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D O C T R I N O F G R A C E,
E X E M P L I F Y ' D.



The late Rev. JONATHAN EDWARDS, sometime MINISTER of the gospel at *Northampton*, in *New-England*, and then MISSIONARY to the INDIANS at *Stockbridge*, and after that PRESIDENT of *NEW-JERSEY COLLEGE*; author of the masterly *Inquiry into the modern prevailing Notion of the Freedom of the Will*, the most judicious *Treatise concerning Religious Affections*, the excellent *Account of the Life of the Rev. DAVID BRAINERD*, &c. &c. was born, *October 5, 1703*, at *Windsor*, in *Connecticut*, and died at *Princeton*, *March 22, 1758*.

The following is an account of his CONVERSION, EXPERIENCES, and RELIGIOUS EXERCISES, which was found among his papers, in his own hand-writing. It seems to have been drawn up for his own private advantage while he resided at Northampton.

I HAD a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but had two more remarkable seasons of awakening, before I met with that change, by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned
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about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation; and was abundant in duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious talk with other boys; and used to meet with them to pray together. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure; and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I, with some of my school-mates joined together, and built a booth in a swamp, in a very secret and retired place, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and used to be, from time to time, much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element when engaged in religious Duties. And I am ready to think, many are deceived with such affections, and such a kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace.

BUT, in process of time, my convictions and affections wore off; and I entirely lost all those affections and delights, and left off secret prayer, at least as to any constant performance of it; and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in ways of sin.

INDEED, I was at sometimes very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of the time of my being at college. Till it pleased God, in my last year at college, at a time when I was in the midst of many uneasy thoughts about the state of my soul, to seize me with a pleurisy; in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell.

BUT yet, it was not long after my recovery, before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But God would not suffer me to go on with any quietness; but I had great and

and violent inward struggles; till after many conflicts with wicked inclinations, and repeated resolutions, and bonds that I had laid myself under by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin; and to apply myself to seek my salvation, and practise the duties of religion: but without that kind of affection and delight, that I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflections. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life. But yet it seems to me, I sought after a miserable manner: which has made me sometimes since to question, whether ever it issued in that which was saving? being ready to doubt whether such miserable seeking was ever succeeded. But yet I was brought to seek salvation in a manner that I never was before. I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world, for an interest in Christ. My concern continued and prevailed, with many exercising things and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed proper to express my concern that I had, by the name of terror.

FROM my childhood up, my mind had been wont to be full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom He would to eternal life, and rejecting whom He pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure. But never could give an account how, or by what means, I was thus convinced; not in the least imagining, in the time of it, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's SPIRIT in it: but only that now I

saw farther, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections, that had till then abode with me, all the preceding part of my life. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against God's sovereignty, in the most absolute sense, in shewing mercy on whom He will shew mercy, and leaving and eternally damning whom He will. God's absolute sovereignty and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of, as much as of any thing that I see with my eyes; at least it is so at times. But I have oftentimes, since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty, than I had then. I have often since, not only had a conviction, but a *delightful* conviction. The doctrine of God's sovereignty has very often appeared an exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet doctrine to me: and absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not with this.

THE first that I remember that ever I found any thing of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading these words, 1. Tim. i. 17. "Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen." As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was, as it were, diffused thro' it, a sense of the glory of the divine being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any words of scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself, how excellent a being that was; and how
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happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be wrapt up to God in heaven, and be, as it were, swallowed up in him. I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of scripture to myself; and went to prayer, to pray to God that I might enjoy him; and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do; with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was any thing spiritual, or of a saving nature in this.

FROM about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. I had an inward, sweet sense of these things that at times came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, and the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation, by free grace in him. I found no books so delightful to me, as those that treated of these subjects. Those words, Cant. ii. 1, used to be abundantly with me: *I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys.* The words seemed to me sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of JESUS CHRIST. And the whole book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it about that time; and found, from time to time, an inward sweetness, that used, as it were, to carry me away in my contemplations; in what I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and 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 wrapt and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things, would often
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of a sudden, as it were, kindle up a sweet burning in my heart; an ardor of my soul, that I know not how to express.

