

Short Account of the *Experience*

OF THE

WORK of GOD,

And the Revealing of

JESUS CHRIST

In the Heart of

JOHN EDWARDS.

Written by Himself.

And published that Men may know how gracious the
LORD is.

The *third Edition*, revised, corrected and amended (by
the AUTHOR's own Hand) of some Things which
escaped the first Impression.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

DEAR FRIEND,

AS the Reading of what God has done for the Souls of others, hath been much blessed to mine own Soul ; and believing it may be of some Use to the scatter'd Lambs of Christ's Flock, I have from Time to Time (for upwards of two Years) been moved, (not only by the Persuasions of Friends, but from the Word of God, such as, Ye also shall bear Witness, because ye have been with me from the Beginning, and what thou seest write in a Book, and send to the Churches) to print my Experience. I am now fully persuaded that it is the Will of God my Saviour, that I should for his Glory and holy Name Sake, thus simply testify of his superabundant, rich, free, sovereign Grace and Love to me the Chief of Sinners, so that his People may have Reason to rejoice, that their Brother

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The P R E F A C E.

which was lost is now found, and that Sinners may be greatly encouraged to come to the Wounds and Blood of a crucified Saviour, trusting to him for Redemption, Justification and Righteousness, believing he will in no wise cast out those that come to him by Faith.

If any Thing in the following Lines should be found either to comfort or warm the Heart of but one of God's dear Children, may he or she give all the Glory to him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb; that he only may be exalted; and that Men might be brought to come and trust in his Name, is the only Aim, End, Wish and Prayer, of your

Brother in CHRIST JESUS,

J. Edwards.

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A Short Account

Of the *Experience*, &c.

MY Parents were of the Church of *England*,
 who brought me up in that Way after
 the strictest Manner, and (had it been in
 their Power) would have kept me from
 the Pollutions which are in the World ;
 but after all their Care, I soon shewed a
 corrupt Nature, and was carried away with most of the
 Sins Children of my Age were capable of committing ;
 such as stealing from other Children, telling Lies, and
 being easily provoked and obstinate. Very early I had
 Trouble of Soul, thro' Convictions for Sin, and the first
 awful Thoughts I had that concerned me, was (I believe)
 in the Year 1716, at a Time when there was great
 Lights in the Air. I thought then of a future State, and
 of Eternity, with very strong Terror of Mind. I was
 afraid the Elements were melting with a fervent Heat,
 and that the whole World was going to be burnt with
 Fire and Brimstone, and that the Day of Judgment was
 drawing nigh. I trembled, and cried out, *O that I had
 never been born ! for now I shall come to a sudden and fear-
 fu!*

ful End, and what will become of me afterwards I know not. But as the Lights disappeared, my Fears for that Time went off also.

When I was about the Age of thirteen, I was seized again with Convictions one Night when I was in Bed : The Lord shewed me my sinful Nature in some Measure, and how I deserved Damnation. All my Sins seem'd to be set in Array against me, & strong Horror and Amazement took hold on my Heart ; I was afraid the Lord had laid his Hand on me to send me quick down to eternal Torments ; and, in Confusion, I cry'd, sigh'd and sobb'd, as if my Heart would have burst. I truly watered my Bed with my Tears that Night, under a deep Sense of my Sins ; but as some other Thoughts stole in, my Frights wore off, and I hoped and wish'd would never return again to disturb my Breast : But ever after this, I was (at Times) in Terror, and under a Dread of Hell, and afraid to be alone, or in the Dark, lest the Devil should meet me ; so that I could never find any solid Peace in all the Changes of Life I passed through ; for in the Midst of the greatest Pleasures and worldly Enjoyments, such Thoughts, tho' I strove greatly against them, together with the Sting of a guilty Conscience, made me unhappy, being still afraid of being called to Judgment before I was prepared.

About two or three Years after, I being for some Time at a Relation's House, did there light upon the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which made great Impressions on my Mind, and affected me to a great Degree. I believe it was taken Notice of, for the Book was lock'd up ; and the World into which I was now going, soon wore those Impressions out of my Mind, and Vanity, to which I was much addicted, took Place in my Heart. So

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that from Infancy I lived in one continual Scene of Sins ; and as my Years encreased, so did my Sins, the chief of which was Covetousness, Passion, Pride, Lying, profane Discourse, singing of filthy Songs, Sabbath-breaking, keeping ill Company, Plays, Revelling and Dancing, evil Concupiscence, and that cursed Delusion of playing at Cards ; yet for all I committed these open Sins, besides the secret Abominations of my wicked Heart, I took Delight in going to Church, hearing the Minister preach, seeing them in their different Habits, &c. So was I carried away with the Form of Godliness without having, or desiring to have any of the Power thereof in my Heart.

