con-

sequent upon it. Ministers that have been used to carry on this work have been chiefly of the younger sort, who have doubtless, as Uzza had, a real concern for the Ark; and it is evident that they are much animated and engaged in their minds, as he was, in this joyful day of bringing up the Ark; and they are afraid what will become of the Ark under the conduct of its ministers, that are sometimes in Scripture compared to oxen. They see the Ark shakes, and they are afraid these blundering oxen will throw it; and some of them it is to be feared, have been overly officious on this occasion, and have assumed too much to themselves, and have been bold to put forth their hand to take hold of the Ark, as though they were the only fit and worthy persons to defend it.

If young ministers had great humility, without a mixture, it would dispose them especially to treat aged ministers with respect and reverence, as their fathers, notwithstanding that a sovereign God may have given them greater assistance and success, than they have had (1 Peter 5:5): 'Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves to the elder; yes, all of you, be subject one to another; and be clothed with humility; for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.' Leviticus 19:32: 'You shall rise up before the white head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear your God; I am the Lord.'

As spiritual pride disposes persons to assume much to themselves, so it also disposes them to treat others with neglect: on the contrary, pure Christian humility disposes persons to honor all men, agreeable to that rule in 1 Peter 2:17.

There has been in some, that I believe are true friends of religion, too much of an appearance of this fruit of spiritual pride, in their treatment of those that they looked upon to be unregenerate

men; and particularly in refusing to enter into any discourse or reasoning with them. Indeed to spend a great deal of time in wrangling and warm debates about religion, is not the way to propagate religion, but to hinder it; and some are so dreadfully set against this work, that it is a dismal task to dispute with them, all that one can say is utterly in vain, I have found it so by experience; and to go to enter into disputes about religion, at some times, is quite unseasonable, as particularly in meetings for religious conference, or exercises of worship. But yet we ought to be very careful that we don't refuse to discourse with men, with any appearance of a supercilious neglect, as though we counted them not worthy to be regarded; on the contrary we should condescend to unregenerate men, as Christ has condescended to us, to bear with our unteachableness and stupidity, and still to follow us with instructions, line upon line, and precept upon precept, saying, 'Come let us reason together'; setting light before us, and using all manner of arguments with us, and waiting upon such dull scholars, as it were hoping that we should receive light. We should be ready with meekness and calmness, without hot disputing, to give our reasons, why we think this work is the work of God, to unregenerate men when they ask us, and not turn them away as not worthy to be talked with; as the apostle directed the primitive Christians to be ready to give a reason of the Christian faith and hope to the enemies of Christianity (1 Peter 3:15): 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.' And we ought not to condemn all reasoning about things of religion under the name of carnal reason. For my

part, I desire no better than that those that oppose this work, should come fairly to submit to have the cause between us tried by strict reasoning.

One qualification that the Scripture speaks of once and again, as requisite in a minister is, that he should be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2). And the apostle seems to explain what he means by it, in 2 Timothy 2:24-25, or at least there expresses one thing he intends by it, namely, that a minister should be ready, meekly to condescend to, and instruct opposers: 'And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, able to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God perhaps will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.'

Secondly, another thing from which errors in conduct, that attend such a revival of religion, do arise, is wrong principles.

And one erroneous principle, than which scarce any has proved more mischievous to the present glorious work of God, is a notion that it is God's manner, now in these days, to guide his saints, at least some that are more eminent, by inspiration, or immediate revelation, and to make known to them what shall come to pass hereafter, or what it is his will that they should do, by impressions that he by his Spirit makes upon their minds, either with, or without texts of Scripture; whereby something is made known to them, that is not taught in the Scripture as the words lie in the Bible. By such a notion the devil has a great door opened for him; and if once this opinion should come to be fully yielded to, and established in the church of God, Satan would have opportunity thereby to set up himself as the guide and oracle of God's people, and to have his word regarded as their infallible rule, and so to lead them where he would, and to introduce what he pleased, and soon to

bring the Bible into neglect and contempt. Late experience in some instances, has shown that the tendency of this notion is to cause persons to esteem the Bible as a book that is in a great measure useless.

This error will defend and support all errors. As long as a person has a notion that he is guided by immediate direction from heaven, it makes him uncorrectable and impenetrable in all his misconduct: for what does it signify, for poor blind worms of the dust, to go to argue with a man, and endeavor to convince him and correct him, that is guided by the immediate counsels and commands of the great Jehovah?

This great work of God has been exceedingly hindered by this error; and until we have quite taken this handle out of the devil's hands, the work of God will never go on without great hindrances. But Satan will always have a vast advantage in his hands against it, and as he has used it hitherto, so he will do still: and it is evident that the devil knows the vast advantage he has by it, which makes him exceedingly reluctant to let go his hold.

It is strange what a disposition there is in many well-disposed and religious persons, to fall in with and hold fast this notion. It is enough to astonish one that such multiplied, plain instances of the failing of such supposed revelations, in the event, don't open every one's eyes. I have seen so many instances of the failing of such impressions, that would almost furnish a history: I have been acquainted with them when made under all kinds of circumstances, and have seen them fail in the event, when made with such circumstances as have been fairest and brightest, and most promising. For instance, when they have been made upon the minds of such, as there was all reason to think were true saints, yes eminent

saints, and at the very time when they have had great divine discoveries, and have been in the high exercise of true communion with God, and made with great strength, and with great sweetness accompanying, and I have had reason to think, with an excellent heavenly frame of spirit, yet continued, and made with texts of Scripture, that seemed to be exceedingly appropriate, yes many texts following one another, extraordinarily and wonderfully brought to the mind, and with great power and majesty, and the impressions repeated over and over, after prayers to be directed; and yet all has most manifestly come to nothing, to the full conviction of the persons themselves. And God has in so many instances of late in his providence, covered such things with darkness, that one would think it should be enough quite to dim the expectations of such as have been ready to think highly of such things; it seems to be a testimony of God, that he has no design of reviving revelations in his church, and a rebuke from him to the groundless expectations of it.

It seems to me that that Scripture in Zechariah 13:5, is a prophecy concerning ministers of the gospel, in the latter, and glorious day of the Christian church, which is evidently spoken of in this and the foregoing chapters; the words are, 'I am no prophet; I am a farmer: for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.' The words, I apprehend, are to be interpreted in a spiritual sense; 'I am a farmer': the work of ministers is very often in the New Testament, compared to the business of the farmer, that takes care of God's farm, to whom he lets out his vineyard, and sends them forth to labor in his field, where one plants and another waters, one sows and another reaps; so ministers are called laborers in God's harvest. And as it is added, 'Man taught me to keep cattle

from my youth,' so the work of a minister is very often in Scripture represented by the business of a shepherd or pastor. And whereas it is said, 'I am no prophet; but man taught me from my youth,' it is as much as to say, I don't pretend to have received my skill, by which I am fitted for the business of a pastor or shepherd in the church of God, by immediate inspiration, but by education, by being trained up to the business by human learning, and instructions I have received from my youth or childhood, by ordinary means.

And why can't we be contented with the divine oracles, that holy, pure Word of God, that we have in such abundance, and such clearness, now since the canon of Scripture is completed? Why should we desire to have anything added to them by impulses from above? Why should we not rest in that standing rule that God has given to his church, which the apostle teaches us is more sure than a voice from heaven? And why should we desire to make the Scripture speak more to us than it does? Or why should any desire any higher kind of intercourse with heaven, than that which is by having the Holy Spirit given in his sanctifying influences, infusing and exciting grace and holiness, love and joy, which is the highest kind of intercourse that the saints and angels in heaven have with God, and the chief excellency of the glorified man Christ Jesus?

Some that follow impulses and impressions go away with a notion that they do no other than follow the guidance of God's Word, and make the Scripture their rule, because the impression is made with a text of Scripture, that comes to their mind, though they take that text as it is impressed on their minds, and improve it as a new revelation, to all intents and purposes, or as the revelation of a particular thing, that is now newly made, while the text in itself, as it is in the Bible, implies no such thing, and they themselves do not

suppose that any such revelation was contained in it before. As for instance, suppose that text should come into a person's mind with strong impression, Acts 9:6: 'Arise, and go into the city; and it shall be told you what you must do.' And he should interpret it as an immediate signification of the will of God, that he should now, forthwith go to such a neighboring town, and as a revelation of that future event, namely, that there he should meet with a further discovery of his duty. If such things as these are revealed by the impression of these words, it is to all intents, a new revelation, not the less because certain words of Scripture are made use of in the case: here are propositions or truths entirely new, that are supposed now to be revealed, that those words do not contain in themselves, and that until now there was no revelation of anywhere to be found in heaven or earth. These propositions — that it is God's mind and will that such a person by name, should arise at such a time, and go from such a place to such a place, and that there he should meet with discoveries — are entirely new propositions, wholly different from the propositions contained in that text of Scripture, no more contained, or consequentially implied in the words themselves, without a new revelation, than it is implied that he should arise and go to any other place, or that any other person should arise and go to that place. The propositions supposed to be now revealed, are as really different from those contained in that Scripture, as they are from the propositions contained in that text in Genesis 5:6: 'And Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begat Enosh.'

This is quite a different thing from the Spirit's enlightening the mind to understand the precepts or propositions of the Word of God, and know what is contained and revealed in them, and what

consequences may justly be drawn from them, and to see how they are applicable to our case and circumstances; which is done without any new revelation, only by enabling the mind to understand and apply a revelation already made.

Those texts of Scripture that speak of the children of God as led by the Spirit, have been by some, brought to defend a being guided by such impulses; as particularly, those in Romans 8:14: 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God': and Galatians 5:18: 'But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.' But these texts themselves confute those that bring them; for it is evident that the leading of the Spirit that the apostle speaks of is a gracious leading, or what is peculiar to the children of God, and that unregenerate men cannot have; for he speaks of it as a sure evidence of their being the sons of God, and not under the law. But a leading or directing a person, by immediately revealing to him where he should go, or what shall hereafter come to pass, or what shall be the future consequence of his doing thus or thus, if there be any such thing in these days, is not of the nature of the gracious leading of the Spirit of God, that is peculiar to God's children; it is no more than a common gift; there is nothing in it but what unregenerate men are capable of, and many of them have had in the days of inspiration. A man may have ten thousand such revelations and directions from the Spirit of God, and yet not have a grain of grace in his heart: it is no more than the gift of prophecy, which immediately reveals what will be, or should be hereafter; but this is but a common gift, as the apostle expressly shows in 1 Corinthians 13:2, 8. If a person has anything revealed to him from God, or is directed to anything, by a voice from heaven, or a whisper, or words immediately suggested and put into his mind, there

is nothing of the nature of grace, merely in this; it is of the nature of a common influence of the Spirit, and is but dross and worthlessness, in comparison of the excellency of that gracious leading of the Spirit that the saints have. Such a way of being directed where one shall go, and what he shall do, is no more than what Balaam had from God, who from time to time revealed to him what he should do, and when he had done one thing, then directed him what he should do next; so that he was in this sense led by the Spirit, for a considerable time. There is a more excellent way that the Spirit of God leads the sons of God, that unregenerate men cannot have, and that is, by inclining them to do the will of God, and go in the shining path of truth and Christian holiness, from a holy heavenly disposition, which the Spirit of God gives them, and enlivens in them, which inclines them, and leads them to those things that are excellent, and agreeable to God's mind, whereby they are transformed, by the renewing of their minds, and prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, as in Romans 12:2. And so the Spirit of God does in a gracious manner teach the saints their duty; and teaches them in a higher manner than ever Balaam, or Saul, or Judas were taught, or any unregenerate man is capable of while such. The Spirit of God enlightens them with respect to their duty, by making their eye single and pure, whereby the whole body is full of light. The sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God rectifies the taste of the soul, whereby it relishes those things that are of God, and naturally delights in those things that are holy and agreeable to God's mind, and like one of a distinguishing taste, chooses those things that are good and wholesome, and rejects those things that are evil; for the sanctified ear tries words, and the sanctified heart tries actions, as the

mouth tastes meat. And thus the Spirit of God leads and guides the meek in his way, agreeable to his promises; he enables them to understand the commands and counsels of his Word, and rightly to apply them. Christ blames the Pharisees that they had not this holy distinguishing taste, to discern and distinguish what was right and wrong (Luke 12:57): 'Yes, and why even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?'

The leading of the Spirit which God gives his children, which is peculiar to them, is that teaching them his statutes, and causing them to understand the way of his precepts, which the psalmist so very often prays for, especially in the 119th Psalm; and not in giving them new statutes, and new precepts: he graciously gives them eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand; he causes them to understand the fear of the Lord, and so brings the blind by a way they knew not, and leads them in paths that they had not known, and makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.

So the assistance of the Spirit in praying and preaching seems by some to have been greatly misunderstood, and they have sought after a miraculous assistance or inspiration, by immediate suggesting of words to them, by such gifts and influences of the Spirit, in praying and teaching, as the apostle speaks of in 1 Corinthians 14:14, 26 — which many unregenerate men had in those days — instead of a gracious holy assistance of the Spirit of God, which is the far more excellent way, as in 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 13:1. The gracious, and most excellent kind of assistance of the Spirit of God in praying and preaching, is not by immediate suggesting of words to the mind, which may be with a cold dead heart, but by warming the heart, and filling it with a great sense of those things that are to

be spoken of, and with holy affections, that that sense and those affections may suggest words. Thus indeed the Spirit of God may be said, indirectly and mediately to suggest words to us, to compose our petitions for us, and to teach the preacher what to say; he fills the heart, and that fills the mouth; as we know that when men are greatly affected in any matter, and their hearts are very full, it fills them with matter for speech, and makes them eloquent upon that subject; and much more have spiritual affections this tendency, for many reasons that might be given. When a person is in a holy and lively frame in private prayer, it will wonderfully supply him with matter, and with expressions, as every true Christian knows; and so it will fill his mouth in Christian conversation, and it has the like tendency to enable a person in public prayer and preaching. And if he has these holy influences of the Spirit on his heart in a high degree, nothing in the world will have so great a tendency to make both the matter and manner of his public performances excellent and profitable. But since there is no immediate suggesting of words from the Spirit of God to be expected or desired, those who neglect and despise study and premeditation, in order to a preparation for the pulpit, in such an expectation, are guilty of presumption; though doubtless it may be lawful for some persons, in some cases, and they may be called to it, to preach with very little study; and the Spirit of God, by the heavenly frame of heart that he gives them, may enable them to do it to excellent purpose.

Besides this most excellent way of the Spirit of God his assisting ministers in public performances, which, considered as the preacher's privilege, far excels inspiration, there is a common assistance which unregenerate men may have in these days, and

which the godly may have intermingled with a gracious assistance, which is also very different from inspiration, and that is his assisting natural principles; as his assisting the natural understanding, reason, memory, conscience and natural affection.

But to return to the subject of impressions and immediate revelations; many lay themselves open to a delusion by expecting direction from heaven in this way, and waiting for it: in such a case it is easy for persons to imagine that they have it. They are perhaps at a loss concerning something, undetermined what they shall do, or what course they should take in some affair, and they pray to God to direct them, and make known to them his mind and will; and then, instead of expecting to be directed, by being assisted in consideration of the rules of God's Word, and their circumstances, and God's providence, and enabled to look on things in a true light, and justly to weigh them, they are waiting for some secret immediate influence on their minds, unaccountably swaying their minds, and turning their thoughts or inclinations that way that God would have them go, and are observing their own minds, to see what arises there, whether some texts of Scripture don't come into the mind, or whether some ideas, or inward motions and dispositions don't arise in something of an unaccountable manner, that they may call a divine direction. Hereby they are exposed to two things: first, they lay themselves open to the devil, and give him a fair opportunity to lead them where he pleases; for they stand ready to follow the first extraordinary impulse that they shall have, groundlessly concluding it is from God. And secondly, they are greatly exposed to be deceived by their own imaginations; for such an expectation awakens and quickens the imagination; and that oftentimes

is called an uncommon impression, that is no such thing; and they ascribe that to the agency of some invisible being, that is owing only to themselves.

Again, another way that many have been deceived, is by drawing false conclusions from true premises. Many true and eminent saints have been led into mistakes and snares, by arguing too much from the fact that they have prayed in faith; and that oftentimes when the premises are true, they have indeed been greatly assisted in prayer for such a particular mercy, and have had the true spirit of prayer in exercise in their asking it of God; but they have concluded more from these premises than is a just consequence from them. That they have thus prayed is a sure sign that their prayer is accepted and heard, and that God will give a gracious answer, according to his own wisdom, and that the particular thing that was asked shall be given, or that which is equivalent; this is a just consequence from it; but it is not inferred by any new revelation now made, but by the revelation that is made in God's Word, the promises made to the prayer of faith in the holy Scriptures. But that God will answer them in that individual thing that they ask, if it is not a thing promised in God's Word, or they don't certainly know that it is that which will be most for the good of God's church, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom and glory, nor whether it will be best for them, is more than can be justly concluded from it. If God remarkably meets with one of his children while he is praying for a particular mercy of great importance, for himself, or some other person, or any society of men, and does by the influences of his Spirit greatly humble him, and empty him of himself in his prayer, and manifests himself remarkably in his excellency, sovereignty and his all-sufficient power and

grace in Jesus Christ, and does in a remarkable manner enable the person to come to him for that mercy, poor in spirit, and with humble resignation to God, and with a great degree of faith in the divine sufficiency, and the sufficiency of Christ's mediation, that person has indeed a great deal more reason to hope that God will grant that mercy, than otherwise he would have; the greater probability is justly inferred from that, agreeable to the promises of the holy Scripture, that the prayer is accepted and heard; and it is much more probable that a prayer that is heard will be returned with the particular mercy that is asked, than one that is not heard. And there is no reason at all to doubt, but that God does sometimes especially enable to the exercises of faith, when the minds of his saints are engaged in thoughts of, and prayer for some particular blessing they greatly desire; that is, God is pleased especially to give them a believing frame, a sense of his fullness, and a spirit of humble dependence on him, at such times as when they are thinking of and praying for that mercy, more than for other mercies. He gives them a particular sense of his ability to do that thing, and of the sufficiency of his power to overcome such and such obstacles, and the sufficiency of his mercy, and of the blood of Christ for the removal of the guilt that is in the way of the bestowal of such a mercy, in particular. When this is the case, it makes the probability still much greater, that God intends to bestow the particular mercy sought, in his own time, and his own way. But here is nothing of the nature of a revelation in the case, but only a drawing rational conclusions from the particular manner and circumstances of the ordinary gracious influences of God's Spirit. And as God is pleased sometimes to give his saints particular exercises of faith in his sufficiency, with regard to particular mercies they seek, so he is some-

times pleased to make use of his Word in order to it, and helps the actings of faith with respect to such a mercy, by texts of Scripture that do especially exhibit the sufficiency of God's power or mercy, in such a like case, or speak of such a manner of the exercise of God's strength and grace. The strengthening of their faith in God's sufficiency in this case, is therefore a just improvement of such Scriptures; it is no more than what those Scriptures, as they stand in the Bible, do hold forth just cause for. But to take them as new whispers or revelations from heaven, is not making a just improvement of them. If persons have thus a spirit of prayer remarkably given them, concerning a particular mercy, from time to time, so as evidently to be assisted to act faith in God, in that particular, in a very distinguishing manner, the argument in some cases, may be very strong that God does design to grant that mercy, not from any revelation now made of it, but from such a kind and manner of the ordinary influence of his Spirit, with respect to that thing.

But here a great deal of caution and circumspection must be used in drawing inferences of this nature: there are many ways persons may be misled and deluded. The ground on which some expect that they shall receive the thing they have asked for, is rather a strong imagination, than any true humble faith in the divine sufficiency. They have a strong persuasion that the thing asked shall be granted, which they can give no reason for, without any remarkable discovery of that glory and fullness of God and Christ, that is the ground of faith. And sometimes the confidence that persons have that their prayers shall be answered, is only a self-righteous confidence, and no true faith: they have a high conceit of themselves as eminent saints, and special favorites of God, and have also a high conceit of the prayers they have made, be-

cause they were much enlarged and affected in them; and hence they are positive in it that the thing will come to pass. And sometimes when once they have conceived such a notion, they grow stronger and stronger in it; and this they think is from an immediate divine hand upon their minds to strengthen their confidence; whereas it is only by their dwelling in their minds on their own excellency, and high experiences, and great assistances, whereby they look brighter and brighter in their own eyes. Hence it is found by observation and experience, that nothing in the world exposes so much to enthusiasm as spiritual pride and self-righteousness.

In order to drawing a just inference from the supposed assistance we have had in prayer for a particular mercy, and judging of the probability of the bestowal of that individual mercy, many things must be considered. We must consider the importance of the mercy sought, and the principle from which we so earnestly desire it; how far it is good, and agreeable to the mind and will of God; the degree of love to God that we exercised in our prayer; the degree of discovery that is made of the divine sufficiency, and the degree in which our assistance is manifestly distinguishing with respect to that mercy. And there is nothing of greater importance in the argument than the degree of humility, poverty of spirit, self-emptiness and resignation to the holy will of God, which God gives us the exercise of in our seeking that mercy: praying for a particular mercy with much of these things, I have often seen blessed with a remarkable bestowal of the particular thing asked for.

From what has been said, we may see which way God may, only by the ordinary gracious influences of his Spirit, sometimes give his saints special reason to hope for the bestowal of a particular mercy they desire and have prayed for, and which we may sup-

pose he oftentimes gives eminent saints, that have great degrees of humility, and much communion with God. And here, I humbly think, some eminent servants of Jesus Christ that have appeared in the church of God, that we read of in ecclesiastical history, have been led into a mistake; and through want of distinguishing such things as these from immediate revelations, have thought that God has favored them, in some instances, with the same kind of divine influences that the apostles and prophets had of old.

