

Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.

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VOL. I.]

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[No. 6.

ON SIN.

SIN radically consists in partial affection in a being capable of knowing God ; or rather, in his loving the creature more than the Creator. This affection of heart is, in its nature, hostile to the universe, and involves in itself every thing that is vile and base ; it is most unjust, it is against reason and the fitness of things ; and the subject of it must of necessity be opposed by the universe, as its enemy ; and if the interest of the whole is more important than the interest of a part, such opposition is fit and reasonable.

Whatever be the cause of sin, its nature will be the same ; enmity to being ; opposition to the general good. But as sinful man, in order to justify himself, is disposed to cast all the blame of sin on its cause, and so ultimately on God the first cause ; let us see, for a moment, whether there is any evidence that the cause of sin is to blame.

To the question what is the cause of sin, if it have a positive cause, the answer must be, God, or, the sinner himself, is the cause. That the sinner himself is the prop-

er efficient cause of his own sinful nature and exercises it might be hard to shew ; but suppose it were admitted, that he might be the cause of his sinful exercises, he must certainly be so by his own act ; but it would not follow that the producing act must be a sinful act, or if, in a given case, it should be, it would not follow, that its sinfulness is necessary to the sinfulness of the effect. To instance in the first sin that existed : The question is, what was its cause ? And the answer, on the present supposition is, the act of the sinner : But certainly the act causing the first sin, being prior to it, and the ground of it, could not be a sinful act, because to suppose this would be to suppose sin existed before the first sin. It is clear then, that the first sin was not produced by a blameable cause in the sinner ; consequently, all the blame of the first sin lay in its nature, and not at all in its cause, if, as is now supposed, the sinner himself be the cause. But if the blame of any one sin may be wholly in its nature, and not at all in its cause, this may also be true of all sin ; an attempt therefore to cast the blame of any sin

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the face of things is surprisngly altered—the former desolations are happily repaired. The revival has been connected with a spirit of union, and a very remarkable reformation of manners.

Among a small tribe of Indians, at a place called Cold Spring, about 12 miles west of us, under the care of Paul, an Indian minister, there has also of late been a great awakening; and it continues in a good measure still. Also at Huntington and Southold there have been, and are at present very promising appearances of special religious attention. May this good and glorious work go on and prosper. Verily when the Lord builds up Zion, he appears in his glory.

I am, with much respect,

Yours, &c.

AARON WOOLWORTH.
Bridgehampton,* (L. I.) }
July 15, 1800. }

LETTER X.

From the Rev. EDWARD D. GRIFFIN of New-Hartford.

GENTLEMEN,

NOT having expected that an account of the late work of God among us would be called for, I have not been careful to charge my mind with particulars. Many impressive circumstances, which, had they stood alone, would not have been soon forgotten, have given place to others, which in their turn arrested and engrossed the attention. A succinct and general account shall however be attempted.

* Although this place is not in New-England, yet as it is in the vicinity, and as the work of God there was coincident in time with that in New-England, the Editors have thought proper to insert the account of it in this place.

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The work of divine grace among us, three years ago, by which nearly fifty persons were hopefully added to the Lord, had not wholly ceased to produce effects on the people generally, when the late scene of mercy and wonder commenced. In the interval, several were, in the judgment of charity, “created a new in Christ Jesus unto good works.” It is not known however that any thing took place in the summer of 1798, which had immediate connection with the present work, unless it were some trying conflicts in a number of praying minds, which appeared to humble and prepare them for the blessings and duties of the ensuing winter.

Late in October 1798, the people frequently hearing of the displays of divine grace in West-Symsbury, were increasingly impressed with the information. Our conferences soon became more crowded and feeling. Serious people began to break their minds to each other; and it was discovered (so far were present impressions from being the effect of mere sympathy) that there had been, for a considerable time, in their minds special desires for the revival of religion; while each one, unapprized of his neighbour's feelings, had supposed his exercises peculiar to himself. It was soon agreed to institute a secret meeting for the express purpose of praying for effusions of the spirit; which was the scene of such wrestlings as are not, it is apprehended, commonly experienced. Several circumstances conspired to increase our anxiety. The glorious work had already begun in Torrington; and the cloud appeared to be going all around us. It seemed as though providence, by avoiding us, designed to bring to remembrance our

past abuses of his grace. Besides, having been so recently visited with distinguishing favors, we dared not allow ourselves to expect a repetition of them so soon; and we began to apprehend it was the purpose of Him whom we had lately grieved from among us, that we should, for penalty, stand alone parched up in sight of surrounding showers. We considered what must be the probable fate of the *risen* generation if we were to see no more of "the days that were past" for a number of years, and the apprehension that we might not, caused sensations more easily felt than described.