Thus I went on in a State of Nature, which was truly a State of Sin and Folly, Year after Year ; I seldom committed Sin without Convictions following close after ; nor did I allow of Sin, but condemn'd it in myself and others, yet had no Power over it, being sold under Sin, and a Bond Slave to Satan. In this Condition I should still have lived and died, had I not been found of God when I sought him not. (I believe) in July 1738, a Friend of mine called to see me on a Sunday in the Afternoon, and desired me to take a Walk with him : To whom I answered, *I thought it was better to go to Church than to be walking about in Time of divine Service.* He ask'd me then, *If I would go to Kennington-Common, and hear Mr. Whitefield preach. Is there not Churches enough in London (said I) without going to the Commons and Highways, and making the Worship of God to appear so vulgar and disgraceful.* I urged much against the Way of preaching in Fields, and against Mr. Whitefield, shewing a Dislike to both. However, I was prevailed on to go for Curiosity's Sake. When w
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came to the Place, (he having begun) the Multitude, being so great, we could not get near enough to hear. I got Sight of him, and his Habit pleased me much ; I thought within myself, that I should be glad to hear him once. In a few Weeks after, the same Person came and called me up very early in the Morning, to go with him to *Moor-fields* to hear Mr. *Whitefield* again. I was unwilling to go at first, but as the Remainder of the Sabbath Day was to be a Day of Pleasure, I consented ; and away we went.

We came to the Place of Preaching before the Minister, and joined ourselves to the Side of the Congregation, which before he came was so great, that we were inclosed in the Midst of many Thousands. I stood still with my Hat on, and had no Design to take it off, but some standing by me said to me, *Pull off your Hat*, with whom I was very angry, and said, *What should I pull off my Hat for ? any Body may walk in the Highways or Fields with their Hat on, and suppose that I have a Mind to stand still in the Fields with my Hat on, what is that to you, or any Body else ?* But some in their Zeal began to talk very roughly to me on the one Hand, while some on the other, said, *That I might be ashamed to shew no more Respect to the Preaching of the Word of God.* O, said I, (laughing) *I know where to show Respect, and where to hear the Word of God preached with Decency and in Order, as Christians ought to do, meaning in the Churches.*

After I had done with the People, I look'd before me, and saw my Companion with his Hat off : Well, thought I, to end Disputes, I will off with mine too ; I did so, and well it was I did ; for I heard but little ere I had Occasion for it to hide my Eyes, which were now like Springs, and my Face seemed turn'd to Rivers
of

of Water ; the Word came with Power, sharper than any two-edged Sword ; the Arrows of the Almighty entered into my Heart, and the Terror of the Lord seized my inmost Soul, ⁸⁰ With, *Awake thou that sleepest, arise, and come to Judgment.* I wanted to see my Friend in like Confusion with myself, for, if so, I thought he could not laugh at me ; but I saw no Alteration in his Face, and so I was afraid to let him see my Disorder ; but, thought I, when this Day's Pleasure is over, I will never pass any more Sabbath Days with my old Companions in Pleasure-taking again.

From this Time I felt myself carnal, and sold under Sin, and found no Power to resist Sin, or to withstand any one Temptation ; nay, Temptations beset me more now than ever, and I fell daily a Prey to my own Heart's Lust, and the common Enemy. Soon after I heard a Sermon preached by Mr. *Whitefield*, on the Parable of the ten Virgins ; where I was convinced, that if the Voice of the Arch-Angel was then to call, and the Trump of God to sound, I should be in as terrible a Case as the five foolish Virgins were, not having Grace in my Heart ; I then promised the Lord to watch and pray, to prepare my Lamp, and be ready to meet him at his Coming, that I might enter in with the Bridegroom *to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb* ; but was not convinced that it was out of my own Power to make myself whole.

At Times I found two Powers at War within, so that I was brought daily more and more into Captivity of Sin and Death : I had no Power over Sin, neither had I Power to forsake the Preaching of the Gospel, altho' I attended it with Frights and Fears, lest any one I knew, should see me, and laugh me to Scorn, and

call me one of *Whitefield's Disciples*, (as most were that favoured him, or the Doctrines of the Gospel of our *Lord Jesus Christ*.) So I went on in Disquietude and Vexation of Soul, not knowing what to do to be saved, for I sinned and repented, and repented and sinned, till I was quite tired of both, and was often tempted to blaspheme the Name of God for making me, and at other Times for making me miserable : Sometimes I thought God had made me, and had forgotten me ; and at other Times again I thought he had made me to be for ever unhappy, and took Delight in tormenting me, and had hardened my Heart, and given me up to commit all Iniquity with Greediness : Again, at other Times I much questioned whether there was a God ? Whether all Things did not come by Chance ? If so, said I, there is no Heaven nor Happiness to wish for, nor any Hell to be afraid of, from whence then comes this Trouble within ? Or why am I so cast down and disquieted ? But surely (thought I) there is a God, *and the Spirit must return to God who gave it.*

