

WORKS
OF
PRESIDENT EDWARDS,
IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

CONTAINING

- I. A NARRATIVE OF MANY SURPRISING CONVERSIONS.
- II. THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN NEW ENGLAND.
- III. AN HUMBLE ATTEMPT TO PROMOTE EXPLICIT AGREEMENT IN PRAYER.
- IV. LIFE OF REV. D. BRAINERD AND REFLECTIONS' UPON IT.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION

PUBLISHED AT WORCESTER,
BY ISAIAH THOMAS, JUN.

ISAAC STURTEVANT, PRINTER.

1808.

THOUGHTS
ON THE
REVIVAL OF RELIGION
IN
NEW ENGLAND,
1740.

PART V.

*Shewing positively, what ought to be done to
promote this WORK.*

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

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

And that which I think we ought to set ourselves about in the first place, is to remove stumbling blocks. When God is revealed as about to come, gloriously to set up his kingdom in the world, this is proclaimed, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make strait in the desert an high way for our God*, Isa. xl. 3. And again, Isa. lvii. 14. “Cast ye up, cast ye up; prepare the way; take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people.” And chap. lxii. 10. “Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high way; gather out the stones.”

And in order to this, there must be a great deal done at confessing of faults, on both sides. For undoubtedly many and great are the faults that have been ..committed, in the jangling and confusions, and mixtures of light and darkness, that have been of late. There is hardly any duty more contrary to our corrupt dispositions, and mortifying to the

pride of man; but it must be done. Repentance of faults is, in a peculiar manner, a proper duty, when the kingdom of heaven is at hand, or when we especially expect or desire that it should come; as appears by John the Baptist's preaching. And if God does now loudly call upon us to repent, then he also calls upon us to make proper manifestations of our repentance. I am persuaded that those that have openly opposed this work, or have from time to time spoken lightly of it, cannot be excused in the sight of God, without openly confessing their fault therein; especially if they be ministers. If they have any way, either directly or indirectly, opposed the work, or have so behaved, in their public performances or private conversation, as has prejudiced the minds of their people against the work, if hereafter they shall be convinced of the goodness and divinity of what they have opposed, they ought by no means to palliate the matter, and excuse themselves, and pretend that they always thought so, and that it was only such and such imprudences that they objected against; but they ought openly to declare their conviction, and condemn themselves for what they have done; for it is Christ that they have spoken against, in speaking lightly of, and prejudicing others against this work; yea, worse than that, it is the Holy Ghost. And though they have done it ignorantly, and in unbelief, yet when they find out who it is that they have opposed, undoubtedly God will hold them bound publicly to confess it.

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

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

stand in it, is what will give the enemy the greatest advantage. For Christians to act like Christians, in openly humbling themselves, when they have openly offended, in the end brings the greatest honor to Christ and religion; and in this way are persons most likely to have God appear for them.

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

Those therefore, that have been zealous for this work, and have greatly erred and been injurious with their zeal, ought not to be treated with bitterness. There is abundant reason to think, that most of them are the dear children of God, for whom Christ died; and therefore, that they will see their error. As to those things, wherein we see them to be in an error, we have reason to say of them as the apostle, Philip, iii. 15. "If any are otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto them." Their errors should not be made use of by us, so much to excite indignation towards them, but should influence all of us, that hope that we are the children of God, to humble ourselves, and become more entirely dependent on the Lord Jesus Christ, when we see those, that are God's own people, so ready to go astray. And those ministers that have been, judged, and injuriously dealt with, will do the part of Christ's disciples, not to judge and revile again, but to receive such injuries with meekness and forbearance, and making a good improvement of them, more strictly -examining their hearts and ways, and committing

themselves to God. This will be the way to have God vindicate them in his providence, if they belong to him. We have not yet seen the end of things; nor do we know who will be most vindicated, and honored of God, in the issue. Eccles, vii. 8. "Better is the end of a thing, than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit, is better than the proud in spirit."

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

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

Christ patiently, continuing still instant in prayer, they might have had him appearing for them, much more effectually to deliver them. *He that believeth shall not make haste*; and it is for those that are found patiently waiting on the Lord, under difficulties, that he will especially appear, when he comes to do great things for his church, as is evident by Isa. xxx. 18, and chap. xl. at the latter end, and xlix. 23, and Psal. xxxvii. 9, and many other places.

