

EDWARDS JONATHAN

SELECTED SERMONS OF
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INTRODUCTION

Jonathan Edwards was born October 5, 1703, in what is now South Windsor, Conn., a part of the parish then known as "Windsor Farmes." His father, the Rev. Timothy Edwards, the minister of the parish, a Harvard graduate, was reputed a man of superior ability and polished manners, a lover of learning as well as of religion; in addition to his pastoral duties, he fitted young men for college, and his liberal views of education appear in the fact that he made his daughters pursue the same studies these youths did. His mother, a daughter of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, the minister of Northampton, is said to have resembled her distinguished father in strength of character and to have surpassed her husband in the native vigor of her mind. As regards remoter ancestry and their intellectual and moral qualities, Edwards seems also to have been well born; an exception, however, must be made of the eccentric and possibly insane grandmother on his father's side, whose outrageous conduct led

to her divorce.¹

Brought up the only son in a family of ten daughters, apart from all distracting influences, in an atmosphere of religion and serious study in the home, amid natural surroundings of meadows, woods, and low-lying distant hills singularly conducive to a life of contemplation, the boy early developed that absorbing interest in the things of the spirit, and that astonishing acuteness of intellect which are the most prominent characteristics of his genius. While a mere child he spent much of his time in religious exercises and in conversation on religious matters with other boys, with some of whom he joined to build a booth in a retired spot in a swamp for secret prayer; he had besides several other such places for prayer in the woods to which he was wont to retire. His mind also dwelt much on the doctrines he was taught, especially on the doctrine of God's sovereignty in election, against which he at that time violently rebelled. When only ten years of age he wrote a short, quaint, somewhat humorous little tract on the immortality of the soul; at about twelve he composed a remarkably accurate and ingenious paper on the habits of the "flying spider."

He entered the Collegiate School of Connecticut at Saybrook – afterwards Yale College – at thirteen, and in 1720, shortly before his seventeenth birthday, graduated at New Haven with

¹ See J. A. Stoughton, *Windsor Farmes*, p. 39 and p. 69 n. Students of heredity may perhaps here find a clew to the character of Edwards's brilliant, wayward grandson, Aaron Burr.

the valedictory. In his Sophomore year he made the acquaintance of Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*— a work which left a permanent impress on his thinking. He read it, he says, with a far higher pleasure “than the most greedy miser finds when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold from some newly-discovered treasure.” Under its influence he began a series of Notes on the Mind, with a view to a comprehensive treatise on mental philosophy. He also began, possibly somewhat later, a series of Notes on Natural Science, with reference to a similar work on natural philosophy. It is in these early writings that we find the outlines of an idealistic theory which resembles, but was probably not at all derived from, that of Berkeley, and which seems to have remained a determining factor in his speculations to the last.²

After graduating he continued to reside for two years in New Haven, studying for the ministry. From August, 1722, till the following April he supplied the pulpit of a small Presbyterian congregation in New York, but declined the invitation to remain as their minister. After returning to his father's home in Windsor, he received at least two other calls, one of which he seems to have accepted.³ In September, 1723, he went to New Haven to receive

² See H. N. Gardiner, *The Early Idealism of Edwards* in *Jonathan Edwards: a Retrospect*, pp. 115-160: Boston, 1901. Cf. J. H. MacCracken, *The Sources of Jonathan Edwards's Idealism*, *Philos. Rev.*, xi. 26 ff. (Jan. 1902).

³ That to the church at Bolton, Conn. But for some reason, not now apparent, he was never installed there. See S. Simpson, *Jonathan Edwards – a Historical Review*, *Hartford Seminary Record*. xiv. 11 (November, 1903).

his Master's degree, was appointed a tutor at the college, entered upon the active duties of that office in June, 1724, and continued in the same till September, 1726, when he resigned his tutorship to become colleague-pastor with his grandfather Stoddard in the church at Northampton.

The spiritual history of Edwards in these years of growth from youth to early manhood is recorded by his own hand in a narrative of personal experiences written at a later date for his own use, in fragments of a diary, and in a series of resolutions which he drew up for the conduct of his own life. These documents, which were first published by his biographer and descendant, Sereno E. Dwight, in 1829, throw a flood of light on Edwards's character and temperament, and serve to explain much in his life which would otherwise be obscure. He tells us in his narrative how the childish delight in the exercises of religion before referred to gradually declined; how at length "he turned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin;" then how, after much conflict of soul, he experienced toward the end of his college course a genuine conversion, issuing in a new life and, in the course of time, a deep and delightful sense of God's sovereignty, the excellency of Christ, and the beauty of holiness. There is possibly some exaggeration in Edwards's description of this lapse and this recovery, but it was at least a very real experience to him, and it doubtless contributed to the emphasis which he afterwards put on conversion in his preaching. His own state after this decisive change was at times one of mystic rapture

– “a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ and wrapped and swallowed up in God.” His diary is the record of a soul straining in its flight. He watches the fluctuations of his moods with almost morbid intensity, and yet in a way by no means merely conventional, and with a singular absence of sentimentality, so evidently sincere and, in a sense, objective are his observations. Of his seventy Resolutions, all written before he was twenty, the following may be taken as a specimen: it is the language of a mind as truly original as religious, and is eminently characteristic. “On the supposition that there never was to be but one individual in the world, at any one time, who was properly a complete Christian, in all respects of a right stamp, having Christianity always shining in its true lustre, and appearing excellent and lovely, from whatever part and under whatever character viewed, *Resolved*: To act just as I would do, if I strove with all my might to be that one, who should live in my time.” And he did so act; these resolutions were not empty, they really determined his life.

Edwards was ordained at Northampton, February 15, 1727, being then in his twenty-fourth year. Five months later, July 28, he married the beautiful Sarah Pierrepont, then seventeen, the daughter of the Rev. James Pierrepont, of New Haven, one of the founders, and a prominent trustee, of Yale College, and on

her mother's side, the great-granddaughter of Thomas Hooker, "the father of the Connecticut churches." Edwards's description of her, written four years before their marriage, is famous.⁴ The union proved a singularly happy one, the intelligence, cheerfulness, piety, and practical sagacity of Mrs. Edwards combining to make her at once a congenial companion and a most useful helpmeet to her zealously devout, highly intellectual, but often low-spirited husband, immersed in his writings and his books. They had twelve children, all born in Northampton. Mr. Stoddard died February 11, 1729, leaving the young minister in full pastoral charge. It was a responsible undertaking for so young a man to guide the affairs of a church reputed the largest and wealthiest in the colony outside of Boston, one too on which the venerable and venerated Stoddard had stamped the impress of his strong personality during a ministry of nearly sixty years. Edwards, as he later confesses, made mistakes. Nevertheless, he succeeded in winning and holding the confidence, admiration, and affection of the people during the greater part of the twenty-three years of his ministry in Northampton. He carried the church through two great periods of revival (1734-35, 1740-42),

⁴ First printed by Dwight, *Life of President Edwards*, p. 114, and frequently reproduced. It has been compared to Dante's description of Beatrice, which in pure lyric quality it certainly equals, though it lacks the latter's sensuous coloring and imaginative idealization. The comparison is made by A. V. G. Allen, *The Place of Edwards in History*, in Jonathan Edwards: a Retrospect, p. 7; the contrast is pointed out by John De Witt, Stockbridge (1903), Oration, p. 45 (pub. by the Berkshire Conference).

and added over five hundred and fifty names to its membership.⁵ This, however, represents but a small part of his influence in these years. Both by his preaching in Northampton and elsewhere and by his published writings, notably his printed sermons and his works dealing with the revivals, in which must be included his treatise on the Religious Affections, he powerfully affected the currents of religious thought and life throughout New England and the neighboring colonies and, to some extent also, in England and Scotland. His mission had been to recall the Puritan churches, which for some seventy years had languished in a period of decline, to the old high Puritan standards both of creed and of conduct, and to infuse into them a new spirit of vital piety. In this he was largely successful; and still to-day, in spite of wide departures from his theological system, he remains an effectual spiritual force in the churches inheriting the Puritan tradition.

The estrangement between Edwards and his people began in 1744, in connection with a case of discipline in which a large number of the youth belonging to the leading families of the town were brought under suspicion of reading and circulating immoral books.⁶ During the excitement of the revival the people had willingly accepted his high demands. But now, in the reaction, flesh and blood rebelled. Edwards, however, was not the man

⁵ Solomon Clark, *Historical Catalogue of the Northampton First Church*, pp. 40-67 (Northampton, 1891), prints the list in full.