I now was sorry that I had ever once concerned myself about Religion, or enquired my Way Zionward ; O (said I) *that God would but let me alone while I live in this World, and send me quick down to Hell, without ever awakening me or disturbing my Conscience, that I may not have one here, and another hereafter : Wo is me, for I am undone, I am born to be for ever unhappy in this World, and that also which is to come : for I have transgressed and broken God's Laws and Commandments all my Life past, and even now have not Power to keep any one of them, either in Thought, Word, or Deed, to make an offended God Amends : For sometimes I was strongly possessed to think, that if I could leave my evil Courses, and forget*

get my former Sins, it was all that the Lord would require of me : But now these Words hung heavy on my Heart, *Whosoever keepeth the whole Law, and offendeth but in one Point, he is guilty of the whole ;* and again, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things of the Book of the Law to do them ;* and thus saith the Lord, *in the Sin that thou sinnest, thou shalt surely die :* This made me startle and cry out, *who then can be saved ?*

I again began to look into the Scriptures, promising God and myself, to become more acquainted with the written Word ; but alas ! those sacred Lines soon grew very tiresome to me ; for when I read therein, instead of finding Comfort for my Soul in them, I found nothing but Condemnation ; they pointed me out to be the Man fitted for Wrath ; for when I read that no unholy Thing can come into the Presence of a most holy and pure God : *Well, (thought I) now I will have done with Scripture, for instead of seeing the Glory of the Lord in the Promises of the Gospel of Peace, I can see nothing but the Thunders and Terrors of the fiery Law.* I will (said I) find me out some other Way to settle the troubled Waters of my disturbed Conscience ; I will not concern myself with holy Writ, for it saith, *He that knoweth his Master's Will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes.* Therefore it is of no Service for me to know the Will of the Lord, seeing I cannot do it : So I laid by the Bible, with a Design never to look into it again ; yet I thought that I would live a good honest Life, and to comfort me, I will take my Swing of what the World calls innocent Diversion, such as visiting, playing an innocent Game at Cards, going to the Plays every now and then, &c. to pass away that Time which I was still afraid would be too soon gone ;

for *Eternity* sounded in my Ears, and I knew that I had not on the *Wedding-Garment*, nor had my *Lamp* burning.

So according to my Purpose I became the willing Servant of Sin, my Time was taken up with ill Company more and more, and I strove now to take greater Delight in seeing Plays than before, and much wish'd to be an Actor myself, having conceived a Persuasion that I should speak before a great Auditory before I died. I had a Notion of being very rich, and, thought I, *how good and generous I would be to the Poor ; I will endeavour to make my Relations happy, and direct them how they shall make others so :* But in the Midst of this there was still a *Remember that for all these Things thou must come to Judgment ;* the Thoughts of which confounded all my best Wishes and Hopes, and made cry again and again, *What shall I do to be saved ? O that God would let go his Hand, and strike me into my primitive Nothing, that I may not live in a fearful Expectation of I know not what Change !* I knew not which was my worst Enemy, my own wicked Heart, or the old Dragon which goeth about seeking whom he may devour, who tempted me to eat, drink, and be merry, for by and by would be Time enough for Repentance ; and glad should I have been to have followed his Advice, and say, as I have often done, to my accusing Conscience : *Go thy Way for this Time, when I have a more convenient Season, I will call for thee.*

Indeed my Soul-Trouble increased daily more and more ; so that nothing could now divert my Thoughts Day nor Night, two mighty Powers were fighting in my Heart, Convictions and Temptations ; both these came like Thunder Claps together, neither could I distin-

distinguish the one from the other. I found I wanted, if by any Means I could, to do something to assuage the Wrath of an angry God, to end this Contest, and reconcile myself to him ; and to this End I began to fast and pray, kept close to Duties both public and private, went commonly three or four Times a Day to Church, and was very much troubled if I missed any one Opportunity : The Times of going to the Play House I now spent in the House of Prayer ; at which Places I very often cast my Eyes round to see how devout the Congregation were, and who look'd the most godly ; and as I once did so, I espied a young Man whom I took great Notice of, who behaved as one of singular Piety and Devotion, whom when I saw I envy'd and thought, ah, he remembers his Creator in the Days of his Youth ; but as for me, my Time is past, the Day of Grace is over, and I have nothing more to expect, but my fearful Sentence at the Day of Judgment, which is very nigh at Hand. If these Thoughts ceased, I prayed and besought the Lord to give me some Christian Friend to comfort my troubled Soul, and help me on my Way ; but while I prayed, I thought *God will never hear the Prayers of so vile and wicked a Wretch as me : No, he never will have Mercy on me, or at least till I make myself better ;* not once thought all the while, that *Christ came only to seek and save the Lost,* and that I was to go to him for Righteousness, but was endeavouring to make a Saviour of my Duties, and to that End at Church and in private, I prayed 7, 8, or 9 Times a Day, and often fasted and prayed all Day long ; nay, I prayed till I knew not what to pray for, and was tempted rather to blaspheme, which made me say with
Tears,

Tears, I would to God I had never been born, or that I had died when I hung at my Mother's Breast.