Another erroneous principle that some have embraced, that has been a source of many errors in their conduct, is, that persons ought always to do whatever the Spirit of God, though but indirectly, inclines them to. Indeed the Spirit of God in itself is infinitely perfect, and all his immediate actings, simply considered, are perfect, and there can be nothing wrong in them; and therefore all that the Spirit of God inclines us to directly and immediately, without the intervention of any other cause that shall pervert and misuse what is from the Spirit of God, ought to be done; but there may be many things that we may be disposed to do, which disposition may indirectly be from the Spirit of God, that we ought not to do. The disposition in general may be good, and be from the Spirit of God, but the particular determination of that disposition, as to particular actions, objects and circumstances, may be ill, and not from the Spirit of God, but may be from the intervention or interposition of some infirmity, blindness, inadvertence, deceit or corruption of ours; so that although the disposition in general ought to be allowed and promoted, and all those actings of it that are simply from God's Spirit, yet the particular ill direction or determination of that disposition, which is from some other cause, ought not to be followed.

As for instance, the Spirit of God may cause a person to have a dear love to another, and so a great desire of, and delight in his comfort, ease and pleasure: this disposition in general is good, and ought to be followed; but yet through the intervention of indiscretion, or some other bad cause, it may be ill directed, and have a bad determination, as to particular acts; and the person indirectly, through that real love that he has to his neighbor, may kill him with kindness; he may do that out of sincere good will to him, that may tend to ruin him. A good disposition may through some inadvertence or delusion, strongly incline a person to that, which if he saw all things as they are, would be most contrary to that disposition. The true loyalty of a general, and his zeal for the honor of his prince, may exceedingly animate him in war; but yet this, that is a good disposition, through indiscretion and mistake, may push him forward to those things that give the enemy great advantage, and may expose him and his army to ruin, and may tend to the ruin of his master's interest.

The apostle does evidently suppose that the Spirit of God in his extraordinary, immediate and miraculous influences on men's minds, may in some respect excite inclinations in men, that if gratified, would tend to confusion, and therefore must sometimes be restrained, and in their exercise, must be under the government of discretion (1 Corinthians 14:31-33): 'For you may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.' Here by the spirits of the prophets, according to the known phrasing of the apostle, is meant the Spirit of God acting in the prophets, according to those special gifts, with which each one was

endowed. And here it is plainly implied that the Spirit of God, thus operating in them, may be an occasion of their having, sometimes an inclination to do that, in the exercise of those gifts, which it was not proper, decent or profitable that they should; and that therefore the inclination, though indirectly from the Spirit of God, should be restrained, and that it ought to be subject to the discretion of the prophets, as to the particular time and circumstances of its exercise.

I can make no doubt but that it is possible for a minister to have given him by the Spirit of God, such a sense of the importance of eternal things, and of the misery of mankind, that are so many of them exposed to eternal destruction, together with such a love to souls, that he might find in himself a disposition to spend all his time, day and night, in warning, exhorting and calling upon men, and so that he must be obliged as it were to do violence to himself ever to refrain, so as to give himself any opportunity to eat, drink or sleep. And so I believe there may be a disposition in like manner, indirectly excited in lay persons, through the intervention of their infirmity, to do what only belongs to ministers. Yes, to do those things that would not become either ministers or people: through the influence of the Spirit of God, together with want of discretion, and some remaining corruption, women and children might feel themselves inclined to break forth and scream aloud, to great congregations, warning and exhorting the whole multitude, and to go forth and call out and scream in the streets, or to leave the families they belong to, and go from house to house, earnestly exhorting others; but yet it would by no means follow that it was their duty to do these things, or that they would not have a tendency to do ten times as much hurt as good.

Another wrong principle from which have arisen errors in conduct, is, that whatever is found to be of present and immediate benefit, may and ought to be practiced, without looking forward to future consequences. Some persons seem to think that it sufficiently justifies anything that they say or do, that it is found to be for their present edification, and the edification of those that are with them; it assists and promotes their present affection, and therefore they think they should not concern themselves about future consequences, but leave them with God. Indeed in things that are in themselves our duty, being required by moral rules, or absolute positive commands of God, they must be done, and future consequences must be left with God; our choice and discretion takes no place here. But in other things we are to be governed by discretion, and must not only look at the present good, but our view must be extensive, and we must look at the consequences of things. It is the duty of ministers especially to exercise this discretion: in things in which they are not determined by an absolute rule, and that are not enjoined them by a wisdom superior to their own, Christ has left them to their own discretion, with that general rule, that they should exercise the utmost wisdom they can obtain, in pursuing that, which upon the best view of the consequences of things they can get, will tend most to the advancement of his kingdom. This is implied in those words of Christ to his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach the gospel (Matthew 10:16): 'Be wise as serpents.' The Scripture always represents the work of a gospel minister by those employments that do especially require a wise foresight of, and provision for future events and consequences. So it is compared to the business of a steward, that is a business that in an eminent manner requires foresight, and a wise laying in of

provision, for the supply of the needs of the family, according to its future necessities; and a good minister is called a wise steward. So it is compared to the business of a farmer, that almost wholly consists in those things that are done with a view to the future fruits and consequences of his labor: the farmer's discretion and foresight is eloquently set forth in Isaiah 28:24-26: 'Does the plowman plow all day to sow? Does he open and break the clods of his ground? When he has made plain the face thereof, does he not scatter the dill, and scatter the cumin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye, in their place? For his God does instruct him to discretion, and does teach him.' So the work of the ministry is compared to that of a wise builder or architect, who has a long reach, and comprehensive view; and for whom it is necessary, that when he begins a building, he should have at once a view of the whole frame, and all the future parts of the structure, even to the pinnacle, that all may fitly be framed together. So also it is compared to the business of a trader or merchant, who is to gain by trading with the money that he begins with: this also is a business that exceedingly requires foresight, and without it, is never likely to be followed with any success, for any long time. So it is represented by the business of a fisherman, which depends on craft and subtlety. It is also compared to the business of a soldier that goes to war, which is a business that perhaps, above any other secular business, requires great foresight, and a wise provision for future events and consequences.

And particularly ministers ought not to be careless how much they discompose and disturb the minds of those that they esteem unregenerate men, or how great an uproar they raise in the world, and so lay obstacles in the way of the propagation of religion. This

certainly is not to follow the example of that zealous apostle Paul, who though he would not depart from his enjoined duty to please unregenerate men, yet in which he might with a good conscience, did exceedingly lay out himself to please them, and if possible to avoid raising in the multitude, prejudices, oppositions and tumults against the gospel; and looked upon it that it was of great consequence that it should be, if possible, avoided (1 Corinthians 10:32-33): 'Give no offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men, in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' Yes, he declares that he laid himself out so much for this, that he made himself a kind of a servant to all sorts of men, conforming to their customs and various ways, in every thing in which he might, even in things that were very burdensome to him, that he might not frighten men away from Christianity, and cause them to stand as it were braced and armed against it, but on the contrary, if possible, might with condescension and friendship win and draw them to it; as you may see in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. And agreeable to this, are the directions he gives to others, both ministers and people: so he directs the Christian Romans, not to please themselves, but every one please his neighbor, for his good, to edification (Romans 15:1-2). And to follow after the things that make for peace (chapter 14:19). And he presses it in exceedingly strong terms (Romans 12:18): 'If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.' And he directs ministers, to endeavor if possible, to gain opposers by a meek condescending treatment, avoiding all appearance of strife or fierceness (2 Timothy 2:24-26). To the like purpose, the same apostle directs Christians to walk in wisdom, toward those that are outside (Ephesians 4:5). And to

avoid giving offense to others, if we can, that our good may not be evil spoken of (Romans 14:16). So that it is evident that the great and most zealous and most successful propagator of vital religion that ever was, looked upon it to be of great consequence to endeavor, as much as possible, by all the methods of lawful meekness and gentleness, to avoid raising the prejudice and opposition of the world against religion. When we have done our utmost there will be opposition enough against vital religion, against which the carnal mind of man has such an enmity; we should not therefore needlessly increase and raise that enmity; as in the apostles' days, though he took so much pains to please men, yet because he was faithful and thorough in his work, persecution almost everywhere was raised against him.

A fisherman is careful not needlessly to stir up and disturb the water, lest he should drive the fish away from his net; but he'll rather endeavor if possible to draw them into it. Such a fisherman was the apostle (2 Corinthians 12:15-16): 'And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. But be it so, I did not burden you, nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with skill.'

The necessity of suffering persecution, in order to being a true Christian, has undoubtedly by some been carried to an extreme, and the doctrine has been abused. It has been looked upon necessary to uphold a man's credit among others as a Christian, that he should be persecuted. I have heard it made an objection against the sincerity of particular persons, that they were no more hated and reproached. And the manner of glorying in persecution, or the cross of Christ, has in some been very wrong, so as has had too much of an appearance of lifting up themselves in it, that they

were very much hated and reviled, more than most, as an evidence of their excelling others, in being good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Such an improvement of the doctrine of the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and of the necessity of persecution, becoming acceptable and customary, has a direct tendency to cause those that would be accounted true Christians, to behave themselves so toward those that are not well affected to religion, as to provoke their hatred, or at least to be but little careful to avoid it, and not very studiously and earnestly to strive, after the apostle's example and precepts, to please them to their edification, and by meekness and gentleness to win them, and by all possible means to live peaceably with them.

I believe that saying of our Savior, 'I came not to send peace on earth, but division,' has been abused; as though when we see great strife and division arise about religion, and violent heats of spirit against the truly pious, and a loud clamor and uproar against the work of God, it was to be rejoiced in, because it is that which Christ came to send. It has almost been laid down as a maxim by some, that the more division and strife, the better sign; which naturally leads persons to seek it and provoke it, or leads them to, and encourages them in such a manner of behavior, such a roughness and sharpness, or such an affected neglect, as has a natural tendency to raise prejudice and opposition; instead of striving, as the apostle did to his utmost, by all meekness, gentleness and benevolence of behavior, to prevent or assuage it. Christ came to send a sword on earth, and to cause division, no otherwise than he came to send damnation; for Christ that is set for the glorious restoration of some, is set for the fall of others, and to be a stone of stumbling and rock of offense to them, and an occasion of their vastly more

aggravated and terrible damnation; and this is always the consequence of a great outpouring of the Spirit and revival of vital religion, it is the means of the salvation of some, and the more aggravated damnation of others. But certainly this is no just argument that men's exposure to damnation is not to be lamented, or that we should not exert ourselves to our utmost, in all the methods that we can devise, that others might be saved, and to avoid all such behavior toward them as tends to lead them down to hell.

I know there is naturally a great enmity in the heart of man against vital religion; and I believe there would have been a great deal of opposition against this glorious work of God in New England if the subjects and promoters of it had behaved themselves never so agreeably to Christian rules; and I believe if this work goes on and spreads much in the world, so as to begin to shake kingdoms and nations, it will dreadfully stir up the rage of earth and hell, and will put the world into the greatest uproar that ever it was in since it stood; I believe Satan's dying struggles will be the most violent. But yet I believe a great deal might be done to restrain this opposition, by a good conformity to that of the apostle James (James 3:13): 'Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge? Let him show out of a good conversation, his works, with meekness of wisdom.' And I also believe that if the rules of Christian charity, meekness, gentleness and prudence had been duly observed by the generality of the zealous promoters of this work, it would have made three times the progress that it has; that is, if it had pleased God in such a case, to give a blessing to means in proportion as he has done.

Under this head of carelessness of the future consequences of things, it may be proper to say something of introducing things new and strange, and that have a tendency by their novelty to shock and surprise people. Nothing can be more evident from the New Testament, than that such things ought to be done with great caution and moderation, to avoid the offense that may be thereby given, and the prejudices that might be raised, to hinder the progress of religion: yes, that it ought to be thus in things that are in themselves good and excellent, and of great weight, provided they are not things that are of the nature of absolute duty, which though they may appear to be innovations, yet can't be neglected without immorality or disobedience to the commands of God. What great caution and moderation did the apostles use in introducing things that were new, and abolishing things that were old in their day? How gradually were the ceremonial performances of the law of Moses removed and abolished among the Christian Jews? And how long did even the apostle Paul himself conform to those ceremonies which he calls weak and beggarly elements? Yes, even to the rite of circumcision (Acts 16:3), that he speaks so much in his epistles of the worthlessness of, that he might not prejudice the Jews against Christianity? So it seems to have been very gradually that the Jewish sabbath was abolished, and the Christian sabbath introduced, for the same reason. And the apostles avoided teaching the Christians in those early days, at least for a great while, some high and excellent divine truths, because they could not bear them yet (1 Corinthians 3:1-2; Hebrews 5:11 to the end). Thus strictly did the apostles observe the rule that their blessed Master gave them, of not putting new wine into old wineskins, lest they should burst the wineskins, and lose the wine. And how did

Christ himself, while on earth, forbear so plainly to teach his disciples the great doctrines of Christianity, concerning his satisfaction, and the nature and manner of a sinner's justification and reconciliation with God, and the particular benefits of his death, resurrection and ascension, because in that infant state the disciples were then in, their minds were not prepared for such instructions; and therefore the more clear and full revelation of these things was reserved for the time when their minds should be further enlightened and strengthened by the outpouring of the Spirit after his ascension (John 16:12-13): 'I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now: however, when he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.' And Mark 4:33: 'And with many such parables spoke he the word to them, as they were able to bear it.' These things might be enough to convince any one, that doesn't think himself wiser than Christ and his apostles, that great prudence and caution should be used in introducing things into the church of God, that are very uncommon, though in themselves they may be very excellent, lest by our rashness and imprudent haste we hinder religion, much more than we help it.

Persons that are influenced by an indiscreet zeal are always in too much haste; they are impatient of delays, and therefore are for jumping to the uppermost step first, before they have taken the preceding steps; whereby they expose themselves to fall and break their bones. It is a thing very appealing to them to see the building rise very high, and all their endeavor and strength is employed in advancing the building in height, without taking care withal proportionably to enlarge the bottom; whereby the whole is in danger of coming to the ground; or they are for putting on the cupola and pinnacle before they are come to it, or before the lower parts of the

building are done; which tends at once to put a stop to the building, and hinder its ever being a complete structure. Many that are thus imprudent and hasty with their zeal, have a real eager desire for that which is good; but are like children, that are impatient to wait for the fruit until the proper season of it, and therefore snatch it before it is ripe: oftentimes in their haste they overshoot their mark, and frustrate their own end; they put that which they would obtain further out of reach than it was before, and establish and confirm that which they would remove. Things must have time to ripen: the prudent farmer waits until he has received the former and the latter rain, and until the harvest is ripe, before he reaps. We are now just as it were beginning to recover out of a dreadful disease that we have been long under; and to feed a man recovering from a fever with strong meat at once, is the ready way to kill him. The Reformation from popery was much hindered by this hasty zeal: many were for immediately rectifying all disorders by force, which were condemned by Luther, and were a great trouble to him. It is a vain prejudice that some have lately imbibed against such rules of prudence and moderation: they will be forced to come to them at last; they'll find themselves that they are not able to maintain their cause without them; and if they won't hearken before, experience will convince them at last, when it will be too late for them to rectify their mistake.

Another error, that is of the nature of an erroneous principle, that some have gone upon, is a wrong notion that they have of an attestation of divine providence to persons or things. We go too far when we look upon the success that God gives to some persons, in making them the instruments of doing much good, as a testimony of God's approval of those persons and all the courses they take. It

is a main argument that has been made use of to defend the conduct of some of those ministers, that have been blamed as imprudent and irregular, that God has smiled upon them and blessed them, and given them great success, and that however men charge them as guilty of many wrong things, yet it is evident that God is with them, and then who can be against them? And probably some of those ministers themselves, by this very means, have had their ears stopped against all that has been said to convince them of their misconduct. But there are innumerable ways that persons may be misled, in forming a judgment of the mind and will of God, from the events of providence. If a person's success be a reward of something that God sees in him, that he approves of, yet it is no argument that he approves of every thing in him. Who can tell how far the divine grace may go in greatly rewarding some small good that he sees in a person, a good meaning, something good in his disposition, while he at the same time, in sovereign mercy, hides his eyes from a great deal that is bad, that it is his pleasure to forgive, and not to mark against the person, though in itself it be very ill? God has not told us after what manner he will proceed in this matter, and we go upon most uncertain grounds when we undertake to determine. It is an exceedingly difficult thing to know how far love or hatred are exercised toward persons or actions, by all that is before us. God was pleased in his sovereignty to give such success to Jacob in that, which from beginning to end, was a deceitful, lying contrivance and proceeding of his, that in that way, he obtained that blessing that was worth infinitely more than the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven, that was given to Esau, in his blessing, yes worth more than all that the world can afford. God was for a while with Judas, so that he by God's power accom-

panying him, worked miracles and cast out devils; but this could not justly be interpreted as God's approval of his person, or his thievery, that he lived in at the same time.

The dispensations and events of providence, with their reasons, are too little understood by us, to be improved by us as our rule, instead of God's Word; God has his way in the sea, and his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known, and he gives us no account of any of his matters; and therefore we can't safely take the events of his providence as a revelation of his mind concerning a person's conduct and behavior, we have no warrant so to do, God has never appointed those things, but something else to be our rule; we have but one rule to go by, and that is his holy Word, and when we join anything else with it as having the force of a rule, we are guilty of that which is strictly forbidden (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18). Those who make what they imagine is pointed forth to them in providence, their rule of behavior, do err, as well as those that follow impulses and impressions: we should put nothing in the room of the Word of God. It is to be feared that some have been greatly confirmed and emboldened by the great success that God has given them, in some things that have really been contrary to the rules of God's holy Word. If it has been so, they have been guilty of presumption, and abusing God's kindness to them, and the great honor he has put upon them: they have seen that God was with them, and made them victorious in their preaching; and this it is to be feared has been abused by some to a degree of self-confidence; it has much taken off all watchfulness of themselves; they have been bold

therefore to go great lengths, in a presumption that God was with them, and would defend them, and finally vindicate all that found fault with them.

Indeed there is a voice of God in his providence, that may be interpreted and well understood by the rule of his Word; and providence may to our dark minds and weak faith, confirm the Word of God, as it fulfills it: but to improve divine providence thus, is quite a different thing from making a rule of providence. There is a good use may be made of the events of providence, of our own observation and experience, and human histories, and the opinion of the fathers, and other eminent men; but finally all must be brought to one rule, namely, the Word of God, and that must be regarded as our only rule.

Nor do I think that they go upon sure ground, that conclude that they have not been in an error in their conduct, because that at the time of their doing a thing, for which they have been blamed and reproached by others, they were favored with special comforts of God's Spirit. God's bestowing special spiritual mercies on a person at such a time, is no sign that he approves of every thing that he sees in him at that time. David had very much of the presence of God while he lived in polygamy: and Solomon had some very high favors, and peculiar smiles of heaven, and particularly at the dedication of the temple, while he greatly multiplied wives to himself, and horses, and silver and gold; all contrary to the most express command of God to the king, in the law of Moses (Deuteronomy 17:16-17). We can't tell how far God may hide his eyes from beholding iniquity in Jacob, and seeing perverseness in Israel. We can't tell what are the reasons of God's actions any further than he interprets for himself. God sometimes gave some of the primitive

Christians, the extraordinary influence of his Spirit, when they were out of the way of their duty; and continued it, while they were abusing it; as is plainly implied in 1 Corinthians 14:31-33.

Indeed, if a person has done a thing for which he is reproached, and that reproach be an occasion of his feeling sweet exercises of grace in his soul, and that from time to time, I do not think that is a certain evidence that God approves of the thing he is blamed for. For undoubtedly a mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the exercise of grace, in a man that has grace. If a person, through mistake, thinks he has received some particular great mercy, that mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the sweet exercises of love to God, and true thankfulness and joy in God. As for instance, if one that is full of love to God should hear credible tidings, concerning a remarkable deliverance of a child, or other dear friend, or of some glorious thing done for the city of God, no wonder if, on such an occasion, the sweet actings of love to God, and delight in God should be excited, though indeed afterwards it should prove a false report that he heard. So if one that loves God, is much maligned and reproached for doing that which he thinks God required and approves, no wonder that it is sweet to such an one to think that God is his friend, though men are his enemies; no wonder at all, that this is an occasion of his, as it were, leaving the world, and sweetly betaking himself to God, as his sure friend, and finding sweet complacency in God; though he be indeed in a mistake, concerning that which he thought was agreeable to God's will. As I have before shown that the exercise of a truly good affection, may be the occasion of error, and may indirectly incline a person to do that which is wrong; so on the other hand, error, or a doing that which is wrong, may be an occasion of the exercise of a

truly good affection. The reason of it is this, that however all exercises of grace be from the Spirit of God, yet the Spirit of God dwells and acts in the hearts of the saints, in some measure after the manner of a vital, natural principle, a principle of new nature in them; whose exercises are excited by means, in some measure as other natural principles are. Though grace is not in the saints, as a mere natural principle, but as a sovereign agent, and so its exercises are not tied to means, by an immutable law of nature, as in mere natural principles; yet God has so constituted, that grace should dwell so in the hearts of the saints, that its exercises should have some degree of connection with means, after the manner of a principle of nature.