⁶ See note, p. [179](#).

to accommodate the claims of religion, as he conceived those claims, to the weaknesses of human nature. It would not be strange if, under the circumstances, the people looked on their minister as something of a spiritual dictator, exercising a kind of spiritual tyranny. Still, this feeling, so far as it then existed, was not likely to have led to an open rupture, had it not been that four years later, on occasion of an application – the first in those years – for membership in the church, Edwards sought to impose a new test of qualification. He required, namely, that the candidate for full communion should give evidence of being converted, and as such converted person, should make a public profession of godliness. This restriction ran counter to the principles and usage established by Mr. Stoddard, accepted by most of the neighboring churches, and hitherto followed by Edwards himself, according to which, not only might persons be admitted to church membership on the terms of the “Halfway Covenant,” but they might come to the Lord’s Supper, if they desired to do so, even without the assurance of conversion, the hope being that the rite might itself prove a converting ordinance. Edwards was now openly charged with seeking to lord it over the brethren, and the indignation was intense. He, on his part, was convinced of the correctness of his position, and was prepared to maintain it at all costs. The unhappy controversy lasted for two years: Edwards dignified, courteous, disposed to be conciliatory, yet insisting on the recognition of his rights, and showing throughout his great moral and intellectual superiority;

the people prejudiced, obstinate, refusing even to consider his views or to allow him to set them forth in the pulpit, bent only on getting rid of him. Finally, on June 22, 1750, the Council, convened to advise on the matter, recommended, by a vote of 10 to 9, the minority protesting, that the pastoral relations should be dissolved. The concurrent sentiment of the church was expressed by the overwhelming vote of about 200 to 20 of the male members. The next Sunday but one Edwards preached his Farewell Sermon.⁷

Edwards was now forty-six years of age, unfitted, as he says, for any other business but study, and with a “numerous and chargeable family” to face the world with. The long controversy and the circumstances attending the dismissal had had a depressing effect on his spirits, and the outlook seemed to him gloomy in the extreme. But his trust was in God, and friends did not fail. From Scotland came the offer of assistance

⁷ It is impossible here to go into the history of this famous controversy. Something concerning it will be found in the notes, pp. 172 ff.; Dwight, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-448, prints the documents from Edwards’s Journal in full; the records of the church are silent. It should be stated, perhaps, in fairness to the Northampton people, that the pastoral relation was not then, as is sometimes supposed, regarded as indissoluble; six clergymen were “dismissed” from neighboring churches between 1721 and 1755. Moreover, Edwards, eminent as he undoubtedly was as a preacher, was to them only the parish minister; his great fame as a theologian was established later. Cf. Trumbull, *History of Northampton*, II, 225. It is also not unreasonable to suppose that the spiritual capacities of the people had been overstimulated. The later repentance of Joseph Hawley (see Dwight, *op. cit.*, p. 421), Edwards’s cousin, who had taken a leading part in the movement against him, concerns only the spirit of the opposition; it does not seriously question the wisdom, under the circumstances, of the separation.

in procuring him a charge there; his Northampton adherents desired him to remain and form a separate church in the town. Early in December he received a call from the little church in Stockbridge, on the frontier, and about the same time an invitation from the Commissioners in Boston of the "Society in London for Propagating the Gospel in New England and the parts adjacent" to become their missionary to the Indians, who then formed a large part of the Stockbridge settlement. After acquainting himself by a residence of several months in Stockbridge with the conditions of the work, and after receiving satisfactory assurances, in a personal interview with the Governor, with regard to the conduct of the Indian mission, he accepted both of these proposals. He had scarcely done so when he received a call, with the promise of generous support, from a church in Virginia.

The opposition which had driven him from Northampton followed him to Stockbridge. For several years a persistent effort was made to obstruct his work, particularly his work among the Indians, and even to secure his removal. But he successfully met this opposition, won the confidence of the Indians, and greatly endeared himself to the "English." Here, too, in the wilderness he found time and opportunity for the writing of those great treatises on the Freedom of the Will, on the End for which God created the World, on the Nature of True Virtue, and on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin, which are the principal foundation of his theological reputation.

Meanwhile an event had occurred in Edwards's family destined to have important consequences – the marriage of his daughter Esther to the Rev. Aaron Burr, President of Nassau Hall, in Princeton.⁸ In September, 1757, Mr. Burr died; two days later, the Corporation appointed Edwards as his successor. Edwards was for various reasons reluctant to accept the appointment; he mistrusted his fitness, he especially feared that the duties of the office would seriously interrupt the literary work in which he was now engrossed. Nevertheless, on the recommendation of a Council called at his desire to advise in the matter, he accepted the call. He left Stockbridge in January, and toward the end of the month reached Princeton. But the only work he did as President of the College was to preach for five or six Sundays and to give out themes in divinity to the Senior Class, with whom he afterwards discussed their papers on them. The small-pox was epidemic in the town when he arrived, and as a precautionary measure he had himself inoculated. The disease, mild at first, developed badly, and on March 22, 1758, he died. From his death-bed he sent this tender and characteristic message to his wife, who was still in Stockbridge: "Give my kindest love to my dear wife, and tell her that the uncommon union, which has so long subsisted between us, has been of such a nature, as, I trust, is spiritual, and therefore will continue forever." His last words, also characteristic, were, "Trust in God,

⁸ Aaron Burr, the Vice-President of the United States, who killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel, was their son.

and ye need not fear.”

A tall, spare man, with high, broad forehead, clear piercing eyes, prominent nose, thin, set lips and a rather weak chin, his whole appearance suggested the perspicacity of intellect and the integrity, refinement, and benevolence of character of one possessing little physical energy, little suited to practical affairs, but intensely alive in the spirit, intensely absorbed in the contemplation of things invisible and eternal. The two qualities, indeed, for which he is most distinguished are spirituality and intellectuality. Spiritual-mindedness was the very core and essence of his being. Religion was his element. God was to him absolute Reality; His will and His thoughts alone constituted the ultimate truth and meaning of things. Nor was this with Edwards a mere philosophical speculation; it was the high region in which he drew vital breath, the solid ground on which he walked. He walked with God. He has been called the “Saint of New England.” Like other saints, he too has on occasion his ecstasies.⁹

To this high spirituality, with its rich emotional coloring, was united a power and subtlety of intellect such as is possessed by only the very greatest masters of the mind. The spiritual world in which Edwards moved was for him no mere shadowy realm of pious sentiment or vague aspiration, but a world whose

⁹ See, e.g., the incident recorded by Dwight, *op. cit.*, p. 133, where the rapture lasts for about an hour, accompanied for the greater part of the time “with tears and weeping aloud.”

main outlines, at least, were sharply defined for thought. He conceived it, namely, in accordance with the scheme of things systematized by Calvin, but originally wrought out with the compelling force of transcendent genius by Augustine. The theological thought of Augustine is concerned – to put the matter as simply as possible – with the elaboration of four fundamental ideas: the absolute sovereignty of God; the absolute dependence of man; the supernatural revelation of a divinely originated plan of salvation administered by the Church; and a philosophy of history according to which the whole created universe and the entire temporal course of events are ordered and governed from all eternity with reference to the establishment and triumph of a Kingdom of saints in the Church, the holy “City of God.” Augustine’s conception of the Church is modified, but not in principle rejected, by the Protestant theologians; the other features of the scheme remain substantially unchanged. The idea of God’s absolute sovereignty leads naturally, in connection with the motives supplied by certain teachings of Scripture, Roman jurisprudence, Greek philosophy, and the experiences of a profound religious consciousness, to the doctrines of God’s eternal foreknowledge, His “arbitrary,” i.e., unconditional decrees, – the eternal world-plan, – predestination, election, the historic work of redemption, everlasting punishment for the unrepentant wicked, everlasting felicity for the elect saints. Over against the sovereignty of God stands man’s absolute dependence, historically conditioned, as regards his present

spiritual capacities, by the Fall, with original sin, total depravity, and the utter inability of man to recover by himself his lost heritage as its consequence. Hence the great, the essential tragedy of human life – man naturally corrupt, in slavery to sin, at enmity with God, utterly incompetent to change a condition in which, by a sort of natural necessity, he is the subject of God’s vindictive justice, utterly dependent for salvation on the free, unmerited grace of God, who has mercy on whom He will have mercy, while whom He will He hardeneth, revealing alike in mercy and in punishment the majesty of His divine and sovereign attributes.

This, in general, is the scheme which Edwards stands for, he most conspicuously of all men of modern times. His speculative genius gave to this scheme a metaphysical background, his logical acumen elaboration and defence. He modified it in some respects, e.g., in his doctrine of the will. What is more important, he gave a prominence to the inward state of man – the dispositions and affections of his mind and heart – which appreciably affected the relative values of the scheme, and which has, in fact, changed the entire complexion of the religious thought of New England. But as to the general scheme itself, the philosophy of religion, the philosophy of life it expresses, there is nothing in that which is essentially original with Edwards. In standing for these doctrines he but champions the great orthodox tradition.