This was the state of the people when, on a sabbath in the month of November, it was the sovereign pleasure of a most merciful God very sensibly to manifest himself in the public assembly. Many abiding impressions were made on minds seemingly the least susceptible, and on several grown old in unbelief. From that memorable day the flame which had been kindling in secret, broke out. By desire of the people, religious conferences were set up in different parts of the town, which continued to be attended by deeply affected crowds; and in which divine presence and power were manifested to a degree which we had never before witnessed. It is not meant that they were marked with out-cries, distortions of body, or any symptoms of intemperate zeal; but only that the power of divine truth made deep impression on the assemblies. You might often see a congregation sit with deep solemnity depicted in their countenances, without observing a tear or sob during the service. This last observation is not made with design to cast odium on such natural expressions of a wounded spirit. But the case was so with us that

most of those who were exercised, were often too deeply impressed to weep. Addresses to the passions, now no longer necessary since the attention was engaged, were avoided; and the aim was to come at the conscience. Little terror was preached, except what is implied in the doctrines—of the entire depravity of the carnal heart—its enmity against God—its deceitful doublings and attempts to avoid the soul-humbling terms of the gospel—the radical defects of the doings of the unregenerate, and the sovereignty of God, in the dispensations of his grace. The more clearly these and other kindred doctrines were displayed and understood, the more were convictions promoted. By convictions is meant those views and feelings which are caused by uncovered truth, and the influences of the Spirit, antecedently to conversion.

The order and progress of these convictions were pretty much as follows. The subjects of them were brought to feel that they were transgressors, yet not that they were totally sinful. As their convictions increased, they were constrained to acknowledge their destitution of love to God; but yet they thought they had no enmity against him. At length they would come to see that such enmity filled their hearts. This was particularly exemplified in a certain house, in which were two persons exercised in mind. One appeared to have a clear sense of this enmity, and wondered how she could have been ignorant of it so long. The other was sensible that she possessed none of that love to God which the law required, but could not believe that she entertained such enmity as filled the other with so much remorse and anguish. A few days afterwards, seeing a friend to whom she had

expressed this sentiment, she was anxious to let him know her mistake, and informed him she had discovered that she "hated God with all her heart."

In the first stages of conviction, it was not easy for the subjects to realize their desert of eternal death. But afterwards, even while they gave decisive evidence of being still as devoid of a right temper as those wretches whose mouths will be stopt by the light of the last day, their conviction of this desert was, in many instances, very clear. Nevertheless, even to the last, their hearts would recoil at the thought of being in God's hands, and would rise against him for having reserved it to himself to decide whether to sanctify and pardon them or not. Though the display of this doctrine had the most powerful tendency to strip them of all hopes from themselves, and to bring them to the feet of sovereign grace; yet as it thus sapped the foundation on which they rested, their feelings were excited against it. There was a man who, having been well indoctrinated, had for many years advocated this truth; who notwithstanding, when he came to be concerned about his salvation and to apply this truth to his own case, was much displeased with it. He was at times quite agitated by a warfare between his understanding and heart; the former assenting to the truth, the latter resisting it. He said it depended on God and not on himself, whether he ever should comply with the gospel; and for God to withhold his influences, and then punish him for not possessing the temper which these influences alone could produce, appeared to him hard. Before conviction had become deep and powerful, many attempted to exculpate them-

selves with this plea of inability, and like their ancestor, to cast the blame upon God, by pleading, "The nature which he gave me, beguiled me." This was the enemy's strong hold. All who were a little more thoughtful than common, but not thoroughly convicted, would, upon the first attack, flee to this refuge. "They would be glad to repent, but *could not*; their *nature* and *heart* were so bad;" As though their nature and heart were not *they themselves*. But the progress of conviction in general soon removed this "refuge of lies," and filled them with a sense of utter inexcuseableness. And in every case, as soon as their enemy was slain this plea wholly vanished, their language immediately became, "I wonder, I ever should ask the question, *How can I repent?* My only wonder now is *that I could hold out so long.*"