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

AFTER this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered: there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet calm, or appearance of divine glory in almost every thing. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity, and love, seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon, for a long time; and so in the day time, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things: in the mean time, singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the creator and redeemer. And scarce any thing, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning. Formerly nothing

nothing had been so terrible to me. I used to be a person uncommonly terrified with thunder: and it used to strike me with terror when I saw a thunder-storm rising. But now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God at the first appearance of a thunder-storm; and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder; which oftentimes was exceeding entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God: and while I viewed, used to spend my time, as it always seemed natural to me, to sing or chant forth my meditations; to speak my thoughts in soliloquys, and speak with a singing voice.

I felt a great satisfaction as to my good estate. But that did not content me. I had Vehement Longings of soul after God and Christ, and after More holiness; wherewith my heart seemed to be Full, and ready to break: which often brought to my mind the words of the psalmist, *Psal. cxix. 28. My soul Breaketh for the longing it hath.* I often felt a mourning and lamenting in my heart, that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; I was almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. Spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year. And used to spend abundance of my time, in walking alone in the woods, and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy and prayer, and converse with God. And it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. And was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath, by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent.

THE delights which I now felt in things of religion, were of an exceeding different kind, from those before-mentioned, that I had when I was a boy. They were totally of another kind; and what I then had no more notion or idea of, than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colors. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating, and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached the heart, and did not arise from any sight of the divine excellency of the things of God, or any taste of the soul-satisfying and life-giving good there is in them.

MY sense of divine things seemed gradually to encrease, till I went to preach at *New-York*, which was about a year and a half after they began. While I was there, I felt them, very sensibly, in a much higher degree, than I had done before. My longings after God and holiness were much encreased. Pure and humble, holy and heavenly christianity appeared exceeding amiable to me. I felt in me a burning desire to be in every thing a complete christian, and conformed to the blessed image of Christ; and that I might live in all things according to the pure, sweet, and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things. My longings after it, put me upon pursuing and pressing after them. It was my continual strife day and night, and constant enquiry, how I should be more holy, and live more holily, and more becoming a child of God, and disciple of Christ.—I NOW SOUGHT AN INCREASE OF GRACE AND HOLINESS, AND THAT I MIGHT LIVE AN HOLY LIFE, WITH VASTLY MORE EARNESTNESS, THAN EVER I SOUGHT GRACE, BEFORE I HAD IT.—I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means, how I should live holily, with far greater diligence and earnestness than ever I pursued any thing in

in my life: but with too great a dependence on my own strength; which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my Extreme Feebleness and Impotence, Every Manner of Way; and the Innumerable and Bottomless Depths of secret corruption and deceit, that there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness, and sweet conformity to Christ.

THE heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations on heaven, and the enjoyments of those there; and living there in perfect holiness, humility, and love. And it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. It appeared to me a great clog and hindrance and burden to me, that what I felt within, I could not express to God, and give vent to, as I desired. The inward ardor of my soul, seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think, how, in heaven, this sweet principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared to me exceeding delightful as a world of love. It appeared to me, that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love.

I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness. I remember I then said sometimes to myself, I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes. It appeared to me, there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely. It appeared to me, to be the highest beauty and amiableness, above all other beautys: that it was a *divine* beauty; far purer than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else

was like mire, filth, and defilement, in comparison of it.

HOLINESS, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature. It seemed to me, it brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, and ravishment to the soul: and that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; that is all pleasant, delightful, and undisturbed; enjoying a sweet calm, and the gentle vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower, as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom, to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrant; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms, to drink in the light of the sun.

THERE WAS NO part of creature-holiness, that I then, and at other times, had so great a sense of the loveliness of, as humility, brokenness of heart, and poverty of Spirit: and there was nothing that I had such a spirit to long for. My heart, as it were, panted after this, to lie low before God, and in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be All; that I might become as a little child.