But however little original may be the content of his thought, there is nothing that is not in the highest degree original in his

manner of thinking. The significant thing about Edwards is the way he enters into the tradition, infuses it with his personality and makes it live. The vitality of his thought gives to its product the value of a unique creation. Two qualities in him especially contribute to this result, large constructive imagination and a marvellously acute power of abstract reasoning. With the vision of the seer he looks steadily upon his world, which is the world of all time and space and existence, and sees it as a whole; God and souls are in it the great realities, and the transactions between them the great business in which all its movement is concerned; and this movement has in it nothing haphazard, it is eternally determined with reference to a supreme and glorious end, the manifestation of the excellency of God, the highest excellency of being. All the dark and tragic aspects of the vision, which for him is intensely real, take their place along with the other aspects, in a system, a system wherein every part derives meaning and worth from its relation to the whole. People have wondered how Edwards, the gentlest of men, could contemplate, as he said he did, with sweetness and delight, the awful doctrine of the divine sovereignty interpreted, as he interpreted it, as implying the everlasting misery of a large part of the human race. The reason is no revolting indifference, callous and inhuman, to suffering; the reason is rather the personal detachment, the disinterested interest, the freedom from the "pathetic fallacy" of the great poet, the great constructive thinker. It is this large quality in Edwards's imagination which is one source of his power. Another

is the thoroughness and ability with which he intellectually elaborates the details of his scheme. He wrote, indeed, no system of divinity; yet he is the very opposite of a fragmentary thinker, and few minds have been less episodic than was his. His intellectual constructions are large and solid. Of the doctrines with which he deals, he leaves nothing undeveloped; with infinite patience he pushes his inquiries into every minute detail and remote consequence, putting his adversaries to confusion by the unremitting attack, the overwhelming massiveness of the argument. Rarely indeed can one escape his conclusions who accepts his premises. Moreover, by the thoroughness, acuteness and sincerity of his reasoning he powerfully stimulates the intellectual faculties. Even in his most terrific sermons he never appeals to mere hope and fear, nor to mere authority; in them, as in his theological treatises, he is bent on demonstrating, within the limits prescribed by the underlying assumptions, the reasonableness of his doctrine, its agreement with the facts of life and the constitution of things, as well as with the inspired teachings of the Word.

Now these qualities appear, as in his other writings, so also, and perhaps most conspicuously, in his sermons. Edwards's chief public work and his chief reputation in his lifetime was as a preacher; the fame of his theological treatises is largely, indeed, posthumous. He was a great preacher. In the case of many of the older divines, it is difficult for us now to understand how they could ever have been considered great preachers: to

us their sermons seem dry and insipid. But it is not so with Edwards. Even in print, after more than a hundred and fifty years, and notwithstanding the gulf which separates our age from his, his sermons are still deeply interesting. They are interesting because, among other things, they reveal a great and interesting personality. They are instinct with the energy of his intellect, they are vital with the vital touch of his genius. He preached his theology; some of his sermons – for instance, the sermon, or rather combination of sermons, on Justification by Faith – seem to be less sermons than highly elaborate theological disquisitions, adapted to the use of professional students. And there is doubtless no sermon of his which does not reflect, to some extent, his theological system. Edwards was certainly impressed with *The Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth* – the theme and title of one of his ablest discourses. He held that God had revealed Himself not only to the heart, but to the mind of man, and that an intelligent apprehension of the revelation was indispensable, in some measure, alike to saving faith and to the development of Christian character. But it would be a mistake to think of Edwards as preaching the dry bones of his theology. He was far, indeed, from supposing, as some now seem to suppose, that a Christian society can be the more perfectly organized in proportion as all definiteness of theological, that is, distinctively religious, conceptions is eliminated. He had too profound a respect for the intellect to exclude it from matters of the deepest

speculative as well as practical moment, and he had too lofty an idea of religion to identify it either with vague, transcendental emotion or with merely personal, social, or political morality. His sermons, however, are by no means all of one type. On the contrary, they are of a great variety of types. They are “doctrinal,” “practical,” “experimental,” and – taking into account the unpublished manuscripts – there is an unusually large number of “occasional” sermons.¹⁰ And there are a good many varieties within the types. But even when the sermons are most “doctrinal,” the practical interest of a *living* conviction of the truth is never absent. The abstract antithesis of thought and life, of theory and practice, as though thinking were not itself a doing or as though an attitude toward truth were not itself practical or capable of determining other practical attitudes, is an error from which Edwards is wholesomely free.

To say this is not necessarily to approve the content of his doctrinal preaching. The thought of the churches with which Edwards was associated has moved away from his thought. He contended stoutly for his scheme of things, but he fought, it would seem, a losing fight. It is not that he has been refuted by abstract logic; the argument by which he has been set aside, so far as he has been set aside, is the logic of events. The change has been brought about no doubt by many influences. Some of them seem purely sentimental. But there are two things at least

¹⁰ See F. B. Dexter, *The Manuscripts of Jonathan Edwards*, p. 7. (Reprinted from the Proceedings of the Mass. Hist. Soc., March, 1901.)

of fundamental divergence in the character of our time – the development in us of a critically disciplined historical sense and the dominating influence in our modern science and philosophy of the idea of evolution. These have broken down those hard and fast distinctions between nature and the supernatural, nature and grace, human reason and divine revelation in which Edwards delighted, at least in the form in which he habitually preached them. With the establishment, on the lines of historical criticism, of new canons of exegesis in the interpretation of Scripture and with the gradual disappearance of the idea of the Bible as an external authority, Protestant Christianity is at present confronting the question, whether the entire claim of Christianity to be a supernatural revelation, in the sense in which the term “supernatural” is used by orthodox theologians, has not been misplaced. This is a question which Edwards never raises and which he does not help us directly to solve. He has the mind of a speculative philosopher, has a very profound thought of God, grasps firmly the eternal spiritual significance of things; but he is deficient in the historical sense – his *History of Redemption* is a wholly uncritical, dogmatic construction, and he is not speculative enough to find, or at least he works under conditions which prevent him from showing, the mediating principles by which the antitheses and contradictions of experience and theory can be reconciled and annulled.

But to return to the sermons. Edwards’s sermons are constructed, in general, on a definite model. We have, first, the

Exposition of the text. We have, secondly, a clearly formulated statement of the Doctrine, which is then developed under its appropriate and preannounced divisions. Finally, we have what is variously called the Improvement, Use, or Application, similarly developed. The “Doctrine” is not usually an abstract theological dogma: it is simply the theme of the discourse stated in propositional form. Thus an unpublished sermon on John i. 41, 42 has this for its statement of doctrine: “When persons have truly come to Christ themselves, they naturally desire to bring others also to him.” Another unpublished sermon on John iii. 7 has this: “Tis no wonder that Christ said that we must be born again.” In another – also unpublished – from the text John i. 47 the doctrine is the similarly simple statement, “Tis a great thing to be indeed a converted person.” Sometimes, though rarely, the statement of a doctrine is omitted altogether, the text itself being regarded as sufficiently defining the subject.¹¹ This, however, is never the case with the Application. Indeed, so “practical” is Edwards in his preaching that the Application is sometimes much the larger part of the discourse. In the sermon on John i. 47, for example, it fills about two-thirds of the manuscript. In fact, the proportion of these parts, Exposition, Development of Doctrine and Application, depends entirely on the nature of the theme and the special ends of the sermon. And similarly of the length and number of the subdivisions. One feature is constant

¹¹ As, e.g., in the great ethical sermon on the Sin of Theft and of Injustice from the text, “Thou shalt not steal.” Works, Worcester reprint, IV, 601.

– strictly logical arrangement. However finely articulated the sermons may be, they are constructed so as to make a distinctly unified impression. Nor is this unity of impression seriously interfered with, as a rule, by the length of the sermon. Edwards was not in the habit of exhausting the attention of his audience. Occasionally, however, he would develop his theme through two or more sermons. When these appear in the printed editions as a single discourse, the length naturally seems inordinate. In the manuscripts the parts of such compound sermons are indicated by the word “Doc” (Doctrine) at the divisions, suggesting that the preacher was wont, in renewing the theme, to remind his hearers of the precise nature of the subject under discussion.¹²

And as there was no confusion in the thought, so the style of Edwards’s sermons is singularly clear, simple and unstudied. He affects no graces, seeks no adornments, which the subject-matter itself and his interest in it do not naturally lend. “The style is the man” is a saying which peculiarly applies to him. The nobility, strength and directness of his thought, the vividness and largeness of his imagination, the truthfulness and elevation of his character, the intensity of his convictions, his impassioned earnestness are reflected in his discourses. They seem to have been to an unusual degree a spontaneous form of self-expression. But attention is never diverted from the subject to the skill of the workmanship. The object is not to delight, but to convince, and the attainment

¹² Examples of this are found in the manuscript sermons on John i. 47 and John i. 41, 42, which are here taken as typical.

of this end is sought by direct methods of argument, persuasion and appeal. Yet the style, though simple and straightforward, is very far from being barren. The sermons are full of great, rich, beautiful words; and there are many passages in them of wonderful charm as well as many of great sublimity and rhetorical power. But Edwards's interest in these seems never merely verbal. He is not a maker of phrases. He makes use of striking metaphor and startling antithesis, his style is often picturesque, he well knows the rhetorical value of iteration, when the repeated phrase is employed in a varied context; but he never seeks to produce his effects by literary indirection. He can be easy, familiar, colloquial even, on occasion, if that suits his purpose; but he is never undignified, never vulgarly sensational, nor does he seem ever to be intentionally humorous. The construction of his sentences is often such as the pedantry of modern standards would condemn; but however old-fashioned, it is seldom indeed that the expression can be called whimsical or quaint. The most determining external influence on his style was unquestionably the old, so-called King James version of the English Bible. His language is saturated with its thought and phraseology. And as he is intimately acquainted with it in all its parts, so he is continually quoting it and constantly surprising us with fresh discoveries, in novel collocations, of its variety, beauty and impressiveness. He was influenced also doubtless by his too exclusively theological and philosophical reading. But it is, in the end, the originality of his own genius, the depth and

subtlety and force of his mind and the richness of his spiritual experiences, which we must regard as setting the stamp upon his style. Edwards's sermons are hall-marked: they have not only interest as historical memorials of the religious conditions of their time; as the personal expressions of an original mind, working in traditional material, indeed, but animating and so refashioning it with the unique form of a great personality, they have also the value of literature.