The more I strove the worse I was, for now I began to see more and more of a sinful Nature beneath the ragged Covering of my Religion and Self-Righteousness. Very often while I sat solitary by myself, thinking of these Things, it would come into my Mind, *Soul, yet lackest thou one Thing* ; I studied over and over again what that should be, but could not think of any other Way but making myself better, and growing more religious by a Round of Duties.

About this Time I heard that a Person whom I had formerly some small Acquaintance with, was grown very sober and religious : I wrote to him, and he came one Day and found me in Tears over the Bible ; we had some Talk together, after which he invited me to come and pass the next Sabbath Day with him, which I did accordingly, and in the Evening he took me to a Society of young Men, at St. *John's Church, Wapping*, the most Part of whom I soon became acquainted withal, but especially three or four of them, amongst which Number was one of my own Name ; but what was more, he was a Christian indeed, a Child of God, and blessed be the Name of the Lord, who soon ripened him and took him home to Glory.

I now grew more regular in my Duties, though I often tired in the Ways of Religion, for I knew nothing of that Love which casteth out Fear, or of that Service which is perfect Freedom : I would have given out, had not the Fear of Hell taken hold upon me : So I strove and strove to build a *Babel* upon the sandy Foundation of my own Works : *Come, said I to my Soul, be thou of good Comfort, for God will hear thy Prayers,*
and

and pardon thy Sins, if thou keepest close to thy Closet, that shall procure thee Peace at the last. I never once looked for the Foundation Christ, but lay'd the Foundation Self, and the Superstructure was my own Duties; and so superstitious was I now to believe that God was pleased with my Performance, and that all was well, that I was surely running the Ways of God's Commandments, and that I need not fear but I should get to Heaven at last, till one Night being in Bed I tho't that I heard the Voice of a Man call to me by Name; I started up to listen, but not hearing any Thing more of it, I lay down again, and was thinking whether I had been asleep, or in a Dream; but while I thus tho't, I heard my Name called much louder than before, at which I jump'd out of Bed, thinking it might be some Body in the Street, but before I got to the Window the Voice seemed to be close as one by me, saying, in an angry Tone, *What will you not come yet?* at which I was struck with such Terror and Confusion, I knew not what to say or do, I stood trembling where I was for some Time, dared not stir backwards nor forwards. O (thought I) *if this should be a warning of me to Death, what will become of my poor Soul? O what shall I do, for I dare not look an angry God in the Face in the Day of Judgment! Who is me that ever I was born, &c.* Indeed it was a bitter Night to my Soul, glad should I have been for the Rocks and Mountains to have fallen on me, and covered me from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Lamb. I wanted much to see the Light of another Day; but in the Morning I wished it were Evening, and in the Evening I wished it were Morning: I could now again get no Rest Day nor Night, though I sought it carefully, and with Tears:

Conscience

Conscience now was waken'd, notwithstanding I endeavour'd to lay it asleep, if by any Means I could.

I continued still afraid of being alone, could not rest nor settle myself to any Thing ; could not read except I was in Bed, and often would go to Bed several Hours before Night, where I made an Agreement with myself to read so many Chapters before I slept ; but this Contract was soon broke, it being too great a Task : I begun again to grow tired of the sacred Lines. So I laid aside the holy Scriptures, and what to do now I did not know, for Company grew as tiresome to me, as Reading or being alone ; nay, at last the very Sight of my intimate Acquaintance was a Burden to me, which often made me wring my Hands and cry, *No is me, for I am undone, my Prayers are an Abomination to God, and Scripture and my own Heart condemn me : Without Holiness no Flesh shall see the Lord ; he certainly hath given me up to a reprobate Mind, to heap up to my self Wrath against the Day of Wrath ; my Iniquities are too much to be forgiven, and my Burden is greater than I can bear.* I knew not which Way to turn myself, my Afflictions were so great. Often I thought to go away into some Desert, where I might never see the Face of Humankind again ; but especially when Mr. Whitefield was going abroad, I thought to go privately away after him and by some Means get acquainted him there ; and, thought I, may be I may get some sort of Employment to keep me from starving, but if not, it is no great Matter, for I am near the Brink of Eternity go which Way I will, or do what I can.