It was not uncommon for the hearts of the convicted, as they rose against God, to rise also against his ministers. Several who had not betrayed their feelings in the season of them, afterwards confessed that such resentments had arisen. In some instances, the emotions were plainly discoverable, and in one, particularly, the subject was so incensed as to break out in bitter expressions, but a few hours before being relieved from the anguish of a deeply troubled spirit. Such things seemed to be satisfying evidence that mere conviction no more meliorates the heart in *this*, than in the *other* world; but serves rather to draw out its corruptions into still stronger exercise. It may be suitable to add that these fallies of resentment were occasioned by the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel closely and affectionately applied to the conscience.

As soon as the heart of stone was removed and a heart of flesh given, the subjects of this happy change exhibited sentiments and feelings widely different from those above described. They were now wrapt up in admiration of the laws and absolute government of God, which had before been the objects of so much cavil and disgust. Notwithstanding the extreme deficiency and danger which attend the detail of individual cases, it may on the whole, it is hoped, be more useful than injurious to confirm and illustrate the observation just now advanced by some particular relations.

There was a man, who, for a number of years, had entertained hope of his personal interest in the covenant; and being of inoffensive behaviour, had given people no other special ground to distrust him than his opposition to divine sovereignty, and disgust (which he now believes arose from a self-righteous temper) at the doctrine that God has no regard for the doings of the unregenerate. He thought the impenitent were thus too much discouraged from making their own exertions. Emboldened by a favorable opinion of his state, he offered himself sometime ago for communion with the church. And because he could not assent to their confession of faith, he petitioned to have several articles struck out, particularly the one which asserts the doctrine of election. The church did not consent, and he withdrew. But so exquisitely was his sensibility touched, that he had it in serious consideration to dispose of his property, and remove to some place where he might enjoy gospel ordinances. It pleased God, the last winter, to convince him that his "feet stood on slippery places;" and after a scene

of distressing conviction, his mind was composed in view of those very truths which had been the objects of his opposition. Since then, he has publicly manifested his belief in the articles adopted by the church, and has been received by them, to the "furtherance" of their "joy of faith" and "comfort of love."

Another might be mentioned who was equally opposed to the essential truths of revelation. Having the care of a school in town last winter, he was required by the inspectors to subscribe to the belief, "That the *general system* of doctrines taught in the assembly's catechism, is agreeable to the word of God." He could not comply, on the ground that the catechism asserts "God hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass." The inspectors loth to lose him, endeavoured to convince him. But this clause appeared to him so exceptionable that he persisted in declining, and would have left his school rather than comply, had he not at last discovered that the phrase, "*general system*" would leave him room after subscribing, to withhold his assent to the offensive article. Soon after this, his conscience was seized by the convincing power of truth, a great revolution was produced in his views and feelings, and he has since professed to be filled with admiration of a government planned by eternal wisdom, and administered by unerring rectitude.

It might perhaps not be unsuitable to mention the case of a man upward of 70 years of age; who, belonging to the lowest class of society, and living in a very retired place, was extremely illiterate, and had little intercourse with the world; yet was possessed of a strong mind and malignant passions.

Having conceived a strong disgust at some of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, he had given his word that he would hear them no more. Because his wife had united with the church, and attended public worship, he rendered her life very uncomfortable. On which subject I went to converse with him, last summer; and am certain I never saw a case in which so much deliberate rancor and deadly hatred were expressed against every thing sacred, against the essential truths of revelation, and against the ministers and church of Christ in general. In the expression both of his countenance and lips he approximated the nearest to my ideas of "the spirits in prison" of any person I ever beheld. His enmity was not awakened to sudden rage, (for my treatment aimed at being conciliatory,) but seemed deep rooted and implacable. His resolution of keeping from public worship, he pertinaciously adhered to: Nor had he any connection with the conferences during the first period of the awakening. Yet as disconnected as he was from all religious society and the means of grace, it pleased God, late in the winter, to take strong hold of his mind. He continued for a while trembling in retirement; but when he could contain no longer, he came out to find the conferences, and to seek some experienced Christians to whom he might lay open his distress. Being called out of town about this time, I did not see him in this condition; and when I saw him next, he was, in appearance, "clothed and in his right mind." Enquiry being made respecting his apprehensions of those doctrines which had been so offensive, he replied, "They are the foundation of the world." Every air seemed changed. Soft-

ness and gentleness had taken the place of native ferocity, and the man appeared tamed. I could not help reflecting that a religion which will make such changes in the tempers and manners of men is a religion worth possessing. An awakening which produces such effects will not be censured by the friends of human happiness.

