

An
ACCOUNT
OF THE
Revival of Religion in Boston
IN THE YEARS 1740-1-2-3



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.....
BY THOMAS PRINCE,
One of the then Pastors of the Old South Church.
.....

“We have heard with our ears, O God! our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.—Psalm xlv, 1.”

“Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.—Jeremiah vi, 16.”



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ADVERTISEMENT.

Presuming that it would be highly gratifying to many at the present day, to be made acquainted with the views of our fathers on the subject of Revivals of Religion, the following Tract, from “the learned and judicious Mr. Prince,” is now reprinted and submitted to the Christian Public, with the hope, that it may be attended with the blessing of Almighty God, and contribute to the promotion of “pure and undefiled religion,”

AN
ACCOUNT, &c.

IT is, I hope, for the glory of God and the public good, that I have drawn up the following Narrative of the late Revival of Religion here, according to the best of my remembrance.

And that the grace and power of God may appear the more illustrious, it seems fit to give a brief and previous history of the general state of religion here, even from my returning hither in 1717, after above eight years travelling abroad, to the time of this revival at the end of 1740.

On my said return, there were five Congregational churches settled with pastors in this town; though now they are increased to five more. The pastors were Dr. Increase and Cotton Mather of the North Church; Mr. Wadsworth, with Mr. Foxcroft, chosen his colleague of the Old Church; Mr. Colman and Cooper of the Church in Brattle-street; Mr. Sewall of the South Church; and Mr. Webb of the New North. All most happily agreeing: in the doctrines of grace, as laid down in the shorter and larger Catechisms and Confession of Faith, drawn out of Scripture by the venerable Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as well as the Confession of Faith agreed to by our New-England Synods, and almost the same with the other. And this town and country were in great tranquillity both civil and religious. But though there were

many bright examples of piety in every seat and order yet there was a general complaint among the pious and elderly persons, of the great decay of godliness in the lives and conversations of people both in the town and land, from what they had seen in the days of their fathers. There was scarce a prayer made in public by the elder ministers without some heavy lamentation of this decay in their sermons also they frequently mourned it: and the younger ministers commonly followed their example therein.

Soon after my arrival I was called to preach to the South Church: and in 1718, ordained their co-pastor with my dear class-mate the Rev. Mr. Sewall, who had been ordained to that office about five years before.

In the spring of 1721, the eight ministers who carried on the public Lecture, taking into consideration the lamentable defect of piety among our young people, agreed to preach a Course of Sermons at the Lecture to them. The audiences were considerably crowded: and while the word of God was loudly sounding, he lifted up his awful rod, by sending the small-pox into the town, which began to spread to our general consternation: scarce a quarter of the people being thought to have had it; and none of the numerous youth under eighteen years of age; it being so many years since that fatal pestilence had prevailed among us. The sermons were quickly printed, with another added by the venerable Dr. Increase Mather, for further benefit. Many of the younger people especially were then greatly awakened: and many hundreds of them quickly alter swept into eternity.

In the spring of 1722, the distemper left us: but so little reformed were the surviving youth, that at the end of the summer, the pastors agreed to move their churches to keep in each successively "a day of prayer and fasting, to ask of God the effusion of his Holy Spirit, particularly on the rising generation." And the churches readily received the motion.

But though a solemnity appeared on many, yet it pleased the holy God to humble us and sparingly to give the blessing.

And though in the spring of 1726, in an awakening view of the deplorable decay of family religion, as a principal source of all other decays, the pastors went into a course of Public Lectures on that important subject; yet

they had the further sorrow to see those Lectures too thinly attended to expect much benefit from them.*

But after all our endeavors, both our security and degeneracy seemed in general to grow, until the night after the Lord's Day, October 29, 1727; when the glorious God arose and fearfully shook the earth through all these countries. By terrible things in righteousness He began to answer us, as the God of our salvation.

On the next morning a very full assembly met at the North Church, for the proper exercises on so extraordinary an occasion. At five in the evening a crowded concourse assembled at the Old Church: and multitudes unable to get in, immediately flowed to the South, and in a few minutes filled that also. At lieutenant-governor Dummer's motion, (who was then our Commander-in-Chief,) the Thursday of the same week was kept as a day of *extraordinary fasting and prayer* in all the churches in Boston; not merely to intreat for sparing mercy, but also to implore the grace and Spirit of God to come down and help us to a sincere repentance and returning to him. And as the houses of public worship were greatly crowded, the people were very attentive.

The ministers endeavored to set in with this extraordinary and awakening work of God in nature, and to preach his word in the most awakening manner; to show the people the vast difference between conviction and conversion, between a forced reformation either in acts of piety, justice, charity, or sobriety, by the mere power of fear, and a genuine change of the very frame and relish of the heart by the supernatural efficacy of the Holy Spirit; to lead them on to true conversion and unfeigned faith in Christ, and to guard them against deceiving themselves.

In all our congregations, many seemed to be awakened and reformed: and professing repentance of their sins

* The several subjects were these:—Dr. C. Mather, Job viii, 6, on household piety in general. Mr. Colman, 2 Sam. vi, 20, on family worship. Mr. Thacher, Gen. xviii, 19, on family instruction. Mr. Sewall, 1 Sam iii, 13, on family government. Mr. Prince, Lev. xxiii, 3, on family sabbatizing. Mr. Webb, Psalm ci, 2, on family example. Mr. Cooper, Ezekiel xvi, 20, on improving the covenant relating to children. Mr. Foxcroft, Col. iii, 18, 19, on conjugal duties. Mr. Checkley, Col. iii, 20, 22-24, on the duties of children and servants.—Mr. Waldron, Prov. xiv, 11, the character and doom of wicked houses. Mr. Gee, Eccl. vii, 14, family Providences, especially afflicted, improved.

and faith in Christ, entered into solemn covenant with God, and came into full communion with our several churches. In ours, within eight months after, were about eighty added to our communicants. But then comparatively few of these applied to me to discourse about their souls until they came to offer themselves to the Communion, or afterwards: the most of those who came to me seemed to have passed through their convictions before their coming to converse with me about approaching to the Lord's Table: though I doubt not but considerable numbers were at that time savingly converted.

However the goodness of many seemed as the morning cloud and early dew which quickly passes away. A spiritual slumber seemed soon to seize the generality; even the wise as well as foolish virgins. And though in 1729, the small pox came into town and prevailed again; yet in a few months left us, both unawakened, ungrateful, and unreformed. The Holy Spirit awfully withheld his influence in convincing and converting sinners, and enlivening others. In three or four years we rather grew to a greater declension than ever: and so alarmed were the pastors of the town with the dismal view, that in the summer of 1734, they agreed to propose another Course of Days of Prayer and Fasting among our several congregations: "To humble ourselves before God for our unfruitfulness under the means of grace, and to ask the effusion of his Spirit to revive the power of godliness among us:" which our people readily complied with and observed.

And though the sovereign God was pleased to give us now and then a sprinkling, for which His name be praised; yet the parching drought continued, and He made us wait for a larger effusion.

In this year the terrible throat-distemper broke out and spread among the youth in the easterly parts of this country, and destroyed multitudes. In some towns it cut off almost all the children. The next year it came into Boston, and began to destroy and strike us with a general awe: but gently treated us, and the next year left us; to melt our hearts into a grateful repentance. And yet we generally seemed to grow more stupid and hard than ever,

About this time indeed, viz. 1735, there was a most remarkable revival of religion in the westerly parts of the country: not only at Northampton, but also in about twelve other congregations in the county of Hampshire,

and in about fourteen others in the neighboring colony of Connecticut. And the solemn rumor of that surprising work of God resounding through the country, was a special, means of exciting great thoughtfulness of heart in many irreligious people; and great joy in others, both in the view of what the mighty power and grace of God had wrought, and in the hopeful prospect that this blessed work begun would go on and spread throughout the land. And as this excited the extraordinary prayers of many, so it seemed to prepare the way in divers places for that more extensive revival of religion which in five years after followed. But, in the mean while, the general decay of piety seemed to increase among us in Boston. And for the congregation I preach to; though for several years some few offered themselves to our Communion, yet but few came to me in concern about their souls before. And so I perceive it was in others: and I remember some of the ministers were wont to express themselves as greatly discouraged with the growing declension both in principle and practice, especially among the rising generation. From the year 1738, we had received accounts of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, as a very pious young minister of the Church of England, rising up in the spirit of the Reformers, and preaching their doctrines first in England and then in America, with surprising power and success: which raised desires in great numbers among us to see and hear him. And having received invitations to come hither; he, from Georgia and South-Carolina, arrived at Rhode-Island, on Lord's Day, Sept. 14, 1740, and the Thursday evening after came to Boston.

Nest day, in the afternoon, Dr. Sewall and I made him a visit: found several ministers and other gentlemen of the town with him, and that Dr. Colman and Mr. Cooper had engaged him to preach in the afternoon in their House of public worship: and in about an hour we went to the place, which quickly crowded with two or three thousand people. He began with a short and fervent prayer: and after singing, took his text from John xvii, 2. Gave us a plain, weighty, regular discourse: representing that all our learning and morality will never save us; and without an experimental knowledge of God in Christ, we must perish in hell for ever. He spake as became the oracles of God in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. And especially when he came to his ap-

plication, he addressed himself to the audience in such a tender, earnest and moving manner, exciting us to come and be acquainted with the dear Redeemer, as melted the assembly into tears.

Next morning, at Dr. Sewall's and my desire, he preached at the South Church, to further acceptance.

He spake with a mighty sense of God, eternity, the immortality and preciousness of the souls of his hearers, of their original corruption, and of the extreme danger the unregenerate are in; with the nature and absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost; and of believing in Christ, in order to our pardon, justification, yielding an acceptable obedience, and obtaining salvation from hell, and an entrance into heaven. His doctrine was plainly that of the Reformers: declaring against putting our good works or morality in the room of Christ's righteousness, or their having any hand in our justification, or being indeed pleasing to God while we are totally un-sanctified, acting from corrupt principles, and unreconciled enemies to him: which occasioned some to mistake him as if he opposed morality. But he insisted on it, that the tree of the heart is by original sin exceedingly corrupted, and must be made good by regeneration, that so the fruits proceeding from it may be good likewise: that where the heart is renewed, it ought and will be careful to maintain good works; that if any be not habitually so careful, who think themselves renewed, they deceive their own souls: and even the most improved in holiness, as well as others, must entirely depend on the righteousness of Christ for the acceptance of their persons and services. And though now and then he dropped some expressions that were not so accurate and guarded as we should expect from aged and long studied ministers; yet I had the satisfaction to observe his readiness with great modesty and thankfulness to receive correction as soon as offered.

In short, he was a most importunate wooer of souls to come to Christ for the enjoyment of him, and all his benefits. He distinctly applied his exhortations to the elderly people, the middle aged, the young, the Indians and negroes; and had a most winning way of addressing them. He affectionately prayed for our magistrates, ministers, colleges, candidates for the ministry, and churches, as well as people in general: and before he left us, he in a

public and moving manner observed to the people, how sorry he was to hear that the religious assemblies, especially on lectures, had been so thin, exhorted them earnestly to a more general attendance on our public ministrations for the time to come, and told them how glad he should be to hear of the same.

Multitudes were greatly affected and many awakened with his lively ministry. Though he preached every day, the houses were exceedingly crowded: but when he preached in the common, a vaster number attended: and almost every evening the house where he lodged was thronged, to hear his prayers and counsels.