WHILE I WAS there at *New-York*, I sometimes was much affected with reflections on my past life, considering how late it was before I began to be truly religious, and how wickedly I had lived till then; and once so as to weep abundantly, and for a considerable time together.

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ON *Jan. 12, 1722*, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had, to God; to be, for the future, in no respect my own; to act as one that had no right to himself in any respect. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were: and His law for the constant rule of my obedience: engaging to fight, with all my might, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life. But have reason to be infinitely humbled, when I consider, how much I have failed of answering my obligation.

I had then abundance of sweet religious conversation, in the Family where I lived, with Mr. *Jehn Smith*, and his pious mother. My heart was knit in affection to those, in whom were appearances of true piety; and I could bear the thoughts of no other companions, but such as were holy, and the disciples of the blessed Jesus.

I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. My secret prayer used to be in great part taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of any thing that appeared to me, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interest of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it; and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be earnest to read public news-letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favourable to the interest of religion in the world.

I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of *Hudson's* river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things, and secret converse with God; and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr. *Smith* and I walked together, to converse

of the things of God; and our conversation used much to turn on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days.

I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt an harmony between something in my heart and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light, exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing ravishing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading. Used oftentimes to dwell long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.

I came away from *New-York* in the month of *April*, 1723, and had a most bitter parting with madam *Smith* and her son. My heart seemed to sink within me, at leaving the family and city, where I had enjoyed so many sweet and pleasant days. I went from *New-York* to *Weathersfield* by Water. As I failed away, I kept sight of the city as long as I could; and when I was out of sight of it, it would affect me much to look that way, with a kind of melancholy mixed with sweetness. However, that night after this sorrowful parting, I was greatly comforted in God at *West-Chester*, where we went ashore to lodge: and had a pleasant time of it all the voyage to *Saybrook*. It was sweet to me to think of meeting dear christians in heaven, where we should never part more. At *Saybrook* we went ashore to lodge on Saturday, and there kept Sabbath; where I had a sweet and refreshing season, walking alone in the fields.

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AFTER I came home to *Windsor*, I remained much in a like frame of my mind, as I had been in at *New-York*; but only sometimes felt my heart ready to sink, with the thoughts of my friends at *New-York*. And my refuge and support was in contemplations on the heavenly state; as I find in my diary of *May 1*, 1723. It was my comfort to think of that state, where there is fulness of joy; where reigns heavenly, sweet, calm, and delightful love, without alloy; where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love; where is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting; where these persons, that appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely, and full of love to us. And how sweetly will the mutual lovers join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How full will it fill us with joy, to think, that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises will never cease or come to an end; but will last to all eternity!

CONTINUED much in the same frame in the general, that I had been in at *New-York*, till I went to *New-Haven*, to live there as tutor of the college; having one special season of uncommon sweetness: particularly once at *Bolton*, in a journey from *Boston*, walking out alone in the fields. After I went to *New-Haven*, I sunk in religion; my mind being diverted from my eager and violent pursuits after holiness, by some affairs that greatly perplexed and distracted my mind.

IN *September*, 1725, was taken ill at *New-Haven*; and endeavouring to go home to *Windsor*, was so ill at the North village, that I could go no farther: where I lay sick for about a quarter of a year. And in this sickness, God was pleased to visit me again with the sweet influences of His Spirit. My mind was greatly engaged there on divine, pleasant contemplations, and longings

longings of soul. I observed, that those who watched with me, would often be looking out for the morning, and seemed to wish for it: which brought to my mind those words of the psalmist, which my soul, with sweetness, made its own language: *My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.* And when the light of the morning, and the beams of the sun came in at the windows, it refreshed my soul from one morning to another. It seemed to me to be some image of the sweet light of God's glory.