I have somewhere, not long since, met with an exposition of those words of the spouse, that we have several times repeated in the book of Canticles, *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please*, which is the only satisfying exposition that ever I met with; which was to this purpose, viz. that when the church of God is under great difficulties, and in distress, and Christ does not appear for her help, but seems to neglect her, as though he were asleep, God's people, or the daughters of Jerusalem, in such a case, should not show an hasty spirit; and not having patience to wait for Christ to awake for their help, until his time comes, take indirect courses for their own deliverance, and use violent means for their escape, before Christ appears to open the door for them; and so as it were, *stir up, and awake Christ*, before his time. When the church is in distress, and God seems not to appear for her in his providence, he is very often represented in scripture, as being asleep; as Christ was asleep in the ship, when the disciples were tossed by the storm, and the ship covered with waves. And God's appearing afterwards for his people's help, is represented as his awaking out of sleep. Psal. vii. 6, and xxxv. 23, and xlv. 23, and lix. 4, and lxxiii. 20. Christ has an appointed time for his thus awaking out of sleep. And his people ought to wait upon him; and not, in an impatient fit, stir him up, before his time. It is worthy to be observed how strict this charge is, given to the daughters of Jerusalem, which is repeated three times over in the book of Canticles, chap. ii. 7, and iii. 5, and viii. 4. In the 2d chapter and six first verses, is represented the supports Christ gives his church, while she is in a suffering state, *as the lily among thorns*. In the 7th verse is represented her patience in waiting for Christ, to appear for her deliverance, when she charges the daughters of Jerusalem, not to stir up, nor awake her love until he please, *by the roes, and the hinds of the field*; which are creatures of a gentle, harmless nature, are not beasts of prey, do not devour one another, do not fight with their enemies, but fly from them; and are of a pleasant, loving nature, Prov. v. 19. In the next verse, we see the church's success, in this way of waiting under sufferings, with meekness and patience; Christ soon awakes, speedily appears, and swiftly comes. *The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills!*

What has been mentioned hitherto, has relation to the behavior we are obliged to, as we would prevent the hindrances of the work; but besides these, there are things that must be done, more directly to advance it. And here, it concerns every one, in the first place, to look into his own heart, and see to it that he be a partaker of the benefits of the work himself, and that it be promoted in his own soul. Now is a most glorious opportunity for the good of souls. It is manifestly, with respect to a time of great revival of religion in the world, that we have that gracious, earnest and moving invitation proclaimed, in the 55th of Isaiah. *Ho, every one that thirsteth!* &c. as is evident by what precedes in the foregoing chapter, and what follows in the close of this. Here, in the 6th verse, it is said, “Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him, while he is near. And it is with special reference to such a time, that Christ proclaims as he does, Rev. xxi. 6. “I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.” And chap. xxii. 17. “And the Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst come; and Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” And it seems to be with reference to such a time, which is typified by the *feast of tabernacles*, that Jesus, at that feast, stood. and cried, as we have an account, John vii. 37, 38. “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come Unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” And it is with special reference to God’s freeness and readiness to bestow grace at such a time, that it is said in Isa. lx. 11, of the spiritual *Jerusalem, thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night.*

And though I judge not those that have opposed this work, and would not have others judge them, yet, if any such shall happen to read this treatise, I would take the liberty to entreat them to leave off concerning themselves so much about Others, and look into their own souls, and see to it that they are the subjects of a true, saving work of the Spirit of God. If they have reason to think they never have been, or it be but a very doubtful hope that they have, then how can they have any heart to be busily and fiercely engaged about the mistakes, and the supposed false hopes of others? And I would now beseech those that have hitherto been something inclining to Arminian principles, seriously to weigh the matter with respect to this work, and consider, whether, if the scriptures are the word of God, the work that has been described in the first part of this treatise, must not needs be, as to the substance of it, the work of God, and the flourishing of that religion, that is taught by Christ and his apostles; and whether any good medium can be found, where a man can rest, with any stability,

between owning this work, and being a Deist; and also to consider whether or no, if it be indeed so, that this be the work of God, it does not entirely overthrow their scheme of religion; and therefore, whether it does not infinitely concern them, as they would be partakers of eternal salvation, to relinquish their scheme. Now is a good time for Arminians to change their principles. I would now, as one of the friends of this work, humbly invite them to come and join with us, and be on our side; and if I had the authority of Moses, I would say to them as he did to Hobab, Numb. x. 29. "We are journeying unto the' place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us; and we will do thee good-. For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

As the benefit and advantage of the good improvement of such a season, is extraordinary great; so the danger of neglecting, and misimproving it, is proportionably great. It is abundantly evident by the scripture, that as a time of great outpouring of the Spirit, is a time of great favor to those that are partakers of the blessing; so it is always a time of remarkable vengeance to others. So in Isa. lxi. 2, the same that is called, *the acceptable year of the Lord*, is called also, *the day of vengeance of our God*. So it was amongst the Jews, in the apostles' days. The apostle in 2 Cor. vi. 2, says of that time, that it was *the accepted time, and day of salvation*; and Christ says of the same time, Luke xxi. 22, "These are the days of vengeance." At the same time that the blessings of the kingdom of heaven were given to some, there was an *axe laid at the root of the trees, that those that did not bear fruit, might be hewn down, and cast into the fire*, Mat. iii. 9, 10, 11. Then was glorified, both the goodness and severity of God, in a remarkable manner. Rom. xi. 22. The harvest and the vintage go together. At the same time that the earth is reaped, and God's elect are gathered into the garner of God, *the angel that has power over fire, thrusts in his sickle, and gathers the cluster of the vine of the earth, and casts it into the great wine press of the wrath of God*, Rev. xiv. at the latter end. So it is foretold, that at the beginning of the glorious times of the Christian church, at the same time that *the hand of the Lord is known towards his servants, so shall his indignation, towards his enemies*, Isa. lxvi. 14. So when that glorious morning shall appear, wherein *the sun of righteousness shall arise, to the gleet, with healing in his wings, the day shall burn as an oven to the wicked*, Mal. iv. 1, 2, 3. There is no time like such a time, for the increase of guilt, and treasuring up wrath, and desperate hardening of the heart, if men stand it out; which is the most awful judgment, and fruit of divine wrath, that can be inflicted on any mortal. So that a time of great grace, and pouring out of the Spirit, and the fruits of divine mercy, is evermore