Another erroneous principle that there has been something of, and that has been an occasion of some mischief and confusion, is that external order in matters of religion, and use of the means of grace, is but little to be regarded: it is spoken lightly of, under the names of ceremonies and dead forms, etc. And is probably the more despised by some because their opposers insist so much upon it, and because they are so continually hearing from them the cry of disorder and confusion. It is objected against the importance of external order that God does not look at the outward form, he looks at the heart: but that is a weak argument against its importance, that true godliness does not consist in it; for it may be equally made use of against all the outward means of grace whatever. True godliness does not consist in ink and paper, but yet that would be a foolish objection against the importance of ink and paper in religion, when without it we could not have the word of God. If any external means at all are needful, any outward actions of a public nature, or wherein God's people are jointly concerned in

public society, without doubt external order is needful: the management of an external affair that is public, or wherein a multitude is concerned without order, is in every thing found impossible. Without order there can be no general direction of a multitude to any particular designed end, their purposes will cross one another, and they will not help but hinder one another. A multitude cannot act in union one with another without order; confusion separates and divides them, so that there can be no concert or agreement. If a multitude would help one another in any affair, they must unite themselves one to another in a regular subordination of members, in some measure as it is in the natural body; by this means they will be in some capacity to act with united strength: and thus Christ has appointed that it should be in the visible church, as (1 Corinthians 12:14 to the end; Romans 12:4-8). Zeal without order will do but little, or at least it will be effectual but a little while. Let a company that are very zealous against the enemy, go forth to war, without any manner of order, every one rushing forward as his zeal shall drive him, all in confusion, if they gain something at first onset, by surprising the enemy, yet how soon do they come to nothing, and fall an easy helpless prey to their adversaries? Order is one of the most necessary of all external means of the spiritual good of God's church; and therefore it is requisite even in heaven itself, where there is the least need of any external means of grace; order is maintained amongst the glorious angels there. And the necessity of it in order to the carrying on any design, wherein a multitude are concerned, is so great, that even the devils in hell are driven to something of it, that they may carry on the designs of their kingdom. And it is very observable, that those kinds of irrational creatures, for whom it is needful that they should act in

union and join a multitude together, to carry on any work for their preservation, they do by a wonderful instinct that God has put into them, observe and maintain a most regular and exact order among themselves; such as bees and some others. And order in the visible church is not only necessary to the carrying on the designs of Christ's glory and the church's prosperity, but it is absolutely necessary to its defense; without it, it is like a city without walls, and can be in no capacity to defend itself from any kind of mischief: and so however it be an external thing, yet is not to be despised on that account; for though it is not the food of souls, yet it is in some respect their defense. The people of Holland would be very foolish to despise the dikes that keep out the sea from overwhelming them, under the names of dead stones and vile earth, because the matter of which they are built is not good to eat.

It seems to be partly on the foundation of this notion of the worthlessness of external order, that some have seemed to act on that principle, that the power of judging and openly censuring others should not be reserved in the hands of particular persons, or consistories appointed thereto, but ought to be left at large, for any body that pleases to take it upon them, or that think themselves fit for it. But more of this afterwards.

On this foundation also, an orderly attending on the stated worship of God in families, has been made too light of; and it has been in some places too much of a common and customary thing to be absent from family worship, and to be abroad late in the night at religious meetings, or to attend religious conversation. Not but that this may be, on certain extraordinary occasions; I have seen the case to be such in many instances, that I have thought did afford sufficient warrant for persons to be absent from

family prayer, and to be from home till very late in the night: but we should take heed that this does not become a custom or common practice; if it should be so, we shall soon find the consequences to be very ill.

It seems to be on the same foundation, of the supposed unprofitableness of external order, that it has been thought by some, that there is no need that such and such religious services and performances should be limited to any certain office in the church; (of which more afterwards.) And also that those offices themselves, as particularly that of the gospel-ministry, need not be limited as it used to be, to persons of a liberal education; but some of late have been for having others that they have supposed to be persons of eminent experience, publicly licensed to preach, indeed and ordained to the work of the ministry; and some ministers have seemed to favor such a thing: but how little do they seem to look forward, and consider the unavoidable consequences of opening such a door? If once it should become a custom, or a thing generally approved and allowed of, to admit persons to the work of the ministry that have had no education for it, because of their remarkable experiences, and being persons of good understanding, how many lay-persons would soon appear as candidates for the work of the ministry? I doubt not but that I have been acquainted with scores that would have desired it. And how shall we know where to stop? If one is admitted because his experiences are remarkable, another will think his experiences also remarkable; and we perhaps, shall not be able to deny but that they are near as great: if one is admitted because besides experiences, he has good natural abilities, another by himself, and many of his neighbors, may be thought equal to him. It will be found of absolute necessity

that there should be some certain, visible limits fixed, to avoid bringing odium upon ourselves, and breeding uneasiness and strife amongst others; and I know of none better, and indeed no other that can well be fixed, than those that the prophet Zechariah fixes, namely, that those only should be appointed to be pastors or shepherds in God's church, that have been taught to keep cattle from their youth, or that have had an education for that purpose. Those ministers that have a disposition to break over these limits, if they should do so, and make a practice of it, would break down that fence, which they themselves after a while, after they have been wearied with the ill consequences, would be glad to have some body else build up for them. Not but that there may probably be some persons in the land, that have had no education at college, that are in themselves better qualified for the work of the ministry than some others that have taken their degrees, and are now ordained. But yet I believe the breaking over those bounds that have hitherto been set, in ordaining such persons, would in its consequences be a greater calamity, than the missing such persons in the work of the ministry. The opening a door for the admission of unlearned men to the work of the ministry, though they should be persons of extraordinary experience, would on some accounts be especially prejudicial at such a day as this; because such persons, for want of an extensive knowledge, are oftentimes forward to lead others into those things, which a people are in danger of at such a time, above all other times, namely, impulses, vain imaginations, superstition, indiscreet zeal, and such like extremes; instead of defending them from them, for which a people especially need a shepherd, at such an extraordinary season.

Another erroneous principle that it seems to me some have been, at least, in danger of, is, that ministers, because they speak as Christ's ambassadors, may assume the same style, and speak as with the same authority that the prophets of old did, indeed that Jesus Christ himself did in the 23rd of Matthew, Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, etc. and other places; and that not only when they are speaking to the people, but also to their brethren in the ministry. Which principle is absurd, because it makes no difference in the different degrees and orders of messengers that God has sent into the world, though God has made a very great difference: for though they all come in some respect in the name of God, and with something of his authority, yet certainly there is a vast difference in the degree of authority with which God has invested them. Jesus Christ was one that was sent into the world as God's messenger, and so was one of his apostles, and so also is an ordinary pastor of a church; but yet it does not follow, that because Jesus Christ and an ordinary minister are both messengers of God, that therefore an ordinary minister in his office, is vested with an equal degree of authority, that Christ was, in his. As there is a great difference in their authority, and as Christ came as God's messenger, in a vastly higher manner, so another style became him, more authoritative than is proper for us worms of the dust, though we also are messengers of inferior degree. It would be strange if God, when he has made so great a difference in the degree in which he has invested different messengers with his authority, should make no difference as to the outward appearance and show of authority, in style and behavior, which is proper and fit to be seen in them. Though God has put great honor upon ministers, and they may speak as his ambassadors, yet he never intended that they should

have the same outward appearance of authority and majesty, either in their behavior or speech, that his Son shall have, when he comes to judgment, at the last day; though both come, in different respects and degrees, in the name of the Lord: alas! can any thing ever make it enter into the hearts of worms of the dust, that it is fit and suitable that it should be so?

Thus I have considered the two first of those three causes of error in conduct that were mentioned; I come now to the

Third and last cause of the errors of those that have appeared to be the subjects or zealous promoters of this work, namely, a being ignorant or unobservant of some particular things, by which the devil has special advantage.

And here I would particularly take notice: 1. Of some things with respect to the inward experiences of Christians themselves. And 2. Something with regard to the external effects of experiences.

There are three things I would take notice of with regard to the experiences of Christians, by which the devil has many advantages against us.

1. The first thing is the mixture there oftentimes is in the experiences of true Christians; whereby when they have truly gracious experiences, and divine and spiritual discoveries and exercises, they have something else mixed with them, besides what is spiritual: there is a mixture of that which is natural, and that which is corrupt, with that which is divine. This is what Christians are liable to in the present exceeding imperfect state: the great imperfection of grace, and feebleness and infancy of the new nature, and the great remains of corruption, together with the circumstances we

are in in this world, where we are encompassed all round with what tends to pollute us, exposes to this. And indeed it is not to be supposed that Christians ever have any experiences in this world that are wholly pure, entirely spiritual, without any mixture of what is natural and carnal: the beam of light, as it comes from the fountain of light upon our hearts, is pure, but as it is reflected from there, it is mixed: the seed as sent from heaven and planted in the heart, is pure, but as it springs up out of the heart, is impure; indeed there is commonly a much greater mixture, than persons for the most part seem to have any imagination of; I have often thought that the experiences of true Christians are very frequently as it is with some sorts of fruits, that are enveloped in several coverings of thick shells or pods, that are thrown away by him that gathers the fruit, and but a very small part of the whole bulk is the pure kernel, that is good to eat.

The things, of all which there is frequently some mixture with gracious experiences, indeed with very great and high experiences, are these three: human, or natural affection and passion; impressions on the imagination; and a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. There is very often with that which is spiritual a great mixture of that affection or passion which arises from natural principles; so that nature has a very great hand in those vehement motions and flights of the passions that appear. Hence the same degrees of divine communications from heaven, shall have vastly different effects, in what outwardly appears, in persons of different natural tempers. The great mixture of that which is natural with that which is spiritual, is very manifest in the peculiar effects that divine influences have in some certain families, or persons of such a blood, in a distinguishing manner of the operating

of the passions and affections, and the manner of the outward expressions of them. I know some remarkable instances of this. The same is also evident by the different effects of divine communications on the same person at different times, and in different circumstances: the novelty of things, or the sudden transition from an opposite extreme, and many other things that might be mentioned, greatly contribute to the raising of the passions. And sometimes there is not only a mixture of that which is common and natural with gracious experience, but even that which is animal, that which is in a great measure from the body, and is properly the result of the animal frame. In what true Christians feel of affections towards God, all is not always purely holy and divine; every thing that is felt in the affections does not arise from spiritual principles, but common and natural principles have a very great hand; an improper self-love may have a great share in the effect: God is not loved for his own sake, or for the excellency and beauty of his own perfections as he ought to be; nor have these things in any wise, that proportion in the effect that they ought to have. So in that love that true Christians have one to another, very often there is a great mixture of what arises from common and natural principles, with grace; and self-love has a great hand: the children of God are not loved purely for Christ's sake, but there may be a great mixture of that natural love that many sects of heretics have boasted of, who have been greatly united one to another, because they were of their company, on their side, against the rest of the world; indeed, there may be a mixture of natural love to the opposite sex, with Christian and divine love. So there may be a great mixture in that sorrow for sin that the godly have; and also in their joys; natural principles may greatly contribute to what is felt, a great many ways, as might

easily be shown, would it not make my discourse too lengthy. There is nothing that belongs to Christian experience that is more liable to a corrupt mixture than zeal; though it be an excellent virtue, a heavenly flame, when it is pure: but as it is exercised in those who are so little sanctified, and so little humbled, as we are in the present state, it is very apt to be mixed with human passion, indeed with corrupt hateful affections, pride and uncharitable bitterness, and other things that are not from heaven but from hell.

Another thing that is often mixed with what is spiritual in the experiences of Christians, are, impressions on the imagination; whereby godly persons, together with a spiritual understanding of divine things, and conviction of their reality and certainty, and a strong and deep sense of their excellency or great importance upon their hearts, have strongly impressed on their minds external ideas or images of things. A degree of imagination in such a case, as I have observed elsewhere, is unavoidable, and necessarily arises from human nature, as constituted in the present state; and a degree of imagination is really useful, and often is of great benefit; but when it is in too great a degree it becomes an impure mixture that is prejudicial. This mixture very often arises from the constitution of the body. It commonly greatly contributes to the other kind of mixture mentioned before, namely, of natural affections and passions; it helps to raise them to a great height.

Another thing that is often mixed with the experiences of true Christians, which is the worst mixture of all, is a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. This is often mixed with the joys of Christians; the joy that they have is not purely the joy of faith, or a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, but is partly a rejoicing in themselves; there is oftentimes in their elevations a looking upon themselves,

and a viewing their own high attainments; they rejoice partly because they are taken with their own experiences and great discoveries, which makes them in their own apprehensions so to excel; and this heightens all their passions, and especially those effects that are more external.

There is a much greater mixture of these things in the experiences of some Christians than others; in some the mixture is so great, as very much to obscure and hide the beauty of grace in them, like a thick smoke that hinders all the shining of the fire.

These things we ought to be well aware of, so that we may not take all for gold that glitters, and that we may know what to encourage and what to discourage; otherwise Satan will have a vast advantage against us, for he works in the corrupt mixture. Sometimes, for want of persons distinguishing the ore from the pure metal, those experiences are most admired — by the persons themselves who are subjects of them, and by others — that are not the most excellent. The great external effects, the vehemence of the passions, and violent agitations of the animal spirits, are sometimes much owing to the corrupt mixture (as is very apparent in some instances), though it is not always so. I have observed a great difference among those that are under high affections, and seem disposed to be earnestly talking to those that are about them. Some insist much more, in their talk, on what they behold in God and Christ — the glory of the divine perfections, Christ's beauty and excellency, his wonderful condescension and grace — and on their own unworthiness, and the great and infinite obligations that they themselves and others are under to love and serve God. Others insist almost wholly on their own high privileges, their assurance of God's love and favor, and the weakness and wickedness

of opposers, and how much they are above their reach. The latter may have much of the presence of God, but their experiences do not appear to be so solid and unmixed as the former. And there is a great deal of difference in persons' earnestness in their talk and behavior. In some it seems to come indeed from the fullness of their hearts, and from the great sense they have of truth — a deep sense of the certainty and infinite greatness, excellency and importance of divine and eternal things — attended with all appearances of great humility. In others their earnestness seems to arise from a great mixture of human passion, and an undue and intemperate agitation of the spirits, which appears by their earnestness and vehemence not being proportioned to the nature of the subject they insist on, but they are violent in everything they say, as much when talking of things of smaller importance as when speaking of things of greater weight. I have seen this in an instance or two, in which this vehemence at length issued in distraction. And there have been some few instances of a more extraordinary nature still, even of persons finding themselves disposed earnestly to talk and cry out from an unaccountable kind of bodily pressure, without any extraordinary view of anything in their minds or sense of anything upon their hearts — wherein probably there was the immediate hand of the devil.

Another thing by which the devil has great advantage is the unheeded defects there sometimes are in the experiences of true Christians, and those high affections wherein there is much that is truly good.

What I now have respect to is something diverse from that defect or imperfection of degree which is in every holy disposition and exercise in this life, in the best of the saints. What I aim at is

experiences being especially defective in some particular thing that ought to be in them — which, though it is not an essential defect, or such a defect as is in the experiences of hypocrites (which renders them utterly vain, monstrous, and altogether abominable to God), yet is such a defect as maims and deforms the experience. The essence of truly Christian experiences is not wanting, but yet that is wanting which is very needful for the proper beauty of the image of Christ in such a person's experiences; things are very much out of due proportion. There is indeed much of some things, but at the same time there is so little of some other things that should bear a proportion, that the defect very much deforms the Christian and is truly odious in the sight of God.

What I observed before was something that deformed the Christian as it was too much — something mixed that does not belong to the Christian as such. What I speak of now is something that deforms the Christian the other way, namely, by there not being enough — something wanting that does belong to the Christian as such. The one deforms the Christian as a monstrous excrescence; the other maims the new creature, so that some member is in great measure wanting, or so small and withering as to be very much out of due proportion. This is another spiritual calamity that the saints are liable to through the great imperfection of grace in this life — like the chick in the egg in the beginning of its formation, in which, though there are indeed the rudiments of all the parts, yet some few parts are plain to be seen while others are hidden, so that without a microscope it appears very monstrous.

When this deficiency and disproportion is great — as sometimes it is in real saints — it is not only a great deformity in itself, but has many ill consequences; it gives the devil great advantage,

and leaves a door open for corruption, and exposes to very deformed and unlovely actions, and issues oftentimes in the great wounding of the soul.

For the better understanding of this matter, we may observe that God, in the revelation that he has made of himself to the world by Jesus Christ, has taken care to give a proportionable manifestation of two kinds of excellencies or perfections of his nature: those that especially tend to possess us with awe and reverence, and to search and humble us; and those that tend to win and draw and encourage us. By the one, he appears as an infinitely great, pure, holy and heart-searching judge; by the other, as a gentle and gracious father and a loving friend. By the one he is a pure, searching and burning flame; by the other a sweet, refreshing light. These two kinds of attributes are as it were admirably tempered together in the revelation of the gospel: there is a proportionable manifestation of justice and mercy, holiness and grace, majesty and gentleness, authority and condescension. God has thus ordered that his diverse excellencies, as he reveals himself in the face of Jesus Christ, should have a proportionable manifestation, herein providing for our necessities. He knew it to be of great consequence that our apprehensions of these diverse perfections of his nature should be duly proportioned one to another. A defect on the one hand — having much of a discovery of his love and grace without a proportionable discovery of his awful majesty and his holy and searching purity — would tend to spiritual pride, carnal confidence and presumption. And a defect on the other hand — having much of a discovery of his holy majesty without a proportionable discovery of his grace — tends to unbelief, a sinful fearfulness and spirit of bondage. And therefore herein chiefly consists that deficiency of

experiences that I am now speaking of. The revelation God has made of himself in his Word, and the provision made for our spiritual welfare in the gospel, is perfect; but yet the actual light and communications we have are not perfect, but many ways exceeding imperfect and maimed. And experience plainly shows that Christians may have high experiences in some respects, and yet their circumstances may be unhappy in this regard — that their experiences and discoveries are no more general. There is a great difference among Christians in this respect; some have much more general discoveries than others, who are upon many accounts the most amiable Christians. Christians may have experiences that are very high, and yet there may be very much of this deficiency and disproportion. Their high experiences are truly from the Spirit of God, but sin comes in by the defect (as indeed all sin is originally from a defective, privative cause); and in such a case high discoveries, at the very time they are enjoyed, may be, and sometimes are, the occasion of sin. Sin may come in at that back door, the gap that is left open; as spiritual pride often does. And many times the Spirit of God is quenched by this means, and God punishes the pride and presumption that rises by bringing such darkness and suffering such awful consequences and horrid temptations as are enough to make one's hair stand on end to hear them. Christians therefore should diligently observe their own hearts as to this matter, and should pray to God that he would give them experiences in which one thing may bear a proportion to another, that God may be honored and their souls edified; and ministers should have an eye to this in their private dealings with the souls of their people.

It is chiefly from such a defect of experiences that some things have arisen which have been pretty common among true Christians of late, and have been supposed by many to have risen from a good cause — particularly talking of divine and heavenly things and expressing divine joys with laughter or a light behavior. I believe in many instances such things have arisen from a good cause as their necessary occasion, in that high discoveries and gracious joyful affections have been the occasion of them. But the proper cause has been sin — even that odious defect in their experience whereby there has been wanting a sense of the awful and holy majesty of God as present with them, and their nothingness and vileness before him, proportionable to the sense they have had of God's grace and the love of Christ. And the same is true in many cases of persons' unsuitable boldness, their disposition to speak with authority, intemperate zeal, and many other things that sometimes appear in true Christians under great religious affections.

And sometimes the vehemence of the motion of the animal spirits, under great affections, is owing in considerable measure to experiences being thus partial. I have known it in several instances, that persons have been greatly affected with the dying love of Christ and the consideration of the happiness of the enjoyment of him in heaven, and other things of that nature; and their animal spirits at the same time have been in great emotion. But in the midst of it they have been given a deep sense of the awful holy majesty of God, and it has at once composed them and quieted animal nature, without diminishing their comfort, but only making it of a better and more solid nature. When they have had a sense

both of the majesty and grace of God, one thing has as it were balanced another, and caused a more happy sedateness and composure of body and mind.

From these things we may learn how to judge of experiences and to estimate their goodness. Those are not always the best experiences that are attended with the most violent affections and most vehement motions of the animal spirits, or that have the greatest effects on the body; nor are they always the best that most dispose persons to abound in talk to others, and to speak in the most vehement manner (though these things often arise from the greatness of spiritual experiences). But those are the most excellent experiences that are qualified as follows: first, that have the least mixture, or are the most purely spiritual; second, that are the least deficient and partial, in which the diverse things that appertain to Christian experience are proportionable one to another; and third, that are raised to the highest degree — it is no matter how high they are raised if they are qualified as before mentioned; the higher the better. Experiences thus qualified will be attended with the most amiable behavior, and will bring forth the most solid and sweet fruits, and will be the most durable, and will have the greatest effect on the abiding temper of the soul.

If God is pleased to carry on this work, and it should prove to be the dawning of a general revival of the Christian church, it may be expected that the time will come before long when the experiences of Christians shall be much more generally thus qualified. We must expect green fruits before we have ripe ones. It is probable that hereafter the discoveries which the saints shall have of divine things will be in a much higher degree than yet have been, but yet shall be so ordered of an infinitely wise and all-sufficient God

that they shall not have so great an effect, in proportion, on the body, and will be less oppressive to nature. And the outward manifestations will rather be like those that were in Stephen when he was full of the Holy Spirit, when all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Their inward fullness of the Spirit of God, in his divine, amiable and sweet influences, shall as it were shine forth in a heavenly aspect and manner of speech and behavior.