Now Temptations came thicker and faster, and grew stronger than ever they had done before, and so far did they get the Ascendant over me, that I thought I should
never

never be able to wait for Death, which I was so afraid of, but would go and meet it in all its Terrors, so I lock'd myself into my Room, and took a Knife in my Hand ; but before I rid me of this miserable Life (said I) *I will ask the Lord to pardon me.* I fell on my Knees by the Bed-side and burst out into Tears, *Now (said I) I shall never see any Body in this World again, Lord thou knowest that my Burden is intolerable, I am no longer able to support under it, therefore I beseech thee to forgive me this horrible Crime, &c.* While in this Posture begging for Mercy with Groans unutterable, a Thought came into my Heart, *that the Lord knew I was oppressed, and may be would undertake for me.* I laid by the Knife with Shame and Confusion of Face, yet I went about very disconsolate, heavy, and broken-hearted with many strong Temptations to put an End to so wretched a Life. I spent Nights and Days, nay Months, in studying how I should compleat that Work, and by what Means. Poison was what I much thought on, but knew not what Sort to get, nor where to get it without being suspected; which gave me great Trouble, so that one Night I got out of Bed and fetched a Knife to Bed with me, with a Resolution that that should be the fatal Time of my Deliverance. I laid me down on my Back with the Knife in one Hand, while I felt with the other which Ribbs to run it between, that it might go to my Heart. With deep and broken Sighs and Cries for Mercy, I fell into a profound Sleep and waked not till late the next Morning, when I found the Knife lying by my Side. I called on the Name of the Lord, and said, *Surely thou hast determined that I shall not come to a fearful End, &c.*

If I heard any Body merry, and laugh, alas, thought I, my Mirth is for ever and ever at an End. If I heard any cursing and swearing, so, thought I, doth God account of my Prayers, I surely shall be driven from amongst the Sons of Men, and be made a Partaker with the Beasts, as *Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon* was, for I wandred up and down from Place to Place. Got into the Fields and under the Hedges till I was almost starved, my Legs would hardly support my Body, and I being so altered, those that knew me took Notice of it, but none guessed at my Disease, nor really knew what was my Disorder, nor could I tell it to any one, being so tempted to keep all to myself, tho' my natural Temper was to speak all Things I knew. I thought that if I was but to tell to any one what Trouble of Mind I underwent, that they would be sure to tell it again to others, so that I should be laughed at and be called Fool or mad ; the latter I often wish'd I was, that I might not be sensible of the bitter Pangs of a troubled Mind, and thought I would rather go down to Hell with it than any one should know any Part of the Sorrows which I past through. Neither was this all, for Troubles without beset me, Men rose up speaking perverse Things, so that I found no greater Foes than those of my own Household.

I now went from one Place of divine Worship to another ; sometimes I thought the Quakers were right, at other Times I thought other Sorts of Dissenters (of one Denomination or other) were right ; at last I tho't of all People, the Roman Catholicks were right, for (said I) they take the most Pains of any People I know ; and if Salvation is of Works (as I then thought it was) no Sett of People whatsoever has so good a Right to the Kingdom of Heaven as they. One

One Day I had got a little Book called *the Life of God in the Soul of Man*, and was reading in it when a Minister of the *established Church* came in, to whom I shewed the Book, asking him, *if he had ever seen it*. He took it and read the Title-Page, and gave it me back, *saying it was an enthusiastical Thing*. I own I was startled at what he said, tho' I did not well understand what the Term *Enthusiastical* meant, but thought it was something bad. I had found some Sweetness in reading the Book before, and thought it one of the best Books I had ever read ; but now I believed the Comfort I had received in reading it might be a Delusion, especially when I considered how a learned Minister had slighted it, and called it an *enthusiastical Thing*. Many disturbing Thoughts passed over my Mind about what the Minister said, because I thought he was learned, so could not be deceived ; nor was I eas'd till the Lord brought these Scriptures to my Mind, *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, &c.*

Scarce was I eas'd of the Trouble I had on Account of this, but I grew very uneasy on another Affair which had long been some Trouble to me, and that was because I had never been confirmed ; and after I had been burden'd a great while with this Temptation, I went to *Coven Garden Church* and was confirmed, but was nothing the better, but rather grew worse ; then I received the Sacrament, and as soon as I had so done, thought, *sure I have eat and drank my own Damnation, not discerning the Lord's Body*. So was I again hurried, that I wished God would let me alone and have nothing to do with me for ever ; and fearing now I should live

to a very great Age, gave me much Uneasiness, and made me often cry, *would to God I was hid in the silent Grave, and my Name blotted out of the Book of his Remembrance.*

Having much Time on my Hands, I thought if I had some constant Employment I should be more settled and composed in Mind. Accordingly I hired a House, fitted up a Shop, so was got into the Affairs of the World, but the Lord would not suffer me to stay there long ere I was in some Measure sensible of my Chains, which made me cry to the Lord for Deliverance, and he heard me in the Time of Trouble, and remarkably helped me out of my Distress ; so I left my House, sold my Things, got a private Lodging, and was determined to wait the Lord's Leisure, and see what he would do with me.