also, a time of great outpouring of something else, viz. divine vengeance, on those that neglect and misimprove such a season.

The state of the present revival of religion, has an awful aspect upon those that are advanced in years. The work has been chiefly amongst those that are young; and comparatively, but few others have been made partakers of it. And indeed, it has commonly been so, when God has begun any great work, for the revival of his church; he has taken the young people, and has cast off the old and stiff necked generation. There- was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, on the children of Israel in the wilderness, on the younger generation, *their little ones, that they said, should be a prey*, the generation that entered into Canaan, with Joshua; which is evident by many things in scripture. That generation seems to have been the most excellent generation that ever was in the church of Israel. There is no generation of which there is so much good, and so little hurt spoken in scripture; as might be shewn, if it would not be too long. In that generation, that were under twenty years, when they went out of Egypt, was that *kindness of youth, and love of espousals*, spoken of, Jer. ii. 2, 3. But the old generation were passed by, and remained obstinate and stiff necked, were always murmuring, and would not be convinced by all God's wonderous works that they beheld. God by his awful judgments that he executed in the wilderness, and the affliction that the people suffered there, convinced and humbled the younger generation, and fitted them for great mercy; as is evident by Deut. ii. 16, but he destroyed the old generation; *he swore in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness*. When it was a time of great mercy, and pouring out of God's Spirit on their children, it was remarkably a day of vengeance unto them; as appears by the 9Qth Psalm... Let the old generation in this land, take warning from hence, and take heed that they do not refuse to be convinced, by all God's wonders that he works before their eyes, and that they do not continue forever objecting, murmuring and cavilling, against the work of God, least, while God is bringing their children into a land flowing with milk and honey, he should swear in his wrath concerning them, that their carcasses shall fall in the wilderness.

So when God had a design of great mercy to the Jews, in bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, and returning them to their own land, there was a blessed outpouring of the Spirit upon them in Babylon, to bring them to deep conviction and repentance, and to a spirit of prayer to cry earnestly to Cod for mercy; which is often spoken of by the prophets. But it was not upon the old generation, that were carried captive. The captivity continued just long enough, for that perverse generation to waste away and die in their captivity; at least those of

them that were adult persons, when carried captive. The old generation, and heads of families were exceeding obstinate, and would not hearken to the earnest, repeated warnings of the prophet Jeremiah; but he had greater success among the young people; as appears by Jer. vi. 10, U. « To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken. Behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore, I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; foremen the husband with the wife (i. e. the heads of families, and parents of these children) shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days.” Blessed be God! There are some of the elder people, that have been made partakers of this work. And those that are most awakened, by these warnings of God’s word, and the awful frowns of his providence, will be most likely to be made partakers hereafter. It infinitely concerns them to take heed to themselves, that they may be partakers of it; for how dreadful will it be to go to hell, after having spent so many years in doing nothing, but treasure up wrath.

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

him in his heart, in such circumstances. I think there is a great deal of reason, from the scripture, to conclude that no sort of men in the world, will be low in hell, as ungodly ministers. Every thing that is spoken of in scripture, as that which aggravates guilt, and heightens divine wrath, meets in them; however some particular persons, of other sorts, may be more guilty than some of these.

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

We that are ministers not only have need of some true experience of the saving influence of the Spirit of God upon our heart, but we need a double portion of the Spirit of God at such a time as this; we had need to be as full of light, as a glass is that is held out in the sun; and with respect to love and zeal, we had need at this day, to be like the angels that are a flame of fire. The state of the times extremely requires a fullness of the divine Spirit in ministers, and we ought to give ourselves no rest until we have obtained it. And in order to this, I should think ministers, above all persons, ought to be much in secret prayer and fasting, and also much in praying and fasting one with another. It seems to me it would be becoming the circumstances of the present day, if ministers in a neighborhood would often meet together, and spend days in fasting, and fervent prayer, among themselves, earnestly seeking for those extraordinary supplies of divine grace from heaven, that we need at this day. And also, if on their occasional visits one to another, instead of spending away their time in sitting and smoking, and in diverting, or worldly, unprofitable conversation, telling news, and making their remarks on this and the other trifling subject, they would spend their time in praying together, and singing praises, and religious conference. How much do many of the common people shame many of us that are in the work of the ministry, in these respects? Surely we do not behave ourselves so much like Christian ministers, and the disciples and ambassadors of Christ, as we ought to do. And -while we condemn zealous persons for their doing so much at censuring ministers at this day, it ought not to be without deep reflections upon, and great condemnation of ourselves. For indeed, we do very much to provoke censoriousness, and lay a great temptation before others, to the sin of judging. And if we can prove that those that are guilty of it, do transgress the scripture rule, yet our indignation should be chiefly against ourselves.