It would not consist with the designed brevity of this narration, nor yet perhaps with propriety, to detail all the interesting circumstances in the experiences of more than a hundred persons, who appear to have been the subjects of this work. It may however be not unuseful to go so far into particulars as to exhibit some of the distinguishing fruits of it. The subjects of it have generally expressed a choice that God should pursue the "determinate counsel" of his own will, and without consulting them, decide respecting their salvation. To the question whether they expected to alter the divine mind by prayer, it has been answered, "I sometimes think, if this were possible I should not dare to pray." When asked what was the first thing which composed their anxious minds, they have sometimes answered, "The thought that I was in the hands of God. It seems to me that whatever becomes of me, whether I live or die, I cannot bear to be out of his hands." Many have expressed a willingness to put their names to a blank, and leave it with God to fill it up; and *that*, because his having the government would secure the termination of all things in his own glory.

They do not found their hopes on the suggestion of scripture passages to their minds, on dreams, or seeing sights, or hearing voices, or on blind unaccountable impulses.

but on the persuasion that they have discovered in themselves the exercises of love to God and man, originating not in selfishness.—When asked what they had discovered in God to engage their affections, they have sometimes answered, “I think I love him because he hates sin—because he hates my sins.” They frequently have declared that God appeared altogether more glorious to them for being sin-hating and sin-avenging; that they were willing he should abide by his determination not to have mercy on them or their friends, if they would not repent and believe the gospel. One observed in confidence to a friend, and without the appearance of ostentation, that she had been so taken up all day in rejoicing in God’s perfections and the certain accomplishment of his glory, that she had scarcely thought of what would be her own destiny; that she must believe she reckoned more of his glory and the public good than of her own happiness. Some declared that if they could have their choice, either to live a life of religion and poverty, or revel in the pleasures of the world, unmolested by conscience or fear, and at last be converted on a dying bed, and be as happy hereafter as if they had made the other choice, they should prefer the former; and *that*, for the glory of God, and not merely for the happiness which the prospects of future glory would daily afford: for they believed their choice would be the same, though in certain expectation that fears and conflicts would render a religious life less happy than a life of sensuality. Their predominant desire still appears to be that God may be glorified, and that they may render him voluntary glory in a life of obedience, and

may enjoy him in a life of communion with him. A prospect of the full attainment of these ends is what appears to render the heavenly state the object of their eager desire. Their admiration of Jesus Christ seems most excited by his zeal to support his Father’s law—a law, the glories of which they appear distinctly, though imperfectly, to apprehend. The bible is to them a new book. Prayer seems their delight. Their hearts are peculiarly united to the people of God. But the most observable part of their character is a lovely appearance of meekness and humility. Little of that presumptuous confidence too much of which has sometimes appeared in young professors, is observable in them. Accordingly they have not that uninterrupted elevation of spirits which in the inexperienced is generally bottomed on comparative ignorance of remaining corruption, and overrating their attainments. Accustomed to discriminate between true and false affections, they appear not to set to their account so much of the “wood, hay and stubble” as perhaps some have done. By reason of the views they have had of the deceitfulness of their hearts, and the comparison and examination they have made to discover how near in appearance false religion lies to the true, they have great diffidence and distrust of themselves. A sense of their ill desert abides and increases upon them after apparent renovation; a considerable time posterior to which, some have been heard to say, “I never had an idea what a heart I had ’till this week.” Each one seems to apprehend his own depravity to be the greatest. They appear not to be calculating to bring God into debt by their new obedience. A

person not greatly indoctrinated, but lovely in the charms of child-like simplicity, was heard to say, "I will tell you, Sir, what appears to me would be *exactly right*. It would be exactly right for me to live 30 or 40 years in the world without ever sinning again, and be serving God all the time; and then it would be just right for me to be sent to hell for what I have already done." The hopeful subjects of the work as yet exhibit "fruits meet for repentance."—Some we have had opportunity to see under the pressure of heavy afflictions; who have seemed calmly to acquiesce in the dispensations of Providence.

