

CONVERSION OF PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

(Concluded.)

In September 1725, I was taken ill at New Haven, and while endeavouring to go home to Windsor, was so ill at the North Village, that I could go no further, where I lay sick for about a quarter of a year. In this sickness God was pleased to visit me again with the sweet influences of his Spirit. My mind was greatly engaged there in divine, pleasant contemplations, and longing of soul. I observed that those who watched with me, would often be looking out wishfully for the morning, which brought to my mind those words of the Psalmist, and which my soul, with delight, 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 day came in at the windows, it refreshed my soul from one morning to another. It seemed to be some image of the 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: I could gladly honour 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, which gave me much more experience of my own heart than ever I had before.

Since I came to this town, (Northampton) I have often had sweet 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 doctrines of God's sovereignty and free grace, and man's absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me a great part of his glory. It has often been my delight to approach 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 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 glorious and excellent, 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, (Isa. xxxii. 2.) "A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest," &c.

It has often appeared to me delightful to be united to Christ; to have him for my head, and to be a member of his body; also to have Christ for my teacher and prophet. I very often think, with 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 (Matt. xviii. 3,) 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 off entirely from my own root, in order 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. (Ps. cxv. 1.) "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." And those words of Christ, (Luke 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." That sovereignty of God which Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me worthy of such joy; and that rejoicing seemed to show the excellency of Christ, and of what Spirit he was.

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 been 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 myself. Though I have habitual peace and joy in believing, yet it seems at such times a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious pleasant objects 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 to me a cause of rejoicing. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest things 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 rejoiced in the prospect all the way as I read. And my mind has been much entertained and delighted with the Scripture promises and prophecies which relate to the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fullness of Christ, and his meekness and suitability as a Saviour; whereby he has appeared to me, as far above all, the chief of ten thousand. His blood and atonement have appeared precious; which was always accompanied with 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 rode out into the woods for my health in 1737, having alighted 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 precious grace and love, meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception. This view continued as near as I can judge, about an hour, and kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied of self, 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 perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have, several other times, had views very much of the same nature, and which 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 as 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 loveliness, being full, and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul; pouring forth itself in sweet communications; like the sun in its glory, pleasantly diffusing light and life. And 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.

Often since I lived in this town, I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and villainy; very frequently to such a degree as to keep me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together; so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. Though I trust the wonderful grace of God has made me differ from my former self, and from a world that lieth in wickedness, I have had a vastly greater sense of my own sinfulness, and the badness of my heart, than ever I had before my conversion. I know it was a sink of iniquity before, but alas! I did not see it. It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the chief of sinners, and that my place would be in hell. When others, that have come to talk with me about the concerns of their soul, have expressed the sense they had of their own wickedness, I thought their expressions seemed exceedingly faint and feeble to represent my sinfulness! My sinfulness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination, like an infinite deluge, or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often, for these many years, these expressions are 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 sinfulness, it looks like an abyss 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 Jehoyah, and the arm of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins, far beyond the sight of every thing but the eye of that grace which can pierce even down to such a depth. And yet, when I have had turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I thought I knew at the time 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, I cannot bear the thoughts of being no more humble than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them, yet it would be a vile 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;" that may be a proper expression for them; but I always think of myself, that I ought, and it is an expression that has long been natural for me to use in prayer, "to lie infinitely low before God." And it is affecting to think how ignorant I was when a young Christian, of the depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit, left in my heart.

I have a much greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting forth its head continually, every where all around me.

Though 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 sovereignty of God, and a delight in his righteous government, and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a Mediator revealed in the Gospel. On one Saturday night, in particular, I had such a discovery of the excellency of the Gospel above all other doctrines 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 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

(January 1739) I had such a sense of the blessedness of walking in the way of duty; of doing that which is 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 for a long 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 is that God should govern the world, and order all things according to his own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigns, and that his will is done.

The above account of the religious exercises of President Edwards was found among his papers at his death, and is supposed to have been written at Northampton, when he was about forty years of age, for his own private advantage.—*Pub. Am. Tract Society, Vol. 5.*

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

REVISION OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES.

No. 8.

A circumstance of no little importance has frequently attracted attention. Persons not gifted with powers of accurate discrimination, have often, after reading several chapters of the Revised Testament published by the American Bible Union, remarked that there seemed to be very little change in the words, but that the general idea was clearer, and they felt more than ordinary interest in the words of inspiration.

We have examined the book with some care. Not a page appears to be unchanged. Not a chapter occurs in which some needed improvement is not made. We think that the average number of changes is not less than forty to the chapter, probably more. We examined a chapter in the Gospels, and found that the variations exceed one hundred, and we counted in the 2d chapter of 1 Peter full ninety. But so much solicitude and discrimination have been exercised by the revisers in the selection of terms and the arrangement of sentences, that the reader is seldom aware of the number of the variations from the Common Version. But, as he reads, the increase of light attracts him. He becomes sensible of a new interest. He feels an unaccustomed pleasure in perusing the work, and he is able to see the course of thought, and realize the objects of the writer, or, rather, of the Holy Spirit. These facts, however, render it difficult to convey full impressions of the improvements made; without an extended comparison between the two books, which would occupy too much space for our present purpose.