Upon invitation he also preached in several neighboring towns; travelled and preached as far as York, above seventy miles northeast of Boston; returned hither; gave us his farewell affectionate sermon, Lord's Day evening, October 12. Next morning left us; travelled westward to Northampton; thence through Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, to Philadelphia, and thence sailed to South Carolina. And as far as I could then see or learn, he parted in the general esteem and love both of ministers and people: and this seemed to continue until the Journal of his Travels in New England came abroad, wherein some passages offended many, and occasioned their reflections on him.

But upon Mr. Whitefield's leaving us, great numbers in this town were so happily concerned about their souls, as we had never seen any thing like it before, except at the lime of the general earthquake:* and their desires excited to hear their ministers more than ever: so that our assemblies both on Lectures and Sabbaths were surprisingly increased, and now the people wanted to hear us oftener. In consideration of which, a public Lecture was proposed to be set up at Dr. Colman's church, near the midst of the town, on every Tuesday evening.

Lord's Day afternoon, October 19, public notice was there given of the proposed Lecture to be on the Tues-

* Though people were then generally frightened, and many Awakened to such a sense of their duty as to offer themselves to our Communion; yet very few came to me then under deep convictions of their unconverted and lost condition, in comparison of what came now. Nor did those who came to me then, come so much with the inquiry. What shall we do to be saved? as to signify they had such a sense of their duty to come to the Lord's Table, that they dare not stay away any longer.

day evening following: which the religious people in general received with so much joy, that when the evening came, the house seemed to be crowded as much as if Mr. Whitefield was there. It was the first stated evening Lecture in these parts of the world: and the venerable Dr. Colman began it with a most suitable and moving sermon; forthwith printed. The title whereof is this:

“Souls flying to Jesus Christ, pleasant and admirable to behold. A Sermon preached at the opening of an Evening Lecture in Brattle-street, Boston, Tuesday, October 21, 1740: by Dr. Colman: to a very crowded audience: and printed at the desire of many.”

And thus the Dr. began the sermon:—

“Isaiah lx, 8. *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as, the doves to their windows?*

“It is a pleasant and wondrous thing, to see souls flying to Jesus Christ, to the means of grace and salvation which he has ordained and sanctified, and into his church. If this were not the proper and natural sense of the prophet’s words, I would not have chose them for the opening of the present Lecture.

“Our dear people, your ministers have with pleasure seen you in the weeks past, old and young, parents and children, masters and servants, high and low, rich and poor together, gathering and passing as clouds in our streets, and as doves on the wing in flocks flying to the doors and windows of our places of worship; and hovering about the same, those that could not get in.

“The fame of a singular, fervent and holy youth, and extraordinary servant and minister of Jesus Christ, (who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire,) had prepared you for his visit; and with raised expectations we received him, even as an angel of God for Jesus sake; as the apostle St. Paul was received by the churches in Galatia.

“God gave him a wonderful manner of entrance among us, just as in other places before us, among the brethren of our denomination; and we were sometimes melted together in tears, ministers and people, parents and children, under the commanding addresses of love to his Savior and our souls. We led you with a visible pleasure in our faces to the solemn and great assemblies, and looked on you there with great satisfaction, in your uncommon regards to the beloved servant of Christ, for the truth’s

sake that dwelleth in him, and the lore of the Spirit filling him, and reigning in his ministrations to us.

“And now our beloved brethren and sisters, you and your children, we are going to prove, confirm and increase, by the will of God, the seeming good dispositions begun or revived in you, toward Christ and his word, in a just and reasonable pious care and solicitude for your salvation.

“Mr. Whitefield once and again in his admonitions to you, and also in his fervent, righteous and effectual prayers for you (by the will of God) led you into this trial and proof of yourselves; Whether when he was gone from us, you would better attend on the ministry of your own pastors, both on Sabbaths and Lectures? For he had heard (and it was but too true) that there had been a very great defect in this point among you before he came. Some of your ministers therefore now make a new tender of themselves to you, in the fear and love of God, in this new Lecture, for the service of your souls, if you will encourage them by something of a like attendance on it, as we have lately seen you give to the word preached. We preach the same Christ, the same doctrines of grace, and according to godliness, with the same gospel motives and arguments, applications to conscience, and supplications to God for you. We would look on the fields, and behold them white for the harvest, and desire to enter into it; if by the help of God we may cherish the impressions made on any of your souls, and carry them on, clinching the nails driven by the master of assemblies that has been sent among us. For though we are elder ministers, and have been many years before him in the service of souls, and he like David going against Goliath, in the sight of the armies of Israel, has been seen to be but a youth and stripling; yet are we not unwilling or ashamed to come and serve after him, in the battles of our Lord, and in the victories of his grace. You have seen, as it were, a young Elias, or the Baptist risen again, a burning and a shining light, and you were willing for the season to rejoice in his light and heat: may we now preach and you hear for the future, with more life and spirit, diligence and constancy; and by the will of God with new success. But we mean not, brethren, at this Lecture only, but on every Sabbath and every Lecture in the town; and more particularly on the public Thurs-

day Lecture; which has been shamefully neglected by the town.

“To come then to my text, which I acknowledge the late discourse to the word among us, has led me to choose. I would now look round on the present assembly, and look back on our past assemblies, and say to you, *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?*”

The Tuesday evening after, the Rev. Dr. Sewall preached the Lecture in the same place; and the house was then also greatly crowded with attentive hearers: and so it continued to be on these Lectures for many months after.

Upon the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent’s coming and preaching here, the people appeared to be yet much more awakened about their souls than before. He came, I think, on Saturday, December 13, this year: preached at the New North on both the parts of the following day; as also on Monday in the afternoon, when I first heard of him, and there was a great assembly.

He did not indeed at first come up to my expectation; but afterwards exceeded it. In private converse with him, I found him to be a man of considerable parts and learning; free, gentle, condescending: and from his own various experience, reading the most noted writers on experimental divinity, as well as the Scriptures, and conversing with many who had been awakened by his ministry in New Jersey, where he then lived; he seemed to have as deep an acquaintance with the experimental part of religion as any I have conversed with; and his preaching was as searching and rousing as ever I heard.

He seemed to have no regard to please the eyes of his hearers with agreeable gesture, nor their ears with delivery, nor their fancy with language; but to aim directly at their hearts and consciences, to lay open their ruinous delusions, shew them their numerous, secret, hypocritical shifts in religion, and drive them out of every deceitful refuge wherein they made themselves easy, with the form of godliness without the power. And many who were pleased in a good conceit of themselves before, now found, to their great distress, they were only self-deceived hypocrites. And though while the discovery was making, some at first raged, as they have owned to me and others; yet in the progress of the discover;

many were forced to submit; and then the power of God so broke and humbled them, that they wanted a further and even a thorough discovery; they went to hear him, that the secret corruptions and delusions of their hearts might be more discovered; and the more searching the sermon, the more acceptable it was to their anxious minds.

From the terrible and deep convictions he had passed through in his own soul, he seemed to have such a lively view of the divine Majesty, the spirituality, purity, extensiveness, and strictness of his law; with his glorious holiness, and displeasure at sin, his justice, truth, and power in punishing the damned; that the very terrors of God seemed to rise in his mind afresh, when he displayed and brandished them in the eyes of unreconciled sinners. And though some could not bear the representation, and avoided his preaching; yet the arrows of conviction, by his ministry, seemed so deeply to pierce the hearts of others, and even some of the most stubborn sinners, as to make them fall down at the feet of Christ, and yield a lowly submission to him.

And here I cannot but observe, that those who call these convictions by the name of religious frights or fears, and then ascribe them to the mere natural or mechanical influence of terrible words, sounds and gestures, moving toses, or boisterous ways of speaking, appear to me to be not sufficiently acquainted with the subjects of this work, as carried on in the town in general, or with the nature of their convictions; or at least as carried on among the people I have conversed with. For I have had awakened people of every assembly of the Congregational and Presbyterian way in town, in considerable numbers repairing to me from time to time; and from their various and repeated narratives shall show the difference.

I don't remember any crying out, or falling down, or fainting, either under Mr. Whitefield's or Mr. Tennent's ministry all the while they were here; though many, both women and men, both those who had been vicious, and those who had been moral, yea, some religious and learned, as well as unlearned, were in great concern of soul. But as Dr. Colman well expressed it in his Letter of November 23, 1741. "We have seen little of those extremes or supposed blemishes of this work in Boston, but much of the blessed fruits of it have fallen to our

share. God has spoken to us in a more soft and calm wind; and we have neither had those outcries and faintings in our assemblies, which have disturbed the worship in many places; nor yet those manifestations of joy inexpressible, which now fill some of our eastern parts.”

As to Mr. Whitefield's preaching—it was, in the manner, moving, earnest, winning, melting; but the mechanical influence of this, according to the usual operations of mechanical powers, in two or three days expired; with many, in two or three hours; and I believe with the most, as soon as the sound was over, or they got out of the house, or in the first conversation they fell into. But with the manner of his preaching, wherein he appeared to be in earnest, he delivered those vital truths which, animated all our martyrs, made them triumph in flames; and led his hearers into the view of that vital, inward, active piety, which is the mere effect of the mighty and supernatural operation of a divine Power on the souls of men; which only will support and carry through the sharpest trials, and make meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. His chief and earnest desires and tabors appeared to be the same with the apostle Paul for the visible saints at Ephesus; viz. that they might know (i. e. by experience) what is the exceeding greatness of his power (i. e. the power of God) to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead—Eph. i. And they were these things, and this sort of preaching with surprising fervency, that the Holy Spirit was pleased to use as means to make many sensible they knew nothing of these mighty operations, nor of these vital principles within them; but that with Simon Magus, who was a visible believer and professor of Christ and his religion, they were in “the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity;” i. e. in the state, pollution, guilt and power of sin, which is inexpressibly more disagreeable to the holy God than the most bitter gall to men, and will be bitterness to them, without a mighty change, in the latter end.

It was by such means as these, that the Holy Spirit seized and awakened the consciences of many; and when the mechanical influence on the animal passions ceased, still continued these convictions, not only for many days, but weeks and months after the sound was over; yea, to

this very day with some; while they excited others to as earnest and persevering application to Jesus for his Spirit to quicken them, till they came to an hopeful perception of his quickening influence in them; and while in others the sovereign and offended Spirit leaving off to strive, these convictions in their consciences, the effects thereof, have either sooner or later died away.

As to Mr. Tennent's preaching—It was frequently both terrible and searching. It was often for matter justly terrible, as he, according to the inspired oracles, exhibited the dreadful holiness, justice, law, threatenings, truth, power, majesty of God; and His anger with rebellious, impenitent, unbelieving and Christless sinners; the awful danger they were every moment in of being struck down to hell, and being damned for ever; with the amazing miseries of that place of torment. But his exhibitions, both for matter and manner, fell inconceivably below the "reality: and though this terrible preaching may strongly work on the natural passions and frighten the hearers, rouse the soul, and prepare the way for terrible convictions; yet those mere natural terrors, and these convictions are quite different things.

Nothing is more obvious than for people to be greatly terrified with the apprehensions of God, eternity and hell, and yet have no convictions.