Largely to the union of the intellectual and emotional elements mentioned – the definiteness of the message, the logical unity of the thought, the singleness and sincerity of the aim, the intensity of the conviction, the thorough knowledge of Scripture, the profound acquaintance, through personal experience, of the religious movings of the human heart – must be attributed, in connection with the state of religious thought and feeling of the time and the respect aroused by the character of the preacher, the power which he exercised on his contemporaries. Of his manner of preaching we have from his pupil, Hopkins, the following authentic testimony. “His appearance in the desk was with a good grace, and his delivery easy, natural and very solemn. He had not a strong, loud voice, but appeared with such gravity and solemnity, and spake with such distinctness, clearness and precision, his words were so full of ideas, set in such a plain and striking light, that few speakers have been so able to demand the attention of an audience as he. His words often discovered a great degree of inward fervor, without much noise or external emotion,

and fell with great weight on the minds of his hearers. He made but little motion of his head or hands in the desk, but spake as to discover the motion of his own heart, which tended in the most natural and effectual manner to move and affect others.

“As he wrote his sermons out at large for many years, and always wrote a considerable part of most of his public discourses, so he carried his notes into the desk with him, and read the most that he wrote; yet he was not so confined to his notes, when he wrote at large, but that, if some thoughts were suggested, while he was speaking, which did not occur when writing, and appeared to him pertinent and striking, he would deliver them; and that with as great propriety, and oftener with greater pathos, and attended with a more sensible good effect on his hearers, than all he had wrote.”¹³

The sermons in the present volume have been selected as representative of Edwards the preacher rather than of Edwards the theologian. Any such collection must include at least the following four: the sermon on Man’s Dependence, the sermon on Spiritual Light, the Enfield Sermon and the Farewell Sermon. These are classic. Moreover, they represent Edwards in four of his most distinguishing aspects: as the powerful champion of a theology resting ultimately on the principle of a transcendent, righteous, sovereign Will; as the equally convinced advocate of the mystical principle of an immediate, intuitive apprehension, through supernatural illumination, of divine truth; as the flaming

¹³ Samuel Hopkins, *Life of Edwards*, p. 48.

revivalist, with pitiless logic and terrible realism of description, arousing, startling, overwhelming the sinner with the sense of impending doom; finally, as the rejected minister appealing, without rancor or bitterness, from the judgment of this world to the judgment of an infallible tribunal and displaying what must ever make him more interesting, more precious as a heritage to the Church and the world, than any of his opinions or his works, the dignity and repose, the patience, strength and depth of a great character, perfected through suffering and apparent defeat, in what was virtually the Apologia of his ministerial life. These sermons alone would suffice to justify Edwards's reputation as the foremost preacher of his age. Still, they cannot, of course, be taken as adequately representing the whole range and power of his discourses. In particular, the Enfield sermon, which has loomed so large in the popular imagination of Jonathan Edwards, and which, in fact, is but one – to be sure, the most extreme – of a number of the same type, cannot be taken as fairly representative even of Edwards's revival sermons. There has, therefore, been added, in this reference, a revival sermon of another type, the sermon on Ruth's Resolution. This sermon was chosen, not because it is better than some others, but because, while being an excellent sermon of its kind, it is also brief, and so better adapted to the scope of this volume. There has been further added, as representing a type distinctly different from any of the others, the funeral sermon entitled *A Strong Rod Broken and Withered*, which is certainly one of the noblest, in thought and expression,

of Edwards's discourses, and which is probably unique among his writings as dealing with the subject of civil government and the management of affairs. Had space permitted, the picture of the Christian statesman in this sermon might have been matched by the picture of the Christian minister in one of the ordination sermons; but the omission is the less serious since the conception is so largely realized in Edwards himself.

The above six sermons were selected independently of the fact that they are among the ten published by their author; but this circumstance confirms the choice and, moreover, serves to authenticate the text. Edwards has suffered not a little at the hands of his editors, particularly Dwight, who seems to have been possessed by the idea that his author would appear to better advantage in a style and language more elegant and refined. "Don't do as Orpah did," pleads Edwards in the Ruth sermon; "Do not as Orpah did," is the feeble refinement of his editor. But even the generally accurate Worcester or First American Edition (1809) is not to be implicitly trusted; for instance, two whole pages are omitted at the end of the Enfield sermon, giving to that sermon a startling and bizarre close, wholly out of keeping with Edwards's habitual manner. Later editions import other errors and, even while professing to follow the Worcester edition, sometimes, in fact, follow not that edition, but Dwight's (e.g., in the Ruth sermon). The present text is based upon a careful comparison of the original editions, now very scarce, in the Boston Athenæum. The original expressions, 'tis, won't,

don't, etc., as Edwards himself printed them, have been restored, a number of verbal errors in the later editions corrected and several omitted lines recovered, besides the long passage already mentioned, which is, however, in Dwight, at the end of the Enfield sermon. No attempt, however, has been made to give a facsimile reproduction of the first editions with all their printer's errors, capricious spelling, antiquated punctuation and uncouth use of capitals and italics. These externalities could but distract the modern reader, while adding nothing essential to accuracy. In these respects, therefore, the more modern usage has been followed. The aim has simply been to give the exact words of the originals and to preserve their spirit, treating the sermons as sermons to be preached and not as essays to be read. Accordingly, while avoiding the extremes of the first editions, italics have been used where Edwards used them to mark divisions, or for special emphasis, somewhat more freely than would be customary now. This edition also follows his, and [Pg xxviii] the Biblical, use of ordinary type in personal pronouns referring to divine beings, the verbal reverence in the modern use of capitals being regarded as needless to enhance the real reverence of Edwards's thought and possibly a little out of place. Added words are enclosed within square brackets.

Besides the six sermons mentioned, the present collection includes one, the interesting if not exactly great sermon on the Many Mansions, which has not before been published. A copy of this sermon made for the late Professor Edwards A. Park,

of Andover, was kindly put at the disposal of the editor by his son, the Rev. Dr. William E. Park, of Gloversville, N.Y.; but it has also been carefully collated with the original manuscript. The editor has also examined the original manuscripts of all the other sermons in this volume, except that of the Farewell Sermon, which could not be discovered. These manuscripts are all in the collection of between eleven and twelve hundred of Edwards's sermons now in the Yale University Library. Most of these manuscripts are written in an exceedingly minute hand, with many abbreviations and occasionally with insertions in shorthand, on sheets of paper about $3\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ in. in size, stoutly stitched together. The facsimile of the first page of the sermon on Spiritual Light given in this volume opposite p. [21](#) is representative; a relatively small number are slightly larger. Of the particular manuscripts some account will be found in the notes. The handling and deciphering of these manuscripts give one a curious sense of intimacy with the working of Edwards's brain and heart: one is with him in his workshop and sees, as it were, the very thing in the making. One seems to feel the intensity of the excitement as, with his audience present in imagination, and with keen delight in the activity of literary creation, he works out his theme. One observes how alternative forms of expression, alternative lines of development, suggest themselves, and how now whole paragraphs, whole pages are struck off at white heat, while now, oftenest towards the end, the barest outlines are jotted down, to be filled out in delivery.

But the manuscripts of the sermons which Edwards himself published afford no help in the fixing of the text. The sermons as he printed them are invariably expanded and often greatly altered in other respects; and the copy prepared for the printer is no longer extant.¹⁴ This circumstance should not be overlooked in judging of sermons printed directly from the manuscripts. In the Yale collection, there are sermons which were written out pretty fully; others are only fairly fully written out in parts, others again are mere skeletons. The majority of those of the Northampton period are of the second sort. Among the hundreds of Edwards's unpublished sermons, there are doubtless many that it would be interesting to have in print just as they stand; it is doubtful if there are any which would add materially to his reputation as a preacher in comparison with the great sermons already published.

The portrait of Edwards in this volume is from a recent photograph of the original painting of 1740. The photograph was kindly furnished by the present owner of the painting, Mr. Eugene P. Edwards, of Chicago, to whom the editor takes this opportunity of expressing his obligations. He also desires to express his thanks to Dr. William E. Park for the use of the copy of the sermon on the Many Mansions; to the publishers for allowing the extra space required for printing this new sermon; to Professor Franklin B. Dexter for generous help in the study

¹⁴ As illustrating the expansion in the printed sermon as compared with the manuscript prepared for preaching, see note p. [157](#).

of the manuscripts and for permission to photograph the sermon on Spiritual Light; to Mr. Charles K. Bolton, Librarian of the Boston Athenæum, for courtesies in the use of the first editions; and to Mr. George N. Whipple of Boston, for verifying a number of references.

Northampton, Mass.,

March, 1904.