I remember, about that time, I used greatly to long for the conversion of some that I was concerned with. It seemed to me, I could gladly honor them, and with delight be a servant to them, and lie at their feet, if they were but truly holy.

BUT some time after this, I was again greatly diverted in my mind, with some temporal concerns, that exceedingly took up my thoughts, greatly to the wounding of my soul: and went on through various exercises, that it would be tedious to relate, that gave much more experience of my own heart, than ever I had before.

SINCE I came to live at Northampton, I have often had complacency in God, in views of His glorious perfections, and the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me, a glorious and lovely being, chiefly on account of His Holiness. The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all His attributes. The Doctrins of God's absolute sovereignty, and free grace, in shewing mercy to whom He Would shew mercy; and man's absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been
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much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me, as great part of His glory. It has often been Sweet to me to go to God, and adore Him as a sovereign God, and ask Sovereign Mercy of Him.

I have loved the doctrines of the gospel: they have been to my soul like green pastures. The gospel has seemed to me to be the richest treasure; the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ, has appeared in a general way, glorious and excellent, and most pleasant and beautiful. It has often seemed to me, that it would in a great measure *spoil* heaven, to receive it in any other way. That text has often been affecting and delightful to me, *Isai. xxxii. 2. A man shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, &c.*

It has often appeared sweet to me, to be united to Christ; to have Him for my head, and to be a member of His body: and also to have Christ for my teacher and prophet. I very often think, with sweetness, and longings, and pantings of soul, of being a little child, taking hold of Christ, to be led by Him through the wilderness of this world. That text in *Matt. xviii.* has often been sweet to me: *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, &c.* I love to think of coming to Christ, to receive salvation of Him, *poor* in spirit, and quite *empty* of self; humbly exalting Him alone; cut entirely off from my own root, and to grow *into*, and *out of* Christ: to have God in Christ to be All in All; and to live by faith on the Son of God, a life of humble, unfeigned confidence in Him. That scripture has often been sweet to me, *Psal. cxv. 1. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake.* And those words
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of Christ, *Luk. x. 21. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.* The sovereignty of God that Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me worthy to be rejoiced in; and that rejoicing of Christ, seemed to me to shew the excellency of Christ, and the spirit that He was of.

SOMETIMES only mentioning a single word, causes my heart to burn within me: or only seeing the name of Christ, or the name of some attribute of God. And God has appeared glorious to me, on account of the Trinity. It has made me have exalting thoughts of God, that He subsists in three persons; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.

THE *sweetest* joys and delights I have experienced, have *not* been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good estate; *but* in a *direct* view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy *this sweetness*, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own safe estate. It seems at such times *a loss that I cannot bear*, to take off my eye from the glorious, pleasant object I behold *without* me, to turn my eye in upon *myself*, and my own good estate.

My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. The histories of the past advancement of Christ's kingdom, have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing in all my reading has been, to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted. And when I have expected, in my reading, to come to any such thing, I have reckoned upon it all the way as I read.

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And my mind has been much entertained and delighted, with the scripture promises and prophecys, of the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth.

I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fulness of Christ, and His meetness and suitability as a savior; whereby He has appeared to me, far above all, the chief of ten thousands. And His blood and atonement has appeared sweet, and His righteousness sweet; which is always accompanied with an ardency of Spirit, and inward strugglings and breathings, and groanings, that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself, and swallowed up in Christ.

ONCE, as I rid out into the woods for my health, *Anno 1737*, and having lit from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer; I had a view, that *for me* was *extraordinary*, of the glory of the Son of God; as mediator between God and man; and His wonderful, great, full, pure, and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared to me so calm and sweet, appeared great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception. Which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me, the bigger part of the time, in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt withal, an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, than to be emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love Him with a holy and pure love; to trust in Him; to live upon Him; to serve and follow Him; and to be totally wrapt up in the fulness of Christ; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity.—I have several other

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times had views very much of the same nature, and that have had the same effects.