In Old England and New, where I have been a constant preacher and an observer of the religious state of those who heard me, for above thirty years, many have passed under scores of most dreadful tempests of thunder and lightning: wherein, as the Psalmist represents, "the voice of the Lord was upon the waters, the God of glory thundered, the voice of the Lord was powerful, the voice of the Lord was full of majesty; the voice of the Lord broke the cedars, divided the flames of fire, shook the wilderness, and (in the darkest night) discovered the forests." Yea, even since the Revival, viz. on Friday night, July 30, 1742, at the Lecture in the South Church, near nine o'clock, being very dark, there came on a very terrible storm of thunder and lightning: and just as the blessing was given, an amazing clap broke over the church with piercing repetitions, which set many a shrieking, and the whole assembly into great consternation: God then appeared "terrible out of His high places; they heard attentively the noise of His voice, and the sound that went

out of his mouth; He directed it under the whole heaven, and His lightning to the ends of the earth; after it a voice roared, He thundered marvellously with his voice: and at this the hearts of many (as Elihu's) trembled, and were moved out of their places," for near two hours together. And yet in all these displays of the majesty of God, and terrifying apprehensions of danger of sudden destruction, neither in this surprising night, nor in all the course of thirty years have I scarce known any, by these kinds of terrors brought under genuine convictions. And what minister has a voice like God, and who can thunder like Him?

So on Lord's day, June 3d last, in our time of public worship in the forenoon, when we had been about a quarter of an hour in prayer, the mighty power of God came on with a surprising roar and earthquake; which made the house with all the galleries to rock and tremble, with such a grating noise as if the bricks were moving out of their places to come down and bury us: which exceedingly disturbed the congregation, excited the shrieks of many, put many on flying out, and the generality in motion. But though many were greatly terrified, yet in a day or two their terrors seemed to vanish, and I know of but two or three seized by convictions on this awful occasion.

No! conviction is quite another sort of a thing. It is the work of the Spirit of God, a sovereign, free and Almighty agent; wherein He gives the sinful soul such a clear and lively view of the glory of the Divine Sovereignty, omnipresence, holiness, justice, truth and power; the extensiveness, spirituality and strictness of His law; the binding nature, efficacy and dreadfulness of His curses; the multitude and heinousness of its sins both of commission and omission; the horrible vileness, wickedness, perverseness and hypocrisy of the heart, with its utter impotence either rightly to repent, or believe in Christ, or change itself: so that it sees itself in a lost, undone and perishing state; without the least degree of worthiness to recommend it to the holy and righteous God, and the least degree of strength to help itself out of this condition. These discoveries are made by means of some revealed truths, either in the reading, hearing or remembrance: when in the hearing, sometimes by words of terror, and sometimes by words of tenderness; and the holy

Spirit with such internal evidence and power so applies them to the conscience, that they become as sharp arrows piercing into the heart, wounding, paining and sticking in it, when all the mechanical impressions of frightful sounds are over, sometimes for many days, weeks and months, if not years together; until this Divine Agent, by these and other convictions, agreeable to His inspired word, entirely subdues the soul to Christ; or being ungratefully treated, withdraws His convincing influence, and leaves the heart and conscience to greater and more dangerous hardness and stupidity than ever.

Such were the convictions wrought in many hundreds in this town by Mr. Tennent's searching ministry: and such was the case of those many scores of several other Congregations as well as mine, who came to me and others for direction under them.* And indeed by all their converse I found, it was not so much the terror, as the searching nature of his ministry, that was the principal means of their conviction. It was not merely, nor so much his laying open the terrors of the law and wrath of God, or damnation of hell; (for this they could pretty well bear, as long as they hoped these belonged not to them, or they could easily avoid them;) as his laying open their many vain and secret shifts and refuges, counterfeit resemblances of grace, delusive and damning hopes, their utter impotence, and impending danger of destruction: whereby they found all their hopes and refuges of lies to fail them, and themselves exposed to eternal ruin, unable to help themselves, and in a lost condition. This searching preaching was both the suitable and principal means of their conviction: though it is most evident, the most proper means are utterly insufficient; and wholly depend on the sovereign will of God, to put forth His power and apply them by this or that instrument, on this or that person, at this or that season, in this or that way or manner; with these or those permitted circumstances, infirmities, corruptions, errors, agencies, oppositions; and to what degree, duration and event He pleases.

* The same kind of searching preaching by our own ministers and others, I also observed was the most successful means of bringing people into powerful convictions, or clear and awakening views of their sinful and lost condition, and their absolute need of Christ to find and save them.

A remarkable instance of conviction after, has been sometimes under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Edwards of Northampton: a preacher of a low and moderate voice, a natural way of delivery; and without any agitation of body, or any thing else in the manner to excite attention, except his habitual and great solemnity, looking and speaking as in the presence of God, and with a weighty sense of the matter delivered. And on the other hand I have known several very worthy ministers of loud and rousing voices; and yet to their great sorrow the generality of their people, for a long course of years asleep in deep security. It is just as the Holy Spirit pleases, to hide occasions of pride from man: and if Mr. Tennent was to come here again and preach more reusingly than ever it may be, not one soul would come under conviction of him.

On Monday, March 2, 1740-1, Mr. Tennent preached his farewell Sermon to the people of Boston, from Acts xi, 23, to an auditory extremely crowded, very attentive and, much affected, in Dr. Colman's house of worship. It was an affectionate parting, and as great numbers of all conditions and ages appeared awakened by him, there seemed to be a general sadness at his going away.

Though it was natural for them to resort abundantly to him by whom it pleased the sovereign. God chiefly to awaken them, for advice in their soul concerns; yet while he was here, many repaired to their ministers also, and many more and oftener when he was gone. Mr. Tennent's ministry, with the various cases of those resorting to us, excited us to treat more largely of the workings of the Spirit of grace, as a Spirit of conviction and conversion, consolation and edification in the souls of men, agreeable to the holy Scriptures, and the common experiences of true believers.

And now was such a time as we never knew. The Rev. Mr. Cooper was won't to say, that more came to him in one week in deep concern about their souls, than in the whole twenty-four years of his preceding ministry. I can also say the same as to the numbers who repaired to me. By Mr. Cooper's Letter to his friend in Scotland, it appears, he has had about six hundred different persons in three months time: and Mr. Webb informs me, he has had in the same space above a thousand.

Agreeable to the numerous bills of the awakened put up in public, sometimes rising to the number of sixty at

once, there repaired to us both boys and girls, young men and women, Indians and negroes, heads of families, aged persons; those who had been in full communion and going on in a course of religion many years. And their cases represented were; a blind mind, a vile and hard heart, and some under a deep sense thereof; some under great temptations; some in great concern for their souls; some in great distress of mind for fear of being unconverted; others for fear they had been all along building on a righteousness of their own, and were still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Some under slight, others under strong convictions of their sins and sinfulness, guilt and condemnation, the wrath and curse of God upon them, their impotence and misery; some for a long time, even for several months under these convictions: some fearing lest the Holy Spirit should withdraw; others having quenched His operations, were in great distress lest He should leave them for ever: persons far advanced in years afraid of being left behind, while others were hastening to the great Redeemer.

Nor were the same persons satisfied with coming once or twice, as formerly, but again and again, I know not how often; complaining of their evil and cursed hearts; of their past and present unbelief, pride, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, contempt of Christ and God, and alienation from them, their love and captivity to sin, and utter impotence to help themselves, or even to believe on Christ, &c. renouncing every degree of worthiness in and utterly condemning themselves; greatly afraid of deceiving their own souls; and earnestly desirous of being searched, discovered and shown the true way of salvation.

Both people and ministers seemed under a divine influence to quicken each other. The people seemed to have a renewed taste for those old pious and experimental writers, Mr. Hooker, Shepard, Gurnal, William Guthrie, Joseph Alein, Isaac Ambrose, Dr. Owen, and others; as well as later—such as Mr. Mead, Flavel, Shaw, Willard, Stoddard, Dr. Increase and Cotton Mather, Mr. Mather of Windsor, Mr. Boston, &c. The evangelical writings of these deceased authors, as well as of others alive, both in England, Scotland and New England, were now read with singular pleasure; some of them reprinted and in great numbers quickly bought and studied. And the more experimental our preaching was, like theirs, the more it was relished.

The people seemed to love to hear us more than ever: the weekly Tuesday evening Lectures at the Church in Brattle-street, were much crowded and not sufficient. April 17, 1741, another Lecture was therefore opened every Friday evening at the South Church; when a seasonable discourse was given by the Rev. Dr. Sewall, from Job xvi, 8: and soon after, another Lecture every Tuesday and Friday evening was opened at the New North: three of the most capacious houses of public worship in town; the least of which I suppose will hold three thousand people. Besides the ancient Lecture every Thursday noon, at the Old Church; and other Lectures in other churches.

Dr. Sewall's discourse, with three other excellent sermons on the same text, were soon after published. In the first of which he says, page 20, "As more lately, we have received good news of this kind from more distant places upon this continent; so I cannot but hope that God's sending one and another of his servants among us, who had been personally acquainted with these later wonderful works of grace, together with their very laborious and fervent preaching, and the ministry of others his servants; has been blessed to convince many of their sins, and awaken them to a serious concern about their souls. Yea, it is hopeful that there are a number converted, and brought home to Christ. Let us give the praise to the God of all grace." In the second, he says, page 66, "To conclude, let us with humble thankfulness behold that remarkable work of grace which I trust God is carrying on in this town and other places; and be encouraged to seek the Lord more earnestly, that His kingdom may come with power by the more plentiful effusions of His holy Spirit; and that the Lord would rebuke Satan in all his attempts to hinder or reproach this work, and bruise him under our feet. Let us bless God for his Spirit and grace manifested in and with his servants that have preached the gospel among us, and for the great success which has attended their painful labors." In the fourth, he says, page last, "And let such as are under good impressions from the Spirit, take heed to themselves, and beware of apostasy. O ponder those awful words! 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him,' Heb. x, 38. But if there should come a falling away respecting some that have promised fair, let us not

be shaken in mind as if the main work was not of God; nor take up an evil report against it. Scripture and experience warn us to fear and prepare for such a trial."

And in the Preface he says, "It hath pleased the sovereign and gracious God, in whose hand our times are, to ordain that we should live under some peculiar advantages for our precious souls. For to the ordinary means, we have super-added the manifestation of the Spirit, in extraordinary works of grace. We have lately heard glad tidings from one place and another, that many are enquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward; and some are declaring what God hath done for their souls. Yea, God hath brought this work home to our own doors, and we hear many crying out, 'What must we do to be saved!' And there are a number hopefully rejoicing in God's salvation. Of such a season as this it may well be said, 'I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' I nope God's people are reaping the fruit of their prayers, particularly on extraordinary days of fasting observed with an especial view to this great blessing, the plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit. O there is great reason to fear that another like season will never, never return upon you. O sleeper! awake, and hearken, there is a noise and a shaking among the dry bones. Some it may be of your own acquaintance, secure like you a little while ago, are now in deep concern, and can no longer relish those carnal pleasures in which you were companions. Now, destruction from God is a terror to them, and they are fleeing from the wrath to come. What a reproof doth God give to your stupidity in the awakenings of others? And here, among you with whom the Spirit is striving at this day, we behold many of our young people. O our children! God is drawing nigh to you in a distinguishing manner," &c.

Nor were the people satisfied with all these Lectures: but as private societies for religious exercises, both of younger and elder persons, both of males and females by themselves, in several parts of the town, now increased in a much greater number than ever, viz. to near the number of thirty, meeting on Lord's Day, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings; so the people were constantly employing the ministers to pray and preach at

those societies, as also at many private houses, where reformed society met: and such numbers flocked to hear as greatly crowded them, as well as more than usual filled our houses of public worship both on Lord's Days and Lectures, especially evening Lectures, for about twelvemonth after.