So I now had much Time again upon my Hands, and knew not how to employ myself, but was tempted to go into the Service of my old Master the Devil as formerly, by playing at Cards, keeping of Company, and had strong Inclinations to contract an Intimacy with two common Women ; yet tho' I often sinned with them in my Heart, the Lord Jesus, by his preventing Grace, did from this Time keep me from falling into any actual Sins in that Way.

One Day as I was visiting some Acquaintance, a Gentlewoman came in whom I had never seen before, who hearing me drop some Words of Scripture in my Discourse, look'd on me very contemptuously, and asked me *if I had ever heard Mr. Whitefield ?* I said, *yes, several Times.* She answered in Anger, *I suppose you are one of his Followers,* and, said she, *his Doctrine is wicked Doctrine.* I answered, *Madam, it don't signify who we follow so we do but follow our Lord Jesus Christ,*
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but pray *Madam* (said I) *did you ever hear Mr. Whitefield?* No (said she) *I never go to hear any of them for fear I should like them:* This is (I fear) the Case of too many in the World, they speak Evil of they know not what (as I myself had done) and are afraid to hear for themselves, lest they should be convinced, and so become self-denying Disciples with them, of a self-denying Lord: However, in our Discourse I found my Heart warmed with more than human Love toward this despised Minister of Christ, and could not but count him happy in that he was so reproached and spoken evil of for his Master's Sake, and at the Close of our Discourse under some particular Refreshment of Soul, I then took my Leave of the Company and the Gentlewoman with saying, *well Madam, if God doth not require so much of his Creatures as these Ministers teach, they who believe their Doctrine are right, but if the Lord doth require it at our Hands, what will become of you and I? &c.*

Soon after I was gone home to my Lodging, it came to my Mind that I had heard of a Place built somewhere near *Moorfields*, where the Methodists preached every Sunday Morning at six o'Clock; this was the whole Account I had, for I had not seen nor heard Mr. *Whitefield* for near two Years. Well, thought I, next Sunday I will go and see if I can find the Place; accordingly when the Morning came, I went to *Moorfields*, and by following the Crouds of People, I came to a Gate where a Man stood who seem'd serious; I asked him very softly (for I was always afraid any Body should hear me ask a Question about those People) *What Place that was within there?* he answer'd me very roughly, *I suppose* (said he) *you know what Place it is without asking; it is Whitefield's Tabernacle.* His Way of answer-
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ing cut me to the Heart, fluttered me, and made me think if I had not found it I would have asked no more after it, but in I went, and soon I heard the People (whispering) say, *here he comes*. I began now to be much pleased, and looked towards the Pulpit to see my favorite Mr. *Whitefield* (in his Gown) appear ; but instead of him I saw a young Man (Mr. *Cennick*) stand up in the Place of the Preacher without a Gown, at which my Anger arose, and I thought what doth that little insignificant Thing do there. I was indeed as much displeased at his Person, as I was before pleased to find the Place, however I thought, since I was there, I would stay to hear what the Youth had to say ; I stayed accordingly, and before he had done his Prayer my Heart was amazingly affected and drawn towards him, saying to God, *Lord, whom hast thou raised up, surely with thee there is no Respect of Persons*. He preached that Morning on the Cleansing of *Naaman*, and spiritualized all the History, and then invited poor leprous Sinners to wash in the River of the Blood of *Jesus*, and make them clean. As he preached, I was astonished, and thought he was to my Soul, as the little Maid that waited on *Naaman's* Wife, who told *Naaman* there was a Prophet in *Israel* who would cure him of his Leprosy ; I now felt indeed the Want of that *one Thing needful*, the Blood of a crucified Saviour to be applied to my Soul, to wash away the Burden of Sins which weighed me down : And when I cast my Eyes round the Place, and saw it not adorned like other Places of Worship in which I had so delighted, a Thought came into my Mind that this Scripture was to be fulfilled, which had long lain on my Mind, *try all Things, hold fast to that which is good* : I think, I then departed full of Love to the Messenger for Christ's Sake.

I cried now to the Lord to let this be the Person which I had so long prayed for as a Companion to comfort my troubled Soul ; neither was I out of Hope, but it would be so, but how it could be brought about I knew not.

From the Time I heard him, I was more and more awakened ; I found many Temptations to despair of Mercy, to be impatient, &c. Tho' now might it be said of me, as once of *Paul*, *Behold he prayeth*. I began to wrestle with the Lord for Faith that I might come to the *Jordan* of *Christ's* Blood, and wash my leprous Soul : I now, and not till now, truly saw my own Wretchedness and Poverty, and the great Want I had of the Merits of *Jesus Christ*. I found nothing now but God could do me any Good ; one Deep truly cried to another ; for in the Depth of Misery did I cry to the Depth of *Christ's* Merits and Mercy. My Wants increased continually more and more, for I saw the Need of a better Saviour than all my own Prayers, Fastings, Cries and Tears could make me : *But O (said I) surely I shall never see the Lord in the Land of the Living.*