In giving the foregoing description, special care has been taken not to paint an ideal image of what they *ought to be*, but scrupulously to delineate the views and exercises which they have really expressed. In these views and exercises they have however circumstantially differed; some having been first and chiefly affected with the beauty of the divine law; others, with the glories and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ; others, with the divine perfections generally; others, and perhaps the greatest number, with the fitness of divine sovereignty. Some have been for a great while, others, a much shorter time, under trouble of mind. One man, in advanced life, who had lately been only a little more thoughtful than common, in this state retired to rest, and was suddenly seized with powerful and very distinct convictions of truth, and in the judgment of charity, almost immediately passed to uncommonly clear exercises of love to God and his kingdom.

With the gift of grace, some have received an uncommon gift of prayer. A man who formerly had

not been disposed to give much credit to religion, falling into a conference of young people one evening, and hearing a prayer made by an illiterate youth, was much surprised and even convinced; and afterwards observed that he was satisfied such a prayer could not, a few months before, have possibly dropt from those lips.

It is believed that the outlines of this narration equally describe the features and fruits of this extensive, (and may we not add, genuine, and remarkably pure) work, in at least 50 or 60 adjacent congregations. It is proposed shortly to give you a more entire picture of it, as it relates to this place; till then.

I am, &c.

E. D. GRIFFIN.

New-Hartford, Aug. 1800.

Memoirs of Mrs. MERCY BURTON, consort of the Rev. Asa Burton, of Thetford, Vermont, who died June 15, 1800, Ætat 48.

MRS. BURTON was born in North-Preston, in Connecticut. She was daughter of Mr. Stephen Burton. She was married to the Rev. Asa Burton, August 25, 1778. She was the mother of two children, who both died young.* At the age of *Twenty-three*, she was hopefully renewed in the spirit of her mind, and united herself with the church.

She possessed a discerning mind; which she early cultivated by reading. After she appeared to become a subject of saving knowledge, she gave herself to the study of the scriptures, and of other books which were calculated to en-

* These children were daughters; their names were *Lucena* and *Polly*. The first of these died August 3, 1796, Ætat 7. The last, September 15, 1797, Ætat 17.

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Vol. I.]

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[No. 7.

A REVIEW of times past, and contemplations on future prospects, humbly attempted for general instruction, and to excite useful and pious meditations, at the commencement of the new year and century: or, the Editors' NEW YEARS' GIFT, to their generous readers.

TIME is most intimately connected with eternity. Solemn thought! It is pregnant with all its joys, and with all its woe. Time will finish the whole mystery of God, and all the works of men. Time will prepare all the vessels of mercy for glory, and all the vessels of wrath for destruction, and seal up all the living to eternal life or death. The manner in which every portion of it has been spent, every action, word and thought, affection and desire of each particular period of time, and of its whole duration, will come under a most solemn and impartial review, at the end; and have an important influence in the final doom, eternal life or death of all the living. In this view, of what solemn moment is it, that all time should be well spent; and that we wisely review our days and years

as they pass? That we recount the mercies, the corrections, the great and various events of the several periods of our lives, and our conduct in each of them? May we not, with a pious pleasure, contemplate the promises and prophecies which have been accomplished, and those which are rapidly fulfilling and the progress which is making in the work of redemption? The changes which a short time makes in individuals, in families, in kingdoms, in the church of God, in the natural and moral state of the world? Will not contemplations like these, awake our gratitude, increase our faith, excite our diligence, watchfulness and activity? How naturally and cogently does the interesting period to which we are arrived, at the close of another year, and of the eighteenth century, and at the commencement of a new year, and new century, invite and press us to these contemplations?

Every year is productive of events solemn, vast and wonderful. It terminates the lives of millions, and, like an irresistible current, bears on the dying children of men to the grave, to judgment and eter-

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LETTER XI.

Second letter from the Rev. EDWARD D. GRIFFIN of New-Hartford.

GENTLEMEN,

IN pursuance of the design suggested in the close of my last, the narration, which was then left unfinished, will now be resumed.