There is another thing concerning experiences of Christians of which it is of yet greater importance that we should be aware than either of the preceding, and that is the degenerating of experiences. What I mean is something diverse from the mere decay of experiences, or their gradually vanishing by persons losing their sense of things. It is persons' experiences growing by degrees worse and worse in their kind, more and more partial and deficient, in which things are more out of due proportion; and also having more and more of a corrupt mixture, the spiritual part decreasing, and the other useless and hurtful parts greatly increasing. There is such a thing, and it is very frequent, as experience abundantly evidences. I have seen it in very many instances, and great are the mischiefs that have risen through want of being more aware of it.

There is commonly, as I observed before, in high experiences — besides that which is spiritual — a mixture of three things: natural or common affections, workings of the imagination, and a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. Now it often comes to pass that, through persons not distinguishing the wheat from the chaff, and for want of watchfulness and humble jealousy of themselves, and through laying great weight on the natural and imagi-

nary part and yielding to and indulging it, that part grows and increases while the spiritual part decreases. The devil sets in and works in the corrupt part and cherishes it to his utmost, until at length the experiences of some persons who began well come to little else but violent motions of carnal affections, with great heats of the imagination, and a great degree of enthusiasm and swelling of spiritual pride. This is very much like some fruits which bud, blossom and kernel well, but afterwards are blasted with an excess of moisture, so that though the bulk is monstrously great, there is little else in it but what is useless and unwholesome. It appears to me very probable that many of the heresies that have arisen and sects that have appeared in the Christian world in one age and another, with wild enthusiastical notions and practices, began at first by this means — that it was such a degenerating of experiences that first gave rise to them, or at least led the way to them.

There is nothing in the world that so much exposes to this degenerating of experiences as unheeded spiritual pride and self-confidence, and persons being conceited of their own stock without a humble, daily and continual dependance on God. And this very thing seems to be typified of old by the corrupting of the manna. Some of the children of Israel, because they had gathered a store of manna, trusted in it, there being, as they supposed, sufficient in the store they had gathered and laid up, without humbly looking to heaven and stooping to the earth for daily supplies; and the consequence was that their manna bred worms and stank (Exodus 16:20). Pride above all things promotes this degeneracy of experiences, because it grieves and quenches the Spirit of the

Lamb of God, and so kills the spiritual part; and it cherishes the natural part, inflames the carnal affections, and heats the imagination.

The unhappy person who is the subject of such degeneracy of experiences, for the most part, is not sensible of his own calamity; but because he finds himself still violently moved, and has greater heats of zeal and more vehement motions of his animal spirits, he thinks himself fuller of the Spirit of God than ever. But indeed it is with him as the apostle says of the Galatians (Galatians 3:3): having begun in the Spirit, they are made perfect by the flesh.

By the mixture there is of common affection with love to God, the love of true Christians is liable to degenerate, and to be more and more built on the foundation of a supposition of being his high and peculiar favorites, and less and less on an apprehension of the excellency of God's nature as he is in himself. So the joy of Christians, by reason of the mixture there is with spiritual joy, is liable to degenerate, and to come at last to be little else but joy in self — joy in a person's own supposed eminency and distinction from others in the favor of God. So zeal, that at first might be in great part spiritual, yet through the mixture there is, in a long continuance of opposition and controversy, may degenerate more and more into human and proud passion, and may come to bitterness and even a degree of hatred. And so love to the brethren may by degrees come to little else but fondness and zeal for a party; yes, through a mixture of natural love to the opposite sex, may degenerate more and more until it issues in that which is criminal and gross. And I leave it with those who are better acquainted with ecclesiastical history to inquire whether such a degeneracy of affections might not be the first thing that led the way and gave occa-

sion to the rise of the abominable notions of some sects that have arisen concerning the community of women. However that may be, certainly the mutual embraces and kisses of persons of different sexes, under the notion of Christian love and holy kisses, are utterly to be disallowed and abominated, as having the most direct tendency quickly to turn Christian love into unclean and brutish lust, which will not be the better but ten times the worse for being christened by the name of Christian love. I should also think it advisable that meetings of young people of both sexes in the evening, by themselves, without a minister or any elder people among them, for religious exercises, should be avoided. For though for the present, while their minds are greatly solemnized with lively impressions and a deep sense of divine things, there may appear no ill consequence, yet we must look to the further end of things and guard against future dangers and advantages that Satan might gain against us. As a lively, solemn sense of divine things on the minds of young persons may gradually decay, so there will be danger that an ill improvement of these meetings may gradually prevail — if not in any unsuitable behavior while together in the meeting, yet when they break up to go home, they may naturally consort together in couples for other than religious purposes; and it may at last come to it that young persons may go to such meetings chiefly for the sake of such an opportunity for company-keeping.

The defect there sometimes is in the experiences of Christians exposes them to degenerate, as well as the mixture that they have. Deficient, maimed experiences do sometimes become more and more so: the mind being wholly intent upon those things that are in view, and those most wanting being neglected, there is less and

less of them, and so the gap for corruption to come in grows wider and wider. And commonly both these causes of the degenerating of experiences operate together.

We had need to be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy, as the apostle was over the Christian Corinthians, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. God indeed will never suffer his true saints totally and finally to fall away, but yet may punish their pride and self-confidence by suffering them to be long led into a dreadful wilderness by the subtle serpent, to the great wounding of their own souls and the interest of religion.

And before I dismiss this head of the degenerating of experiences, I would mention one thing more that tends to it: persons aiming in their experience to go beyond the rule of God's Word — that is, aiming at that which is in some respect beyond the rule. Thus some persons have endeavored utterly to root out and abolish all natural affection, or any special affection or respect to their near relations, under a notion that no other love ought to be allowed but spiritual love, and that all other love is to be abolished as carnal, and that it becomes Christians to love none on account of anything else but the image of God, and that therefore love should go out to one and another only in that proportion in which the image of God is seen in them. They might as well argue that a man ought utterly to disallow of and endeavor to abolish all love or appetite to their daily food, under a notion that it is a carnal appetite and that no other appetite should be tolerated but spiritual appetites. Why should the saints strive after that, as a high attain-

ment in holiness, which the apostle in Romans 1:31 mentions as one instance wherein the heathen had got to the most horrid pass in wickedness — namely, being without natural affection?

Some have doubted whether they might pray for the conversion and salvation of the souls of their children, any more than for the souls of others; because the salvation of the souls of others would be as much to God's glory as the salvation of their children; and they have supposed that to pray most for their own would show a selfish disposition. So they have been afraid to tolerate a compassionate grief and concern for their nearest friends, for fear it would be an argument of want of resignation to God.

And it is true, there is great danger of persons setting their hearts too much upon their earthly friends. Our love to earthly friends ought to be under the government of the love of God, and should be attended with a spirit of submission and resignation to his will, and everything should be subordinated to his glory. But that is no argument that these affections should be entirely abolished — affections which the Creator of the world has put within mankind for the good of mankind, and because he saw they would be needful for them, as they must be united in society in the present state, and are of great use when kept in their proper place. To endeavor totally to root them out would be to reproach and oppose the wisdom of the Creator. Nor is the being of these natural inclinations, if well regulated, inconsistent with any part of our duty to God, or any argument of a sinful selfishness, any more than the natural abhorrence of pain and natural inclination to ease that was in the man Christ Jesus himself.

It is the duty of parents to be more concerned, and to pray more, for the salvation of their children than for the children of their neighbors; as much as it is the duty of a minister to be more concerned for the salvation of the souls of his flock and to pray more for them than for those of other congregations, because they are committed to his care. So our near friends are more committed to our care than others, and our near neighbors than those that live at a great distance; and the people of our land and nation are more in some sense committed to our care than the people of China, and we ought to pray more for them and to be more concerned that the kingdom of Christ should flourish among them than in another country where it would be as much and no more for the glory of God. Compassion ought to be especially exercised towards friends (Job 6:14). Christ did not frown upon a special affection and compassion for near friends, but countenanced and encouraged it from time to time in those that, in the exercise of such an affection and compassion, applied to him for relief for their friends; as in the instance of the woman of Canaan, Jairus, Mary and Martha, the centurion, the widow of Nain, and many others. The apostle Paul, though a man as much resigned and devoted to God and under the power of his love as perhaps any mere man that ever lived, yet had a peculiar concern for his countrymen the Jews, the rather on that account that they were his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh. He had a very high degree of compassionate grief for them, insomuch that he tells us he had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for them, and could wish himself accursed from Christ for them.

There are many things that are proper for the saints in heaven that are not suitable to the state God has set us in in this world; and for Christians in these and other instances to affect to go beyond the present state of mankind and what God has appointed as fit for it, is an instance of that which the wise man calls being righteous overmuch, and has a tendency to open a door for Satan and to cause religious affections to degenerate into something very unbecoming of Christians.

Thus I have, as I proposed, taken notice of some things with regard to the inward experiences of Christians by which Satan has an advantage.

In the second place, I proceed to take notice of something with regard to the external effects of experiences, which also gives Satan an advantage. What I have respect to is the secret and unaccountable influence that custom has upon persons with respect to the external effects and manifestations of the inward affections of the mind. By custom I mean both a person's being accustomed to a thing in himself — in his own common, allowed and indulged practice — and also the countenance and approbation of others among whom he dwells, by their general voice and practice. It is well known, and appears sufficiently by what I have said already in this treatise and elsewhere, that I am far from ascribing all the late uncommon effects and outward manifestations of inward experiences to custom and fashion, as some do; I know it to be otherwise, if it is possible for me to know anything of this nature by the most critical observation under all manner of opportunities for observing. But yet, this also is exceedingly evident by experience: custom has a strange influence in these things. I know it by the different manners and degrees of external effects and manifestations of great af-

fections and high discoveries in different towns, according to what persons are gradually led into and insensibly habituated to by example and custom. And also in the same place at different times, according to the conduct they have: if some person is among them to conduct them who much countenances and encourages such kinds of outward manifestations of great affections, they naturally and insensibly prevail and grow by degrees unavoidable; but when afterward they come under another kind of conduct, the manner of external appearances will strangely alter. And yet it seems to be without any proper design or contrivance of those in whom there is this alteration; it is not properly affected by them, but the influence of example and custom is secret and insensible to the persons themselves. These things have a vast influence in the manner of persons manifesting their joys, whether with smiles and an air of lightness, or with more solemnity and reverence; and so they have a great influence as to the disposition persons have under high affections to abound in talk, and also as to the manner of their speaking, the loudness and vehemence of their speech. Though it would be exceedingly unjust, and against all the evidence of fact and experience and the reason of things, to lay all dispositions persons have to be much in speaking to others and to speak in a very earnest manner to custom. It is manifest that example and custom has some way or other a secret and unsearchable influence on those actions that are involuntary, by the difference that there is in different places and in the same places at different times, according to the diverse examples and conduct they have.

Therefore, though it would be very unreasonable and prejudicial to the interest of religion to frown upon all these extraordinary external effects and manifestations of great religious affections (for

a measure of them is natural, necessary and beautiful, and the effect is in no wise disproportioned to the spiritual cause, and is of great benefit to promote religion), yet I think they greatly err who think that these things should be wholly unlimited and that all should be encouraged to go in these things to the utmost length that they feel themselves inclined to. The consequence of this will be very bad. There ought to be a gentle restraint held upon these things, and there should be a prudent care taken of persons in such extraordinary circumstances, and they should be moderately advised at proper seasons not to make more ado than there is need of, but rather to hold a restraint upon their inclinations. Otherwise extraordinary outward effects will grow upon them; they will be more and more natural and unavoidable, and the extraordinary outward show will increase without any increase of the internal cause. Persons will find themselves under a kind of necessity of making a great ado with less and less affection of soul, until at length almost any slight emotion will set them going, and they will be more and more violent and boisterous and will grow louder and louder, until their actions and behavior become indeed very absurd. These things experience proves.

Thus I have taken notice of the more general causes from which the errors that have attended this great revival of religion have risen, and under each head have observed some particular errors that have flowed from these fountains.

I now proceed in the second place to take notice of some particular errors that have risen from several of these causes: in some perhaps they have been chiefly owing to one cause, and in others to another, and in others to the influence of several or all conjunctly.

The first thing I would take notice of is censuring others that are professing Christians, in good standing in the visible church, as unconverted. I need not repeat what I have elsewhere said to show this to be against the plain and frequent and strict prohibitions of the Word of God. It is the worst disease that has attended this work, most contrary to the spirit and rules of Christianity, and of worst consequences. There is a most unhappy tincture that the minds of many, both ministers and people, have received in this way. The manner of many has been, when they first enter into conversation with any person that seems to have any show or make any pretense to religion, to discern him — or fix a judgment of him from his manner of talking of things of religion — whether he be converted or experimentally acquainted with vital piety or not, and then to treat him accordingly, and freely to express their thoughts of him to others. They do this especially with those they have a good opinion of as true Christians, accepted as brethren and companions in Christ; or if they do not declare their minds expressly, yet by their manner of speaking of them — at least to their friends — they will show plainly what their thoughts are. So when they have heard any minister pray or preach, their first work has been to observe him on a design of discerning whether he be a converted man or not, whether he prays like one that feels the saving power of God's Spirit in his heart, and whether he preaches like one that knows what he says. It has been so much the way in some places that many new converts do not know but that it is their duty to do so; they know no other way. And when once persons yield to such a notion and give in to such a humor, they will quickly grow very discerning in their own apprehension — they think they can easily tell a hypocrite. And when once they have passed their cen-

sure, every thing seems to confirm it; they see more and more in the person they have censured that seems to them to show plainly that he is an unconverted man. And then, if the person censured be a minister, every thing in his public performances seems dead and sapless, and to do them no good at all, but on the contrary to be of deadening influence and poisonous to the soul; yes, it seems worse and worse to them, his preaching grows more and more intolerable — which is owing to a secret, strong prejudice that steals in more and more upon the mind, as experience plainly and certainly shows. When the Spirit of God was wonderfully poured out in this place, more than seven years ago, and near thirty souls in a week, taking one with another, for five or six weeks together, were to appearance brought home to Christ, and all the town seemed to be alive and full of God, there was no such notion or humor prevailing here. When ministers preached here — as very many did at that time, young and old — our people did not go about to discern whether they were men of experience or not. They did not know that they must; Mr. Stoddard never brought them up in that way; it did not seem natural to them to go about any such thing, nor did any such thing enter into their hearts. But when any minister preached, the business of every one was to listen and attend to what he said, and apply it to his own heart, and make the utmost improvement of it. And it is remarkable that never did there appear such a disposition in the people to relish, approve of and admire ministers' preaching as at that time. Such expressions as these were frequent in the mouths of one and another, on occasion of the preaching of strangers here: that they rejoiced that there were so many such eminent ministers in the country, and they wondered they had never heard the fame of them before; they were

thankful that other towns had so good means; and the like. And scarcely ever did any minister preach here but his preaching did some remarkable service, as I had good opportunity to know, because at that time I had particular acquaintance with most of the persons in the town in their soul concerns. That it has been so much otherwise of late in many places in the land is another instance of the secret and powerful influence of custom and example.

There has been an unhappy disposition in some ministers toward their brethren in the ministry in this respect, which has encouraged and greatly promoted such a spirit among some of their people. A wrong improvement has been made of Christ's scourging the buyers and sellers out of the temple; it has been expected by some that Christ was now about thus to purge his house of unconverted ministers, and this has made it more natural to them to think that they should do Christ service and act as co-workers with him, to put their hand and endeavor by all means to cashier those ministers that they thought to be unconverted. Indeed it appears to me probable that the time is coming when awful judgments will be executed on unfaithful ministers, and that no sort of men in the world will be so much exposed to divine judgments; but then we should leave that work to Christ, who is the Searcher of hearts and to whom vengeance belongs, and not without warrant take the scourge out of his hand into our own. There has been too much of a disposition in some, as it were, to give ministers over as reprobates who have been looked upon as wolves in sheep's clothing, which has tended to promote and encourage a spirit of bitterness toward them and to make it natural to treat them too much as if they knew God hated them. If God's children knew that others were reprobates, it would not be required of them to love them; we

may hate those that we know God hates — as it is lawful to hate the devil, and as the saints at the day of judgment will hate the wicked. Some have been too apt to look for fire from heaven upon particular ministers, and this has naturally excited that disposition to call for it which Christ rebuked in his disciples at Samaria. For my part, though I believe no sort of men on earth are so exposed to spiritual judgments as wicked ministers, yet I feel no disposition to treat any minister as if I supposed that he was finally rejected of God; for I cannot but hope that there is coming a day of such great grace — a time so appointed for the magnifying of the riches and sovereignty of divine mercy, beyond what ever was — that a great number of unconverted ministers will obtain mercy. There was no sort of persons in Christ's time that were so guilty and so hardened, and toward whom Christ manifested such great indignation, as the priests and scribes, and there were no such persecutors of Christ and his disciples as they; and yet in that great outpouring of the Spirit that began on the day of Pentecost, though it began with the common people, yet in the progress of the work after a while, a great company of priests in Jerusalem were obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7). And Saul, one of the most violent of all the persecuting Pharisees, became afterward the greatest promoter of the work of God that ever was. I hope we shall yet see in many instances a fulfillment of that in Isaiah 29:24: 'They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.'

Nothing has been gained by this practice. The end that some have aimed at in it has not been obtained, nor is ever likely to be. Possibly some have openly censured ministers and encouraged their people's uneasiness under them, in hopes that it would soon

come to it that the uneasiness would be so general and so great that unconverted ministers in general would be cast off, and that then things would go on happily; but there is no likelihood of it. The devil indeed has obtained his end: this practice has bred a great deal of unhappiness among ministers and people, has spoiled Christians' enjoyment of Sabbaths and made them their most uneasy, uncomfortable and unprofitable days, and has stirred up great contention and set all in a flame. And in one place and another where there was a glorious work of God's Spirit begun, it has in a great measure knocked all in the head, and their ministers hold their places. Some have aimed at a better end in censuring ministers; they have supposed it to be a likely means to awaken them. Whereas indeed, there is no one thing that has had so great a tendency to prevent the awakening of disaffected ministers in general; and no one thing has actually had such influence to lock up the minds of ministers against any good effect of this great work of God in the land upon their minds. I have known instances of some that seemed to be much moved by the first appearance of this work, but since have seemed to be greatly deadened by what has appeared of this nature. And if there be one or two instances of ministers that have been awakened by it, there are ten to one on whom it has had a contrary influence. The worst enemies of this work have been inwardly eased by this practice; they have made a shield of it to defend their consciences, and have been glad that it has been carried to so great a length, at the same time that they have looked upon it and improved it as a door opened for them to be more bold in opposing the work in general.

There is no such dreadful danger of natural men's being undone by our forbearing thus to censure them and carrying it toward them as visible Christians. It will be no bloody, hell-peopling charity, as some seem to suppose, when it is known that we do not treat them as Christians because we have taken it upon us to pass a judgment on their state on any trial or exercise of our skill in examining and discerning them, but only as allowing them to be worthy of a public charity on their profession and good external behavior. Any more than Judas was in danger of being deceived by Christ's treating him a long time as a disciple and sending him forth as an apostle, because he did not then take it upon him to act as the judge and searcher of hearts, but only as the head of the visible church. Indeed such a charity as this may be abused by some, as every thing is and will be that is in its own nature proper and of never so good tendency. I say nothing against dealing thoroughly with conscience by the most convincing and searching dispensation of the Word of God. I do not desire that that sword should be sheathed or gently handled by ministers; but let it be used as a two-edged sword, to pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; let conscience be dealt with without any compliments; let ministers handle it in flaming fire, without having any more mercy on it than the furnace has on those metals that are tried in it. But let us let men's persons alone: let the Word of God judge them, but do not let us take it upon us until we have warrant for it.

Some have been ready to censure ministers because they seem, in comparison of some other ministers, to be very cold and lifeless in their ministerial performances. But then it should be considered that for all we know, God may hereafter raise up ministers of so

much more excellent and heavenly qualifications, and so much more spiritual and divine in their performances, that there may appear as great a difference between them and those that now seem the most lively, as there is now between them and others that are called dead and sapless. And those that are now called lively ministers may appear to their hearers, when they compare them with others that shall excel them, as wretchedly mean, and their performances poor, dead, dry things; and many may be ready to be prejudiced against them as accounting them good for nothing. What a poor figure may we suppose the most lively of us — those that are most admired by the people — make in the eyes of one of the saints of heaven, any otherwise than as our deadness, deformity and rottenness is hidden by the veil of Christ's righteousness?

Another thing that has been supposed to be sufficient warrant for openly censuring ministers as unconverted is their opposing this work of God that has lately been carried on in the land. And there can be no doubt with me but that opposition against this work may be such as to render either ministers or people truly scandalous, and expose them to public ecclesiastical censure; and that ministers hereby may utterly defeat the design of their ministry, as I observed before, and so give their people just cause of uneasiness. I should not think that any person had power to oblige me constantly to attend the ministry of one who did from time to time plainly pray and preach against this work, or speak reproachfully of it frequently in his public performances, after all Christian methods had been used for a remedy, and to no purpose.