I

GOD GLORIFIED IN MAN'S DEPENDENCE^o_—

1 Cor. i. 29-31. – That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Those Christians to whom the apostle directed this epistle dwelt in a part of the world where human wisdom was in great repute; as the apostle observes in the 22d verse of this chapter, “The Greeks seek after wisdom.” Corinth was not far from Athens, that had been for many ages the most famous seat of philosophy and learning in the world.

The apostle therefore observes to them how that God, by the gospel, destroyed and brought to nought their human wisdom. The learned Grecians and their great philosophers by all their wisdom did not know God: they were not able to find out the truth in divine things. But after they had done their utmost to no effect, it pleased God at length to reveal himself by the gospel, which they accounted foolishness. He “chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the base things of

the world, and things that are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are.” And the apostle informs them why he thus did, in the verse of the text: *That no flesh should glory in his presence, &c.*

In which words may be observed,

1. What God aims at in the disposition of things in the affair of redemption, viz., that man should not glory in himself, but alone in God: *That no flesh should glory in his presence, – that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

2. How this end is attained in the work of redemption, viz., by that absolute and immediate dependence which men have upon God in that work for all their good. Inasmuch as,

First, All the good that they have is in and through Christ; *he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* All the good of the fallen and redeemed creature is concerned in these four things, and cannot be better distributed than into them; but Christ is each of them to us, and we have none of them any otherwise than in him. *He is made of God unto us wisdom:* in him are all the proper good and true excellency of the understanding. Wisdom was a thing that the Greeks admired; but Christ is the true light of the world, it is through him alone that true wisdom is imparted to the mind. ’Tis in and by Christ that we have *righteousness:* it is by being in him that we are justified, have our sins pardoned, and are received as righteous into God’s favor. ’Tis by Christ that we have *sanctification:* we have in him true excellency of heart as well as of understanding; and he is

made unto us inherent, as well as imputed righteousness. 'Tis by Christ that we have *redemption*, or actual deliverance from all misery, and the bestowment of all happiness and glory. Thus we have all our good by Christ, who is God.

Secondly, Another instance wherein our dependence on God for all our good appears, is this, that it is God that has given us Christ, that we might have these benefits through him; he *of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, &c.*

Thirdly, 'Tis *of him* that we are in Christ Jesus, and come to have an interest in him, and so do receive those blessings which he is made unto us. It is God that gives us faith whereby we close with Christ.

So that in this verse is shown our dependence on each person in the Trinity for all our good. We are dependent on Christ the Son of God, as he is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. We are dependent on the Father, who has given us Christ, and made him to be these things to us. We are dependent on the Holy Ghost, for 'tis *of him that we are in Christ Jesus*; 'tis the Spirit of God that gives faith in him, whereby we receive him and close with him.

DOCTRINE

God is glorified in the work of redemption in this, that there appears in it so absolute and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him.

Here I propose to show, I., That there is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God for all their good. And II., That God hereby is exalted and glorified in the work of redemption.

I. There is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God. The nature and contrivance of our redemption is such, that the redeemed are in every thing directly, immediately and entirely dependent on God: they are dependent on him for all, and are dependent on him every way.

The several ways wherein the dependence of one being may be upon another for its good, and wherein the redeemed of Jesus Christ depend on God for all their good, are these, viz., that they have all their good *of* him, and that they have all *through* him, and that they have all *in* him. That he is the cause and original whence all their good comes, therein it is *of* him; and that he is the medium by which it is obtained and conveyed, therein they have it *through* him; and that he is that good itself that is given and conveyed, therein it is *in* him.

Now those that are redeemed by Jesus Christ do, in all these respects, very directly and entirely depend on God for their all.

First, The redeemed have all their good *of* God; God is the great author of it; he is the first cause of it, and not only so, but he is the only proper cause.

'Tis of God that we have our Redeemer: it is God that has provided a Saviour for us. Jesus Christ is not only of God in his person, as he is the only begotten Son of God, but he is from God,

as we are concerned in him and in his office of Mediator: he is the gift of God to us: God chose and anointed him, appointed him his work, and sent him into the world.

And as it is God that gives, so 'tis God that accepts the Saviour. As it is God that provides and gives the Redeemer to buy salvation for us, so it is of God that salvation is bought: he gives the purchaser, and he affords the thing purchased.

'Tis of God that Christ becomes ours, that we are brought to him and are united to him: it is of God that we receive faith to close with him, that we may have an interest in him. Eph. ii. 8, "For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." 'Tis of God that we actually do receive all the benefits that Christ has purchased. 'Tis God that pardons and justifies, and delivers from going down to hell, and it is his favor that the redeemed are received into, and are made the objects of, when they are justified. So it is God that delivers from the dominion of sin, and cleanses us from our filthiness, and changes us from our deformity. It is of God that the redeemed do receive all their true excellency, wisdom and holiness; and that two ways, viz., as the Holy Ghost, by whom these things are immediately wrought, is from God, proceeds from him and is sent by him; and also as the Holy Ghost himself is God, by whose operation and indwelling the knowledge of divine things, and a holy disposition, and all grace, are conferred and upheld.

And though means are made use of in conferring grace on men's souls, yet 'tis of God that we have these means of grace,

and 'tis God that makes them effectual. 'Tis of God that we have the holy Scriptures; they are the word of God. 'Tis of God that we have ordinances, and their efficacy depends on the immediate influence of the Spirit of God. The ministers of the gospel are sent of God, and all their sufficiency is of him. 2 Cor. iv. 7, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Their success depends entirely and absolutely on the immediate blessing and influence of God. The redeemed have all.

1. Of the *grace* of God. It was of mere grace that God gave us his only begotten Son. The grace is great in proportion to the dignity and excellency of what is given: the gift was infinitely precious, because it was a person infinitely worthy, a person of infinite glory; and also because it was a person infinitely near and dear to God. The grace is great in proportion to the benefit we have given us in him: the benefit is doubly infinite, in that in him we have deliverance from an infinite, because an eternal, misery; and do also receive eternal joy and glory. The grace in bestowing this gift is great in proportion to our unworthiness to whom it is given; instead of deserving such a gift, we merited infinitely ill of God's hands. The grace is great according to the manner of giving, or in proportion to the humiliation and expense of the method and means by which way is made for our having of the gift. He gave him to us dwelling amongst us; he gave him to us incarnate, or in our nature; he gave him to us in our nature, in the like infirmities in which we have it in our fallen state, and which

in us do accompany and are occasioned by the sinful corruption of our nature. He gave him to us in a low and afflicted state; and not only so, but he gave him to us slain, that he might be a feast for our souls.°

The grace of God in bestowing this gift is most free. It was what God was under no obligation to bestow: he might have rejected fallen man, as he did the fallen angels. It was what we never did any thing to merit. 'Twas given while we were yet enemies, and before we had so much as repented. It was from the love of God that saw no excellency in us to attract it; and it was without expectation of ever being requited for it.

And 'tis from mere grace that the benefits of Christ are applied to such and such particular persons. Those that are called and sanctified are to attribute it alone to the good pleasure of God's goodness, by which they are distinguished. He is sovereign, and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardens.

Man hath now a greater dependence on the grace of God than he had before the fall. He depends on the free goodness of God for much more than he did then: then he depended on God's goodness for conferring the reward of perfect obedience: for God was not obliged to promise and bestow that reward: but now we are dependent on the grace of God for much more: we stand in need of grace, not only to bestow glory upon us, but to deliver us from hell and eternal wrath. Under the first covenant we depended on God's goodness to give us the reward

of righteousness; and so we do now. And not only so, but we stand in need of God's free and sovereign grace to give us that righteousness; and yet not only so, but we stand in need of his grace to pardon our sin and release us from the guilt and infinite demerit of it.

And as we are dependent on the goodness of God for more now than under the first covenant, so we are dependent on a much greater, more free and wonderful goodness. We are now more dependent on God's arbitrary and sovereign good pleasure. We were in our first estate dependent on God for holiness: we had our original righteousness from him; but then holiness was not bestowed in such a way of sovereign good pleasure as it is now. Man was created holy, and it became God to create holy all the reasonable creatures he created: it would have been a disparagement to the holiness of God's nature, if he had made an intelligent creature unholy. But now when a man is made holy, it is from mere and arbitrary grace; God may forever deny holiness to the fallen creature if he pleases, without any disparagement to any of his perfections.

And we are not only indeed more dependent on the grace of God, but our dependence is much more conspicuous, because our own insufficiency and helplessness in ourselves is much more apparent in our fallen and undone state than it was before we were either sinful or miserable. We are more apparently dependent on God for holiness, because we are first sinful, and utterly polluted, and afterward holy: so the production of the effect is

sensible, and its derivation from God more obvious. If man was ever holy and always was so, it would not be so apparent, that he had not holiness necessarily, as an inseparable qualification of human nature. So we are more apparently dependent on free grace for the favor of God, for we are first justly the objects of his displeasure and afterwards are received into favor. We are more apparently dependent on God for happiness, being first miserable and afterwards happy. It is more apparently free and without merit in us, because we are actually without any kind of excellency to merit, if there could be any such thing as merit in creature excellency. And we are not only without any true excellency, but are full of, and wholly defiled with, that which is infinitely odious. All our good is more apparently from God, because we are first naked and wholly without any good, and afterwards enriched with all good.