Some of our ministers, to oblige the people, have sometimes preached in public and private, at one house or another, even every evening, except after Saturdays for a week together: and the more we prayed and preached, the more enlarged were our hearts, and the more delightful the employment. And O how many how serious and attentive were our hearers! How many awakened and hopefully converted by their ministers. And how many of such added soon to our churches, do we hope will be saved eternally? Scarce a sermon seemed to be preached without some good impressions

As to the church to which I belong—Within 6 months from the end of January, 1740–1, were threescore joined to our communicants: the greater part of whom gave a more exact account of the work of the Spirit of God on their souls in effectual calling, as described in the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, than I was wont to meet with before: besides many others I could not but have charity for, who refrained from coming to the table of Christ for want of a satisfying view of the work of renovation in them. Mr. Tennent being so exceeding strict in cautioning people from running into churches taking the sacred covenant, and receiving the Lord's Supper, the seal thereof, until they had saving grace; the diverse brought to a very hopeful disposition, yea, some I doubt not, to embrace the Savior in all his offices, we through fear and darkness kept from coming into fellowship communion. Or otherwise, many more I believe, would have entered; who had they the like experiences a year before, I doubt not would have readily offered themselves and we should have as readily received them, and would now, as some of the most hopeful Christians. So far did Mr. Tennent's awakening ministry shake their hopes at hinder them, that those whom I apprehended to be thirsty, and thought myself obliged to encourage, I found the impressions of his preaching had discouraged.

Yea, some who had been in full communion were made so suspicious of themselves, as to refrain partaking

and I had no small pains to remove their scruples. For as to my own opinion—it seems to me, that where there is a thirst for Christ and his spiritual benefits, that thirst is raised by the Spirit of Christ: and in raising such a thirst, He qualifies for them, shows his readiness to satiate it, invites, requires, and gives sufficient grounds for coming to Him at these pipes of living waters; though we may not be sure whether this thirst arises from a renewed heart or no: and thither therefore should we come with a humble sense of our emptiness and unworthiness, and with our thirsty souls reaching forth to Him, to receive from His open, offered and overflowing fulness. If I am mistaken, I desire to see it.

However, in many of these people, their convictions, in a judgment of charity, appeared by the same spirit to be carried further than an awakening view of their sins, their sinfulness and misery; even to what the Assembly's Catechism, agreeable to Scripture, calls an enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ, or clear, lively and attractive views of His perfect suitableness, all-sufficiency and willingness as the Son of God incarnate and Mediator, to receive them, and by His merits, intercession, grace and Spirit to reconcile them to the holy God, and save and make them completely and eternally holy and happy, though now the chief of sinners: and in such views as these he melted their frozen hearts, renewed their wills, overcome them with affection to Him, and persuaded and enabled them to embrace Him in his person and all his offices and benefits as offered in the gospel.

By Dr. Colman's Letter o) June 8, 1741, it appears, "that in 1741, in April, there were nine or ten, and in May were nineteen, added to his church: among whom (says the Dr.) were many of the rich and polite of our sons and daughters.

And the Rev. Mr. Webb, senior Pastor of the New North, just now informs me, with respect to his church and people, in the following words—"Admissions to full communion of those hopefully wrought upon in the late day of grace, about one hundred and sixty: of which one hundred and two from January 1740-1, to 1741-2. Of the above mentioned, by far the greater part have since given hopeful signs of saving conversion. And many more give good evidences of grace; but for the reasons in your account [above] cannot be prevailed upon to come to the Table of the Lord."

In this year, 1741, the very face of the town seemed to be strangely altered. Some who had not been here since the Fall before, have told me their great surprise at the change in the general look and carriage of people, as soon as they landed. Even the negroes and boys in the streets surprisingly left their usual rudeness: I knew many of these had been greatly affected, and now were formed into religious societies. And one of our worthy gentlemen expressing his wonder at the remarkable change informed me, that whereas he used with others on Saturday evenings to visit the taverns, in order to clear them of town inhabitants, they were wont to find many there and meet with trouble to get them away! but now having gone at those seasons again, he found them empty of all but lodgers.

Of that time the Rev. Dr. Colman justly writes to the Rev. Dr. Watts, on September 15, 1741, in the following terms: "Thanks be to God In our Province the impressions of religion grow and increase in a happy, wise sedate manner, such as gives a joyous prospect relating to the next generation, that our young ones will be wise, grave, devout parents to their children. I know not how to admire the pleasant, gracious work of God. Our Lectures flourish, our Sabbaths are joyous, our Churches increase, our ministers have new life and spirit in the their work."

Of the same time the Rev. Mr. Cooper also writes, on Nov. 20, 1741, in his noble Preface to Mr. Edwards's most excellent, solid, judicious and scriptural performance, as the venerable Mr. Willison of Scotland rightly styles it, in the following manner:—"I verily believe in this our metropolis, there were the last winter some thousands under such religious impressions as they never felt before. And as to the fruits of this work, (which we have been bid so often to wait for) blessed be God so far as there has been time for observation, they appear to be abiding. I do not mean, that none have lost their impressions, or that there are no instances of hypocrisy and apostasy. Scripture and experience lead us to expect these at such a season. It is to me matter of surprise and thankfulness, that as yet there have been no more. But I mean, that a great number of those who have been awakened are still seeking and striving to enter in at the straight gate. The most of those who have

been thought to be converted, continue to give evidences of their being new creatures, and seem to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart. To be sure a new face of things continues in this town; though many circumstances concur to render such a work not so observable here, as in smaller and distant places. Many things not becoming the profession of the gospel are in a measure reformed. Taverns, dancing-schools, and such meetings as have been called Assemblies, which have always proved unfriendly to serious godliness, are much less frequented. Many have reduced their dress and apparel, so as to make them look more like the followers of the humble Jesus. And it has been both surprising and pleasant to see how some younger people, and of that sex too which is most fond of such vanities, have put off the bravery of their ornaments, as the effect and indication of their seeking the inward glories of the King's Daughter. Religion is now much more the subject of conversation at friends' houses, than ever I knew it. The doctrines of grace are espoused and relished. Private religious meetings are greatly multiplied. The public assemblies (especially Lectures) are much better attended; and our auditories were never so attentive and serious. There is indeed an extraordinary appetite after the sincere milk of the word. It is more than a twelvemonth since an evening Lecture was set up in this town; there are now several two constantly on Tuesday and Friday evenings; when some of our most capacious houses are well filled, with hearers, who by their looks and deportment seem to come to hear that their souls might live. An evening in God's courts is now esteemed better than many elsewhere. There is also great resort to ministers in private. Our hands continue full of work and many times we have more than we can discourse with distinctly and separately."

January 11, 1741-2, most of the associate pastors of this town agreed on a course of Days of Prayer in their several churches; as the Rev. Dr. Sewall well expresses it, in his sermon on that occasion, preached in the South Church, February 26, 1741-2, "to bless the name of God for spiritual blessings already received in the remarkable revival of His work among us, and in many other places; to seek of God the more plentiful effusion of his Holy Spirit; that the Lord would preserve us and

his people from every thing that hath a tendency to quench his Spirit, and obstruct the progress and success of his good work; and that it may go on and prosper, until the whole land shall be filled with the blessed fruits of the Spirit." And in his sermon he says, "We ought to praise the Lord that he has not left us without a witness of his divine power and grace in the wonderful operation of his Spirit in our times. Let the success which God hath of late given to the ministers of the word, above what we have known in times past, animate us to labor more abundantly. And. let not any pervert what has been said, to prejudice themselves or others against that wonderful work of grace, which I verily believe God has wrought in this town and other places."

In some, this further work of conviction and effectual calling was clearer, in others more obscure, in others less or more doubtful. And so various likewise were the joys and consolations rising from the various changes of exercises in them, or their various applications to Christ for mercy. But herein their pastors labored to preserve them from mistakes, to discover their dangers on every side, to lead them to a thorough conviction and humiliation, and through these to right views of Christ and closing with him in a saving manner; that they might not be deceived with joys or consolations which belonged not to them.

Of those who came not into full communion with our churches—some who were under strong convictions, and in a hopeful way, have since sadly lost them; the Spirit of God has ceased striving, and they are more blind and hard than ever: and, some of these like those under His ineffectual influence in the apostles' days; "after they have escaped the pollution of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, are again entangled therein and overcome; their latter end is worse with them than the beginning; and it has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire,'" 2 Peter, ii, 20-22. And some who had fair resemblances both of saving grace and holy joy, whereby they for a time deceived both themselves and others; after high appearances have fallen away: as some who first followed Christ himself, yet after left him; and as he has represented the various events

of impressions made by his own and his successors' preaching, in the parable of the sower; Matt, xiii, Mark iv, and Luke viii.

But though their faithful ministers, both in private and public, both in preaching and print, fairly warned, and from the word of God foretold, of these apostacies; yet they gave occasion to the prejudiced against the work, to cast a slur on the rest in general, to multiply and magnify the instances, and pronounce them all impostors. So I remember, when thirty years since I lived and preached in England, especially in the latter end of queen Ann's reign; if but one of our congregation, and much more one of our communion, fell into any scandal, all the country round would ring and echo with it, and the looser people in the church of England would take occasion to triumph with their reproaches; crying out, "We were all alike, and though we were so precise we would not curse or swear, yet we would lie, and cheat, and steal, and commit any private wickedness;" and the profane would damn us all as a pack of hypocrites.

And indeed in every party, where there is an enmity or prejudice against any other person or party, there is always more or less of blindness and partiality, and a powerful bent, on all occasions, to misconstrue, cavil, misrepresent, defame and vilify. So were the ancient puritans with the pious fathers of this country, treated in the reigns of king James the I. and Charles the I. until they came over hither between 1620 and 1640: and so were the pious Nonconformists in the reign of king Charles the II. I believe there scarce ever was a set of men more reproached and stigmatized than those pious Puritans and Nonconformists: and this not only by looser people, but even by learned clergymen, as their writings to this day show. And any man who knows them, may see the same aspersing and reviling spirit and way of writing in the present day, against the instruments and subjects of this work in general. So the Papists have traduced the Protestants in general, especially Luther, Calvin, Beza, Knox, &c. for, by blackening those great Reformers, they thought to blacken the Reformation advanced by them: yea, to this very day, the most learned in the Christian world cry out of nothing but contention and confusion in that happy work, and deny there has been any Reformation at all; yea, assert, that those who embraced the pretended re-

formed religion, grew insolent, censorious, turbulent, and worse in morals. So I have heard an Egyptian traveller who once sailed with me, most zealously represent the Christians, from the numerous instances he knew, as the vilest sect on earth. And so was their glorious Leader counted a deceiver; and his apostles were despised, but feted, reviled, persecuted, defamed, made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, 1 Cor. iv.

Some, after all, have no doubt deceived both themselves and others in the extent of their conviction, humiliation, applying to Christ, and in the spring and nature of their comforts. Some I was afraid of at the time; as not being duly convinced, humbled, broken-hearted, self-condemned, devoted to God, concerned for his glory, or having a due reverence of Him: and some few have given too much occasion for our fears since. Though from my extensive view of the many infirmities and corruptions in the best of saints on earth, I am not apt to be narrow or censorious in these matters: for till persons who seemed to be converted, fall into a course of some sin or other against the common light of conscience, I am not willing to lose my charity.

But the generality of those, whom I judged to have passed through a right conviction and humiliation to faith in Christ, seemed to come to consolation in Him, in a way agreeable to Scripture, the very nature and reason of things, and common experience of those who are thoroughly subdued to Christ, savingly enlightened, are satisfied in Him, rest on Him, and feel themselves in a new state, happily changed and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God: as I apprehend those were: and one or other of these are common springs of joy or consolation, especially at the first conversion.