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

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

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

Whitefield has done, every where, as he has run through the British dominions, (so far as they are owing to means) are very much owing to the appearance of these things, which he is eminently possessed of. When the people see these things apparently in a person, and to a great degree, it awes them, and has a commanding influence upon their minds; it seems to them that they must yield; they naturally fall before them, without standing to contest or dispute the matter; they are conquered as it were by surprize. But while we are cold and heartless, and only go on in a dull manner, in an old formal round, we shall never do any great matters. Our attempts, the appearance of such coldness and irresolution, will not so much as make persons think of yielding. They will hardly be sufficient to put it into their minds; and if it be put into their minds, the appearance of such indifference and cowardice, does as it were call for, and provoke opposition. Our misery is want of zeal and courage; for not only through want of them, does all fail that we seem to attempt, but it prevents our attempting any thing very remarkable, for the kingdom of Christ. Hence, oftentimes it has been, that when anything very considerable, that is new, is proposed to be done, for the advancement of religion, or the public good, many difficulties are found out, that are in the way, and a great many objections are started, and it may be, it is put off from one to another; but nobody does any thing. And after this manner good designs or proposals have oftentimes failed, and have sunk as soon as proposed. Whereas if we had but Mr. Whitefield's zeal and courage, what could not we do, with such a blessing as we might expect?

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

With respect to candidates for the ministry, I will not undertake particularly to determine, what kind of examination or trial they should pass under, in order to their admission to that sacred work. But I think this is evident from the scripture, that another sort, of trial, with

regard to their virtue and piety, is requisite, than is required in order to persons being admitted into the visible church. The apostle directs, that *hands be laid suddenly on no man*; but that they should *first be tried*) before they are admitted to the work of the ministry. But it is evident that persons were suddenly admitted, by baptism, into the visible church, from time to time, on their profession of their faith in Christ, without such caution and strictness in their probation. And it seems to me, those would act very unadvisedly, that should enter on that great and sacred work, before they had comfortable satisfaction concerning themselves, that they have had a saving work of God on their souls.

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

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

And I cannot see, why it is not on all accounts fit and convenient, for the governors and instructors of the colleges, particularly, singly and frequently to converse with the students, about the state of their souls. As is the practice of the Rev. Dr. Doddridge, one of the most noted of the present dissenting ministers in England, who keeps an academy at Northampton, as he himself informs the Rev. Mr. Wadsworth of Hartford, in Connecticut, in a letter dated at Northampton, March 6, 1740, 41. The original of which letter I have seen, and have by me an extract of it, sent to me, by Mr. Wadsworth; which is as follows.

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

I frequently converse with each of them alone, and conclude the conversation with prayer. This does indeed take up a great deal of time; but I bless God, it is amply repaired, in the pleasure I have, in seeing my labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

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

Rich men have a talent in their Hands, in the disposal and improvement of which, they might very much promote such a work as this, if they were so disposed. They are far beyond others under advantage to do good; and lay Up for themselves treasures in heaven. What a thousand pities is it, that for Want of a heart, they commonly have no share at all there, but heaven is peopled mostly with the poor of this World? One Would think that bur rich men, that call themselves Christians, might devise Some notable things, to do with their money, to advance the kingdom of their professed Redeemer, and the prosperity of the souls of men, at this time of such extraordinary advantage for it. It seems to me, that in this age, most of us have but very narrow, penurious notions of Christianity, as it respects cur use and disposal of our temporal goods.