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in His office of Sanctifier; in His holy operations communicating divine light and life to the soul. God, in the communications of His Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full, and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul: pouring forth itself in sweet communications, like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life.

I have sometimes had an affecting sense of the excellency of the word of God, as a word of life; as the light of life, a sweet, excellent, life-giving word: accompanied with a thirsting after that word, that it might dwell richly in my heart.

I have often, since I lived in this town, had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently so as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together: so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness, and the badness of my own heart, *since* my conversion, than ever I had *before*. It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the *very worst* of all mankind, of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time; and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell. When others, that have come to talk with me about their soul concerns, have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, by saying that it seemed to them, that they were as bad as the devil himself, I thought their expressions seemed exceeding faint and feeble, to represent

present my wickedness. I thought I should wonder, that they should content themselves with such expressions as these, if I had any reason to imagine, that their sin bore any proportion to mine. It seemed to me, I should wonder at myself, if I should express my wickedness in such feeble terms as they did.

My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me *perfectly ineffable*, and infinitely swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or infinite mountains over my head. I know not how to express better, what my sins appeared to me to be, than by *heaping INFINITE ON INFINITE, and multiplying INFINITE BY INFINITE*. I go about very often, for these many years, with these expressions in my mind and in my mouth, *INFINITE UPON INFINITE, INFINITE UPON INFINITE!* When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of His power and grace stretched forth, in all the majesty of His power, and in all the glory of His sovereignty; I should appear sunk down in my sins infinitely below hell itself, far beyond sight of every thing, but the piercing eye of God's grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth, and to the bottom of such an abyss.

AND yet I ben't in the least inclined to think, that I have a greater conviction of sin than ordinary. It seems to me, my conviction of sin is exceeding small, and faint. It appears to me enough to amaze me, that I have no more sense of my sin. I know certainly, that I have very little sense of my sinfulness. That my sins appear to me so great, don't *seem to me* to be, because

I have so much more conviction of sin than other christians, but because I am so much worse, and have so much more wickedness to be convinced of. When I have had these turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I thought I *knew* in the time of it, that my *repentance* was *nothing* to my *sin*.

I have greatly longed of late, for a broken heart, and to lie low before God. And when I ask for humility of God, I cannot bear the thoughts of being no more humbled, than other christians. It seems to me, that, though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them; yet it would be a *wile* self-exaltation in *me*, not to be the *lowest* in humility of all mankind. Others speak of their longing to be humbled *to the dust*. Tho' that may be a proper expression for *them*, I always think for *myself*, that I ought to be humbled down *below hell*. 'Tis an expression that it has long been natural for me to use in prayer to God. I *ought* to lie infinitely low before God.

It is affecting to me to think, how ignorant I was, when I was a young christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit, lest in my heart.

I have vastly a greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, and mere good pleasure, of late, than I formerly used to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The thought of any comfort or joy, arising in me, on any consideration or reflection on my own amiableness, or any of my performances or experiences, or my goodness of heart or life, is nauseous and detestable to me. And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit; much more

sensibly

sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see *that serpent* rising and putting forth its head, continually, every where, all around me.

Two' it seems to me, that in *some respects*, I was a far better christian, for two or three years after my first conversion, than I am now; and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure: yet, of late years, I have had a more full and constant sense of the absolute Sovereignty of God, and a Delight in that Sovereignty; and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a mediator, as revealed in the gospel. On one Saturday night in particular, had a particular discovery of the excellency of the gospel of Christ, above all other doctrines; so that I could not but say to myself, "*This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine*:" and of Christ, "*This is my chosen prophet*." It appeared to me to be sweet beyond all expression, to follow Christ, and to be taught and enlightened and instructed by Him; to learn of Him, and live to Him.

ANOTHER Saturday night, Jan. 1739, had such a sense, how sweet and blessed a thing it was to walk in the way of duty, to do that which was right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God; that it caused me to break forth into a kind of loud weeping, which held me some time; so that I was forced to shut myself up, and fasten the doors. I could not but, as it were, cry out, "How happy are they which do that which is right in the sight of God! They are blessed indeed, they are the happy ones!" I had, at the same time, a very affecting sense, how meet and suitable it was that God should govern the world, and order all things according to His own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigned, and that His will was done.