The consolations of some were weaker, of others stronger: in some they rose to joys; in some few to joy unspeakable and full of glory, as the apostle speaks; though I never saw one either in town or country, in what some wrongly call a vision, trance or revelation. And where those few instances have happened in some places, appeared but a little while and vanished.* By

* I never heard of above one or two in this town; and I do not remember to have heard of one in this province to the southward of us, though there has been a remarkable revival in several places in that part of the land.

what I have heard, I apprehend that where they were unfeigned, they were only natural effects of an extraordinary intense exercise of soul; though a Divine influence might be the original of the exercise. Nor do I apprehend such effects a sign either of the person's being unsanctified or sanctified: sanctification being to be judged of by the frame of the whole soul and nature of its exercises, while fully awake, and not by such dreaming ideas: yea, though it were possible they should be inspirations, they would be no more signs in themselves of sanctification, than the genuine visions of Balaam or Belshazzar. And I know of none but is of the same opinion with me.

But as for spiritual joys and consolations; whoever has a large experience in his own heart, or a large acquaintance with the various experiences of others, has found those joys arise from such like various causes as these that follow.

1. Some in the progress of their conviction towards the depths of humiliation; while their souls were quarrelling with the holiness, justice, law, wrath, curses, truth and sovereignty of God, so as to throw them into the utmost tumult; they have been at length, and some times suddenly subdued, so as to yield, submit and resign to the sovereign hands of Christ: upon which their quarrels and tumults ceasing, a divine and wondrous calm and pleasure have immediately and genuinely succeeded.

2. Some from a lively view of the exceeding number and heinousness of their sins, and vileness of their hearts, whereby they thought themselves the worst of sinners; and seeing the all-sufficiency of Christ in every thing but willingness to save such horrid wretches, were in great distress; but upon seeing his willingness to save even, them in particular, have been overcome with joy at the view, and with such joyful views fled into his arms.

3. Some finding themselves under the love and power of sin, in wretched bondage to their lusts, to horrible suggestions, temptations, oppositions, and utter impotence to free themselves and serve the Lord with pleasure; being unexpectedly delivered, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; they have been like those in Psalm cxxvi, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream: then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with sing-

ing: the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.”

4. Some labouring under such blindness of mind, that they could see nothing of the personal and perfect loveliness of Christ, have been exceedingly troubled; when they came, especially on a sudden, to see his perfect and transcendent loveliness, it has raised them into a transport.

5. Some who have found their hearts as hard as a rock, that they could not mourn in the least, as they could perceive, for their horrid sins and sinfulness, and were in the way of despair; upon their hearts dissolving with godly sorrow for their piercing Christ, and even the smallest sins and heart-impurities, have been greatly affected with pleasure and gladness.

6. Some after all their genuine changes, their exercise of faith in Christ, of love unto Him, repentance and other graces, have not yet been-able to see whether these have been any other than superficial changes and common graces, and been in great perplexity; until the Spirit of Christ has shone so clearly on them as to give them joyful satisfaction.

7. Some having all the likely marks of conversion, and even some of their graces in some exercise, though very faint and low, and their hearts exceeding cold, flat and deadened, have been greatly discouraged; but ere they were aware, their souls have been made as the chariots of Amminadab, to their great rejoicing.

8. Some have been so greatly troubled with their lamentable distance and estrangement from the blessed Jesus, as they could enjoy no rest; until he has taken them into his banqueting house, exalted them to sit in heavenly places with Him, and so shown his glories and love unto them (his banner over them was love) as have most powerfully drawn out their hearts to an holy and transporting intimacy, with Him; that in the believing views of Christ and sensation of this communion, they have rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I here write what many holy souls who have had communion with Christ, by their experience well understand. And by sensation, I mean in the like spiritual sense as when Christ speaks of his supping with believers and they with Him, Rev. iii, 20.

As for spiritual pride and rash judging—some lately wrought upon, especially in hours of temptation, have-

grievously exceeded; yea some whom we judged to be effectually called, as well as many more who had been under very powerful and far advanced, but ineffectual operations; and who ought not to be blended with, as is the way of the prejudiced, but distinguished from the other. Yet some of the hopefully renewed are more free than others from those excesses: and I never knew the most grown, humble, and prudent saint on earth wholly without them; for if I had, I should hold to sinless perfection in the present state: much less can we expect the new-born convert to be so humble and wise, as those who have been growing in grace and knowledge for several years. Alas! every soul renewed has remains of the same corruptions (though not reigning) as before; they mix with all our graces; unbelief with faith, pride with humility, precipitant zeal or passion with wisdom, rash judging of others with condemning ourselves: and he seems to be tittle acquainted with his own heart who sees not in himself a bent to be proud even of his own humility; and who feels not the risings of pride, especially while grace is young, even in his highest enlargements and enjoyments, as well as in his best performances and the applauses of those about him. Even the apostle Paul himself, though one of the greatest mortification and improved sanctity; yet by being favoured of God with abundant revelations, found himself so strongly inclined to be above measure exalted, that if there had not been given him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, he would have been carried away by the natural bias, 2 Cor. xii. And what wonder is it at first to see some undue elations mix with the joys of young and little experienced Christians, before they have much time to grow in the sad, surprising and abasing views of their remaining corruptions; which at the first sense of their change, their first joyful views of the love and glory of Christ, and first elevations of their faith and affections to Him, they could scarce perceive, and were therefore ready to think by His blood and Spirit to be almost entirely purged away.

But with the common mixture of their remaining infirmities and corruptions, I have generally seen attending their joys, high, humble and affectionate admirations of the wonderful grace of God, and astonishing pity and condescension of the Son of His love, in becoming incarnate, dying to save them, bearing so long with them

while they have been spitting and trampling on Him; and after all their abuses, sending them His ambassadors and tenders of grace, employing His Spirit, overcoming their hearts, and opening His arms to receive them; and with these joys I have also seen all the proper expressions of their lively gratitude, love, praise, devotion to God their Saviour, zeal for His glory; love to His word, truths, ordinances, and those in whom the meek, humble and holy image of Christ appears, and concern for others. And as they soon found the activity of their love subsiding, the fountain of corruption in them rising, and their spiritual impotence in a sad degree returning; the Holy Spirit has given them further views of their remaining vileness; and they have generally grown more humble and jealous of themselves, more sensible of their depending on Christ continually, and more meek and tender in their carriage to others.

And thus successfully did this divine work as above described go on in town, without any lisp, as I remember, of a separation either in this town, or province, for above a year and a half after Mr Whitefield left us, viz. the end of June, 1742; when the Rev. Mr Davenport, of Long-Island, came to Boston. And then through the awful providence of the sovereign God, the wisdom of whose ways are past finding out, we unexpectedly came to an unhappy period, which it exceedingly grieves me now to write of, though with all convenient brevity.

Friday evening, June 25, he came to Charlestown. Lord's-day forenoon, he attended the public worship, and at the Lord's Table there: but the afternoon stayed at his lodgings, from an apprehension of the minister's being unconverted, which greatly alarmed us. Monday afternoon he came over the ferry to Boston: which the associate pastors in this town and Charlestown, then at their stated course of meeting, hearing of, sent to signify, that we should be glad to see him; whereupon he presently came, and we had long and friendly conferences with him about his conduct, on this and the following day.

On Thursday, July 1, we thought ourselves obliged to publish a declaration of our judgment concerning him: wherein we owned, "That he appeared to us to be truly pious, and we hoped that God had used him as an instrument of good to many souls; yet we judged it our duty to bear our testimony against the following particulars:—

1. His being acted much by sudden impulses. 2. His judging some ministers in Long-Island and New-England to be unconverted; and his thinking himself called of God to demand of his brethren, from place to place, an account of their regenerate state, when or in what manner the Holy Spirit wrought upon and renewed them. 3. His going with his friends singing through the streets and highways, to and from the houses of worship on Lord's days and other days. 4. His encouraging private brethren (i.e. who are not probationers for the ministry) to pray and exhort (i.e. like ministers) in assemblies gathered for that purpose. We judged it therefore our present duty not to invite him into our places of public worship, as otherwise we might have readily done." And we concluded thus—"And we take this opportunity to repeat our testimony to the great and glorious work of God, which of His free grace he has begun and is carrying on in many parts of this and the neighbouring provinces; beseeching him to preserve, defend, maintain and propagate it, in spite of all the devices of Satan against it, of one kind or other; that however it may suffer by the imprudence of its friends, or by the virulent opposition of its enemies, yet it may stand as on the rock, and the gates of hell may never prevail against it."

Boston, July 1, 1712.

THOMAS FOXCROFT, *Pastor of the First Church.*

JOSHUA GEE, *Pastor of the Second, or Old North.*

JOSEPH SEWALL, }
THOMAS PRINCE, } *Pastors of the Old South.*

WILLIAM COOPER, }
BENJAMIN COLMAN } *Pastors of the Church in
Brattle-street.*

JOHN WEBB }
ANDREW ELIOT } *Pastors of the New North.*

SAMUEL CHECKLEY, *Pastor of the New South.*

WILLIAM WELSTEED }
ELLIS GRAY } *Pastors of the New Brick
Church.*

MATHER BYLES, *Pastor of the Church in Hollis-street.*

HULL ABBOT, *Pastor of the Church at Charlestown.*

THOMAS PRENTICE, *do. do.*

Upon publishing this declaration on Friday, many were offended: and some days after, Mr. Davenport thought himself obliged to begin in his public exercises to declare

against us also; naming some as unconverted, representing the rest as Jehoshaphat in Ahab's army, and exhorting the people to separate from us: which so diverted the minds of many from being concerned about their own conversion, to think and dispute about the case of others; as not only seemed to put an awful stop to their awakenings, but also on all sides to inflame our passions, and provoke the Holy Spirit in a gradual and dreadful measure to withdraw His influence.

Now a disputatious spirit most grievously prevailed among us: and, what almost ever attends it, much censoriousness and reflection; which had a further tendency to inflame and alienate, and whereof many of every party were sadly guilty. It was indeed a lamentable time; wherein we seemed to fall into such a case as the Christian church at Corinth, in the Apostle's days: which had shared such a large effusion of the Holy Spirit, that the Apostle calls them "sanctified in Christ; and thanked his God always in their behalf for the grace of God which was given them by Jesus Christ, that in every thing they were enriched by him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them, so that they came behind in no gift:" and yet he complains there were risen among them "contentions, envying, strife, divisions; one saying, I am of Paul, another, I am of Apollos"—and they were "carnal, and walked as men," &c. 1 Cor i, and iii.

And now a small number from some of our Churches and Congregations* (some had been communicants formerly, and some added lately) withdrew, and met in a distinct society: whereof four males, and two or three females, were of our communion.

In the following month came out of the press in Boston, a book composed by the Rev. Mr. Dickinson of Elizabeth-Town, New-Jersey, entitled, "A display of God's special grace: in a familiar dialogue between a minister and a gentleman of his congregation, about the work of God, in the conviction and conversion of sinners, so remarkably of late begun and going on in these American parts. Wherein the objections against some uncommon appearances among us are distinctly considered, mistakes recti-

* There were ten Congregational Churches in town, two Presbyterian, one Baptist, and three Episcopalian.

fied, and the work itself particularly proved to be from the Holy Spirit. With an addition, in a second conference, relating to sundry Antinomian principles, beginning to obtain in some places. To which is prefixed, an attestation, by several ministers of Boston.”