The primitive Christians had not such notions. They were trained Up by the apostles in another way. God has greatly distinguished some of the inhabitants of New England, from others, in the abundance that he has given them of the good things of this life. If they could now be persuaded to lay out some considerable part of that which God has given them for the honor of God, and lay it up in heaven, instead of spending it for their own honor, or laying it up for their posterity, they would not repent of it Afterwards. How liberally did the Heads of the tribes contribute of their wealth, at the setting up the tabernacle, though it was in a barren wilderness? These are the days of the erecting the tabernacle Of God amongst us. We have a particular account how the goldsmiths and the merchants helped to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, Neh. iii. 32. The days are coming spoken of in scripture, and I believe not very far off, when the sons of *Zion shall come from far, bringing their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord their God, and to the Holy One of Israel;* and when the merchants of the earth, shall trade for Christ, more than for themselves, and *their merchandize and hire shall be holiness to the Lord, and shall not be treasured, or laid up for posterity, but shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing;* and when *the ships of Tarshish shall bring the wealth of the distant parts of the earth, to the place of God's sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious; and the abundance of the sea, shall be converted to the use of God's church, and she shall suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breasts of kings.* The days are coming, when the great and rich men of the world, *shall bring their honor and glory into the church,* and shall, as it were, strip themselves, to spread their garments under Christ's feet, as he enters triumphantly into Jerusalem; and when those that will not do so shall have no glory, and their silver and gold shall be cankered, and their garments moth eaten; for the saints shall then inherit the earth, and they shall reign on earth, and those that honor God he will honor, and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.

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

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

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

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

And here, the first thing I shall mention, is, *fasting and prayer*. It seems to me, that the circumstances of the present work do loudly call God's people to abound in this; whether they consider the experience God has lately given them, of the worth of his presence, and of the blessed fruits of the effusions of his' Spirit, to excite them to pray for the continuance and increase, and greater extent of such blessings; or whether they consider the great encouragement God has lately given them, to pray for the outpourings of his Spirit, and the carrying on this work, by the great manifestations he has lately made, of the freeness and riches of his grace; and how much there is, in what we have seen of the glorious works of God's power and grace, to put us in mind of the yet greater things of this nature, that he has spoken of in his word, and to excite our longings for those things, and hopes of their approach; or whether we consider the great opposition that Satan makes against this work, and the many difficulties with which it is clogged, and the distressing circumstances that some parts of God's church in this land are under at this day, on one account and another.

So is God's will, through his wonderful grace, that the prayers of his saints should be one great and principal means of carrying on the designs of Christ's kingdom in the world. When God has something very great to accomplish for his church, it is his will, that there should precede it, the extraordinary prayers of his people; as is manifest by Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "I will yet, for this, be inquired of, by the house of Israel, to do it for them;" together with the context. And it is revealed that, when God is about to accomplish great things for his church, he will begin by remarkably pouring out the Spirit of grace and supplication. Zech. xii. 10. If we are not to expect that the devil should go out

of a particular person, that is under a bodily possession, without extraordinary prayer, *or prayer and fasting*; how much less, should we expect to have him cast out of the land, and the world without it.

I am sensible that considerable has been done in duties of this nature, in some places; but I do not think so much as God, in the present dispensations of his providence calls for. I should think the people of God in this land, at such a time as this is, would be in the way of their duty, to do three times so much at fasting and prayer as they do; not only, nor principally, for the pouring out of the Spirit on those towns or places where they belong; but that God would appear for his church, and in mercy to miserable men, to carry on his work in the land, and in the world of mankind, and to fulfil the things that he has spoken of in his word, that his church has been so long wishing and hoping and waiting for. *They that make mention of the Lord*, at this day, ought not to keep silence, and should give God no rest, until he establish, and until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, agreeably to Isa. lxii. 6, 7. Before the first great outpouring of the Spirit of God, on the Christian church, which began at Jerusalem, the church of God gave themselves to incessant prayer, Acts i. 13, 14. There is a time spoken of, wherein God will remarkably and wonderfully appear, for the deliverance of his church from all her enemies, and when he will *avenge his own elect*. And Christ reveals that this will be in answer to their incessant prayers, or *crying day and night*, Luke xviii. 7. In Israel, the *day of atonement*, which was their great day of fasting and prayer, preceded and made way for the glorious and joyful *feast of tabernacles*. When Christ is mystically born into the world, to rule over all nations, it is represented in the 12th chapter of Revelations, as being in consequence of the churches *crying, and travailing in births and being pained to be delivered*. One thing here intended, doubtless is, her crying and agonizing in prayer.

God seems now, at this very time, to be waiting for this from us. When God is about to bestow some great blessing on his church, it is often his manner, in the first place, so to order things in his providence, as to shew his church their great need of it, and to bring them into distress for want of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to him for it. And let us consider God's present dispensations towards his church in this land. A glorious work of his grace has been begun and carried on; and God has, of late, suffered innumerable difficulties to arise, that do in a great measure clog and hinder it, and bring many of God's dear children into great distress; and yet does not wholly forsake the work of his hand; there are remarkable tokens of his presence still to be seen, here and there; as though he was not forward to forsake us, and (if I may so say) as though he had a mind to carry on his work;

but only was waiting for something that he expected in us, as requisite in order to it. And we have a great deal of reason to think, that one thing at least is, that we should further acknowledge the greatness and necessity of such a mercy, and our dependence on God for it, in earnest and importunate prayers to him. And by the many errors that have been run into, and the wounds we have thereby given ourselves and the cause that we would promote, and the mischief and confusion we have thereby made, God has hitherto been remarkably shewing us our great and universal dependence on him, and exceeding need of his help and grace. Which should engage our cries to him for it.