Some

Some extracts from Mr. EDWARDS's PRIVATE
DIARY—written about the 20th year of his age.

Saturday, Dec. 22, 1722. This Day revived by God's Spirit. Affected with the sense of the excellency of holiness. Felt more exercise of love to Christ than usual. Have also felt sensible repentance of sin, because it was committed against so merciful and good a God.

Wednesday, Jan. 2, 1723. Dull. I find, by experience, that let me make resolutions, and do what I will, with never so many inventions, it is all nothing, and to no purpose at all, without the motions of the Spirit of God: for if the Spirit of God should be as much withdrawn from me always, as for the week past, notwithstanding all I do I should not grow; but should languish, and miserably fade away. There is no dependence upon myself. It is to no purpose to resolve, except we depend on the grace of God; for if it were not for His mere grace, one might be a very good man one day, and a very wicked one the next.

Saturday, Jan. 12. I this day solemnly renewed my self-dedication to God. I have been before God; and have given myself, all that I am and have, to God; so that I am not, in any respect, my own: I can challenge no right in myself; I can challenge no right in this understanding, this will, these affections that are in me; neither have I any right to this body, or any of its members: no right to this tongue, these hands, nor feet: no right to these senses, these eyes, these ears, this smell, or taste. I have given myself clear away, and have not retained any thing as my own. I have
been

been to God this morning, and told Him that I gave myself *wholly* to Him. I have given every power to Him; so that, for the future, I will challenge no right in myself, in any respect. I have expressly promised Him, and do now promise Almighty God, that *by His grace* I will not. I have this morning told Him, that I did take Him for my whole portion and felicity, looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and His law for the constant rule of my obedience: and would fight with all my might against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life. And did believe in Jesus Christ, and receive Him as a prince and a savior; and would adhere to the faith and obedience of the gospel, how hazardous and difficult soever the profession and practice of it may be. That I did receive the blessed Spirit as my teacher, sanctifier, and comforter; and cherish all His motions to enlighten, purify, confirm, comfort, and assist me. This I have done. And I pray God, for the sake of Christ, to look upon it as a self-dedication; and to receive me now as entirely His own, and deal with me in all respects as such; whether He afflicts me or prospers me, or whatever He pleases to do with me, who am His. Now, henceforth, I am not to act in any respect as my own. I shall act as my own, if ever I make use of any of my powers to any thing that is not to the glory of God, and don't make the glorifying Him my whole and entire business; if I murmur in the least at afflictions; if I grieve at the prosperity of others; if I am any way uncharitable; if I am angry because of injuries; if I revenge; if I do any thing, purely to please myself, or if I avoid any thing for the sake of my ease; if I omit any thing because it is great self-denial; if I trust to myself; if I take any of the praise of any good that I do, or rather God does by me; or if I am any way proud.

Tuesday,

Tuesday, Jan. 15. It seemed yesterday, the day before, and Saturday, that I should always retain the same resolutions to the same height; but, alas, how soon do I decay! O; how weak, how infirm, how unable to do any thing am I! What a poor inconsistent, what a miserable wretch, without the assistance of God's Spirit! While I stand I am ready to think I stand in my own strength, and upon my own legs; and I am ready to triumph over my enemys, as if it were I myself that caused them to flee: when, alas! I am but a *poor infant*, upheld by Jesus Christ; who holds me up, and gives me liberty to smile to see my enemys flee, when He drives them before me; and so I laugh, as tho' I myself did it, when it is only Jesus Christ leads me along, and fights himself against my enemys. And now the Lord has a little left me, and how weak do I find myself! O let it teach me to depend less on myself, to be more humble, and give more of the praise of my ability to Jesus Christ. The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it.

F I N I S.

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