But as to determining how far opposing this work is consistent with a state of grace, or how far and for how long time some persons of good experience in their own souls — through prejudices

they have received from the errors that have been mixed with this work, or through some peculiar disadvantages they are under to behold things in a right view of them by reason of the persons they converse with, or their own cold and dead frames — is, as experience shows, a very difficult thing. I have seen that which abundantly convinces me that the business is too high for me; I am glad that God has not committed such a difficult affair to me; I can joyfully leave it wholly in his hands, who is infinitely fit for it, without meddling at all with it myself. We may represent it as exceedingly dangerous to oppose this work, for this we have good warrant in the Word of God; but I know of no necessity we are under to determine whether it be possible for those that are guilty of it to be in a state of grace or not.

God seems so strictly to have forbidden this practice of our judging our brethren in the visible church, not only because he knew that we were too much babes — infinitely too weak, fallible and blind — to be well capacitated for it, but also because he knew that it was not a work suited to our proud hearts; that it would be setting us vastly too high and making us too much of lords over our fellow creatures. Judging our brethren and passing a condemnatory sentence upon them seems to carry in it an act of authority, especially in so great a case, to sentence them with respect to that state of their hearts on which depends their liability to eternal damnation. This is evident by such interrogations as these, to hear which from God's mouth is enough to make us shrink into nothing with shame and confusion and sense of our own blindness and worthlessness: 'Who are you that judge another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls' (Romans 14:4); and 'There is one Lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy; who are you that judge

another?' (James 4:12). Our wise and merciful Shepherd has graciously taken care not to lay in our way such a temptation to pride; he has cut up all such poison out of our pasture; and therefore we should not desire to have it restored. Blessed be his name, that he has not laid such a temptation in the way of my pride! I know that in order to be fit for this business, I must not only be vastly more knowing, but more humble than I am.

Though I believe some of God's own children have of late been very guilty in this matter, yet by what is said of it in the Scripture, it appears to me very likely that before these things which God has lately begun have an end, God will awfully rebuke that practice; may it in sovereign and infinite mercy be prevented by the deep and open humiliation of those that have openly practiced it.

As this practice ought to be avoided, so should all such open, visible marks of distinction and separation that imply it — as particularly, distinguishing such as we have judged to be in a converted state with the appellations of 'brother' or 'sister,' any further than there is a visible ecclesiastical distinction. In those places where it is the manner to receive only such persons to the communion of the visible church as recommend themselves by giving a satisfying account of their inward experiences, there Christians may openly distinguish such persons in their speech and ordinary behavior with a visible separation, without being inconsistent with themselves. And I do not now pretend to meddle with that controversy, whether such an account of experience be requisite to church fellowship. But certainly, to admit persons to communion with us as brethren in the visible church, and then visibly to reject them and to make an open distinction between them and others by different names or appellations, is to be inconsistent with our-

selves; it is to make a visible church within a visible church, and visibly to divide between sheep and goats, setting one on the right hand and the other on the left.

This bitter root of censoriousness must be totally rooted out, as we would prepare the way of the Lord. It has nourished and upheld many other things contrary to the humility, meekness and love of the gospel. The minds of many have received an unhappy turn in some respects with their religion: there is a certain point or sharpness, a disposition to a kind of warmth that does not savor of that meek, lamb-like, sweet disposition that becomes Christians. Many have now been so long habituated to it that they do not know how to get out of it; but we must get out of it: the point and sharpness must be blunted, and we must learn another way of manifesting our zeal for God.

There is a way of reflecting on others and censuring them in open prayer that some have, which though it has a fair show of love, yet is indeed the boldest way of reproaching others imaginable, because there is implied in it an appeal to the most high God concerning the truth of their censures and reflections.

And here I would also observe by the way, that some have a way of joining a sort of imprecations with their petitions for others — though but conditional ones — that appear to me wholly needless and improper: they pray that others may either be converted or removed. I never heard nor read of any such thing practiced in the church of God until now, unless it be with respect to some of the most visibly and notoriously abandoned enemies of the church of God. This is a sort of cursing men in our prayers, adding a curse with our blessing; whereas the rule is, bless and curse not. To pray that God would kill another is to curse him with the like curse with

which Elisha cursed the children that came out of Bethel. And the case must be very great and extraordinary indeed to warrant it, unless we were prophets and did not speak our own words, but words indited by the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is pleaded that if God has no design of converting others, it is best for them — as well as best for others — that they should be immediately taken away and sent to hell before they have contracted more guilt. To which I would say: so it was best that those children that met Elisha, seeing God had no design of converting them, should die immediately as they did; but yet Elisha's imprecating that sudden death upon them was cursing them, and therefore would not have been lawful for one that did not speak in the name of the Lord as a prophet.

And then if we give way to such things as these, where shall we stop? A child that suspects he has an unconverted father and mother may pray openly that his father and mother may either be converted or taken away and sent to hell now, quickly, before their guilt is greater. For unconverted parents are as likely to poison the souls of their family in their manner of training them up as unconverted ministers are to poison their people. And so it might come to it that it might be a common thing all over the country for children to pray after this manner concerning their parents, and brothers and sisters concerning one another, and husbands concerning their wives, and wives concerning husbands; and so for persons to pray concerning all their unconverted friends and neighbors. And not only so, but we may also pray concerning all those saints that are not lively Christians, that they may either be enlivened or taken away — if that be true which is often said by

some at this day, that these cold dead saints do more hurt than natural men, and lead more souls to hell, and that it would be well for mankind if they were all dead.

How needless are such petitions or imprecations as these? What benefit is there of them? Why is it not sufficient for us to pray that God would provide for his church and the good of souls, and take care of his own flock, and give it needful means and advantages for its spiritual prosperity? Does God need to be directed by us in what way he shall do it? What need we ask of God to do it by killing such and such persons if he does not convert them? — unless we delight in the thoughts of God's answering us in such terrible ways and with such awful manifestations of his wrath to our fellow creatures.

And why do not ministers direct sinners to pray for themselves, that God would either convert them or kill them and send them to hell now, before their guilt is greater? In this way we should lead persons in the next place to self-murder, for many probably would soon begin to think that that which they may pray for, they may seek and use the means of.

Some with whom I have discoursed about this way of praying have said that the Spirit of God, as it were, forces them to utter themselves thus — forces out such words from their mouths when otherwise they should not dare to utter them. But such a kind of impulse does not look like the influence of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God sometimes strongly inclines men to utter words, but not by putting expressions into the mouth and urging them to utter them; but by filling the heart with a sense of divine things and holy affections, and those affections and that sense incline the

mouth to speak. That other way of men's being urged to use certain expressions by an unaccountable force is very probably from the influence of the spirit of the devil.

2. Another thing I would take notice of, in the management of which there has been much error and misconduct, is lay-exhorting; about which there has been abundance of disputing, jangling, and contention.

In the midst of all the disputes that have been, I suppose that all are agreed as to these two things, namely: 1. That all exhorting one another of laymen is not unlawful or improper, but on the contrary, that some exhorting is a Christian duty. And 2. I suppose also, all will allow that there is something that is proper only for ministers; that there is some kind or way of exhorting and teaching or other, that belongs only to the office of teachers. All will allow, that God has appointed such an office as that of teachers in the Christian church, and therefore doubtless will allow that something or other is proper and peculiar to that office, or some business of teaching that belongs to it, that does not belong as much to others as to them.

If there be any way of teaching that is peculiar to that office, then for others to take that upon them, is to invade the office of a minister; which doubtless is very sinful, and is often so represented in Scripture. But the great difficulty is to settle the bounds, and to tell exactly, how far laymen may go, and when they exceed their limits; which is a matter of so much difficulty, that I do not wonder if many in their zeal have transgressed. The two ways of teaching and exhorting, the one of which ought ordinarily to be left to ministers, and the other of which may and ought to be practiced by the people, may be expressed by those two names of preaching,

and exhorting in a way of Christian conversation. But then a great deal of difficulty and controversy arises to determine what is preaching, and what is Christian conversation. However I will humbly offer my thoughts, concerning this subject of lay-exhorting, as follows.

1. The common people in exhorting one another ought not to clothe themselves with the like authority with that which is proper for ministers. There is a certain authority that ministers have, and should exercise in teaching, as well as governing the flock. Teaching is spoken of in Scripture as an act of authority (1 Timothy 2:12). In order to a man's preaching, special authority must be committed to him (Romans 10:15): How shall they preach, except they be sent? Ministers in this work of teaching and exhorting are clothed with authority, as Christ's messengers (Malachi 2:7), and as representing him, and so speaking in his name, and in his stead (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). And it seems to be the most honorable thing that belongs to the office of a minister of the gospel, that to him is committed the word of reconciliation, and that he has power to preach the gospel, as Christ's messenger, and speaking in his name. The apostle seems to speak of it as such (1 Corinthians 1:16-17). Ministers therefore in the exercise of this power, may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, or may teach others in an authoritative manner (Titus 2:15): These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority: Let no man despise you. But the common people in exhorting one another, ought not thus to exhort in an authoritative manner. There is a great deal of difference between teaching as a father amongst a company of children, and counselling in a brotherly way, as the children may kindly counsel and admonish one another. Those that are mere brethren,

ought not to assume authority in exhorting, though one may be better, and have more experience than another. Laymen ought not to exhort as though they were the ambassadors or messengers of Christ, as ministers do; nor should they exhort and warn and charge in his name, according to the ordinary import of such an expression, when applied to teaching. Indeed in one sense, a Christian ought to do every thing he does in religion in the name of Christ, that is, he ought to act in a dependence on him as his head and mediator, and do all for his glory: but the expression as it is usually understood, when applied to teaching or exhorting, is speaking in Christ's stead, and as having a message from him.

Persons may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, either by the authoritative words they make use of, or in the manner, and authoritative air of their speaking: though some may think that this latter is a matter of indifference, or at least of small importance, yet there is indeed a great deal in it: a person may go much out of his place, and be guilty of a great degree of assuming, in the manner of his speaking those words, which as they might be spoken, might be proper for him: the same words spoken in a different manner, may express what is very diverse. Doubtless there may be as much hurt in the manner of a person's speaking, as there may in his looks; but the wise man tells us, that an high look is an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 21:4). Again, a man may clothe himself with authority, in the circumstances under which he speaks; as for instance, if he sets himself up as a public teacher. Here I would have it observed, that I do not suppose that a person is guilty of this, merely because he speaks in the hearing of many: persons may speak, and speak only in a way of conversation, and yet speak in the hearing of a great number, as they often do in their

common conversation about temporal things, at feasts and entertainments, where women as well as others, do converse freely together about worldly things, in the hearing of a considerable number; and it may happen to be in the hearing of a great number, and yet without offense: and if their conversation on such occasions should turn on spiritual things, and they should speak as freely and openly, I do not see why it would not be as harmless. Nor do I think, that if besides a great number's being present, persons speak with a very earnest and loud voice, this is for them to set up themselves as public teachers, if they do it from no contrivance or premeditated design, or as purposely directing themselves to a congregation or multitude, and not speaking to any that are composed to the solemnity of any public service; but speaking in the time of conversation, or a time when all do freely converse one with another, they express what they then feel, directing themselves to none but those that are near them, and fall in their way, speaking in that earnest and pathetic manner, to which the subject they are speaking of, and the affecting sense of their souls naturally leads them, and as it were constrains them: I say, that for persons to do thus, though many happen to hear them, yet it does not appear to me to be a setting themselves up as public teachers. Indeed, if this be added to these other circumstances, that all this happens to be in a meeting-house; I do not think that merely its being in such a place, much alters the case, provided the solemnity of public service and divine ordinances be over, and the solemn assembly broke up, and some stay in the house for mutual religious conversation; provided also that they speak in no authoritative way, but in an humble manner, becoming their degree and station, though they speak very earnestly and pathetically.

Indeed modesty might in ordinary cases, restrain some persons, as women, and those that are young, from so much as speaking, when a great number are present; at least, when some of those present are much their superiors, unless they are spoken to: and yet the case may be so extraordinary, as fully to warrant it. If something very extraordinary happens to persons, or if they are in extraordinary circumstances: as if a person be struck with lightning, in the midst of a great company, or if he lies a dying, it appears to none any violation of modesty, for him to speak freely, before those that are much his superiors. I have seen some women and children in such circumstances, on religious accounts, that it has appeared to me no more a transgressing the laws of humility and modesty, for them to speak freely, let who will be present, than if they were dying.

But then may a man be said to set up himself as a public teacher, when he in a set speech, of design, directs himself to a multitude, either in the meeting-house or elsewhere, as looking that they should compose themselves to attend to what he has to say; and much more when this is a contrived and premeditated thing, without any thing like a constraint, by any extraordinary sense or affection that he is then under; and more still, when meetings are appointed on purpose to hear lay-persons exhort, and they take it as their business to be speakers, while they expect that others should come, and compose themselves, and attend as hearers; when private Christians take it upon them in private meetings, to act as the masters or presidents of the assembly, and accordingly from time to time to teach and exhort the rest, this has the appearance of authoritative teaching.

When private Christians, that are no more than mere brethren, exhort and admonish one another; it ought to be in an humble manner, rather by way of entreaty, than with authority; and the more, according as the station of persons is lower. Thus it becomes women, and those that are young, ordinarily to be at a greater distance from any appearance of authority in speaking than others: thus much at least is evident by that in (1 Timothy 2:9, 11-12).

That lay-persons ought not to exhort one another as clothed with authority, is a general rule but it cannot justly be supposed to extend to head of families in their own families. Every Christian family is a little church, and the heads of it are its authoritative teachers and governors. Nor can it extend to school-masters among his scholars; and some other cases might perhaps be mentioned, that ordinary discretion will distinguish, where a man's circumstances do properly clothe him with authority, and render it fit and suitable for him to counsel and admonish others in an authoritative manner.

2. No man but only a minister that is duly appointed to that sacred calling, ought to follow teaching and exhorting as a calling, or so as to neglect that which is his proper calling. A having the office of a teacher in the church of God implies two things: 1. A being invested with the authority of a teacher; and 2. A being called to the business of a teacher, to make it the business of his life. Therefore that man that is not a minister, that takes either of these upon him, invades the office of a minister. Concerning assuming the authority of a minister I have spoken already. But if a layman does not assume authority in his teaching, yet if he forsakes his proper calling, or does so at least in a great measure, and spends his time in going about from house to house, to counsel and exhort, he goes beyond

his line, and violates Christian rules. Those that have the office of teachers or exhorters, have it for their calling, and should make it their business, as a business proper to their office; and none should make it their business but such (Romans 12:3-5, 7-8): For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the proportion of faith. For as we have many members, in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many, are one body in Christ. He that teaches, let him wait on teaching, or he that exhorts, on exhortation (1 Corinthians 12:29): Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? (1 Corinthians 7:20): Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. (1 Thessalonians 4:11): And that you study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.

It will be a very dangerous thing for laymen, in either of these respects, to invade the office of a minister; if this be common among us we shall be in danger of having a stop put to the work of God, and the ark's turning aside from us, before it comes to Mount Zion, and of God's making a breach upon us; as of old there was an unhappy stop put to the joy of the congregation of Israel, in bringing up the ark of God, because others carried it besides the Levites: and therefore David, when the error was found out, says (1 Chronicles 15:2): None ought to carry the ark of God, but the Levites only; for them has the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister to him forever. And because one presumed to

touch the ark that was not of the sons of Aaron, therefore the Lord made a breach upon them, and covered their day of rejoicing with a cloud in his anger.

Before I dismiss this head of lay-exhorting, I would take notice of three things relating to it, upon which there ought to be a restraint.

1. Speaking in the time of the solemn worship of God, as public prayer, singing, or preaching, or administration of the sacrament of the Holy Supper; or any duty of social worship: this should not be allowed. I know it will be said, that in some cases, when persons are exceedingly affected, they cannot help it; and I believe so too: but then I also believe, and know by experience, that there are several things that contribute to that inability, besides merely and absolutely the sense of divine things they have upon their hearts. Custom and example, or the thing's being allowed, have such an influence, that they actually help to make it impossible for persons under strong affections to avoid speaking. If it was disallowed, and persons at the time that they were thus disposed to break out, had this apprehension, that it would be a very unbecoming, shocking thing for them so to do, it would be a help to them, as to their ability to avoid it: their inability arises from their strong and vehement disposition; and so far as that disposition is from a good principle, it would be weakened by the coming in of this thought to their minds, namely, "What I am going to do, will be for the dishonor of Christ and religion:" and so that inward vehemence, that pushed them forward to speak, would fall, and they would be enabled to avoid it. This experience confirms.

2. There ought to be a moderate restraint on the loudness of persons talking under high affections; for if there be not, it will grow natural and unavoidable for persons to be louder and louder, without any increase of their inward sense; till it becomes natural to them, at last, to scream and hallow to almost every one they see in the streets, when they are much affected: but this is certainly a thing very improper, and what has no tendency to promote religion. The man Christ Jesus when he was upon earth, had doubtless as great a sense of the infinite greatness and importance of eternal things, and the worth of souls, as any have nowadays; but there is not the least appearance in his history, of his taking any such course, or manner of exhorting others.

3. There should also be some restraint on the abundance of persons' talk, under strong affections; for if persons give themselves an unbounded liberty, to talk just so much as they feel an inclination to, they will increase and abound more and more in talk, beyond the proportion of their sense or affection; till at length it will become ineffectual on those that hear them, and by the commonness of their abundant talk, they will defeat their own end.

One thing more I would take notice of before I conclude this part, is the mismanagement that has been in some places of the duty of singing praises to God. I believe it to have been one fruit of the extraordinary degrees of the sweet and joyful influences of the Spirit of God that have been lately given, that there has appeared such a disposition to abound in that duty, and frequently to fall into this divine exercise; not only in appointed solemn meetings, but when Christians occasionally meet together at each other's houses. But the mismanagement I have respect to, is the getting into a way of performing it, without almost any appearance of that

reverence and solemnity with which all visible, open acts of divine worship ought to be attended; it may be two or three in a room singing hymns of praise to God, others that are present talking at the same time, others about their work, with little more appearance of regard to what is doing, than if some were only singing a common song, for their amusement and diversion. There is danger, if such things are continued, of its coming to that by degrees, that a mere nothing be made of this duty, to the great violation of the third commandment. Let Christians abound as much as they will in this holy, heavenly exercise, in God's house and in their own houses; but when it is performed, let it be performed as a holy act, wherein they have immediately and visibly to do with God. When any social open act of devotion, or solemn worship of God is performed, God should be revered as visibly present, by those that are present. As we would not have the ark of God depart from us, nor provoke God to make a breach upon us, we should take heed that we handle the ark with reverence.

With respect to companies singing in the streets, going to, or coming from the place of public worship, I would humbly offer my thoughts in the following particulars.

1. The rule of Christ concerning putting new wine into old bottles, does undoubtedly take place in things of this nature, supposing it to be a thing that in itself is good, but not essential, and not particularly enjoined or forbidden. For things, so very new and uncommon, and of so open and public a nature, to be suddenly introduced and set up and practiced, in many parts of the country, without the matter's being so much as first proposed to any public consideration, or giving any opportunity for the people of God to weigh the matter, or to consider any reasons that might be offered

to support it, is putting new wine into old bottles with a witness; as if it were with no other design than to burst them directly. Nothing else can be expected to be the consequence of this, than uproar and confusion, and great offense, and unhappy mischievous disputes, even among the children of God themselves: not that that which is good in itself, and is new, ought to be forborne, till there is no body that will dislike it; but it ought to be forborne till the visible church of God is so prepared for it, at least, that there is a probability that it will not do more hurt than good, or hinder the work of God more than promote it; as is most evident from Christ's rule, and the apostles' practice. If it be brought in, when the country is so unprepared, that the shock and surprise on persons' minds, and the contention and prejudice against religion, that it is like to be an occasion of, will do more to hinder religion, than the practice of it is like to do to promote it, then the fruit is picked before it is ripe. And indeed, such a hasty endeavor to introduce such an innovation, supposing it to be good in itself, is the likeliest way to retard the effectual introduction of it; it will hinder its being extensively introduced, much more than it will promote it, and so will defeat its own end. But...

2. As to the thing itself, if a considerable part of a congregation have occasion to go in company together to a place of public worship, and they should join together in singing praises to God, as they go, I confess, that after long consideration, and endeavoring to view the thing every way, with the utmost diligence and impartiality I am capable of, I cannot find any valid objection against it. As to the common objection from (Matthew 6:5): And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that

they may be seen of men. It is strong against a single person's singing in the streets, or in the meeting-house, by himself, as offering to God personal worship; but as it is brought against a considerable company, their thus publicly worshipping God, it appears to me to have no weight at all; to be sure it is of no more force against a company's thus praising God in the streets, than against their praising him in the synagogue or meeting-house, for the streets and the synagogues are both put together in these words of our Savior, as parallel in the case that he had respect to. It is evident that Christ speaks of personal, and not public worship. If to sing in the streets be ostentatious, then it must be because it is a public place, and it cannot be done there without being very open; but it is no more public than the synagogue or meeting-house is when full of people. Some worship is in its nature private, as that which is proper to particular persons, or families, or private societies, and has respect to their particular concerns: but that which I now speak of, is performed under no other notion than a part of God's public worship, without any relation to any private, separate society, or any chosen or picked number, and in which every visible Christian has equal liberty to join, if it be convenient for him, and he has a disposition, as in the worship that is performed in the meeting-house. When persons are going to the house of public worship, to serve God there with the assembly of his people, they are upon no other design than that of putting public honor upon God, that is the business they go from home upon, and even in their walking the streets on this errand, they appear in a public act of respect to God; and therefore if they go in company with public praise, it is not a being public when they ought to be private. It is one part of the beauty of public worship, that it be very public; the

more public it is, the more open honor it puts upon God; and especially is it beautiful in that part of public worship, namely, public praise; for the very notion of public praising of God, is to declare abroad his glory, to publish his praise, to make it known, and proclaim it aloud, as is evident by innumerable expressions of Scripture. It is fit that God's honor should not be concealed, but made known in the great congregation, and proclaimed before the sun, and upon the house-tops, before kings, and all nations, and that his praises should be heard to the utmost ends of the earth.