2. We receive all of the *power* of God. Man's redemption is often spoken of as a work of wonderful power as well as grace. The great power of God appears in bringing a sinner from his low state, from the depths of sin and misery, to such an exalted state of holiness and happiness. Eph. i. 19, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."

We are dependent on God's power through every step of our redemption. We are dependent on the power of God to convert us, and give faith in Jesus Christ, and the new nature. 'Tis a work of creation: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2

Cor. v. 17. "We are created in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 10. The fallen creature cannot attain to true holiness, but by being created again: Eph. iv. 24, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It is a raising from the dead: Col ii. 12, 13, "Wherein ye also are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Yea, it is a more glorious work of power than mere creation, or raising a dead body to life, in that the effect attained is greater and more excellent. That holy and happy being and spiritual life which is reached in the work of conversion is a far greater and more glorious effect than mere being and life. And the state from whence the change is made, of such a death in sin, and total corruption of nature, and depth of misery, is far more remote from the state attained, than mere death or nonentity.

'Tis by God's power also that we are preserved in a state of grace: 1 Pet. i. 5, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." As grace is at first from God, so 'tis continually from him, and is maintained by him, as much as light in the atmosphere is all day long from the sun, as well as at first dawning or at sunrising.

Men are dependent on the power of God for every exercise of grace, and for carrying on the work of grace in the heart, for the subduing of sin and corruption, and increasing holy principles, and enabling to bring forth fruit in good works, and at last bringing grace to its perfection, in making the soul completely amiable in Christ's glorious likeness, and filling of it with a

satisfying joy and blessedness; and for the raising of the body to life, and to such a perfect state, that it shall be suitable for a habitation and organ for a soul so perfected and blessed. These are the most glorious effects of the power of God that are seen in the series of God's acts with respect to the creatures.

Man was dependent on the power of God in his first estate, but he is more dependent on his power now; he needs God's power to do more things for him, and depends on a more wonderful exercise of his power. It was an effect of the power of God to make man holy at the first; but more remarkably so now, because there is a great deal of opposition and difficulty in the way. 'Tis a more glorious effect of power to make that holy that was so depraved and under the dominion of sin, than to confer holiness on that which before had nothing of the contrary. It is a more glorious work of power to rescue a soul out of the hands of the devil, and from the powers of darkness, and to bring it into a state of salvation, than to confer holiness where there was no prepossession or opposition. Luke xi. 21, 22, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." So 'tis a more glorious work of power to uphold a soul in a state of grace and holiness, and to carry it on till it is brought to glory, when there is so much sin remaining in the heart resisting, and Satan with all his might opposing, than it would have been to have kept man from falling at first, when Satan had

nothing in man.

Thus we have shown how the redeemed are dependent on God for all their good, as they have all *of* him.

Secondly, They are also dependent on God for all, as they have all *through* him. 'Tis God that is the medium of it, as well as the author and fountain of it. All that we have, wisdom and the pardon of sin, deliverance from hell, acceptance in God's favor, grace and holiness, true comfort and happiness, eternal life and glory, we have from God by a Mediator; and this Mediator is God, which Mediator we have an absolute dependence upon as he *through* whom we receive all. So that here is another way wherein we have our dependence on God for all good. God not only gives us the Mediator, and accepts his mediation, and of his power and grace bestows the things purchased by the Mediator, but he is the Mediator.

Our blessings are what we have by purchase; and the purchase is made of God, the blessings are purchased of him, and God gives the purchaser; and not only so, but God is the purchaser. Yea, God is both the purchaser and the price; for Christ, who is God, purchased these blessings for us by offering up himself as the price of our salvation. He purchased eternal life by the sacrifice of himself: Heb. vii. 27, "He offered up himself;" and ix. 26, "He hath appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Indeed it was the human nature that was offered; but it was the same person with the divine, and therefore was an infinite price: it was looked upon as if God had been offered in sacrifice.

As we thus have our good through God, we have a dependence on God in a respect that man in his first estate had not. Man was to have eternal life then through his own righteousness; so that he had partly a dependence upon what was in himself; for we have a dependence upon that through which we have our good, as well as that from which we have it. And though man's righteousness that he then depended on was indeed from God, yet it was his own, it was inherent in himself; so that his dependence was not so immediately on God. But now the righteousness that we are dependent on is not in ourselves, but in God. We are saved through the righteousness of Christ: he *is made unto us righteousness*; and therefore is prophesied of, Jer. xxiii. 6, under that name of "the Lord our righteousness." In that the righteousness we are justified by is the righteousness of Christ, it is the righteousness of God: 2 Cor. v. 21, "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Thus in redemption we han't only all things of God, but by and through him: 1 Cor. viii. 21, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

Thirdly, The redeemed have all their good *in* God. We not only have it of him, and through him, but it consists in him; he *is* all our good.

The good of the redeemed is either objective or inherent. By their objective good I mean that intrinsic object, in the possession and enjoyment of which they are happy. Their inherent good is

that excellency or pleasure which is in the soul itself. With respect to both of which the redeemed have all their good in God, or, which is the same thing, God himself is all their good.

1. The redeemed have all their *objective* good in God. God himself is the great good which they are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; he is the portion of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their life, their dwelling-place, their ornament and diadem, and their everlasting honor and glory. They have none in heaven but God; he is the great good which the redeemed are received to at death, and which they are to rise to at the end of the world. The Lord God, he is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and is the “river of the water of life,” that runs, and “the tree of life that grows, in the midst of the paradise of God.” The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will forever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast. The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things; they will enjoy the angels, and will enjoy one another; but that which they shall enjoy in the angels, or each other, or in any thing else whatsoever that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what will be seen of God in them.

2. The redeemed have all their *inherent* good in God. Inherent good is twofold; 'tis either excellency or pleasure. These the redeemed not only derive from God, as caused by him, but have them in him. They have spiritual excellency and joy by

a kind of participation of God. They are made excellent by a communication of God's excellency: God puts his own beauty, i.e., his beautiful likeness, upon their souls: they are made partakers of the divine nature, or moral image of God, 2 Pet. i. 4. They are holy by being made partakers of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10. The saints are beautiful and blessed by a communication of God's holiness and joy, as the moon and planets are bright by the sun's light. The saint hath spiritual joy and pleasure by a kind of effusion of God on the soul. In these things the redeemed have communion with God; that is, they partake with him and of him.

The saints have both their spiritual excellency and blessedness by the gift of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, and his dwelling in them. They are not only caused by the Holy Ghost, but are in the Holy Ghost as their principle. The Holy Spirit becoming an inhabitant, is a vital principle in the soul: he, acting in, upon and with the soul, becomes a fountain of true holiness and joy, as a spring is of water, by the exertion and diffusion of itself: John iv. 14, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," – compared with chap. vii. 38, 39, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." The sum of what Christ has purchased for us is that spring of water spoken of in the former of those places, and those rivers of living water spoken of in the latter. And the

sum of the blessings which the redeemed shall receive in heaven is that river of water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, Rev. xxii. 1, – which doubtless signifies the same with those rivers of living water explained John vii. 38, 39, which is elsewhere called the “river of God’s pleasures.” Herein consists the fulness of good which the saints receive by Christ. ’Tis by partaking of the Holy Spirit that they have communion with Christ in his fulness. God hath given the Spirit, not by measure unto him, and they do receive of his fulness, and grace for grace. This is the sum of the saints’ inheritance; and therefore that little of the Holy Ghost which believers have in this world is said to be the earnest of their inheritance. 2 Cor. i. 22, “Who hath also sealed us, and given us the Spirit in our hearts.” And chap. v. 5, “Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.” And Eph. i. 13, 14, “Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.”

The Holy Spirit and good things are spoken of in Scripture as the same; as if the Spirit of God communicated to the soul comprised all good things: Matt. vii. 11, “How much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?” In Luke it is, chap. xi. 13, “How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” This is the sum of the blessings that Christ died to procure, and that are the subject of gospel promises: Gal. iii. 13, 14, “He was made

a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” The Spirit of God is the great promise of the Father: Luke xxiv. 49, “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you.” The Spirit of God therefore is called “the Spirit of promise,” Eph. i. 13. This promised thing Christ received, and had given into his hand, as soon as he had finished the work of our redemption, to bestow on all that he had redeemed: Acts ii. 33, “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye both see and hear.” So that all the holiness and happiness of the redeemed is *in* God. ’Tis in the communications, indwelling and acting of the Spirit of God. Holiness and happiness are in the fruit, here and hereafter, because God dwells in them, and they in God.

Thus ’tis God that has given us the Redeemer, and ’tis of him that our good is purchased: so ’tis God that is the Redeemer and the price; and ’tis God also that is the good purchased. So that all that we have is *of* God, and *through* him, and *in* him: Rom. xi. 36, “For of him, and through him, and to him (or in him), are all things.” The same in the Greek that is here rendered *to him* is rendered *in him*, 1 Cor. vii. 6.

II. God is glorified in the work of redemption by this means, viz., by there being so great and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him.