There is no way that Christians in a private capacity can do so much to promote the work of God, and advance the kingdom of Christ, as by prayer. By this even women, children and servants may have a public influence. Let persons be never so weak, and never so mean, and under never so poor advantages to do much for Christ, and the souls of men otherwise; yet, if they have much of the spirit of grace and supplication, in this way, they may have power with him that is infinite in power, and has the government of the whole world. And so a poor man in his cottage may have a blessed influence all over the world. God is, if I may so say, at the command of the prayer of faith; and in this respect is, as it were, under the power of his people; *as princes, they have power with God, and prevail*. Though they may be private persons, their prayers are put in the name of a Mediator, that is a public person, being the head of the whole church, and the Lord of the universe. And if they have a great sense of the importance of eternal things, and concern for the precious souls of men, yet they need not regret it, that they are not preachers; they may go in their earnestness and agonies of soul, and pour out their souls before One that is able to do all things; before him they may speak as freely as ministers; they have a great High Priest, through whom they may come boldly at all times, and may vent themselves before a prayer hearing father, without any restraint.

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

heaven with their humble, fervent and incessant prayers for them, they would have been much more in the way of success.

God in his providence, appearing in the present state of things, does especially call on his people in New England to be very much in praying to him for the pouring out of the Spirit upon ministers in the land. For though it is not for us to determine, concerning particular ministers, how much they have of the Spirit of God; yet in the general, it is apparent, that there is, at this day, need of very great degrees of the presence of God with the ministry in New England, much greater degrees of it than has hitherto been granted; they need it for themselves, and the church of God stands in extreme need of it.

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

I have often thought it would be a thing very desirable, and very likely to be followed with a great blessing, if there could be some contrivance, that there should be an agreement of all God's people in America, that are well affected to this work, to keep a day of fasting

and prayer to God; wherein we should all unite on the same day, in humbling ourselves before God for our past long continued lukewarmness and unprofitableness; not omitting humiliation for the errors that so many of God's people that have been zealously affected towards this work, through their infirmity and remaining blindness and corruption, have run into; and together with thanksgivings to God, for so glorious and wonderful a display of his power and grace, in the late outpourings of his Spirit; to address the Father of mercies, with prayers and supplications, and earnest cries, that he would guide and direct his own people, and that he would continue, and still carry on this work, and more abundantly and extensively pour out his Spirit; and particularly that he would pour out his Spirit upon ministers; and that he would bow the heavens and come down, and erect his glorious kingdom through the earth. Some perhaps may think that its being all on the same day, is a circumstance of no great consequence; but I cannot be of that mind. Such a circumstance makes the union and agreement of God's people in his worship the more visible, and puts the greater honor upon God, and would have a great tendency to assist and enliven the devotions of Christians. It seems to me it would mightily encourage and animate God's saints, in humbly and earnestly seeking to God, for such blessings which concern them all; and that it would be much for the rejoicing of all, to think, that at the same time, such multitudes of God's dear children, far and near, were sending up their cries to the same common Father, for the same mercies. Christ speaks of agreement in asking, as what contributes to the prevalence of the prayers of his people. Mat. xviii. 19. "Again I say unto you, that if any two of you, shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. If the agreement or united purpose and appointment of but two of God's children, would contribute much to the prevalence of their prayers, how much more the agreement of so many thousands? Christ delights greatly in the union of his people, as appears by his prayer in the 17th of John. And especially is the appearance of their union in worship, lovely and attractive unto him.

I doubt not but such a thing as I have now mentioned is practicable, without a great deal of trouble. Some considerable number of ministers might meet together and draw up the proposal, wherein a certain day should be pitched upon, at a sufficient distance, endeavoring therein to avoid any other public day, that might interfere with the design, in any of the provinces, and the business of the day should be particularly mentioned; and these proposals should be published, and sent abroad, into all parts, with a desire that as many ministers as are disposed to fall in with them, would propose the matter to their

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

One thing more I would mention concerning fasting and prayer, wherein I think there has been a neglect in ministers; • and that is, that although they recommend, and much insist on the duty of secret prayer, in their preaching; so little is said about secret fasting. It is a duty recommended by our Saviour to his followers, just in like manner as secret prayer is; as may be seen by comparing the 5th and 6th verses of the 6th chapter of Matthew with verses 16, 17, 18. Though I do not suppose that secret fasting is to be practised in a stated manner, and steady course as secret prayer, yet it seems to me it is a duty that all professing Christians should practice, and frequently practice. There are many occasions, of both a spiritual and temporal nature, that do properly require it; and there are many particular mercies, that we desire for ourselves or friends that it would be proper, in this manner, to seek of God.