We will try what can be done by copying a few verses, and phrases.

2 Cor. v., 20, COMMON VERSION: "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

REVISÉD TESTAMENT: "We are then ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were beseeching by us; on behalf of Christ we pray: be reconciled to God!"

The Common Version implies that Paul was addressing the saints at Corinth as unbelievers, unreconciled to Christ. The Revised Testament shows what was the general character of his preaching as he traveled among the Gentiles, and preached to the unconverted.

(C. V.) 1 Peter ii., 1, 2: "Wherefore laying aside malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

(R. V.) "Laying aside therefore all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envyings, and all backbitings, as new born babes long for the spiritual unadulterated milk, that ye thereby may grow unto salvation."

(C. V.) Col. ii., 20: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ,"

Col. iii., 3: "For ye are dead."

Rom. vi., 8: "Now if we be dead with Christ,"

2 Cor. v., 14: "If one died for all, then were all dead."

Rom. vi., 2: "We that are dead,"

Gal. ii., 19: "I through the law am dead to the law."

(R. V.) Col. ii., 20: "If ye died with Christ,"

Col. iii., 3: "For ye died."

Rom. vi., 8: "And if we died with Christ,"

2 Cor. v., 14: "If one died for all, then they all died."

Rom. vi., 3: "We who died to sin,"

Gal. ii., 19: "For I through law died to law."

In these last passages the Common Version teaches, that Christians are dead. The Revised Testament uniformly teaches, that Christians are alive. They died with Christ; they rose with Him; and they live in Him.

(C. V.) Acts xviii., 22, 23: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld

your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

(R. V.) "Men of Athens, in all things, I perceive ye are very devout. For as I passed by, and observed your objects of worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore, not knowing, ye worship, him I announce to you."

The Common Version here represents the apostle as commencing his address to the most polished audience of the day, by flagrantly and repeatedly insulting his hearers, declaring them superstitious and ignorant.

The Revised Testament shows him to be a Christian gentleman, and an ambassador of the Prince of Peace, kindly winning their attention by explaining to them, that they already worshiped the God whom he came to announce, although they were not aware of his character, and his doings, and these he came to reveal to them.

(C. V.) 1 Cor. xvi., 45: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

(R. V.) "The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a life-giving spirit."

The Revised Testament here renders clear, and bright, and glorious, the superiority of Christ to Adam, as bringing life and immortality to light, renewing the soul and imparting to it the divine nature. I come, says he, that ye may have life; and that ye may have it more abundantly. The origin and support of the spiritual life is entirely dependent on Christ. He sends the Holy Spirit, who is sometimes called, "The Spirit of Christ, who creates us anew in Christ Jesus." He himself is life, and the life is the light of the world.

Passages like these, involving the most important improvements in translation, might be multiplied to almost any extent. But these are sufficient to suggest the inquiry whether it is impossible for those who owe everything to Christ, to be so regardless of his revealed word as to prefer obscurity and error to inspired truth, merely because they have long been accustomed to them. Is it not unacquaintance with the facts of the case, that keeps Christians contented and satisfied to leave things as they are; to use and circulate the old version, because it is old; to refuse, or neglect, to examine the Revised Testament and compare it carefully with the Common Version?

WM. H. WYCKOFF,

Corresponding Secretary.

No. 32 Great Jones Street, New York.

For the Christian Messenger.

[By some means the following did not come to hand until too late for our last. Ed.]

HORTON COLLEGIATE ACADEMY.

Mr. Editor,—

The ORDER OF EXERCISES of the Rhetorical Exhibition of Horton Collegiate Academy, to which brief allusion was made in your last issue, was the following:—

- MUSIC.
- 1. ESSAY. "Rome was not built in a day." G. O. Gates, Wilmet.
- 2. Do. Growth and Decline. Isaac Sklauer, Berwick.
- 3. Dialogue. The Speculators. MUSIC.
- 4. ESSAY. Success—its Guarantee. E. Churchill, Locke's Island.
- 5. Do. Greeks and Grecian Lore. J. A. Kirtman, Cornwallis.
- 6. Dialogue. The Town Meeting. MUSIC.
- 7. ESSAY. Agitation. J. H. Robbins, Yarmouth.
- 8. Do. The Might of Mind. S. W. Black, Amherst.
- 9. Dialogue. The Student and his neighbour. MUSIC.
- 10. ESSAY. Life a Conflict. G. N. Ballentine, Wilmet.
- 10. Dialogue. The Apothecary.
- 12. Do. Popping the Question. MUSIC.
- 13. Do. LaMelange.

The audience was large and appeared to enjoy the Exercises. The Students acquitted themselves well. The Essays manifested a freshness of thought rarely excelled on similar occasions. We wish our young friends success in their literary career.—*Com.*

For the Christian Messenger.

Cow Bay, C. B.,

Homeville, March 25th, 1869.

Dear Editor,—

The fact that "In the midst of life we are in death," gathers strength from observation and experience. And although these words may have become, as familiar as a "twice told tale," yet their practical application has no less value. Especially of late have we been made to feel the force of the above mentioned truth. All good men have not an equal share of affliction,