1. Man hath so much the greater occasion and obligation to take notice and acknowledge God’s perfections and all-

sufficiency. The greater the creature's dependence is on God's perfections, and the greater concern he has with them, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of them. So much the greater concern any one has with, and dependence upon, the power and grace of God, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of that power and grace. So much the greater and more immediate dependence there is on the divine holiness, so much the greater occasion to take notice of and acknowledge that. So much the greater and more absolute dependence we have on the divine perfections, as belonging to the several persons of the Trinity, so much the greater occasion have we to observe and own the divine glory of each of them. That which we are most concerned with, is surely most in the way of our observation and notice; and this kind of concern with any thing, viz., dependence, does especially tend to commend and oblige the attention and observation. Those things that we are not much dependent upon, 'tis easy to neglect; but we can scarce do any other than mind that which we have a great dependence on. By reason of our so great dependence on God and his perfections, and in so many respects, he and his glory are the more directly set in our view, which way soever we turn our eyes.

We have the greater occasion to take notice of God's all-sufficiency, when all our sufficiency is thus every way of him. We have the more occasion to contemplate him as an infinite good, and as the fountain of all good. Such a dependence on God demonstrates God's all-sufficiency. So much as the dependence

of the creature is on God, so much the greater does the creature's emptiness in himself appear to be; and so much the greater the creature's emptiness, so much the greater must the fulness of the Being be who supplies him. Our having all *of* God shows the fulness of his power and grace: our having all *through* him shows the fulness of his merit and worthiness; and our having all *in* him demonstrates his fulness of beauty, love and happiness.

And the redeemed, by reason of the greatness of their dependence on God, han't only so much the greater occasion, but obligation to contemplate and acknowledge the glory and fulness of God. How unreasonable and ungrateful should we be if we did not acknowledge that sufficiency and glory that we do absolutely, immediately and universally depend upon!

2. Hereby is demonstrated how great God's glory is considered comparatively, or as compared with the creature's. By the creature's being thus wholly and universally dependent on God, it appears that the creature is nothing and that God is all. Hereby it appears that God is infinitely above us; that God's strength, and wisdom and holiness are infinitely greater than ours. However great and glorious the creature apprehends God to be, yet if he be not sensible of the difference between God and him, so as to see that God's glory is great, compared with his own, he will not be disposed to give God the glory due to his name. If the creature, in any respect, sets himself upon a level with God, or exalts himself to any competition with him, however he may apprehend that great honor and profound respect may belong to God from those

that are more inferior, and at a greater distance, he will not be so sensible of its being due from him. So much the more men exalt themselves, so much the less will they surely be disposed to exalt God. 'Tis certainly a thing that God aims at in the disposition of things in the affair of redemption (if we allow the Scriptures to be a revelation of God's mind), that God should appear full, and man in himself empty, that God should appear all, and man nothing. 'Tis God's declared design that others should not "glory in his presence"; which implies that 'tis his design to advance his own comparative glory. So much the more man "glories in God's presence," so much the less glory is ascribed to God.

3. By its being thus ordered, that the creature should have so absolute and universal a dependence on God, provision is made that God should have our whole souls, and should be the object of our undivided respect. If we had our dependence partly on God and partly on something else, man's respect would be divided to those different things on which he had dependence. Thus it would be if we depended on God only for a part of our good, and on ourselves or some other being for another part: or if we had our good only from God, and through another that was not God, and in something else distinct from both, our hearts would be divided between the good itself, and him from whom, and him through whom we received it. But now there is no occasion for this, God being not only he from or of whom we have all good, but also through whom, and one that is that good itself, that we have from him and through him. So that whatsoever there is to

attract our respect, the tendency is still directly towards God, all unites in him as the centre.

USE

1. We may here observe the marvellous wisdom of God in the work of redemption. God hath made man's emptiness and misery, his low, lost and ruined state into which he sunk by the fall, an occasion of the greater advancement of his own glory, as in other ways, so particularly in this, that there is now a much more universal and apparent dependence of man on God. Though God be pleased to lift man out of that dismal abyss of sin and woe into which he was fallen, and exceedingly to exalt him in excellency and honor, and to a high pitch of glory and blessedness, yet the creature hath nothing in any respect to glory of; all the glory evidently belongs to God, all is in a mere and most absolute and divine dependence on the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

And each person of the Trinity is equally glorified in this work: there is an absolute dependence of the creature on every one for all: all is *of* the Father, all *through* the Son, and all *in* the Holy Ghost. Thus God appears in the work of redemption as *all in all*. It is fit that he that is, and there is none else, should be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the all, and the only, in this work.

2. Hence those doctrines and schemes of divinity that are

in any respect opposite to such an absolute and universal dependence on God, do derogate from God's glory, and thwart the design of the contrivance for our redemption. Those schemes that put the creature in God's stead, in any of the mentioned respects, that exalt man into the place of either Father, Son or Holy Ghost, in any thing pertaining to our redemption; that, however they may allow of a dependence of the redeemed on God, yet deny a dependence that is so absolute and universal; that own an entire dependence on God for some things, but not for others; that own that we depend on God for the gift and acceptance of a Redeemer, but deny so absolute a dependence on him for the obtaining of an interest in the Redeemer; that own an absolute dependence on the Father for giving his Son, and on the Son for working out redemption, but not so entire a dependence on the Holy Ghost for conversion and a being in Christ, and so coming to a title to his benefits; that own a dependence on God for means of grace, but not absolutely for the benefit and success of those means; that own a partial dependence on the power of God for the obtaining and exercising holiness, but not a mere dependence on the arbitrary and sovereign grace of God; that own a dependence on the free grace of God for a reception into his favor, so far that it is without any proper merit, but not as it is without being attracted, or moved with any excellency; that own a partial dependence on Christ, as he through whom we have life, as having purchased new terms of life, but still hold that the righteousness through which we have life is inherent in ourselves,

as it was under the first covenant; and whatever other way any scheme is inconsistent with our entire dependence on God for all, and in each of those ways, of having all of him, through him, and in him, it is repugnant to the design and tenor of the gospel and robs it of that which God accounts its lustre and glory.

3. Hence we may learn a reason why faith is that by which we come to have an interest in this redemption; for there is included in the nature of faith a sensibleness and acknowledgment of this absolute dependence on God in this affair. 'Tis very fit that it should be required of all, in order to their having the benefit of this redemption, that they should be sensible of, and acknowledge the dependence on God for it. 'Tis by this means that God hath contrived to glorify himself in redemption; and 'tis fit that God should at least have this glory of those that are the subjects of this redemption, and have the benefit of it.

Faith is a sensibleness of what is real in the work of redemption; and as we do really wholly depend on God, so the soul that believes doth entirely depend on God for all salvation, in its own sense and act. Faith abases men and exalts God, it gives all the glory of redemption to God alone. It is necessary in order to saving faith, that man should be emptied of himself, that he should be sensible that he is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Humility is a great ingredient of true faith: he that truly receives redemption, receives it as a little child: Mark x. 15, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein." It is the delight

of a believing soul to abase itself and exalt God alone: that is the language of it, Psalm cxv. 1, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory.”

4. Let us be exhorted to exalt God alone, and ascribe to him all the glory of redemption. Let us endeavor to obtain, and increase in a sensibleness of our great dependence on God, to have our eye to him alone, to mortify a self-dependent and self-righteous disposition. Man is naturally exceeding prone to be exalting himself and depending on his own power or goodness, as though he were he from whom he must expect happiness, and to have respect to enjoyments alien from God and his Spirit, as those in which happiness is to be found.

And this doctrine should teach us to exalt God alone, as by trust and reliance, so by praise. *Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord.* Hath any man hope that he is converted and sanctified, and that his mind is endowed with true excellency and spiritual beauty, and his sins forgiven, and he received into God’s favor, and exalted to the honor and blessedness of being his child, and an heir of eternal life: let him give God all the glory; who alone makes him to differ from the worst of men in this world, or the miserablest of the damned in hell. Hath any man much comfort and strong hope of eternal life, let not his hope lift him up, but dispose him the more to abase himself and reflect on his own exceeding unworthiness of such a favor, and to exalt God alone. Is any man eminent in holiness and abundant in good works, let him take nothing of the glory of it to himself, but ascribe it to

him whose “workmanship we are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”

II

A DIVINE AND SUPERNATURAL LIGHT, IMMEDIATELY IMPARTED TO THE SOUL BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, SHOWN TO BE BOTH A SCRIPTURAL AND RATIONAL DOCTRINE. ◊

Matt. xvi. – And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Christ says these words to Peter upon occasion of his professing his faith in him as the Son of God. Our Lord was inquiring of his disciples, who men said he was; not that he needed to be informed, but only to introduce and give occasion to what follows. They answer, that some said he was John the Baptist, and some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. When they had thus given an account who others said he was, Christ asks them, who they said he was. Simon Peter, whom we find always zealous and forward, was the first to answer: he readily replied to the question, *Thou art Christ, the*

Son of the living God.

Upon this occasion, Christ says as he does *to* him, and *of* him in the text: in which we may observe,

1. That Peter is pronounced blessed on this account. *Blessed art Thou.*— “Thou art a happy man, that thou art not ignorant of this, that I am Christ, the Son of the living God. Thou art distinguishingly happy. Others are blinded, and have dark and deluded apprehensions, as you have now given an account, some thinking that I am Elias, and some that I am Jeremias, and some one thing, and some another; but none of them thinking right, all of them misled. Happy art thou, that art so distinguished as to know the truth in this matter.”