Another thing I would also mention, wherein it appears to me that there has been an omission, with respect to the external worship of God. There has been of late, a great increase of preaching the word, and a great increase of social prayer, and a great increase of singing praises. These external duties of religion are attended, much more frequently than they used to be; yet I cannot understand that there is any increase of the administration of the Lord's supper, or that God's people do any more frequently commemorate the dying love of their Redeemer, in this sacred memorial of it, than they used to do. Though I do not see why an increase of love to Christ, should not dispose Christians, as much to increase in this, as in those other duties; or why it is not as proper, that Christ's disciples should abound in this duty, in this joyful season, which is spiritually supper-time, a feast day with God's saints, wherein Christ is so abundantly manifesting his dying love to souls, and is dealing forth so liberally of the precious fruits of his

death. It seems plain by the scripture, that the primitive Christians were wont to celebrate this memorial of the sufferings of their dear Redeemer every Lord's day. And so I believe it will be again in the church of Christ, in days that are approaching. And whether we attend this holy and sweet ordinance so often now, or no, yet I cannot but think it would become us, at such a time as this, to attend it much oftener than is commonly done in the land.

But another thing I would mention, which it is of much greater importance, that we should attend to; and that is the duty, that is incumbent upon God's people at this day, to take heed, that while they abound in external duties of devotion, such as praying, hearing, singing, and attending religious meetings, there be a proportionable care to abound in moral duties, such as acts of righteousness, truth, meekness, forgiveness and love towards our neighbor; which are of much greater importance in the sight of God, than all the externals of his worship. Which our Saviour was particularly careful that men should be well aware of. Matt. ix. 13. "But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." And chap. xii. 7. "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

The internal acts and principles of the worship of God, or the worship of the heart, in the love and fear of God, trust in God, and resignation to God, &c. are the most essential and important of all duties of religion whatsoever; for therein consists the essence of all religion. But of this inward religion, there are two sorts of external manifestations or expressions. The one sort, are outward acts of worship, such as meeting in religious assemblies, attending sacraments, and other outward institutions, and honoring God with gestures, such as bowing, or kneeling before him, or with words, in speaking honorably of him, in prayer, praise or. religious conference. And the other sort, are the expressions of our love to God, by obeying his moral commands, of self denied, righteousness, meekness, and Christian love, in our behavior among men. And the latter are of vastly the greatest importance in the Christian life. God makes little account of the former, in comparison of them. They are abundantly more insisted on, by the prophets, in the Old Testament, and Christ and his apostles, in the New. When these two kinds of duties are spoken of together, the latter are ever more greatly preferred. As in Isa. i. 12, to 18, and Amos v. 21, &c. and Mich. vi. 7, 8, and Isa. lviii. 5, 6, 7, and Zech. vii. ten first verses, and Jer. ii. seven first verses, and Matth. xv. 3, See. Often, when the times were very corrupt in Israel, the people abounded in the former kind of duties, but were at such times, always notoriously deficient in the latter; as the prophets complain, Isa. lviii. four first

verses, Jer. vi. 13, compared with verse 20. Hypocrites and self righteous persons, do much more commonly abound in the former kind of duties, than the latter; as Christ remarks of the Pharisees, Matth. xxiii. 14, 25, and 34. When the scripture directs us to *shew our faith by our works*, it is principally the latter sort are intended; as appears by James ii. from 8th verse to the end, and 1 John ii. 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. And we are to be judged at the last day, especially by these latter sort of works; as is evident by the account we have of the day of judgment, in the 25th of Matthew. External acts of worship in words and gestures, and outward forms, are of little use, but as signs of something else, or as they are a profession of inward worship. They are not so properly shewing our religion by our deeds; for they are only a shewing our religion by words, of an outward profession. But he that shows religion in the other sort of duties, shews it in something more than a profession of words, he shews it in deeds. And though deeds may be hypocritical, as well as words; yet in themselves they are of greater importance, for they are much more profitable to ourselves and our neighbor. We cannot express our love to God, by doing any thing that is profitable to God; God would therefore have us do it in those things that are profitable to our neighbors, whom he has constituted his receivers. Our goodness extends not to God, but to our fellow Christians. The latter sort of duties, put greater honor upon God, because there is greater self denial in them. The external acts of worship, consisting in bodily gestures, words and sounds, are the cheapest part of religion, and least contrary to our lusts. The difficulty of thorough, external religion, does not lie in them. Let wicked men enjoy their covetousness, and their pride, their malice, envy and revenge, and their sensuality and voluptuousness, in their behavior amongst men, and they will be willing to compound the matter with God, and submit to what forms of worship you please, and as many as you please; as is manifest in the Jews of old, in the days of the prophets, and the Pharisees in Christ's time, and the Papists and Mahometans at this day.