I suppose none will condemn singing God's praises, merely because it is performed in the open air, and not in a close place: and if it may be performed by a company in the open air, doubtless they may do it moving, as well as standing still. So the children of Israel praised God, when they went to Mount Zion, with the ark of God; and so the multitude praised Christ, when they entered with him into Jerusalem, a little before his passion; and so the children of Israel were accustomed, from year to year, to go up to Jerusalem, when they went in companies, from all parts of the land, three times in the year, when they often used to manifest the engagedness of their minds, by traveling all night, and manifested their joy and gladness, by singing praises, with great decency and beauty, as they went towards God's holy mountain; as is evident by (Isaiah 30:29): You shall have a song, as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart; as when one goes with a pipe, to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Israel. And (Psalm 42:4): When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day. (Psalm 100:4): Enter into his gates

with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. When God's people are going to his house, the occasion is so joyful to a Christian in a lively frame, (the language of whose heart is, Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord, and who is glad when it is so said to him,) that the duty of singing praises seems to be peculiarly beautiful on such an occasion. So that if the state of the country was ripe for it, and it should be so that there should be frequent occasions for a considerable part of a congregation to go together to the places of public worship, and there was in other respects a proportionable appearance of fervency of devotion, it appears to me that it would be ravishingly beautiful, if such things were practiced all over the land, and would have a great tendency to enliven, animate and rejoice the souls of God's saints, and greatly to propagate vital religion. I believe the time is coming when the world will be full of such things.

3. It seems to me to be requisite that there should be the consent of the governing part of the worshipping societies, to which persons have joined themselves, and of which they own themselves a part, in order to the introducing of things in public worship, so new and uncommon, and not essential, nor particularly commanded, into the places where those worshipping societies belong: the peace and union of such societies seems to require it; seeing they have voluntarily united themselves to these worshipping societies, to that end, that they might be one in the affairs of God's public worship, and obliged themselves in covenant to act as brethren and mutual assistants, and members of one body, in those affairs, and all are hereby naturally and necessarily led to be concerned with one another, in matters of religion and God's worship; and seeing that this is a part of the public worship, and wor-

ship that must be performed from time to time in the view of the whole, being performed at a time when they are meeting together for mutual assistance in worship, and therefore that which all must unavoidably be in some measure concerned in, so at least as to show their approbation and consent, or open dislike and separation from them in it; I say it being thus, charity and a regard to the union and peace of such societies, seems to require a consent of the governing part, in order to the introducing any thing of this nature; (unless they think those societies unworthy that they should be joined to them any longer, and so first renounce them, as the worshipping societies of which they are members.) Certainly if we are of the spirit of the apostle Paul, and have his discretion, we shall not set up any such practice without it: he for the sake of peace, conformed, in things wherein he was not particularly forbidden, to the Jews, when among them; and so when among those that were without the law, conformed to them, wherein he might. To be sure those go much beyond proper limits, who coming from abroad, do immediately of their own heads, in a strange place, set up such a new and uncommon practice among a people.

In introducing any thing of this nature among a people, their minister especially ought to be consulted, and his voice taken, as long as he is owned for their minister. Ministers are pastors of worshipping societies, and their heads and guides in the affairs of public worship. They are called in Scripture, those that rule over them, and their people are commanded to obey them, because they watch for their souls, as those that must give account. If it belongs to these shepherds and rulers to direct and guide the flock in any thing at all, it belongs to them so to do, in the circumstantial of their public worship.

Thus I have taken particular notice of many of those things that have appeared to me to be amiss, in the management of our religious concerns, relating to the present revival of religion, and have taken liberty freely to express my thoughts upon them. Upon the whole it appears manifest to me, that things have as yet, never been set a-going in their right channel; if they had, and means had been blessed in proportion as they have been now, this work would have so prevailed, as before this time to have carried all afore it, and have triumphed over New England as its conquest.

The devil in driving things to these extremes, besides the present hindrance of the work of God, has, I believe, had in view, a two-fold mischief hereafter, in the issue of things; one with respect to those that are more cold in religion; to carry things to such an extreme, that people in general, at length, having their eyes opened, by the great excess, and seeing that things must needs be wrong, he might take the advantage to tempt them entirely to reject the whole work, as being all nothing but delusion and distraction. And another is with respect to those that have been very warm and zealous, of God's own children, that have been out of the way, to sink them down in unbelief and darkness. The time is coming I doubt not, when the bigger part of them will be convinced of their errors; and then probably the devil will take advantage to lead them into a dreadful wilderness, and to puzzle and confound them about their own experiences, and the experiences of others; and to make them to doubt of many things that they ought not to doubt of, and even to tempt them with atheistical thoughts. I believe if all true Christians all over the land, should now at once have their eyes opened, fully to see all their errors, it would seem for the present to damp religion: the dark thoughts, that it would

at first be an occasion of, and the inward doubts, difficulties and conflicts that would rise in their souls, would deaden their lively affections and joys, and would cause an appearance of a present decay of religion. But yet it would do God's saints great good in their latter end; it would fit them for more spiritual and excellent experiences, more humble and heavenly love, and unmixed joys, and would greatly tend to a more powerful, extensive and durable prevalence of vital piety.

I do not know but we shall be in danger by and by, after our eyes are fully opened to see our errors, to go to contrary extremes. The devil has driven the pendulum far beyond its proper point of rest; and when he has carried it to the utmost length that he can, and it begins by its own weight to swing back, he probably will set in, and drive it with the utmost fury the other way; and so give us no rest; and if possible prevent our settling in a proper medium. What a poor, blind, weak and miserable creature is man, at his best estate! We are like poor helpless sheep; the devil is too subtle for us: what is our strength! What is our wisdom! How ready are we to go astray! How easily are we drawn aside, into innumerable snares, while we in the mean time are bold and confident, and doubt not but that we are right and safe! We are foolish sheep, in the midst of subtle serpents and cruel wolves, and do not know it. Oh! how unfit are we to be left to ourselves! And how much do we stand in need of the wisdom, the power, the condescension, patience, forgiveness and gentleness of our good shepherd!

PART 5



In considering of means and methods for promoting this glorious work of God, I have already observed, in some instances wherein there has been needless objecting and complaining, and have also taken notice of many things amiss, that ought to be amended: I now proceed in the

Third and last place, to show positively, what ought to be done, or what courses (according to my humble opinion) ought to be taken to promote this work. The obligations that all are under, with one consent, to do their utmost, and the great danger of neglecting it, were observed before. I hope that some, upon reading what was said under that head, will be ready to say, What shall we do? To such readers I would now offer my thoughts, in answer to such an inquiry.

And that which I think we ought to set ourselves about in the first place, is to remove stumbling-blocks. When God is revealed, as about to come, gloriously to set up his kingdom in the world, this is proclaimed, Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God (Isaiah 40:3). And again (Isaiah 57:14): Cast up, cast up; prepare the way; take up the stumbling-

block out of the way of my people. And (Isaiah 62:10): Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones.

And in order to this, there must be a great deal done at confessing of faults, on both sides: for undoubtedly many and great are the faults that have been committed, in the jangling and confusions, and mixtures of light and darkness, that have been of late. There is hardly any duty more contrary to our corrupt dispositions, and mortifying to the pride of man; but it must be done. Repentance of faults is, in a peculiar manner, a proper duty, when the kingdom of heaven is at hand, or when we especially expect or desire that it should come; as appears by John the Baptist's preaching. And if God does now loudly call upon us to repent, then he also calls upon us to make proper manifestations of our repentance. I am persuaded that those that have openly opposed this work, or have from time to time spoken lightly of it, cannot be excused in the sight of God, without openly confessing their fault therein; especially if they be ministers. If they have any way, either directly or indirectly, opposed the work, or have so behaved, in their public performances or private conversation, as has prejudiced the minds of their people against the work, if hereafter they shall be convinced of the goodness and divinity of what they have opposed, they ought by no means to palliate the matter, and excuse themselves, and pretend that they always thought so, and that it was only such and such imprudences that they objected against, but they ought openly to declare their conviction, and condemn themselves for what they have done; for it is Christ that they have spoken against, in speaking lightly of, and prejudicing others against this work; indeed, worse than that, it is the Holy Ghost.

And though they have done it ignorantly, and in unbelief, yet when they find out who it is that they have opposed, undoubtedly God will hold them bound publicly to confess it.

And on the other side, if those that have been zealous to promote the work, have in any of the fore-mentioned instances, openly gone much out of the way, and done that which is contrary to Christian rules, whereby they have openly injured others, or greatly violated good order, and so done that which has wounded religion, they must publicly confess it, and humble themselves, as they would gather out the stones, and prepare the way of God's people. They who have laid great stumbling-blocks in others' way, by their open transgression, are bound to remove them, by their open repentance.

Some probably will be ready to object against this, that the opposers will take advantage by this to behave themselves insolently, and to insult both them and religion. And indeed, to the shame of some, they have taken advantage by such things; as of the good spirit that Mr. Whitefield showed in his retractations, and some others. But if there are some embittered enemies of religion, that stand ready to improve every thing to its disadvantage, yet that ought not to hinder doing an enjoined Christian duty; though it be in the manifestation of humility and repentance, after a fault openly committed. To stand it out, in a visible impenitence of a real fault, to avoid such an inconvenience, is to do evil, to prevent evil. And besides, the danger of an evil consequence is much greater on the other side: to commit sin, and then stand in it, is what will give the enemy the greatest advantage. For Christians to act like Christians, in openly humbling themselves, when they have

openly offended; in the end brings the greatest honor to Christ and religion; and in this way are persons most likely to have God appear for them.

Again, at such a day as this, God does especially call his people to the exercise of extraordinary meekness and mutual forbearance: for at such a time, Christ appears as it were coming in his kingdom, which calls for great moderation in our behavior towards all men; as is evident (Philippians 4:5): Let your moderation be known to all men: the Lord is at hand. The awe of the divine majesty that appears present or approaching, should dispose us to it, and deter us from the contrary. For us to be judging one another, and behaving with fierceness and bitterness, one towards another, when he who is the searcher of all hearts, to whom we must all give an account, appears so remarkably present, is exceeding unsuitable. Our business, at such a time, should be at home, searching ourselves, and condemning ourselves, and taking heed to our own behavior. If there be glorious prosperity to the church of God approaching, those that are the most meek, will have the largest share in it: for when Christ rides forth, in his glory and his majesty, it is because of truth, meekness and righteousness (Psalm 45:3-4). And when God remarkably arises, to execute judgment, it is to save all the meek of the earth (Psalm 76:9). And it is the meek, that shall increase their joy in the Lord (Isaiah 29:19). And when the time comes, that God will give this lower world into the hands of his saints, it is the meek that shall inherit the earth (Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:9). But with the froward, God will show himself unsavory.

Those therefore, that have been zealous for this work, and have greatly erred and been injurious with their zeal, ought not to be treated with bitterness. There is abundant reason to think, that most of them are the dear children of God, for whom Christ died; and therefore that they will see their error. As to those things, wherein we see them to be in an error, we have reason to say of them as the apostle (Philippians 3:15): If any are otherwise minded, God shall reveal this to them. Their errors should not be made use of by us, so much to excite indignation towards them, but should influence all of us, that hope that we are the children of God, to humble ourselves, and become more entirely dependent on the Lord Jesus Christ, when we see those, that are God's own people, so ready to go astray. And those ministers that have been judged, and injuriously dealt with, will do the part of Christ's disciples, not to judge and revile again, but to receive such injuries with meekness and forbearance, and making a good improvement of them, more strictly examining their hearts and ways, and committing themselves to God. This will be the way to have God vindicate them in his providence, if they belong to him. We have not yet seen the end of things; nor do we know who will be most vindicated, and honored of God, in the issue. (Ecclesiastes 7:8): Better is the end of a thing, than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit, is better than the proud in spirit.

Contrary to this mutual meekness, is each party's stigmatizing one another with odious names; as is done in many parts of New England: which tends greatly to widen and perpetuate the breach. Such distinguishing names of reproach, do as it were divide us into two armies, separated, and drawn up in battle-array, ready to fight one with another; which greatly hinders the work of God.

And as such an extraordinary time as this, does especially require of us the exercise of a great deal of forbearance, one towards another; so there is peculiarly requisite in God's people, the exercise of great patience, in waiting on God, under any special difficulties and disadvantages they may be under, as to the means of grace. The beginning of a revival of religion will naturally and necessarily be attended with a great many difficulties of this nature; many parts of the reviving church will, for a while, be under great disadvantages, by reason of what remains of the old disease, of a general corruption of the visible church. We cannot expect that, after a long time of degeneracy and depravity, in the state of things in the church, things should all come to rights at once; it must be a work of time: and for God's people to be over-hasty and violent, in such a case, being resolved to have every thing rectified at once, or else forcibly to deliver themselves, by breaches and separations, is the way to hinder things coming to rights, as they otherwise would, and to keep them back, and the way to break all in pieces. Not but that the case may be such, the difficulty may be so intolerable, as to allow of no delay, and God's people cannot continue in the state wherein they were, without violations of absolute commands of God. But otherwise, though the difficulty may be very great, another course should be taken. God's people should have their recourse directly to the throne of grace, to represent their difficulties before the great shepherd of the sheep, that has the care of all the affairs of his church; and when they have done, they should wait patiently upon him: if they do so, they may expect that in his time, he will appear for their deliverance: but if instead of that, they are impatient, and take the work into their own hands, they will betray their want of faith, and will dishonor God, and cannot have such

reason to hope that Christ will appear for them, as they have desired, but have reason to fear, that he will leave them to manage their affairs for themselves, as well as they can: when otherwise, if they had waited on Christ patiently, continuing still instant in prayer, they might have had him appearing for them, much more effectually to deliver them. He that believes shall not make haste; and it is for those that are found patiently waiting on the Lord, under difficulties, that he will especially appear, when he comes to do great things for his church, as is evident by (Isaiah 30:18; Isaiah 40, at the latter end; Isaiah 49:23; Psalm 37:9) and many other places.

I have somewhere, not long since, met with an exposition of those words of the spouse, that we have several times repeated in the book of Canticles, I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please, which is the only satisfying exposition that ever I met with; which was to this purpose, namely, that when the church of God is under great difficulties, and in distress, and Christ does not appear for her help, but seems to neglect her, as though he were asleep, God's people, or the daughters of Jerusalem, in such a case, should not show a hasty spirit; and not having patience to wait for Christ to awake for their help, till his time comes, take indirect courses for their own deliverance, and use violent means for their escape, before Christ appears to open the door for them; and so as it were, stir up, and awake Christ, before his time. When the church is in distress, and God seems not to appear for her in his providence, he is very often represented in Scripture, as being asleep; as Christ was asleep in the ship, when the disciples were tossed by the storm, and the ship covered with waves: and God's appearing afterwards for his

people's help, is represented as his awaking out of sleep (Psalms 7:6; 35:23; 44:23; 59:4; 73:20). Christ has an appointed time for his thus awaking out of sleep: and his people ought to wait upon him; and not, in an impatient fit, stir him up, before his time. It is worthy to be observed how strict this charge is, given to the daughters of Jerusalem, which is repeated three times over in the book of Canticles (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). In the second chapter and six first verses, is represented the supports Christ gives his church, while she is in a suffering state, as the lily among thorns: in the seventh verse is represented her patience in waiting for Christ, to appear for her deliverance, when she charges the daughters of Jerusalem, not to stir up, nor awake her love till he please, by the roes, and the hinds of the field; which are creatures of a gentle, harmless nature, are not beasts of prey, do not devour one another, do not fight with their enemies, but fly from them; and are of a pleasant, loving nature (Proverbs 5:19). In the next verse, we see the church's success, in this way of waiting under sufferings, with meekness and patience; Christ soon awakes, speedily appears, and swiftly comes; The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills!

What has been mentioned hitherto, has relation to the behavior we are obliged to [reconstructed: show if] we would prevent the hindrances of the work, but besides these, there are things that must be done, more directly to advance it. And here, it concerns every one, in the first place, to look into his own heart, and see to it that he be a partaker of the benefits of the work himself, and that it be promoted in his own soul. Now is a most glorious opportunity for the good of souls. It is manifestly, with respect to a time of great revival of religion in the world, that we have that gracious,

earnest and moving invitation proclaimed, in the 55th of Isaiah, Ho, every one that thirsts! etc. as is evident by what precedes in the foregoing chapter, and what follows in the close of this. Here, in the sixth verse it is said, Seek the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him, while he is near. And it is with special reference to such a time, that Christ proclaims as he does (Revelation 21:6): I will give to him that is thirsty, of the fountain of the water of life freely. And (Revelation 22:17): And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that hears say, Come; and let him that is thirsty come; and whoever will, let him take the water of life freely. And it seems to be with reference to such a time, which is typified by the feast of tabernacles, that Jesus, at that feast, stood and cried, as we have an account (John 7:37-38): In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. And it is with special reference to God's freeness and readiness to bestow grace at such a time, that it is said in (Isaiah 60:11) of the spiritual Jerusalem, Your gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut, day nor night.

And though I judge not those that have opposed this work, and would not have others judge them, yet, if any such shall happen to read this treatise, I would take the liberty to entreat them to leave off concerning themselves so much about others, and look into their own souls, and see to it that they are the subjects of a true, saving work of the Spirit of God. If they have reason to think they never have been, or it be but a very doubtful hope that they have, then how can they have any heart to be busily and fiercely engaged about the mistakes, and the supposed false hopes of others? And I would now beseech those that have hitherto been something in-

clining to Arminian principles, seriously to weigh the matter with respect to this work, and consider, whether, if the Scriptures are the word of God, the work that has been described in the first part of this treatise, must not needs be, as to the substance of it, the work of God, and the flourishing of that religion, that is taught by Christ and his apostles; and whether any good medium can be found, where a man can rest, with any stability, between owning this work, and being a Deist; and also to consider whether or no, if it be indeed so, that this be the work of God, it does not entirely overthrow their scheme of religion; and therefore whether it does not infinitely concern them, as they would be partakers of eternal salvation, to relinquish their scheme. Now is a good time for Arminians to change their principles. I would now, as one of the friends of this work, humbly invite them to come and join with us, and be on our side; and if I had the authority of Moses, I would say to them as he did to Hobab (Numbers 10:29): We are journeying to the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come with us; and we will do you good: for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel.

As the benefit and advantage of the good improvement of such a season, is extraordinary great; so the danger of neglecting, and misimproving it, is proportionably great. It is abundantly evident by the Scripture, that as a time of great outpouring of the Spirit, is a time of great favor to those that are partakers of the blessing; so it is always a time of remarkable vengeance to others. So in (Isaiah 61:2), the same that is called, the acceptable year of the Lord, is called also, the day of vengeance of our God. So it was amongst the Jews, in the apostles' days: the apostle in (2 Corinthians 6:2) says of that time, that it was the accepted time, and day of salvation;

and Christ says of the same time (Luke 21:22): These are the days of vengeance. At the same time that the blessings of the kingdom of heaven were given to some, there was an ax laid at the root of the trees, that those that did not bear fruit, might be hewn down, and cast into the fire (Matthew 3:9-11). Then was glorified, both the goodness and severity of God, in a remarkable manner (Romans 11:22). The harvest and the vintage go together: at the same time that the earth is reaped, and God's elect are gathered into the garner of God, the angel that has power over fire, thrusts in his sickle, and gathers the cluster of the vine of the earth, and casts it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God (Revelation 14, at the latter end). So it is foretold, that at the beginning of the glorious times of the Christian church, at the same time that the hand of the Lord is known, towards his servants, so shall his indignation, towards his enemies (Isaiah 66:14). So when that glorious morning shall appear, wherein the Sun of righteousness shall arise, to the elect, with healing in his wings, the day shall burn as an oven to the wicked (Malachi 4:1-3). There is no time like such a time, for the increase of guilt, and treasuring up wrath, and desperate hardening of the heart, if men stand it out; which is the most awful judgment, and fruit of divine wrath, that can be inflicted on any mortal. So that a time of great grace, and pouring out of the Spirit, and the fruits of divine mercy, is evermore also, a time of great outpouring of something else, namely, divine vengeance, on those that neglect and misimprove such a season.

The state of the present revival of religion, has an awful aspect upon those that are advanced in years. The work has been chiefly amongst those that are young; and comparatively, but few others have been made partakers of it. And indeed, it has commonly been

so, when God has begun any great work, for the revival of his church; he has taken the young people, and has cast off the old and stiff-necked generation. There was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, on the children of Israel in the wilderness, on the younger generation, their little ones, that they said, should be a prey, the generation that entered into Canaan, with Joshua; which is evident by many things in Scripture. That generation seems to have been the most excellent generation that ever was in the church of Israel. There is no generation, of which there is so much good, and so little hurt spoken in Scripture; as might be shown, if it would not be too long. In that generation, that were under twenty years, when they went out of Egypt, was that kindness of youth, and love of espousals, spoken of (Jeremiah 2:2-3). But the old generation were passed by, and remained obstinate and stiff-necked, were always murmuring, and would not be convinced by all God's wondrous works that they beheld. God by his awful judgments that he executed in the wilderness, and the affliction that the people suffered there, convinced and humbled the younger generation, and fitted them for great mercy; as is evident by (Deuteronomy 2:16) but he destroyed the old generation; he swore in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness: when it was a time of great mercy, and pouring out of God's Spirit on their children, it was remarkably a day of vengeance to them; as appears by the 90th Psalm. Let the old generation in this land, take warning from hence, and take heed that they do not refuse to be convinced, by all God's wonders that he works before their eyes, and that they do not continue forever objecting, murmuring and caviling against the work of God,

lest while God is bringing their children into a land flowing with milk and honey, he should swear in his wrath concerning them, that their carcasses shall fall in the wilderness.