2. The evidence of this his happiness declared; viz., that God, and he only, had *revealed it* to him. This is an evidence of his being *blessed*.

First, As it shows how peculiarly favored he was of God above others; q. d., “How highly favored art thou, that others that are wise and great men, the Scribes, Pharisees and Rulers, and the nation in general, are left in darkness, to follow their own misguided apprehensions; and that thou shouldst be singled out, as it were, by name, that my Heavenly Father should thus set his love on thee, Simon Barjona. This argues thee blessed, that thou shouldst thus be the object of God’s distinguishing love.”

Secondly, It evidences his blessedness also, as it intimates that this knowledge is above any that flesh and blood can reveal. “This is such knowledge as my Father which is in heaven only can give:

it is too high and excellent to be communicated by such means as other knowledge is. Thou art blessed, that thou knowest that which God alone can teach thee.”

The original of this knowledge is here declared, both negatively and positively. Positively, as God is here declared the author of it. Negatively, as it is declared, that flesh and blood had not revealed it. God is the author of all knowledge and understanding whatsoever. He is the author of the knowledge that is obtained by human learning: he is the author of all moral prudence, and of the knowledge and skill that men have in their secular business. Thus it is said of all in Israel that were wise-hearted and skilful in embroidering, that God had filled them with the spirit of wisdom, *Exod. xxviii. 3.*

God is the author of such knowledge; but yet not so but that flesh and blood reveals it. Mortal men are capable of imparting the knowledge of human arts and sciences, and skill in temporal affairs. God is the author of such knowledge by those means: flesh and blood is made use of by God as the mediate or second cause of it; he conveys it by the power and influence of natural means. But this spiritual knowledge, spoken of in the text, is what God is the author of, and none else: he reveals it, and flesh and blood reveals it not. He imparts this knowledge immediately, not making use of any intermediate natural causes, as he does in other knowledge.

What had passed in the preceding discourse naturally occasioned Christ to observe this; because the disciples had been

telling how others did not know him, but were generally mistaken about him, and divided and confounded in their opinions of him: but Peter had declared his assured faith, that he was the Son of God. Now it was natural to observe, how it was not flesh and blood that had revealed it to him, but God: for if this knowledge were dependent on natural causes or means, how came it to pass that they, a company of poor fishermen, illiterate men, and persons of low education, attained to the knowledge of the truth; while the Scribes and Pharisees, men of vastly higher advantages, and greater knowledge and sagacity in other matters, remained in ignorance? This could be owing only to the gracious distinguishing influence and revelation of the Spirit of God. Hence, what I would make the subject of my present discourse from these words is this

DOCTRINE

viz., That there is such a thing as a Spiritual and Divine Light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means.

In what I say on this subject at this time I would

I. Show what this divine light is.

II. How it is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means.

III. Show the truth of the doctrine.

And then conclude with a brief improvement.

I. I would show what this spiritual and divine light is. And in order to it, would show,

First, In a few things what it *is not*. And here,

1. *Those convictions that natural men may have of their sin and misery*, is not *this* spiritual and divine light. Men in a natural condition may have convictions of the guilt that lies upon them, and of the anger of God and their danger of divine vengeance. Such convictions are from light or sensibleness of truth. That some sinners have a greater conviction of their guilt and misery than others, is because some have more light, or more of an apprehension of truth than others. And this light and conviction may be from the Spirit of God; the Spirit convinces men of sin: but yet nature is much more concerned in it than in the communication of that spiritual and divine light that is spoken of in the doctrine; 'tis from the Spirit of God only as assisting natural principles, and not as infusing any new principles. Common grace differs from special, in that it influences only by assisting of nature; and not by imparting grace, or bestowing anything above nature. The light that is obtained is wholly natural, or of no superior kind to what mere nature attains to, though more of that kind be obtained than would be obtained if men were left wholly to themselves: or, in other words, common grace only assists the faculties of the soul to do that more fully which they do by nature, as natural conscience or reason will, by mere nature, make a man sensible of guilt, and will accuse and condemn him when he has done amiss. Conscience is a principle natural to men; and the

work that it doth naturally, or of itself, is to give an apprehension of right and wrong, and to suggest to the mind the relation that there is between right and wrong and a retribution. The Spirit of God, in those convictions which unregenerate men sometimes have, assists conscience to do this work in a further degree than it would do if they were left to themselves: he helps it against those things that tend to stupefy it, and obstruct its exercise. But in the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, those things are wrought in the soul that are above nature, and of which there is nothing of the like kind in the soul by nature; and they are caused to exist in the soul habitually, and according to such a stated constitution or law that lays such a foundation for exercises in a continued course, as is called a principle of nature. Not only are remaining principles assisted to do their work more freely and fully, but those principles are restored that were utterly destroyed by the fall; and the mind thenceforward habitually exerts those acts that the dominion of sin had made it as wholly destitute of, as a dead body is of vital acts.

The Spirit of God acts in a very different manner in the one case from what he doth in the other. He may indeed act upon the mind of a natural man, but he acts in the mind of a saint as an indwelling vital principle. He acts upon the mind of an unregenerate person as an extrinsic, occasional agent; for in acting upon them, he doth not unite himself to them; notwithstanding all his influences that they may be the subjects of, they are still sensual, having not the Spirit, Jude 19. But he

unites himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and influences him as a new, supernatural principle of life and action. There is this difference, that the Spirit of God, in acting in the soul of a godly man, exerts and communicates himself there in his own proper nature. Holiness is the proper nature of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit operates in the minds of the godly by uniting himself to them, and living in them, and exerting his own nature in the exercise of their faculties. The Spirit of God may act upon a creature, and yet not in acting communicate himself. The Spirit of God may act upon inanimate creatures; as the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters in the beginning of the creation; so the Spirit of God may act upon the minds of men many ways, and communicate himself no more than when he acts upon an inanimate creature. For instance, he may excite thoughts in them, may assist their natural reason and understanding, or may assist other natural principles, and this without any union with the soul, but may act, as it were, as upon an external object. But as he acts in his holy influences and spiritual operations, he acts in a way of peculiar communication of himself; so that the subject is thence denominated spiritual.

2. *This spiritual and divine light don't consist in any impression made upon the imagination.* It is no impression upon the mind, as though one saw any thing with the bodily eyes: 'tis no imagination or idea of an outward light or glory, or any beauty of form or countenance, or a visible lustre or brightness of any object. The imagination may be strongly impressed with such things;

but this is not spiritual light. Indeed when the mind has a lively discovery of spiritual things, and is greatly affected by the power of divine light, it may, and probably very commonly doth, much affect the imagination; so that impressions of an outward beauty or brightness may accompany those spiritual discoveries. But spiritual light is not that impression upon the imagination, but an exceeding different thing from it. Natural men may have lively impressions on their imaginations; and we can't determine but that the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light, may cause imaginations of an outward beauty, or visible glory, and of sounds and speeches and other such things; but these are things of a vastly inferior nature to spiritual light.

3. *This spiritual light is not the suggesting of any new truths or propositions not contained in the word of God.* This suggesting of new truths or doctrines to the mind, independent of any antecedent revelation of those propositions, either in word or writing, is inspiration; such as the prophets and apostles had, and such as some enthusiasts pretend to. But this spiritual light that I am speaking of, is quite a different thing from inspiration: it reveals no new doctrine, it suggests no new proposition to the mind, it teaches no new thing of God, or Christ, or another world, not taught in the Bible, but only gives a due apprehension of those things that are taught in the word of God.

4. *'Tis not every affecting view that men have of the things of religion that is this spiritual and divine light.* Men by mere principles of nature are capable of being affected with things that

have a special relation to religion as well as other things. A person by mere nature, for instance, may be liable to be affected with the story of Jesus Christ, and the sufferings he underwent, as well as by any other tragical story: he may be the more affected with it from the interest he conceives mankind to have in it: yea, he may be affected with it without believing it; as well as a man may be affected with what he reads in a romance, or sees acted in a stage play. He may be affected with a lively and eloquent description of many pleasant things that attend the state of the blessed in heaven, as well as his imagination be entertained by a romantic description of the pleasantness of fairy-land, or the like. And that common belief of the truth of the things of religion that persons may have from education or otherwise, may help forward their affection. We read in Scripture of many that were greatly affected with things of a religious nature, who yet are there represented as wholly graceless, and many of them very ill men. A person therefore may have affecting views of the things of religion, and yet be very destitute of spiritual light. Flesh and blood may be the author of this: one man may give another an affecting view of divine things with but common assistance; but God alone can give a spiritual discovery of them.

But I proceed to show,

Secondly, Positively what this spiritual and divine light *is*.

And it may be thus described: *a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising.*

This spiritual light primarily consists in the former of these, viz., a real sense and apprehension of the divine excellency of things revealed in the word of God. A spiritual and saving conviction of the truth and reality of these things arises from such a sight of their divine excellency and glory; so that this conviction of their truth is an effect and natural consequence of this sight of their divine glory. There is therefore in this spiritual light,

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