And the principal paragraphs of the Attestation are as follows:—“He must be a stranger in Israel, who has not heard of the uncommon religious appearances in the several parts of this land, among persons of all ages and characters. This is an affair which has in some degree drawn every one’s attention, and been the subject of much debate both in conversation and writing. And the grand question is, ‘Whether it be a work of God, and how far it is so?’ The most serious and judicious, both ministers and Christians, have looked upon it to be, in the main, a genuine work of God, and the effect of that effusion of the Spirit of grace, which the faithful have been praying, hoping, longing and waiting for; while at the same time they have looked upon some circumstances attending it, to be from natural temper, human weakness, or the subtilty and malice of Satan, permitted to counteract this divine operation. But here rightly to distinguish is a matter of no small difficulty; and requires both a scriptural knowledge of, and an experimental acquaintance with the things of the Spirit of God. Mr. Edwards’s Discourse concerning the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God, has met with deserved acceptance, and been of great use. The following performance, by another dear and reverend brother in a different part of the country, is also, in our opinion, exceeding well adapted to serve the same design, viz. to help people to judge of the present work, whether, and how far it is of God; and to remove those prejudices, which may keep them from owning it to the honour of God, and from coming under the power of it to their own salvation. Here the reader will see the ordinary work of the Spirit of grace, in applying the redemption purchased by Christ to particular souls, judiciously described, in several distinct parts of it, conviction, conversion, and consolation: the necessity of regeneration and faith, in order to final salvation, and the necessity of conviction and humiliation in order to these, clearly evinced, from the reason and nature of the thing, as well as the method God has established in His word: mistakes, which might prove fatal

and undoing, carefully guarded against: and very safe and suitable directions given to one who is awakened to that inquiry, 'What must I do to be save?' Whoever takes up this book and reads, has, as it were, in his hands a glass, in which he may behold what manner of person he is; whether a natural or renewed man, a hypocrite or a Bound believer. And in recommending this book to the world, we would be understood as owning, and bearing a public testimony to, what is called the present work of God in this land, as it is here stated and distinguished (separate from those disorders, errors, and delusions, which are only the unhappy accidents sometimes accompanying of it) to be such a glorious display of the Divine power and grace, as may well raise our wonder, excite our praises, and engage our prayers for the preservation and progress of it. May the children of God then unite in that prayer, Let thy work appear more and more unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children; and the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us!"

BENJAMIN COLMAN,
JOSEPH SEWALL,
THOMAS PRINCE,
JOHN WEBB,
WILLIAM COOPER,
THOMAS FOXCROFT,
JOSHUA GEE.

Boston, August 10, 1742.

In December was printed here, a treatise of the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent against the Moravian errors: which treatise was introduced with a preface by several ministers, of this town, and the final paragraph thereof is
t h i s : —

"When this our dear brother, whose praise is in our churches through the provinces, visited us at Boston two years ago, and in the spirit of the Rev. Mr Whitefield entered into his labours here; it pleased God in a wonderful manner to crown his abundant services with success, in the conviction and (we trust) conversion of many souls. As therefore the name of Mr Tennent is greatly endeared to us, so we beseech our ascended Saviour, the Head of the Church, long to continue him for a burning light and extensive blessing to our provinces; and in particular

to use this faithful, judicious and seasonable endeavor of his servant, for a guard and defence about his own sacred truths and his glorious work in the midst of us, which too many are ready to speak evil of and oppose.

BENJAMIN COLMAN,
THOMAS PRINCE,
JOHN WEBB,
WILLIAM COOPER,
THOMAS FOXCROFT,
JOSHUA GEE.

Boston, December 22, 1742.

Some time after, a man of the separate society became a Saturday-Baptist: who being immersed in the country, and having hands laid on him, thought himself a minister, drew five women after him and proceeded to immerse them: yet they all have since deserted him. But six males of the said society, with one of Brookline, a town about five miles off, went on to associate as a church, owning the Assembly's Confession of Faith, and professing themselves Congregational, according to our New-England Platform: and have not yet returned to the several churches whence they went; though the Rev. Mr. Davenport has happily seen and most ingenuously confessed his abovesaid errors and misconduct, and published his retractions. See *Christian History*, No. 82, and 83.

Besides the aforesaid four males and two or three females of the South Church, I know not any who have left our communion. But the rest of our said numerous and former additions continue with us; and as far as I know, their conversation is as becomes the gospel.* Nor do I hear of more than one of those who have left our church that has fallen into other censurable evil, nor in the other churches in town, except a few of the New North.

July 7, 1743, there met in Boston one of the largest assembly of ministers that ever convened here, to bear their testimony to this remarkable revival in the land: when ten ministers of this town, joined with many others in giving their public testimony to this happy work. An

* This the reader will recollect was written in November, 1744, more than four years after the revival.

account of which is printed in the *Christian History*, No. 20, &c.

On December 13, following, this town and land received a great loss in the death of the Rev. Mr Cooper. An account of which, with his deserved character, is in No. 43, of the *Christian History*. To which I would add the further account of the Rev. Dr Colman in his Funeral Sermon the Lord's day after, since published, in the following terms:—

“Mr Cooper was as fixed and firm against the spirit of separation from the churches of New-England, which he judged to be strongly settled on the platform of Scripture; as any rock on our coast is unshaken by the furious waves that only break themselves into foam by dashing against it. And had he lived he would have been a most strenuous opposer of this defection. But at the same time he was immoveably determined, as we all know, that there has been a remarkable work of God going on among us, by what he had seen with his eyes, had looked upon, and as it were handled, in the resort to him (and come other ministers of the town) of a multitude of persons, younger and older, under strong convictions, humiliation, illuminations, godly fear, with strong crying and tears; faith, hope, trust, joy, with strong reliance on the righteousness of Christ for justification, and on the Almighty Spirit of grace in a sovereign manner to enable them unto all the duties of a sober, righteous and godly life; to work in them both to will and to do, to begin and carry on His good work in their souls; and to keep them by His mighty power through faith to salvation. And among these there were numbers overflowing with the joys and comforts of religion, in the utmost abhorrence of themselves, and repenting as in dust and ashes; while the love of God seemed to be shed abroad in their hearts, in their fervent desires after and pleasure in the conviction and conversion of others. The numerous instances of this nature, with whom he daily conversed, gave him abundant satisfaction of the presence and power of the Sanctifier and Comforter in and with many of them. I think myself also now called by the providence of God to add,—that as I was myself struck with wonder at what of this nature occurred to me two years ago among the young people of this flock, so the good fruits of their abiding profession unto this day, in a discreet, meek, vir-

tuous, pious conversation, gave, me satisfaction and pleasure in them from day to day; while their exemplary face of grave devotion, and diligent attention to the word of God, on Lord's-days and Lectures, are also adorning to the doctrine of God their Saviour."

Of all who resorted to me from all the Congregations in town, I remember no more than three or four who talked of their impulses: and but one or two of these a subject of the late revival, the other two had been communicants in two of our churches, and used to speak of those things before. Nor in all the preaching of the instruments of this work in town, did I ever hear any teach to follow impulses, or any religious impressions, but of the word of God upon our minds, affections, wills and consciences; and which, agreeable to the Holy Scripture, the most famous Reformers and Puritan ministers both in England, Scotland, and New-England, have in their writings taught us.

As to the doctrinal principles of those who continue in our Congregations, and have been the subjects of the late revival; they are the same as they have been all along instructed in, from the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism: which has been generally received and taught in the churches of New-England from its first publication for these hundred years to this day; and which is therefore the system of doctrine most generally and clearly declarative of the faith of the New-England churches.

And though some have represented many of the subjects of this work as holding some or other of the following mischievous errors; viz. 1. "That sanctifying grace in a minister is necessary to Tender the administrations of gospel ordinances valid. 2. That unconverted ministers are incapable to be instruments of converting people. 3. That sanctification (as described in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism) is no evidence of justification. 4. That an unregenerate man ought not to pray. And 5, That assurance is essential to saving faith, so as whoever believes, is sure he believes in a saving manner, and is not in doubt or darkness about it." Upon a careful inquiry, I cannot find nor bear of any of the subjects of this work remaining in our several congregations in town; no, nor even in that which has drawn off from us, who hold these or any other familistical or Antinomian errors.

However, the sovereign Spirit in his awakening influence in the unconverted, and his enlivening efficacy in the hopefully renewed, in this town, has seemed these two last years in a gradual and awful manner to withdraw, For a twelvemonth I have rarely heard the cry of any new ones—"What shall I do to be saved?" But few are now added to our churches, and the heavenly shower in Boston seems to be over. Of those who were in the late effusion wrought on, divers are sometimes repairing to me, with sad complaints of their spiritual dullness, darkness and decays; but I hope are working out their salvation with fear and trembling: while some have now and then a fresh revival of grace and comfort.

Thus have I endeavoured a brief and plain account of the late Revival in this town; especially among the people who resorted to me, and more particularly those of the Assembly I belong to, according to my observation and intelligence: relating only those facts which seemed to me, as I went along, to be most material; avoiding personal reflections, and writing, as I always desire, with candor and moderation. I leave it as a grateful public testimony of the memorable work of the Divine Power and grace among us in my day, which my eyes have seen, and my ears have heard with pleasure; that God the Father, Son and Spirit, may have the more extensive praise, to whose blessing I consign it; and that others may thereby receive eternal benefit.

THOMAS PRINCE.

Boston, November 26, 1744.

As we have given the Public some account of the late extraordinary work of God in this metropolis of New-England; we think it convenient to insert some accounts of the Rev. GEORGE WHITEFIELD, an eminent instrument thereof, as they successively arrived, before his appearance here, and which prepared the way for his entertainment and successful labours among us.

IT was in the year 1738, we were first surprised with the news of Mr Whitefield, as a young minister of the Church of England, of flaming piety and zeal for the power of godliness: who this year sailed from London to Gibraltar and Georgia; being appointed minister of Frederica in that Province, and after a few months stay, returned, through Ireland, to England, for priest's orders, being ordained only a deacon before.

The year following, we were yet more surprised to hear of his preaching the doctrines of the martyrs and other Reformers, which were the same our forefathers brought over hither: particularly the great doctrines of original sin, of regeneration by the Divine Spirit, justification by faith only, &c. and this with amazing assiduity, power and success; which extraordinary appearance, especially in the church of England, together with the vast multitudes of people that flocked to hear him, drew our attention to every thing that was published concerning him.

The latter end of this year he left England, being presented by the honourable Trustees of Georgia to the living at Savannah: and arrived at Philadelphia the second of November, preached there on Lord's day, and every day in the week after. November 8th, began to preach from the Court House gallery about six a night, to near six thousand people, who stood in awful silence to hear him; and so every night, until Lord's day evening. No-

ember 12th, he set out for New York: where he arrived two days after, and there also preached with great power and efficacy. An account of which, with some more particular description of his person and doctrines, were drawn up by an ingenious gentleman, and published in the New England Journal, from which we select the following passages:—

“The Rev. Mr Whitefield arrived at the city of New York on Wednesday, the 14th inst. a little before night. The next day in the afternoon, he preached in the fields to many hundreds of people.