In the Midst of these Tossings, at Times, it came into my Mind, that may be the Lord would pardon me for *Jesus's* Sake, and had a Mind to be gracious, because he did not cut me down. What, thought I, can be the Reason God spares me, for sure I am, that I am ripe for Destruction ; never one went down to Hell that deserved Damnation more than I. Who knows (tho't I) but I may be saved. Yet often under the Word my Knees would knock together, and my Flesh and Bones trembled exceedingly, lest I should be made a living Monument of God's Wrath ; and when I remembered *Lot's* Wife, I thought in my Heart, ah, like her have I looked back again and again after cursed Sin, which
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hath offended God & set me at so great a Distance from his Mercies in *Christ Jesus*; yet was I resolved to look towards his Temple, and abide close in hearing the Word preached, and thought if I perish, I will perish here in the Way of Means.

But as I came out of the Tabernacle one Morning, a Gentlewoman (to whom I was an entire Stranger) came up to me, and asked *if I had ever heard how this young Gentleman came into the Ministry?* I said, *No, I knew nothing of him*: She then offered to lend me a Book wherein (if I would read) I might see the Dealings of God with his Soul; I refused at first to take the Book, saying, *I fear I shall not know you again to return it*, but she insisted on my taking it, with saying, that she should know me again; at last I was prevailed on to accept of her Kindness, so thanking her, I parted and went home. The Book was Mr. Cennick's first Volume of Hymns, the Preface of which is his Experience. As soon as I was at my Lodgings I began reading, but not without Multitudes of Tears, well knowing he had not been unsensible of the Load of Chains wherewith my Soul was bound, nor of the Miseries and Convictions I laboured under. I laid me down on the Bed with a Design to read it thro', if my Grief (which was very great) would permit me, but when I came to the Place where he speaks of drinking the Dregs of the bitter Cup, I could read no more for Tears; I thought my Heart would have burst with Sighs and Sobs, my Soul was in an Agony for sometime, and when I was recovered, I could not help thinking, *I shall never be born again, alas! alas! I shall never see the Kingdom of God*. And as I thus lay bemoaning myself, those Words came with Power to my Mind, *Will God bring to the Birth and not give Strength*

Strength to bring forth ; Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but God's Word shall not. Many such like Passages of Scripture darted into my Thoughts, but I was hindred from receiving any Comfort from them through Unbelief, which made me wring my Hands and smite on my Breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a Sinner, for except thou savest me freely out of thine abundant Love and Mercy, I am damned to all Eternity.*

In this miserable State was I groaning and crying, *was ever Sorrow like my Sorrow wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the Day of his fierce Anger,* and in this Confusion of Soul I begged the Lord to find out a Way for me to come to the Author of this Book whom I found had been tempted in many Things like unto myself, & I at Times did think the Lord would grant me this Request, if he spared me much longer, which again I much doubted, for I thought that I felt the Fore-taste of eternal Torments in my Soul, and cared not how soon my Dissolution came on ; but the Thoughts of coming to Judgment, and beholding him whom I had so pierced, was still worse than all ; but still I found my Heart inexpressibly drawn towards Mr. Cennick, and my Soul knit to him as *Jonathan's* was to *David*. In a few Days after I received an Answer from him, of a Letter I had wrote to him ; in his, he kindly invited me to come and see him, but yet I went not for some Time through Temptations, that it would only add to my Condemnation to converse with a Servant of the Lord : But now the Time of my Deliverance drew near when I least expected it : Surely I have great Reason to say, the Lord was found of me when I sought him not, and at a Time when I looked not for him.

A few Nights after I had received Mr. Cennick's Letter, I was reading in the 18th Chapter of St. John, about Judas betraying the Lord Jesus, which much affected me, and set me upon praying earnestly : But as I read on, these Words shock'd me very much, *Of them whom thou gavest me have I lost none, &c.* I let fall the Book, and prayed to the Lord to shew me if I was one of those given to Christ, of which none should be lost : and while, like Jacob, I was wrestling, like Israel I prevailed ; for these Words came to me from the Lord, *He that believeth on me hath everlasting Life* : I cried then *Lord help, O help my Unbelief*, and as bewailing my Unbelief, the holy Ghost brought to my Remembrance those Words, *He hath included all in Unbelief, that he might have Mercy upon all, and whosoever call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved.* I laid hold then on the Promise, and believed Salvation was not of Works but of Mercy, even the free Gift of God ; and at the same Time I saw clearly, that God had pardoned my Unbelief, and washed away all my Sins and Iniquities in the Fountain of Christ's Blood, which is open for Sin and for Uncleanness.