So when God had a design of great mercy to the Jews, in bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, and returning them to their own land, there was a blessed outpouring of the Spirit upon them in Babylon, to bring them to deep conviction and repentance, and to a spirit of prayer, to cry earnestly to God for mercy; which is often spoken of by the prophets: but it was not upon the old generation, that were carried captive. The captivity continued just long enough, for that perverse generation to waste away and die in their captivity; at least those of them that were adult persons, when carried captive. The old generation, and heads of families, were exceeding obstinate, and would not hearken to the earnest repeated warnings of the prophet Jeremiah; but he had greater success among the young people; as appears by (Jeremiah 6:10-11): To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is to them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife (that is, the heads of families, and parents of these children) shall be taken, the aged, with him that is full of days. Blessed be God! There are some of the elder people, that have been made partakers of this work: and those that are most awakened, by these warnings of God's word, and the awful frowns of his providence, will be most likely to be made partakers hereafter. It infinitely con-

cerns them to take heed to themselves, that they may be partakers of it; for how dreadful will it be to go to Hell, after having spent so many years in doing nothing, but treasure up wrath.

But above all others whatever, does it concern us that are ministers, to see to it that we are partakers of this work, or that we have experience of the saving operations of the same Spirit, that is now poured out on the land. How sorrowful and melancholy is the case, when it is otherwise? For one to stand at the head of a congregation of God's people, as representing Christ and speaking in his stead, and to act the part of a shepherd and guide to a people, in such a state of things, when many are under great awakenings, and many are converted, and many of God's saints are filled with divine light, love and joy, and to undertake to instruct and lead them all, under all these various circumstances, and to be put to it, continually to play the hypocrite, and force the airs of a saint in preaching, and from time to time, in private conversation, and particular dealing with souls, to undertake to judge of their circumstances, to try to talk with those that come to him, as if he knew what they said; to try to talk with persons of experience, as if he knew how to converse with them, and had experience as well as they; to make others believe that he rejoices when others are converted, and to force a pleased and joyful countenance and manner of speech, when there is nothing in the heart, what sorrowful work is here! Oh! how miserably must such a person feel! What a wretched bondage and slavery is this! What pains, and how much art must such a minister use to conceal himself! And how weak are his hands! Besides the infinite provocation of the most high God, and displeasure of his Lord and Master, that he incurs, by continuing a secret enemy to him in his heart, in such circumstances. I

think there is a great deal of reason, from the Scripture, to conclude, that no sort of men in the world, will be so low in Hell, as ungodly ministers: every thing that is spoken of in Scripture, as that which aggravates guilt, and heightens divine wrath, meets in them; however some particular persons, of other sorts, may be more guilty than some of these.

And what great disadvantages are unconverted ministers under, to oppose any irregularities, or imprudences, or intemperate zeal, that they may see in those that are the children of God, when they are conscious to themselves, that they have no zeal at all? If enthusiasm and wildness comes in like a flood, what poor weak instruments are such ministers to withstand it? With what courage can they open their mouths, when they look inward, and consider how it is with them?

We that are ministers, not only have need of some true experience of the saving influence of the Spirit of God upon our heart, but we need a double portion of the Spirit of God at such a time as this; we had need to be as full of light, as a glass is, that is held out in the sun; and with respect to love and zeal, we had need at this day, to be like the angels, that are a flame of fire. The state of the times extremely requires a fullness of the divine Spirit in ministers, and we ought to give ourselves no rest till we have obtained it. And in order to this, I should think ministers, above all persons, ought to be much in secret prayer and fasting, and also much in praying and fasting one with another. It seems to me it would be becoming the circumstances of the present day, if ministers in a neighborhood would often meet together, and spend days in fasting, and fervent prayer, among themselves, earnestly seeking for those extraordinary supplies of divine grace from heaven, that we

need at this day: and also if, on their occasional visits one to another, instead of spending away their time in sitting and smoking, and in diverting, or worldly, unprofitable conversation, telling news, and making their remarks on this and the other trifling subject, they would spend their time in praying together, and singing praises, and religious conference. How much do many of the common people shame many of us that are in the work of the ministry, in these respects? Surely we do not behave ourselves so much like Christian ministers, and the disciples and ambassadors of Christ, as we ought to do. And while we condemn zealous persons for their doing so much at censuring ministers at this day, it ought not to be without deep reflections upon, and great condemnation of ourselves: for indeed, we do very much to provoke censoriousness, and lay a great temptation before others, to the sin of judging: and if we can prove, that those that are guilty of it, do transgress the Scripture rule, yet our indignation should be chiefly against ourselves.

Ministers, at this day in a special manner, should act as fellow-helpers, in their great work. It should be seen that they are animated and engaged, and exert themselves with one heart and soul, and with united strength, to promote the present glorious revival of religion: and to that end should often meet together, and act in concert. And if it were a common thing in the country, for ministers to join in public exercises, and second one another, in their preaching, I believe it would be of great service. I mean that ministers having consulted one another, as to the subjects of their discourses, before they go to the house of God, should there speak, two or three of them going, in short discourses, as seconding each other, and earnestly enforcing each other's warnings and counsels.

Only such an appearance of united zeal in ministers, would have a great tendency to awaken attention, and much to impress and animate the hearers; as has been found by experience, in some parts of the country.

Ministers should carefully avoid weakening one another's hands. And therefore every thing should be avoided, by which their interest with their people might be diminished, or their union with them broken. On the contrary, if ministers have not forfeited their acceptance in that character, in the visible church, by their doctrine or behavior, their brethren in the ministry ought studiously to endeavor to heighten the esteem and affection of their people towards them, that they may have no temptation to repent their admitting other ministers to come and preach in their pulpit.

Two things, that are exceeding needful in ministers, as they would do any great matters, to advance the kingdom of Christ, are zeal and resolution. The influence and power of these things, to bring to pass great effects, is greater than can well be imagined: a man of but an ordinary capacity, will do more with them, than one of ten times the parts and learning, without them: more may be done with them, in a few days, or at least weeks, than can be done without them, in many years. Those that are possessed of these qualities, commonly carry the day, in almost all affairs. Most of the great things that have been done in the world of mankind, the great revolutions that have been accomplished in the kingdoms and empires of the earth, have been chiefly owing to these things. The very sight or appearance of a thoroughly engaged spirit, together with a fearless courage and unyielding resolution, in any person, that has undertaken the managing any affair amongst mankind, goes a great way towards accomplishing the effect aimed

at. It is evident that the appearance of these things in Alexander, did three times as much towards his conquering the world, as all the blows that he struck. And how much were the great things that Oliver Cromwell did, owing to these things? And the great things that Mr. Whitefield has done, every where, as he has run through the British dominions, (so far as they are owing to means) are very much owing to the appearance of these things, which he is eminently possessed of. When the people see these things apparently in a person, and to a great degree, it awes them, and has a commanding influence upon their minds; it seems to them that they must yield; they naturally fall before them, without standing to contest or dispute the matter; they are conquered as it were by surprise. But while we are cold and heartless, and only go on in a dull manner, in an old formal round, we shall never do any great matters. Our attempts, the appearance of such coldness and irresolution, will not so much as make persons think of yielding: they will hardly be sufficient to put it into their minds; and if it be put into their minds, the appearance of such indifference and cowardice, does as it were call for, and provoke opposition. Our misery is want of zeal and courage; for not only through want of them, does all fail that we seem to attempt, but it prevents our attempting any thing very remarkable, for the kingdom of Christ. Hence, oftentimes it has been, that when any thing very considerable, that is new, is proposed to be done, for the advancement of religion, or the public good, many difficulties are found out, that are in the way, and a great many objections are started, and it may be, it is put off from one to another; but no body does any thing. And after this manner good designs or proposals have oftentimes failed, and have sunk as

soon as proposed. Whereas, if we had but Mr. Whitefield's zeal and courage, what could not we do, with such a blessing as we might expect?

Zeal and courage will do much in persons of but an ordinary capacity; but especially would they do great things, if joined with great abilities. If some great men, that have appeared in our nation, had been as eminent in divinity, as they were in philosophy, and had engaged in the Christian cause, with as much zeal and fervor, as some others have done, and with a proportionable blessing of heaven, they would have conquered all Christendom, and turned the world upside down. We have many ministers in the land that do not want for abilities, they are persons of bright parts and learning; they should consider how much is expected, and will be required of them, by their Lord and Master, and how much they might do for Christ, and what great honor, and how glorious a reward they might receive, if they had in their hearts a heavenly warmth, and divine heat, proportionable to their light.

With respect to candidates for the ministry, I will not undertake particularly to determine, what kind of examination or trial they should pass under, in order to their admission to that sacred work: but I think this is evident from the Scripture, that another sort of trial, with regard to their virtue and piety, is requisite, than is required in order to persons being admitted into the visible church. The apostle directs, that hands be laid suddenly on no man; but that they should first be tried, before they are admitted to the work of the ministry: but it is evident that persons were suddenly admitted, by baptism, into the visible church, from time to time, on their profession of their faith in Christ, without such caution and strictness in their probation. And it seems to me, those

would act very unadvisedly, that should enter on that great and sacred work, before they had comfortable satisfaction concerning themselves, that they have had a saving work of God on their souls.

And though it may be thought, that I go out of my proper sphere, to intermeddle in the affairs of the colleges, yet I will take the liberty of an Englishman, (that speaks his mind freely, concerning public affairs) and the liberty of a minister of Christ, (who doubtless may speak his mind as freely about things that concern the kingdom of his Lord and Master) to give my opinion, in some things, with respect to those societies; the original and main design of which is to train up persons, and fit them for the work of the ministry. And I would say in general, that it appears to me that care should be taken, some way or other, that those societies should be so regulated, that they should, in fact, be nurseries of piety. Otherwise, they are fundamentally ruined and undone, as to their main design, and most essential end. They ought to be so constituted, that vice and idleness should have no living there: they are intolerable in societies, whose main design is, to train up youth in Christian knowledge and eminent piety, to fit them to be pastors of the flock of the blessed Jesus. I have heretofore had some acquaintance with the affairs of a college, and experience of what belonged to its tuition and government; and I cannot but think that it is practicable enough, so to constitute such societies, that there should be no being there, without being virtuous, serious and diligent. It seems to me to be a reproach to the land, that ever it should be so with our colleges, that instead of being places of the greatest advantages for true piety, one cannot send a child there, without great danger of his being infected, as to his morals; as it has certainly, sometimes been with these societies: it is per-

fectly intolerable; and any thing should be done, rather than it should be so. If we pretend to have any colleges at all, under any notion of training up youth for the ministry, there should be some way found out, that should certainly prevent its being thus. To have societies for bringing persons up to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and to lead souls to heaven, and to have them places of so much infection, is the greatest nonsense and absurdity imaginable.

And, as thorough and effectual care should be taken that vice and idleness be not tolerated in these societies, so certainly, the design of them requires, that extraordinary means should be used in them, for training up the students in vital religion, and experimental and practical godliness; so that they should be holy societies, the very place should be as it were sacred: they should be, in the midst of the land, fountains of piety and holiness. There is a great deal of pains taken, to teach the scholars human learning; there ought to be as much, and more care, thoroughly to educate them in religion, and lead them to true and eminent holiness. If the main design of these nurseries, is to bring up persons to teach Christ, then it is of greatest importance that there should be care and pains taken, to bring those that are there educated, to the knowledge of Christ. It has been common in our public prayers, to call these societies, the schools of the prophets; and if they are schools, to train up young men to be prophets, certainly there ought to be extraordinary care there taken, to train them up to be Christians.

And I cannot see, why it is not on all accounts fit and convenient, for the governors and instructors of the colleges, particularly, singly and frequently to converse with the students, about the state of their souls. As is the practice of the Reverend Doctor

Doddridge, one of the most noted of the present dissenting ministers in England, who keeps an academy at Northampton, as he himself informs the Reverend Mr. Wadsworth of Hartford, in Connecticut, in a letter, dated at Northampton, March 6, 1741. The original of which letter I have seen, and have by me an extract of it, sent to me, by Mr. Wadsworth; which is as follows;

Through the divine goodness, I have every year, the pleasure to see some plants taken out of my nursery, and set in neighboring congregations; where they generally settle with a unanimous consent, and that to a very remarkable degree, in some very large, and once divided congregations. A circumstance, in which, I own and adore the hand of a wise and gracious God; and cannot but look upon it as a token for good. I have at present, a greater proportion of pious and ingenious youth under my care, than I ever before had. So that I hope the church may reasonably expect some considerable relief from hence, if God spare their lives a few years, and continue to them those gracious assistances, which he has hitherto mercifully imparted. I will not, Sir, trouble you at present, with a large account of my method of academic education: only would observe, that I think it of vast importance, to instruct them carefully in the Scriptures; and not only endeavor to establish them in the great truths of Christianity, but to labor to promote their practical influence on their hearts. For which purpose, I frequently converse with each of them alone, and conclude the conversation with prayer. This does indeed take up a great deal of time; but, I bless God, it is amply repaired, in the pleasure I have, in seeing my labor is not in vain in the Lord.

There are some that are not ministers, nor are concerned immediately in those things that appertain to their office, or in the education of persons for it, that are under great advantages to promote such a glorious work as this. Some laymen, though it be not their business publicly to exhort and teach, yet are in some respects, under greater advantage to encourage and forward this work, than ministers. As particularly great men, or men that are high in honor and influence. How much might such do, to encourage religion, and open the way for it to have free course, and bear down opposition, if they were but inclined? There is commonly a certain unhappy shyness, in great men, with respect to religion, as though they were ashamed of it, or at least, ashamed to do very much at it; whereby they dishonor, and doubtless, greatly provoke the King of kings, and very much wound religion among the common people. They are careful of their honor, and seem to be afraid of appearing openly forward and zealous in religion, as though it were what would debase their character, and expose them to contempt. But in this day of bringing up the ark, they ought to be like David, that great king of Israel, who made himself vile before the ark; and as he was the highest in honor and dignity, among God's people, so thought it became him to appear foremost, in the zeal and activity he manifested on that occasion; thereby animating and encouraging the whole congregation to praise the Lord, and rejoice before him, with all their might: and though it diminished him in the eyes of scoffing Michal, yet it did not at all abate the honor and esteem of the congregation of Israel, but advanced it; as appears by (2 Samuel 6:22).

Rich men have a talent in their hands, in the disposal and improvement of which, they might very much promote such a work as this, if they were so disposed. They are far beyond others under advantage to do good, and lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. What a thousand pities is it, that for want of a heart, they commonly have no share at all there, but heaven is peopled mostly with the poor of this world? One would think that our rich men, that call themselves Christians, might devise some notable things, to do with their money, to advance the kingdom of their professed Redeemer, and the prosperity of the souls of men, at this time of such extraordinary advantage for it. It seems to me, that in this age, most of us have but very narrow, penurious notions of Christianity, as it respects our use and disposal of our temporal goods. The primitive Christians had not such notions: they were trained up by the apostles in another way. God has greatly distinguished some of the inhabitants of New England, from others, in the abundance that he has given them of the good things of this life. If they could now be persuaded to lay out some considerable part of that which God has given them for the honor of God, and lay it up in heaven, instead of spending it for their own honor, or laying it up for their posterity, they would not repent of it afterwards. How liberally did the heads of the tribes contribute of their wealth, at the setting up the tabernacle, though it was in a barren wilderness? These are the days of the erecting the tabernacle of God amongst us. We have a particular account how the goldsmiths and the merchants helped to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3:32). The days are coming spoken of in Scripture, and I believe not very far off, when the sons of Zion shall come from far, bringing their silver and their gold with them, to the name of

the Lord their God, and to the holy one of Israel; and when the merchants of the earth, shall trade for Christ, more than for themselves, and their merchandise and hire shall be holiness to the Lord, and shall not be treasured, or laid up for posterity, but shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing; and when the ships of Tarshish shall bring the wealth of the distant parts of the earth, to the place of God's sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious; and the abundance of the sea shall be converted to the use of God's church, and she shall suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breasts of kings. The days are coming, when the great and rich men of the world, shall bring their honor and glory into the church, and shall, as it were, strip themselves, to spread their garments under Christ's feet, as he enters triumphantly into Jerusalem; and when those that will not do so shall have no glory, and their silver and gold shall be cankered, and their garments moth-eaten; for the saints shall then inherit the earth, and they shall reign on earth, and those that honor God he will honor, and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.

If some of our rich men would give one quarter of their estates to promote this work, they would act a little, as if they were designed for the kingdom of heaven, and a little as rich men will act by and by, that shall be partakers of the spiritual wealth and glories of that kingdom.

Great things might be done for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, at this day, by those that have ability, by establishing funds, for the support and propagation of religion; by supporting some that are eminently qualified with gifts and grace, in preaching the gospel in certain parts of the country, that are more

destitute of the means of grace; in searching out children, of promising abilities, and their hearts full of love to Christ, but of poor families, (as doubtless there are such now in the land) and bringing them up for the ministry; and in distributing books, that are remarkably fitted to promote vital religion, and have a great tendency to advance this work; or if they would only bear the trouble, expense and loss of sending such books into various parts of the land, to be sold, it might be an occasion that ten times so many of those books should be bought, as otherwise would be; and in establishing and supporting schools, in poor towns and villages; which might be done on such a foundation, as not only to bring up children in common learning, but also, might very much tend to their conviction and conversion, and being trained up in vital piety; and doubtless something might be done this way, in old towns, and more populous places, that might have a great tendency to the flourishing of religion, in the rising generation.

But I would now proceed to mention some things, that ought to be done, at such a day as this, that concern all in general.

And here, the first thing I shall mention, is fasting and prayer. It seems to me, that the circumstances of the present work do loudly call God's people to abound in this; whether they consider the experience God has lately given them, of the worth of his presence, and of the blessed fruits of the effusions of his Spirit, to excite them to pray for the continuance and increase, and greater extent of such blessings; or whether they consider the great encouragement God has lately given them, to pray for the outpourings of his Spirit, and the carrying on this work, by the great manifestations he has lately made, of the freeness and riches of his grace; and how much there is, in what we have seen of the glorious works

of God's power and grace, to put us in mind of the yet greater things of this nature, that he has spoken of in his word, and to excite our longings for those things, and hopes of their approach; or whether we consider the great opposition that Satan makes against this work, and the many difficulties with which it is clogged, and the distressing circumstances that some parts of God's church in this land are under at this day, on one account and another.

So is God's will, through his wonderful grace, that the prayers of his saints should be one great and principal means of carrying on the designs of Christ's kingdom in the world. When God has something very great to accomplish for his church, it is his will, that there should precede it, the extraordinary prayers of his people; as is manifest by (Ezekiel 36:37): I will yet, for this, be inquired of, by the house of Israel, to do it for them; together with the context. And it is revealed that, when God is about to accomplish great things for his church, he will begin by remarkably pouring out the Spirit of grace and supplication (Zechariah 12:10). If we are not to expect that the devil should go out of a particular person, that is under a bodily possession, without extraordinary prayer, or prayer and fasting; how much less, should we expect to have him cast out of the land, and the world, without it.

I am sensible that considerable has been done in duties of this nature, in some places; but I do not think so much as God, in the present dispensations of his providence calls for. I should think the people of God in this land, at such a time as this is, would be in the way of their duty, to do three times so much at fasting and prayer as they do; not only, nor principally, for the pouring out of the Spirit on those towns or places where they belong; but that God would appear for his church, and in mercy to miserable men, to

carry on his work in the land, and in the world of mankind, and to fulfill the things that he has spoken of in his word, that his church has been so long wishing and hoping and waiting for. They that make mention of the Lord, at this day, ought not to keep silence, and should give God no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, agreeable to (Isaiah 62:6-7). Before the first great outpouring of the Spirit of God, on the Christian church, which began at Jerusalem, the church of God gave themselves to incessant prayer (Acts 1:13-14). There is a time spoken of, wherein God will remarkably and wonderfully appear, for the deliverance of his church from all her enemies, and when he will avenge his own elect: and Christ reveals that this will be in answer to their incessant prayers, or crying day and night (Luke 18:7). In Israel, the day of atonement, which was their great day of fasting and prayer, preceded and made way for the glorious and joyful feast of tabernacles. When Christ is mystically born into the world, to rule over all nations, it is represented in the 12th chapter of Revelation, as being in consequence of the church's crying, and travailing in birth, and being pained to be delivered. One thing here intended, doubtless is, her crying and agonizing in prayer.