“Among the hearers, the person who gives this account, was one. I fear curiosity was the motive that led me and many others into that assembly. I had read two or three of Mr. Whitefield’s sermons, and part of his Journal, and from thence had obtained a settled opinion, that he was a good man. Thus far was I prejudiced in his favor. But then having heard of much opposition, and many clamors against him, I thought it possible that he might have carried matters too far. That some enthusiasm might have mixed itself with his piety, and that his zeal might have exceeded his knowledge. With these prepossessions I went into the fields; when I came there, I saw a great number of people, consisting of Christians of all denominations, some Jews, and a few, I believe, that had no religion at all. When Mr. Whitefield came to the place before designed; which was a little eminence on the side of a hill; he stood still and beckoned with his hand, and disposed the multitude upon the descent, before, and on each side of him. He then prayed most excellently, in the same manner that the first ministers of the Christian Church prayed (before they were shackled with forms.) The assembly soon appeared to be divided into two companies, the one of which I considered under the name of God’s church, and the other the devil’s chapel. The first were collected round the minister, and were very serious and attentive. The last had placed themselves in the skirts of the assembly, and spent most of their time in giggling, scoffing, talking and laughing. I believe the minister saw them, for in his sermon, observing the cowardice and shamefacedness of Christians Christ’s cause, he pointed towards this assembly, and reproached the former with the boldness and zeal with which, the devil’s vassals serve him. Towards the last

prayer, the whole assembly appeared more united, and all became hushed and still; a solemn awe and reverence appeared in the faces of most, a mighty energy attended the word. I heard and felt something astonishing and surprising, but, I confess, I was not at that time fully rid of my scruples. But as I thought I saw a visible presence of God with Mr Whitefield, I kept my doubts to myself.

“Under this frame of mind, I went to hear him in the evening at the Presbyterian church, where he expounded to above two thousand people within and without doors. I never in my life saw so attentive an audience: Mr Whitefield spake as one having authority: all he said was demonstration, life and power! The people’s eyes and ears hung on his lips. They greedily devoured every word. I came home astonished! every scruple vanished; I never saw nor heard the like; and I said within myself, Surely God is with this man of a truth. He preached and expounded in this manner twice every day, for four days, and his evening assemblies were continually increasing.

“On Sunday morning, at eight o’clock, his congregation consisted of about fifteen hundred people. But at night, several thousands came together to hear him; and the place being too strait for them, many were forced to go away, and some (it is said) with tears lamented their disappointment. After sermon, he left New York, at ten at night, to fulfil a promise that he had made to preach at Elizabethtown, at 11 A. M. the next day.

“Mr Whitefield was born at Gloucester, it is said, in the month of December, 1714. He observes in his Journal, that he was baptized at the font of one of the churches in that city, on the 25th day of that month. He was bred up in the bosom of the church of England, and educated at Oxford. There he commenced Bachelor of Arts. He was ordained priest, according to the orders of the church of England, on the 14th of January last, which was almost as soon as it could be, by the canons of the church, he being then but little more than twenty-four years old. He is a man of a middle stature, of a slender body, of a fair complexion, and of a comely appearance. He is of a sprightly, cheerful temper, acts and moves with great agility and life. The endowments of his mind are very uncommon; his wit is quick and piercing; his imagination lively and florid; and, as far as I can discern, both are under the direction of an exact and solid judg-

ment. He has a most ready memory, and, I think, speaks entirely without notes. He has a clear and musical voice, and a wonderful command of it. He uses much gesture, but with great propriety: every accent of his voice, every motion of his body, speaks, and both are natural and unaffected. If his delivery is the product of art, it is certainly the perfection of it, for it is entirely concealed. He has a great mastery of words, but studies much plainness of speech.

His doctrine is right sterling, I mean, perfectly agreeable to the articles of the church of England, to which he frequently appeals for the truth of it. He loudly proclaims all men by nature to be under sin, and obnoxious to the wrath and curse of God. He maintains the absolute necessity of supernatural grace, to bring men out of this state. He asserts the righteousness of Christ to be the alone cause of the justification of a sinner; that this is received by faith; that this faith is the gift of God; that where faith is wrought, it brings the sinner under the deepest sense of his guilt and unworthiness to the footstool- of sovereign grace, to accept of mercy, as the free gift of God, only for Christ's sake. He denies that good works have any share in our justification; that indeed they do justify our faith, and necessarily flow from it, as streams from the fountain; but Christ's external righteousness imputed to us, and his inherent righteousness wrought in us, is the only cause of man's salvation. He asserts the absolute necessity of the new-birth; where a principle of new life is ingenerated in the heart of man, and an entire change is produced in the temper and disposition of the soul: that this new production is solely the work of God's blessed Spirit. That wherever it is wrought, it is a permanent and abiding principle, and that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. He asserts, that the special influence and indwelling of the Spirit, was not peculiar to the first Christians, but that it is the common privilege of believers, in all ages of the Church. That the Holy Spirit is the Author of the sanctification and comfort of all God's people. And that even in these days, if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. That to many of his hearers, he feared he spake in an unknown tongue. He acknowledged that he preached great mysteries, but true Christians knew what be meant, and that all his hearers must be brought to

understand them if ever they are saved. These are some of those doctrines that have been attended with such mighty power in this city! This is the doctrine of the Church of England! This is the faith of its martyrs! This they sea fed with their blood! Notwithstanding that so many in our days have departed from it.

He speaks much the language of the New Testament; and has an admirable faculty in explaining the Scriptures. He strikes out of them such lights, and unveils those excellencies which surprise his hearers, when he expounds them. He expresses the highest love and concern for the souls of men; and speaks of Christ with the most affectionate appropriation—'My Master!' 'My Lord!' He is no enemy to the innocent freedoms and liberties of the gospel. Nor affects singularity in indifferent things. He spends not his zeal in trifles: he says, the kingdom of God consists not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He breathes a most catholic spirit! He prays most earnestly, that God would destroy all that bigotry and party zeal, that has divided Christians. He supposes that some of Christ's flock are to be found under every denomination. He upbraids the uncharitableness of those, that confine the Church to their own Communion. He professes a most sincere love to all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. He declares that he has no design to make a party in religion. That his whole view in preaching the gospel, is to bring men to Christ, to deliver them from their false confidences, to raise them from their dead formalities, to revive primitive Christianity among them; and if he can obtain this end, he will leave them to their liberty, and they may go to what church, and worship God in what form they like best."

This account of Mr. Whitefield excited an earnest desire in many pious people among us, to see and hear him. But we were informed soon after, of his having preached eight times at New York, and at several places in his return to Philadelphia, of his arriving there, November 23, preaching twice every day in the church, to crowded assemblies of people: and that, at his farewell sermon, November 28, a multitude, computed at not less than ten thousand, attended in the fields; that next day he left the city, to pass through Maryland, Virginia! North and South Carolina, to Georgia.

After this we had a brief account of his travelling and preaching through those countries, and beginning the Orphan House at Savannah in Georgia.

In April, 1740, we had an account of his arrival again at Philadelphia, of his preaching there and in the neighboring places, when the congregations were greatly affected, of his setting out for New York, and his intending to return from thence to Philadelphia, and thence to Georgia, before he came to Boston; where he designed, God willing, to be in July or August.

* The following historical passage, relating to the occasion, &c. of his itinerancy, extracted from a Letter of his to the Rev. Mr Church, prebendary of St Paul's, London, we think proper to insert here.

"I wish every non-resident minister in England could give as good an account of their non-residence, as I of my absence from Savannah. To satisfy you, Rev. Sir, I will acquaint you with the whole. When I first went abroad, I was appointed to be minister of Frederica. But upon my arrival in Georgia, finding there was no minister at Savannah, and no place of worship at Frederica, by the advice of magistrates and people I continued at Savannah, teaching publicly, and from house to house, and catechising the children day by day, during the whole time of my continuance at Georgia; except about a fortnight, in which I went to Frederica, to visit the people, and to see about building a church, for which I had given fifty pounds out of some money I had collected, and of which I have given the public an account. In about four months, I came over to England, to receive priest's orders, and collect money for building an Orphan-House. At the request of many, the honourable Trustees presented me to the living of Savannah. I accepted it, but refused the stipend of fifty pounds per annum, which they generously offered me. Neither did I put them to any expence during my stay in England; where I thought it my duty to abide until I had collected a sufficient sum wherewith to begin an Orphan House; though I should have left England sooner, had I not been prevented by the embargo. However I was more easy, because the honourable Trustees, I knew, had sent over another minister soon after I left the colony. Upon my second arrival at Georgia, finding the case of the Orphan House, and the case of the parish, too great a task for me, I immediately wrote over to the honourable Trustees to provide another minister.

In the mean while, as most of my parishioners were in debt, or ready to leave the colony, for want of being employed, and as I believed erecting an Orphan House would be the best thing I could do for them and their posterity, I thought it my duty from time to time to answer the invitations that were sent me to preach Christ Jesus in several parts of America, and to raise farther collections towards carrying on the Orphan House. The Lord stirred up many to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate on this occasion. I always came home furnished with provisions and money, most of which was expended among the people, and by this means the northern part of the colony almost entirely subsisted for a considerable time. This was asserted not very long ago before the honourable House of Commons. And now, Sir, judge you, whether my non-residence was any thing like the non-residence of most of the English clergy. When I was absent from my parishioners, I was not loitering or living at ease, but preaching Christ Jesus, and begging for them and theirs, &c."

An account of the fruits of his fervent ministry in these places, we had in a Letter of his to a friend in England, dated, at the city of New Brunswick, in New Jersey: as follows:—

“A fortnight ago, after a short passage of ten days, I landed at Pennsylvania, and have had the pleasure of seeing and hearing that my poor endeavours for promoting Christ’s kingdom, when here last, were not in vain in the Lord. I cannot well tell you how many come to me labouring under the deepest convictions, and seemingly truly desirous of finding rest in Jesus Christ, several have received Him into their hearts by faith, and have not only righteousness and peace, but also joy in the Holy Ghost.

“In short, the word has run and been glorified. I daily receive fresh and most importunate invitations to preach in all the countries round about,” &c.

Some weeks before his arrival here, came out a sermon of the Rev. Mr Smith, of Charleston, South Carolina, on the character and preaching of Mr Whitefield there, with a Preface, by the Rev. Dr Colman and Mr Cooper of Boston; from which we shall extract some passages.

“The following Discourse was enclosed to us by our dear brother, the worthy author of it; and we have read it with high pleasure and satisfaction. The design is sufficiently intimated in the title-page. It is indeed a sermon of an extraordinary nature. To give, from the pulpit, the personal and ministerial character of a living preacher, is very unusual, or, perhaps, altogether new. But so is the occasion—and the Discourse must be looked upon to be apologetical, rather than encomiastic. The manifest design is to support the cause by vindicating the man; not a private and party cause, but that of primitive piety and catholic Christianity; the cause of Christ and truth, if the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, the asserting and clearing whereof was the glory of the Reformation, may he so called: a cause this in which zeal is certainly a virtue!

“As to the Rev. Mr Whitefield, the person referred to and named, he is the wonder of the age; and no one man more employs the pens, and tills up the conversation of people, than he does at this day: none more admired and applauded by some, contemned and reproached by others: the common lot of the most excellent men the world has ever had to show!

“While so many others are speaking and publishing their sentiments concerning him with all freedom, Mr. Smith thought himself not precluded. He has had as much opportunity as most, to inform himself concerning Mr Whitefield’s doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, charity, long-suffering, patience, persecutions, and afflictions, which have come unto him: and what he has seen and heard, that declares he unto us; and we receive his testimony, because we know him to be a gentleman of good sense, and strict veracity; and also free from enthusiastic impressions, unless serious religion and experimental piety are so called, as we have melancholy occasion to observe they often are. There appear to us plain marks of sincerity and impartiality in the following account. And the same things have been reported to us by other Reverend-Brethren, of the like character, whom we know and correspond with, in places which Mr Whitefield has visited and preached in.

“And as to his thoughts respecting the views of Providence, in raising up men of this stamp and spirit in our day, he expresses them with great modesty and caution, and we cannot but apprehend they are countenanced from Scripture, reason, and observation.

“When God is about to carry on salvation work with any remarkable success, He will raise up suitable instruments to work by. He will form and spirit men for great and extraordinary undertakings, when He has any great and extraordinary purposes to serve.