In that Night did I receive the white Stone, and the new Name which none know saving he that receiveth it, namely, the Witness of God's Spirit with my Spirit, that I was born of God. I believed now that Christ came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners, such as me, to Repentance, and that I was one of the lost Sheep he came to seek and save, and for whom he laid down his Life ; at the same Time God bearing Witness, that he had loved me with an everlasting Love ; and therefore with loving Kindness had he drawn me. The Remainder of that blessed Night, I slept as on the Lord's Bosom,

Bosom, and when I awoke in the Morning he was present with me. I found the Day-Star was risen in my Heart, and the Sun of Righteousness shone on me with Healing in his Wings.

Some Days after I went to see Mr. Cennick, who received me very kindly, and asked me of the State of my Soul, (a Question that had never been put to me before by any Minister :) I told him but little then of God's Dealing with me, because he had little Time, being just going to preach ; but at other Times I enjoyed sweet Seasons in his Company in public, and when alone, I truly walked in the Mount with God in the Comforts of the holy Ghost, saying, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.*

After several Weeks, the Enemy (who seldom permits the Redeemed of the Lord to be long without troubling them) again attacked me one Night, and tempted me to question the Divinity of my Saviour ; for a Time I staggered, and was much distressed with reasoning Thoughts ; but I was enabled to lay all the Temptation and my Concern before the Lord, who directed me to that Portion of the Prophet Zachariak's Prophecy, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee : Is not this a Brand pluck'd out of the Fire ?* The Lord by this strengthened me, and the Devil fled and left me for a Season ; and the Lord fulfilled his Word which saith, *Call upon me in Time of Trouble, and I will hear thee and deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me ;* he was pleased to give fresh Evidences of this, that my Redemption was wrought out by the Blood, Wounds and Sufferings of the slaughter'd Lamb, who is God blessed for evermore, *Amen.*

After this did I enjoy sweet and close Communion with my Saviour in Prayer and Meditation ; nor was I left to doubt of his Love, though Clouds often interposed, and as it were eclipsed the bright Beams of his Glory for a while ; I conversed with my Beloved by Day, and dreamed of him at Night, and waked with Praise or Prayer in the Morning ; neither to this Day have I been left to question my Interest in the Salvation of God, but rest on the Promises, and believe that, *whom he loves, he loves to the End.* I being fully persuaded that as long as God is, my everlasting Happiness is secure in him, and *when Christ, who is my Life, shall appear, I also shall appear with him in Glory, and know him even as I am known of him.*

Some Time after, I was with Mr. Cennick in *Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Kingswood, Bristol, and Wales, &c.* By this and other Means I became acquainted with many of the Sons and Daughters of God, in whose Company the Lord often shed abroad his Love in my Heart, and with Astonishment I was made to cry out, *Why me, Lord, why me, thus highly favoured and distinguished, that am the most undeserving of the least Crumb that falls from thy Table ?* The Lord gave me to know, that he would have Mercy on whom he would have Mercy : And I am confident of this very Thing, that he which has begun a good Work in me will carry it on, and will finish it in the Day of the *Lord Jesus Christ* ; knowing in whom I have believed, I am persuaded he will keep that which I have committed unto him, even my own Soul, and that nothing is able to pluck it out of his Hands.

Thus far, to the best of my Knowledge, have I declared, (amongst the many) some of the great Things which God has done for my Soul, and now wait I for the

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the same Spirit to teach, lead and direct me, believing that all Things which the Lord hath promised shall come to pass, and that when I have done the Work for which I am sent, I shall be called home to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, dressed in the *Wedding Garment*, my elder Brother's Clothing, the Righteousness of Christ, with a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give in that Day ; wherefore I call Heaven and Earth to record this Day, that I give up my self to be the Lord's, and subscribe with my own Hand to the Name of *Jesus*.

J. EDWARDS.



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I will tell of all his wonderous Works.

WHILE others round me tell how they
Have found the *new and living Way*,
I, highly favour'd, tell the same ;
And blaze the Mercy to his Fame.

I am the Man, who lately was
An Enemy to J E S U 's Crofs ;
A Stranger to the Life of G O D !
His Pow'r, his Mercy, and his Blood.

Long did I roam (when wak'd) to find
A Rest for my disorder'd Mind :
For Righteousness by Works I sought,
And labour'd hard, but found it not.

In this sad State, the *Lamb* once slain,
Beheld me, and perceiv'd my Pain :
Kindly he call'd me, *Come and see,*
And find thy Righteousness in me.

Believe (my dear Redeemer said)
Eternal Life shall your's be made ;
My Soul believ'd, and found his Blood,
Breath Pardon from the Throne of G O D ;

To

To others now I recommend,
 The Merits of the *Sinner's Friend* ;
 Draw near to him, ye sinful Race,
 And try his Blood, and prove his Grace,

Ye (who in vain) have Peace desir'd,
 Who long have strove, and now are tir'd ;
Behold the Lamb ! and him you'll bless
 Our Peace, and Joy, and Righteousness,

F I N I S.