At a time when there is an appearance of the approach of any glorious revival of God's church, God does especially call his professing people to the practice of moral duties. Isa. lvi. 1. "Thus saith the Lord; keep ye judgment and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed." So when John preached that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, and cried to the people, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths strait*, as we have an account, Luke iii. 4, the people asked him, *What they should do?* He answers, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.* The publicans said, *What shall we do?* he answers, *Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the*

soldiers asked him. What shall we do? He replies, Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. Verses 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

God's people at such a time as this, ought especially to abound in deeds of charity, or alms giving. We generally, in these days, seem to fall far below the true spirit and practice of Christianity, with regard to this duty, and seem to have but little notion of it, so far as I can understand the New Testament. At a time when God is so liberal of spiritual things, we ought not to be strait handed towards him, and sparing of our temporal things. So far as I can judge by the scripture, there is no externa. duty whatsoever, by which persons will be so much in the way, not only of receiving temporal benefits, but also spiritual blessings, the influences of God's holy Spirit in the heart, in divine discoveries, and spiritual consolations. I think it would be unreasonable to understand those promises, made to this duty, in the 58th chapter of Isaiah, in a sense exclusive of spiritual discoveries and comforts. Isa. lviii. 7, &c. "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to .thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward; then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer, thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee, the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." So, that giving to the poor is the way to receive spiritual blessings, is manifest by Psal. cxii. 4, &c. "Unto the upright, there ariseth light in the darkness; he is gracious, and full of compassion and righteous. A good man sheweth favor, and lendeth, he will guide his affairs with discretion; surely he shall not be moved forever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his horn shall be exalted with honor." That this is one likely mean's to obtain assurance, is evident by 1 John iii. 18, 19. "My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

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

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

Rebekah, in her marriage with Isaac, was undoubtedly a remarkable type of the church, in her espousals to the Lord Jesus. But she

found her husband, in doing deeds of charity, agreeable to the prayer of Abraham's servant, who prayed that this might be the thing that might distinguish and mark out the virgin, that was to be Isaac's wife. So Cornelius was brought to the knowledge of Christ, in this way. *He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. And an angel appeared to him, and said to him, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God; and now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter, &c.* Acts x. at the beginning. And we have an account in the following parts of the chapter, how God by Peter's preaching revealed Christ to Cornelius and his family, and of the Holy Ghost's descending upon them, and filling their hearts with joy and their mouths with praises.

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

If God's people in this land, were once brought to abound in such deeds of love, as much as in praying, hearing, singing, and religious meetings and conference, it would be a most blessed omen. There is nothing would have a greater tendency to bring the God of love down from heaven to the earth. So amiable would be the sight, in the eyes of our loving and exalted Redeemer, that it would soon as it were fetch Him down from his throne in heaven, to set up His tabernacle with men on the earth, and dwell with them. I do not remember ever to have read of any remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, that continued any long time, but what was attended with an abounding in this duty. So we know it was with that great effusion of the Spirit that began at Jerusalem in the apostles' days. And so in the late remarkable revival of religion in Saxony, which began by the labors of the famous Professor Franck, and has now been carried on for above thirty years, and has spread its happy influences into many parts of the world; it was begun,

and has been carried on, by a wonderful practice of this duty. And the remarkable blessing that God has given Mr. Whitefield, and the great success with which he has crowned him, may well be thought to be very much owing to his laying out himself so abundantly in charitable designs. And it is foretold, that God's people shall abound in this duty, in the time of the great outpouring of the Spirit that shall be in the latter days. Isa. xxxii. 5 and 8.

The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

To promote a reformation, with respect to all sorts of duties, among a professing people, one proper means, and that which is recommended by frequent scripture examples, is their solemn, public renewing their covenant with God. And doubtless it would greatly tend to promote this work in the land, if the congregations of God's people could generally be brought to this. If a draught of a covenant should be made by their ministers, wherein there should be an express mention of those particular duties, that the people of the respective congregations have been observed to be most prone to neglect, and those particular sins that they have heretofore especially fallen into, or that it may be apprehended they are especially in danger of, whereby they may prevent or resist the motions of God's Spirit, and the matter should be fully proposed and explained to the people, and they have sufficient opportunity given them for consideration, and then they should be led, all that are capable of understanding, particularly to subscribe the covenant, and also should all appear together, on a day of prayer and fasting, publicly to own it before God in his house, as their vow to the Lord; hereby congregations of Christians would do that which would be beautiful, and would put honor upon God, and be very profitable to themselves.

Such a thing as this, was attended with a very wonderful blessing in Scotland, and followed with a great increase of the blessed tokens of the presence of God, and remarkable outpourings of his Spirit; as the author of *the fulfilling of the Scripture* informs, p. 186, 5th edition.

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

One thing more I would mention, which if God should still carry on this work, would tend much to promote it, and that is, that an history should be published once a month, or once a fortnight, of the progress of it, by one of the ministers of Boston, who are near the press, and are most conveniently situated, to receive accounts from all parts.

It has been found by experience, that the tidings of remarkable effects of the power and grace of God in any place, tend greatly to awaken and engage the minds of persons, in other places. It is a great pity therefore, but that some means should be used, for the most speedy, most extensive and certain giving information of such things, and that the country be not left, only to the slow, partial and doubtful information, and false representations of common report.

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