“Thus when God’s time for that great and good work of building the second temple was come, Joshua and others were animated to undertake it; and though they were men wondered at, for the warmth of their zeal, and the boldness of their enterprise; that in the face of as many opposers and difficulties, they should undertake to rebuild the holy city and the temple; yet they were raised above all discouragements, and stood firm against all opposition, being fortified with a special promise of the Messiah, in whose strength, and by whose influence, they should be successfully carried on in their work. ‘Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at: for I will bring forth my Servant, the Branch. Behold, the Stone that I have laid before Joshua: upon one stone shall be seven eyes. I will engrave the engraving

thereof, saith the Lord of Hosts; and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day,' Zech. iii. 8, 9.

"So when the gospel church was to be set up in the world, and the Gentile nations to be converted to the knowledge and faith of Jesus, a dozen poor illiterate fishermen, were endued with power from on high, and tent forth to open men's eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And in them was fulfilled that which is written, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies; that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.' Psalm viii. 2.

"And when the Church was overspread with Popish darkness, superstition and idolatry, and the Romish tyranny was at its very height,* it pleased God to enlighten some ecclesiastics gradually in the knowledge of His truth, and then animate and assist them to lay open the errors and corruptions of Popery, and boldly to assert and maintain the pure truths of the gospel. Of this number were Zuinglius in Switzerland, and Luther in Germany: names that will be had in everlasting remembrance in the records of the Church.

"The resolute opposition that was made against them, and the contempt that was poured upon them, instead of cooling, inflamed their courage. The further search they made into the depth of those corruptions that had overspread the Church, the more light still broke in upon them. They found its doctrines poisoned with heresy, and its worship corrupted with superstition and idolatry; and Christianity grown very like to Paganism. Under this conviction they loudly called upon all that had any concern for their souls, to go out of Babylon, as they would not be partakers of her plagues. And multitudes of people were influenced by their preaching and writings to renounce the Roman doctrines and superstitions; and many of the princes of Europe too, were inclined to favour and fall in with the Reformation.

"As for Luther in particular, he was a wondrous man, and the almighty power of God was eminently manifested in him. When he first appeared, 'What could be expected from a poor friar, creeping out of a cloister?' He was advised by his friends to get into his cell again, and

* In the 16th century.

to ply his prayers, and not venture upon so hazardous an undertaking as to preach against the Pope, or attempt so impossible a work as the Reformation.' But, not by might, nor power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. This single inconsiderable man was more than a match for the powers of Rome, and was instrumental to produce one of the greatest changes the world has ever had to marvel at.

"And when it pleases God to renew the face of religion; when primitive Christianity, and the power of godliness, shall be revived in the reforming churches; when the professors of the gospel shall be recovered from the false principles they have embraced, raised above those dead formalities they have so long rested in, and awakened out of that lethargy they are fallen into; when these expected times of reformation shall come on, is it not reasonable to suppose God will raise up those to effect it, whom he will furnish with a good measure of the primitive apostolic spirit; whose hearts shall be inflamed with a burning zeal for the honour of the Redeemer, and love to the souls of men; and who shall therefore be willing to deny themselves in those things which are dear to the most; shall not scruple to go out of the common read, to spread the triumphs of the gospel, and fetch in souls to Jesus Christ; and will not be discouraged by any opposition they may meet with? Considering the present stated of things in the Christian world, how can we expect any great change for the better, but in a way that shall be extraordinary?

"And if there is any appearance of such a work at any time, or in any places, surely we should take care not to slight and undervalue it; much less should we reproach and censure it, or those who are used as instruments in it; but, on the contrary, we should rejoice in it, so far as it seems to be from heaven, and further it with our prayers, as those who are waiting for the kingdom of God.

"We would therefore bespeak the prayers of the faithful in Christ Jesus, into whose hands these papers may come, both for our dear brother, the author of this Discourse, who is with great zeal contending for some important points of the faith once delivered to the saints, against some who openly oppose them, and laboring to promote practical godliness, in the place where divine Providence has appointed his present station; that

he may be assisted and succeeded in all his faithful services for the Redeemer's kingdom: and also for the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, that he may (as he has well expressed himself in some of his Letters to us) 'be kept humble and dependent on our dear Lord Jesus;' be preserved in his travels, strengthened to his uncommon labours, and fortified against all opposition: that Satan (who cannot but have a peculiar enmity at those who so set themselves against his kingdom) may never get advantage of him, to the blemish or hindrance of the great and good work which lire hope is begun and going on: that God would cause him always to triumph in Christ, while he makes manifest the savour of His knowledge by him in every place, and uses him as an instrument to bring back many wandering sheep to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls: and very particularly that his purposed coming to us, may be with as full a blessing of the gospel of Christ as other places have experienced, and much more abundant, by like will and grace of our God!

BENJAMIN COLMAN,
WILLIAM COOPER.

Boston, N. E. June 7, 1740.

*Extracts from Mr. Smith's Sermon on the Character, &c.
of Mr. Whitefield.*

Others have freely spoken their sentiments, and I have heard the defaming, as well as the applause of many; I said, therefore, I will answer also for my part; I also will
s h e w m y o p i n i o n .

1. I shall give you my opinion of the doctrines he insisted on among us. To speak more generally, they were doctrines, I am of opinion, agreeable to the dictates of reason, evidently founded upon Scripture, exactly correspondent with the articles of the establishment, of great use and necessity in forming the Christian life; which I had early imbibed from the best writers and systems.

To be particular,

One of the doctrines, which he has hardly passed over in silence in any single Discourse, is that of original sin. By which, I mean nothing less than the imputation of Adam's first sin to all his posterity by ordinary generation; which imputation is the resultance of his being constituted to act for them in the extensive character of a legal re-

presentative; the consequence of which is that inherent corruption of nature and those sinful propensions we are now born with into the world.

Another doctrine, we have lately had in the warmest language impressed upon us, is that Pauline one of justification by faith alone. And here you will remember, how the preacher vindicated himself from all suspicions of Antinomian error: for while he earnestly contended for our justification as the free gift of God, by faith alone, in the blood of Christ, he took special care to guard against the abuse of it, and asserted that good works were the necessary fruits and evidences of true faith.

Regeneration was another great doctrine insisted on: hardly a single sermon but he mentioned it, sometimes more than twice; and one, and perhaps the best of his discourses, was *ex professo* on this subject.

Another doctrine nearly allied to this, was warmly insisted on, viz. the impressions, or, which was the preacher's own phrase, inward feelings of the Spirit. And here you remember, how he guarded against the invidious censure of assuming the character of an apostle. He renounced all pretensions to the extraordinary powers and signs of apostleship. He also allowed these feelings of the Spirit were not in every person, or at all times, in the same degree, and that though a full assurance were attainable, yet not of absolute necessity to the being of a Christian. Only he asserted that we might feel the Spirit of God in his sanctifying and saving impressions and witnessing with our spirits. And what is there in this but what is agreeable to reason? How can we be led by the Spirit, or have joy in the Holy Ghost, without some sensible perception of it? Can I at any time feel my soul in sacred raptures, burning with the love of God and Christ, and all my best passions alive: Can I feel a secret pleasure in the word, ordinances and communion with God: can I taste the powers of the world to come: can I feel the threatening of God impressed upon my conscience or promises of paradise working upon my hopes: can I groan under the burthen of my corruptions, or exult in the liberty of spirit I may have, in a calm and retired hour, in the meditation of my pardon, and of heaven and immortality. And yet this doctrine of feeling the Spirit, he ridiculed in an age of infidelity. This is a doctrine I have been acquainted with these many years. You have

heard me preach it scores of times, though perhaps clothed in ether expressions. And however derided by some, I hope always to have enthusiasm enough to maintain that the Spirit of God may be felt.

To conclude, all the doctrines now mentioned are primitive, Protestant, Puritanic ones; which our good forefathers, Conformists, and Dissenters, filled their writings with; and, as Dr. Watts has well observed, they filled heaven apace, for God was with them."

Yet all that reverence, with which I heard these doctrines, from the mouth of our preacher, could not win my approbation of some few harsher expressions which dropt from his lips. These in my opinion may be pronounced failings; but such as often attend a warm zeal for Orthodoxy in matters of the last importance, and are found interwoven with the brightest characters.

I shall next give you my opinion of the manner of his preaching.

He appeared to me, in all discourses, very deeply affected and impressed in his own heart. How did that burn within him, when he spake of the things touching the king! With what a flow of words did he speak to us won the great concern of our souls! In what a flaming light did he set out eternity before us! How earnestly did he press Christ upon us! Hew close, strong and pungent, were his applications to the conscience; mingling light and heat, pointing the arrows of the Almighty at the heart of sinners, while he poured in the balm on the wounds of the contrite! How bold and courageous did he look! He was no flatterer: he taught the way of God in truth, and regarded not the persons of men; the politest, and the most modish of our vices, he struck at; the most fashionable entertainments; regardless of every one's presence, but His in whose name he spake.

I shall now show my opinion of his personal character.

While he preaches up faith alone, in our justification before God, he is careful to maintain good works. These things the grace of God teaches us. And how much of this doctrine has he transcribed into his life! How rich has he been in all good works! What an eminent pattern of piety towards God? How holy and unblameable in all conversation and godliness! How seasoned, how much to the use of edifying all his discourses! How naturally does he turn them to religion! How much is he

given to devotion himself, and how much does he labor to excite it in others!

It is indisputable with me, that he affects no party in religion, nor sets himself at the head of any. He is not bigotted to the lesser rites and forms of religion, while zealous enough in all its essentials. He professes love to good men of every denomination. His heart seems set upon doing good. He goes about his great Master's work with diligence and application, and with such cheerfulness as would make one in love with a life of religion. He is proof against reproach and invective. When he is reviled, he revileth not again; but prays heartily for all his enemies.

He renders to all their due; while zealous for the things of God, is a friend to Cæsar. And for charity, as it consists in compassion, and acts of beneficence we have few men like minded. Had he been under any criminal influence of a mercenary temper—had he collected monies for himself in his journeys, under the pretext of doing it for the poor, as he was slanderously reported, he had certainly a fair opportunity to enrich himself. But we have seen, and plain fact cannot be denied, that he casts all into the treasury, and serves the tables of the poor with it. Strolling and vagabond orphans, without father and without mother, without purse and without friend, he seeks out, picks up, and adopts into his family. He is bow building accommodations, and laying the best foundation for their support and maintenance.

I now proceed to give my opinion what views Providence may have in raising up men of this stamp.

And this I desire to do with all humility and modesty.

I pretend to no spirit of prophecy, and can only conjecture, and offer the result of observation, reason, and the usual tendencies of things, corroborated by the great promises scattered up and down in our Bibles.

Now we are none of us ignorant, bow far the primitive spirit of Christianity has sunk into a mere form of godliness: irreligion has been rushing in like a flood; the dearest and most obvious doctrines of the Bible fallen into low contempt: the principles and systems of our pious fathers have been more and more exploded. And now God seems to have revived the ancient spirit and doctrines. He is raising up of our young men with zeal and courage to stem the torrent. They have preached with such

fire, assiduity and success, such solemn awe have they struck upon their hearers. Such deep convictions have their sermons produced: so much have they roused and kindled the zeal of ministers and people: so intrepidly do they push through all opposition. It looks as if some happy period were opening.”

By such accounts as these, many ministers and people were excited to desire his assistance in carrying on that Revival of religion, which, some years before, was begun in some parts of our land, and were prepared to embrace him.

THE END.