God seems now, at this very time, to be waiting for this from us. When God is about to bestow some great blessing on his church, it is often his manner, in the first place, so to order things in his providence, as to show his church their great need of it, and to bring them into distress for want of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to him for it. And let us consider God's present dispensations towards his church in this land: a glorious work of his grace has been begun and carried on; and God has, of late, suffered innumerable difficulties to arise, that do in a great measure

clog and hinder it, and bring many of God's dear children into great distress; and yet does not wholly forsake the work of his hand; there are remarkable tokens of his presence still to be seen, here and there; as though he was not forward to forsake us, and (if I may so say) as though he had a mind to carry on his work; but only was waiting for something that he expected in us, as requisite in order to it. And we have a great deal of reason to think, that one thing at least is, that we should further acknowledge the greatness and necessity of such a mercy, and our dependence on God for it, in earnest and importunate prayers to him. And by the many errors that have been run into, and the wounds we have thereby given ourselves and the cause that we would promote, and the mischief and confusion we have thereby made, God has hitherto been remarkably showing us our great and universal dependence on him, and exceeding need of his help and grace: which should engage our cries to him for it.

There is no way that Christians in a private capacity can do so much to promote the work of God, and advance the kingdom of Christ, as by prayer. By this even women, children and servants may have a public influence. Let persons be never so weak, and never so mean, and under never so poor advantages to do much for Christ, and the souls of men, otherwise; yet, if they have much of the Spirit of grace and supplication, in this way, they may have power with him that is infinite in power, and has the government of the whole world: and so a poor man in his cottage may have a blessed influence all over the world. God is, if I may so say, at the command of the prayer of faith; and in this respect is, as it were, under the power of his people; as princes, they have power with God, and prevail: though they may be private persons, their

prayers are put up in the name of a mediator, that is a public person, being the head of the whole church, and the Lord of the universe: and if they have a great sense of the importance of eternal things, and concern for the precious souls of men, yet they need not regret it, that they are not preachers; they may go in their earnestness and agonies of soul, and pour out their souls before one that is able to do all things; before him they may speak as freely as ministers; they have a great high priest, through whom they may come boldly at all times, and may vent themselves before a prayer-hearing Father, without any restraint.

If the people of God, at this day, instead of spending time in fruitless disputing, and talking about opposers, and judging of them, and animadverting upon the unreasonableness of their talk and behavior, and its inconsistency with true experience, would be more silent in this way, and open their mouths much more before God, and spend more time in fasting and prayer, they would be more in the way of a blessing. And if some Christians in the land, that have been complaining of their ministers, and struggling in vain to deliver themselves, from the difficulties they have complained of, under their ministry, had said and acted less before men, and had applied themselves with all their might to cry to God for their ministers, had as it were risen, and stormed heaven with their humble, fervent and incessant prayers for them, they would have been much more in the way of success.

God in his providence, appearing in the present state of things, does especially call on his people in New England to be very much in praying to him for the pouring out of the Spirit upon ministers in the land. For though it is not for us to determine, concerning particular ministers, how much they have of the Spirit of God; yet

in the general, it is apparent, that there is, at this day, need of very great degrees of the presence of God with the ministry in New England, much greater degrees of it than has hitherto been granted; they need it for themselves, and the church of God stands in extreme need of it.

In days of fasting and prayer, wherein the whole church or congregation is concerned, if the whole day, besides what is spent in our families, was not spent in the meeting-house, but part of it in particular praying companies or societies, it would have a tendency to animate and engage devotion, more than if the whole day were spent in public, where the people are no way active themselves in the worship, any otherwise than as they join with the ministers. The inhabitants of many of our towns are now divided into particular praying societies, most of the people, young and old, have voluntarily associated themselves, in distinct companies, for mutual assistance, in social worship, in private houses: what I intend therefore is, that days of prayer should be spent partly in these distinct praying companies. Such a method of keeping a fast as this, has several times been proved, namely, in the forenoon, after the duties of the family and closet, as early as might be, all the people of the congregation have gathered in their particular religious societies; companies of men by themselves, and companies of women by themselves; young men by themselves, and young women by themselves; and companies of children, in all parts of the town, by themselves, as many as were capable of social religious exercises; the boys by themselves, and girls by themselves: and about the middle of the day, at an appointed hour, all have met together in the house of God, to offer up public prayers, and to hear a sermon suitable to the occasion: and then, they have retired

from the house of God again, into their private societies, and spent the remaining part of the day in praying together there, excepting so much as was requisite for the duties of the family and closet, in their own houses. And it has been found to be of great benefit, to assist and engage the minds of the people in the duties of the day.

I have often thought it would be a thing very desirable, and very likely to be followed with a great blessing, if there could be some contrivance, that there should be an agreement of all God's people in America, that are well affected to this work, to keep a day of fasting and prayer to God; wherein we should all unite on the same day, in humbling ourselves before God for our past long continued lukewarmness not omitting humiliation for the errors that so many of God's people that have been zealously affected towards this work, through their infirmity and remaining blindness and corruption, have run into; and together with thanksgivings to God, for so glorious and wonderful a display of his power and grace, in the late outpourings of his Spirit, to address the Father of mercies, with prayers and supplications, and earnest cries, that he would guide and direct his own people, and that he would continue, and still carry on this work, and more abundantly and extensively pour out his Spirit; and particularly that he would pour out his Spirit upon ministers; and that he would bow the heavens and come down, and erect his glorious kingdom through the earth. Some perhaps may think that its being all on the same day, is a circumstance of no great consequence; but I cannot be of that mind: such a circumstance makes the union and agreement of God's people in his worship the more visible, and puts the greater honor upon God, and would have a great tendency to assist and enliven the devotions of Christians: it seems to me, it would mightily encourage

and animate God's saints, in humbly and earnestly seeking to God, for such blessings which concerns them all; and that it would be much for the rejoicing of all, to think, that at the same time, such multitudes of God's dear children, far and near, were sending up their cries to the same common Father, for the same mercies. Christ speaks of agreement in asking, as what contributes to the prevalence of the prayers of his people (Matthew 18:19): Again I say to you, that if any two of you, shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. If the agreement, or united purpose and appointment of but two of God's children, would contribute much to the prevalence of their prayers, how much more the agreement of so many thousands? Christ delights greatly in the union of his people, as appears by his prayer in the 17th of John: and especially is the appearance of their union in worship, lovely and attractive to him.

I doubt not but such a thing as I have now mentioned is practicable, without a great deal of trouble: some considerable number of ministers might meet together, and draw up the proposal, wherein a certain day should be pitched upon, at a sufficient distance, endeavoring therein to avoid any other public day, that might interfere with the design, in any of the provinces, and the business of the day should be particularly mentioned; and these proposals should be published, and sent abroad, into all parts, with a desire, that as many ministers as are disposed to fall in with them, would propose the matter to their congregations, and having taken their consent, would subscribe their names, together with the places of which they are ministers, and send back the proposals thus subscribed, to the printer; (the hands of many ministers

might be to one paper) and the printer having received the papers, thus subscribed, from all the provinces, might print the proposals again, with all the names; thus they might be sent abroad again, with the names, that God's people might know who are united with them in the affair: one of the ministers of Boston might be desired to have the oversight of the printing and dispersing the proposals. In such a way, perhaps, might be fulfilled, in some measure, such a general mourning and supplication of God's people, as is spoken of (Zechariah 12, at the latter end), with which the church's glorious day is to be introduced. And such a day might be something like the day of atonement in Israel, before the joyful feast of tabernacles.

One thing more I would mention concerning fasting and prayer, wherein I think there has been a neglect in ministers; and that is, that although they recommend, and much insist on the duty of secret prayer, in their preaching; so little is said about secret fasting. It is a duty recommended by our Savior to his followers, just in like manner as secret prayer is; as may be seen by comparing the fifth and sixth verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew with verses 16, 17, 18. Though I do not suppose that secret fasting is to be practiced in a stated manner, and steady course, as secret prayer, yet it seems to me, it is a duty that all professing Christians should practice, and frequently practice. There are many occasions, of both a spiritual and temporal nature, that do properly require it; and there are many particular mercies, that we desire for ourselves or friends, that it would be proper, in this manner, to seek of God.

Another thing I would also mention, wherein it appears to me that there has been an omission, with respect to the external worship of God. There has been of late, a great increase of preaching the word, and a great increase of social prayer, and a great increase of singing praises: these external duties of religion are attended, much more frequently than they used to be; yet I cannot understand that there is any increase of the administration of the Lord's supper, or that God's people do any more frequently commemorate the dying love of their Redeemer, in this sacred memorial of it, than they used to do: though I do not see why an increase of love to Christ, should not dispose Christians, as much to increase in this, as in those other duties; or why it is not as proper, that Christ's disciples should abound in this duty, in this joyful season, which is spiritually supper-time, a feast-day with God's saints, wherein Christ is so abundantly manifesting his dying love to souls, and is dealing forth so liberally of the precious fruits of his death. It seems plain by the Scripture, that the primitive Christians were accustomed to celebrate this memorial of the sufferings of their dear Redeemer every Lord's day: and so I believe it will be again in the church of Christ, in days that are approaching. And whether we attend this holy and sweet ordinance so often now, or not, yet I cannot but think it would become us, at such a time as this, to attend it much oftener than is commonly done in the land.

But another thing I would mention, which it is of much greater importance, that we should attend to; and that is the duty, that is incumbent upon God's people at this day, to take heed, that while they abound in external duties of devotion, such as praying, hearing, singing, and attending religious meetings, there be a proportionable care to abound in moral duties, such as acts of righteous-

ness, truth, meekness, forgiveness and love towards our neighbor; which are of much greater importance in the sight of God, than all the externals of his worship: which our Savior was particularly careful, that men should be well aware of (Matthew 9:13): But go, and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. And (Matthew 12:7): But if you had known what this means, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless.

The internal acts and principles of the worship of God, or the worship of the heart, in the love and fear of God, trust in God, and resignation to God, etc. are the most essential and important of all duties of religion whatever; for therein consists the essence of all religion. But of this inward religion, there are two sorts of external manifestations or expressions. The one sort, are outward acts of worship, such as meeting in religious assemblies, attending sacraments, and other outward institutions, and honoring God with gestures, such as bowing, or kneeling before him, or with words, in speaking honorably of him, in prayer, praise, or religious conference. And the other sort, are the expressions of our love to God, by obeying his moral commands, of self-denial, righteousness, meekness, and Christian love, in our behavior among men. And the latter are of vastly the greatest importance in the Christian life. God makes little account of the former, in comparison of them. They are abundantly more insisted on, by the prophets, in the Old Testament, and Christ and his apostles, in the New. When these two kinds of duties are spoken of together, the latter are evermore greatly preferred. As in (Isaiah 1:12-18; Amos 5:21 etc.; Micah 6:7-8; Isaiah 58:5-7; Zechariah 7, ten first verses; Jeremiah 2, seven first verses; Matthew 15:3 etc.) Often, when the times were very

corrupt in Israel, the [reconstructed: people] abounded in the former kind of duties, but were in such times, always notoriously deficient in the latter; as the prophets complain (Isaiah 58:1-4; Jeremiah 6:13, compared with verse 20). Hypocrites and self-righteous persons, do much more commonly abound in the former kind of duties, than the latter; as Christ remarks of the Pharisees (Matthew 23:14, 25, 34). When the Scripture directs us to show our faith by our works, it is principally the latter sort are intended; as appears by (James 2:8 to the end; 1 John 2:3, 7-11). And we are to be judged at the last day, especially by these latter sort of works; as is evident by the account we have of the day of judgment, in the 25th of Matthew. External acts of worship, in words and gestures, and outward forms, are of little use, but as signs of something else, or as they are a profession of inward worship: they are not so properly showing our religion by our deeds; for they are only a showing our religion by words, or an outward profession. But he that shows religion in the other sort of duties, shows it in something more than a profession of words, he shows it in deeds. And though deeds may be hypocritical, as well as words; yet in themselves they are of greater importance, for they are much more profitable to ourselves and our neighbor. We cannot express our love to God, by doing any thing that is profitable to God; God would therefore have us do it in those things that are profitable to our neighbors, whom he has constituted his receivers: our goodness extends not to God, but to our fellow Christians. The latter sort of duties, put greater honor upon God, because there is greater self-denial in them. The external acts of worship, consisting in bodily gestures, words and sounds are the cheapest part of religion, and least contrary to our lusts. The difficulty of thorough, external religion, does not lie in

them. Let wicked men enjoy their covetousness, and their pride, their malice, envy and revenge, and their sensuality and voluptuousness, in their behavior amongst men, and they will be willing to compound the matter with God, and submit to what forms of worship you please, and as often as you please; as is manifest in the Jews of [reconstructed: former] days of the prophets, and the Pharisees in Christ's time, and the papists and Mahometans at this day.

At a time, when there is an appearance of the approach of any glorious revival of God's church, God does especially call his professing people to the practice of moral duties (Isaiah 56:1): Thus says the Lord; keep judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. So when John preached, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and cried to the people, Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, as we have an account (Luke 3:4), the people asked him, What they should do? He answers, He that has two coats, let him impart to him that has none, and he that has meat, let him do likewise. The publicans said, What shall we do? He answers, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers asked him, What shall we do? He replies, Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages (Luke 3:10-14).

God's people, at such a time as this, ought especially to abound in deeds of charity, or almsgiving. We generally, in these days, seem to fall far below the true spirit and practice of Christianity, with regard to this duty, and seem to have but little notion of it, so far as I can understand the New Testament. At a time when God is so liberal of spiritual things, we ought not to be strait-handed towards him, and sparing of our temporal things. So far as I can

judge by the Scripture, there is no external duty whatever, by which persons will be so much in the way, not only of receiving temporal benefits, but so spiritual blessings, the influences of God's [reconstructed: Holy] Spirit in the heart, in divine discoveries and spiritual consolations. I think it would be unreasonable to understand those promises, made to this duty, in the 58th chapter of Isaiah, in a sense exclusive of spiritual discoveries and comforts (Isaiah 58:7 etc.): Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out, to your house? When you see the naked that you cover him and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rearward; then shall you call, and the Lord shall answer, you shall cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If you take away from the midst of you, the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if you draw out the soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall your light rise in obscurity, and your darkness be as the noon-day; and the Lord shall guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and make fat your bones; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. So, that giving to the poor is the way to receive spiritual blessings, is manifest by (Psalm 112:4 etc.): To the upright, there arises light in the darkness; he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous: a good man shows favor and lends, he will guide his affairs with discretion; surely he shall not be moved forever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established, he shall not be afraid,

until he sees his desire upon his enemies: he has dispersed, he has given to the poor; his horn shall be exalted with honor. That this is one likely means to obtain assurance, is evident by (1 John 3:18-19): My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

We have a remarkable instance in Abraham, of God's rewarding deeds of charity with sweet discoveries of himself, when he had been remarkably charitable to his brother Lot, and the people that he had redeemed out of captivity with him, by exposing his life to rescue them, and had retaken not only the persons, but all the goods, the spoil that had been taken by Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and the king of Sodom offered him, that if he would give him the persons, he might take the goods to himself, Abraham refused to take any thing, even so much as a thread or shoelatchet, but returned all. He might have greatly enriched himself, if he had taken the spoils to himself, for it was the spoils of five wealthy kings, and their kingdoms, yet he coveted it not; the king and people of Sodom were now become objects of charity, having been stripped of all by their enemies, therefore Abraham generously bestowed all upon them; as we have an account in (Genesis 14, four last verses). And he was soon rewarded for it, by a blessed discovery that God made of himself to him; as we have an account in the next words, After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram, in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram, I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward. I am your shield, to defend you in battle, as I have now done; and though you have

charitably refused to take any reward, for exposing your life, to rescue this people, yet fear not, you shall not lose, you shall have a reward, I am your exceeding great reward.

When Christ was upon earth he was poor, and an object of charity; and during the time of his public ministry, he was supported by the charity of some of his followers, and particularly certain women, of whom we read (Luke 8:2-3). And these women were rewarded, by being peculiarly favored with gracious manifestations, which Christ made of himself to them. He discovered himself first to them after his resurrection, before the twelve disciples: they first saw a vision of glorious angels, who spoke comfortably to them; and then Christ appeared to them, and spoke peace to them, saying, All hail, be not afraid; and they were admitted to come, and hold him by the feet, and worship him (Matthew 28). And though we cannot now be charitable in this way, to Christ in person, who in his exalted state, is infinitely above the need of our charity; yet we may be charitable to Christ now, as well as they then; for though Christ is not here, yet he has left others in his room, to be his receivers; and they are the poor. Christ is yet poor in his members; and he that gives to them, lends to the Lord: and Christ tells us that he shall look on what is done to them, as done to him.

Rebekah, in her marriage with Isaac, was undoubtedly a remarkable type of the church, in her espousals to the Lord Jesus. But she found her husband, in doing deeds of charity, agreeable to the prayer of Abraham's servant, who prayed that this might be the thing that might distinguish and mark out the virgin, that was to be Isaac's wife. So Cornelius was brought to the knowledge of Christ, in this way. He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and

prayed to God always. And an angel appeared to him, and said to him, Your prayers and your alms are come up for a memorial before God; and now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter, etc. (Acts 10, at the beginning). And we have an account in the following parts of the chapter, how God, by Peter's preaching, revealed Christ to Cornelius and his family, and of the Holy Ghost's descending upon them, and filling their hearts with joy, and their mouths with praises.

Some may possibly object that for persons to do deeds of charity, in hope of obtaining spiritual blessings and comforts in this way, would seem to show a self-righteous spirit, as though they would offer something to God, to purchase these favors. But if this be a good objection, it may be made against every duty whatever. All external duties of the first table will be excluded by it, as well as those of the second. First-table-duties have as direct a tendency to raise self-righteous persons' expectations of receiving something from God, on account of them, as second-table-duties; and on some accounts more, for those duties are more immediately offered to God, and therefore persons are more ready to expect something from God for them. But no duty is to be neglected, for fear of making a righteousness of it. And I have always observed, that those professors that are most partial in their duty, exact and abundant in external duties of the first table, and slack as to those of the second, are the most self-righteous.

If God's people in this land, were once brought to abound in such deeds of love, as much as in praying, hearing, singing, and religious meetings and conference, it would be a most blessed omen: there is nothing would have a greater tendency to bring the God of love down from heaven to the earth: so amiable would be the sight,

in the eyes of our loving and exalted Redeemer, that it would soon as it were fetch him down from his throne in heaven, to set up his tabernacle with men on the earth, and dwell with them. I do not remember ever to have read of any remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, that continued any long time, but what was attended with an abounding in this duty. So we know it was with that great effusion of the Spirit that began at Jerusalem in the apostles' days: and so in the late remarkable revival of religion in Saxony, which began by the labors of the famous Professor Franck, and has now been carried on for above thirty years, and has spread its happy influences into many parts of the world it was begun, and has been carried on, by a wonderful practice of this duty. And the remarkable blessing that God has given Mr. Whitefield, and the great success with which he has crowned him, may well be thought to be very much owing to his laying out himself so abundantly in charitable designs. And it is foretold, that God's people shall abound in this day, in the time of the great outpouring of the Spirit that shall be in the latter days (Isaiah 32:5, 8): The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. But the liberal devises liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.

To promote a reformation, with respect to all sorts of duties, among a professing people, one proper means, and that which is recommended by frequent Scripture examples, is their solemn, public renewing their covenant with God. And doubtless it would greatly tend to promote this work in the land, if the congregations of God's people could generally be brought to this. If a draft of a covenant should be made by their ministers, wherein there should be an express mention of those particular duties, that the people of the respective congregations have been observed to be most prone

to neglect, and those particular sins that they have heretofore especially fallen into, or that it may be apprehended they are especially in danger of, whereby they may prevent or resist the motions of God's Spirit, and the matter should be fully proposed and explained to the people, and they have sufficient opportunity given them for consideration, and then they should be led, all that are capable of understanding, particularly to subscribe the covenant, and also should all appear together, on a day of prayer and fasting, publicly to own it before God in his house, as their vow to the Lord; hereby congregations of Christians would do that which would be beautiful, and would put honor upon God, and be very profitable to themselves.

Such a thing as this, was attended with a very wonderful blessing in Scotland, and followed with a great increase of the blessed tokens of the presence of God, and remarkable outpourings of his Spirit; as the author of the fulfilling of the Scripture informs, page 186, fifth edition.

A people must be taken, when they are in a good mood, when considerable religious impressions are prevailing among them; otherwise they will hardly be induced to this; but innumerable will be their objections and cavils against it.

One thing more I would mention, which if God should still carry on this work, would tend much to promote it, and that is, that a history should be published once a month, or once a fortnight, of the progress of it, by one of the ministers of Boston, who are near the press, and are most conveniently situated, to receive accounts from all parts. It has been found by experience, that the tidings of remarkable effects of the power and grace of God, in any place, tend greatly to awaken and engage the minds of persons, in

other places. It is great pity therefore, but that some means should be used, for the most speedy, most extensive and certain giving information of such things, and that the country be not left, only to the slow, partial and doubtful information, and false representations of common report.

Thus I have, (I hope, by the help of God,) finished what I proposed. I have taken the more pains in it, because it appears to me, that now God is giving us the most happy season to attempt a universal reformation, that ever was given in New England. And it is a thousand pities, that we should fail of that which would be so glorious, for want of being sensible of our opportunity, or being aware of those things that tend to hinder it, or our taking improper courses to obtain it, or not being sensible in what way God expects we should seek it. If it should please God to bless any means, for the convincing the country of his hand in this work, and bringing them fully and freely to acknowledge his glorious power and grace in it, and engage with one heart and soul, and by due methods, to endeavor to promote it, it would be a dispensation of divine providence, that would have a most glorious aspect, happily signifying the approach of great and glorious things to the church of God, and justly causing us to hope, that Christ would speedily come, to set up his kingdom of light, holiness, peace and joy on earth, as is foretold in his word. Amen; even so come Lord Jesus!

FINIS.

THANKS FOR READING



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