The late attention of our State Legislature to schools has led the way to important benefits to children, as well in this, as in many other towns. In consequence of the new arrangements, school-masters of serious minds have been employed, who have entered in earnest upon instructing the children in the principles of religion, and praying with them. The effect has been, that many schools have been awakened, and as we have good reason to conclude, have received lasting benefits. Three of the schools in this town were last winter under the care of men professedly pious, and very faithful in imparting these instructions. Out of these, nearly twenty children, in the course of the winter, it is hoped, were introduced into "marvellous light." The knowledge possessed by such as we hope have been savingly enlightened by the divine spirit, is worthy of particular observation. Important ideas and distinctions which it has been attempted in vain to give to others of their age, appear familiar to them. One lad in particular, in a certain interview which was had with him, discriminated between true and false affections, and stated the grounds of his hopes and fears in a manner very surprising and affecting. It was the more so, because the evening before an attempt had been made with children of the same age and neighbor-

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hood, and of equal abilities and opportunity; and it had seemed like "plowing on a rock;" inasmuch that the hope was almost relinquished of ever being able to introduce discriminating ideas into minds so young. It would be ungrateful not to acknowledge that in a remarkable manner it hath pleased the Most High "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings to perfect praise."

It is hoped that about fifty heads of families have been the subjects of this work; a considerable part of whom rank among the most respectable and influential characters in the town. This however gives the young no just encouragement to hazard their salvation on the chance of being called in "at the eleventh hour." Had they seen the anguish of some of these for neglecting so long the great business of life, it might discourage such neglect in them. Penetrated with remorse for the waste of life, and for the lax examples by which they supposed they had corrupted others, they seemed to conclude it was probably too late for them to find mercy; yet were anxious to disburden their conscience of one torment, by solemnly warning the youth not to follow their steps. "We are soon going, said they, to receive the reward of wasted life; and we warn you to proceed no further in search of a more convenient time to prepare for death. We have been over the ground between you and us, and this 'more convenient season' does not lie before you. O that we could be placed back to your age, for then we might have hope. If you did but know and feel as we do the value of youth, you would surely better improve it." In language of this import have they been frequently heard to vent themselves,

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while despair and anguish seemed settled on every feature; all which, united, produced sensations in the affected hearers not easily described.

The power of the almighty spirit has prostrated the stoutness of a considerable number, who were the last that human expectation would have fixed on to be the subjects of such a change. One man who lives at a distance from the sanctuary, and who perhaps seldom, if ever, visited it in his life; and who, as might be expected, was extremely ignorant and stupid; has been visited in his own house, and in the view of charity, bro't into the kingdom. His heart seems now for the first time to be towards the sanctuary, though ill health prevents him from enjoying the blessings and privileges of it. Another old man, in the same neighborhood, who had not been into our house of worship, and probably not into any other, for more than twenty years, has been arrested, in his retirement, by the divine spirit, and still remains "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest."

It has been a remarkable season for the destruction of false hopes. Nearly twenty of those who have lately appeared to build "on the rock" have been plucked off from the sandy foundation. As a caution to others, it may perhaps not be improper briefly to state the previous situation of some of these. One had supposed that she loved the God of providence because she had some sense of his daily kindness to her and her family. She was the one mentioned in my former letter, who was brought to see and acknowledge that she hated the real character of God with all her heart. Another, having been brought up in gay life,

was also very ignorant of the essential nature of true religion, insensible of the deceitfulness of her heart, and in full confidence of her good estate. Another, accustomed to contemplate moral truth, in the light of a clear and penetrating intellect, had mistaken the assent of the understanding for affections of the heart. Another had been the subject of some exercises in early life, which had induced the hope that he was within the embraces of the gracious covenant. But he had become a worldling; and lived in the omission of family prayer. Still, while under his late conflicts, he would reach back, and fasten anew on his former hope, (which he had made little account of in the days of his carelessness) until the power of the divine spirit broke his hold. Another had formerly rested her hope on some suggestion to her mind (somewhat like a voice) assuring her in time of sickness and anxiety, that her sins were forgiven. Another had been introduced into a hoping state in a season of awakening several years ago; since which, nothing special had occurred as a ground of self-distrust, except that she had sometimes, for a considerable season, neglected prayer and spiritual contemplations for worldly objects. Another was first put upon suspecting and searching himself by finding in his heart an undue appetite for the gaieties and vanities of youth. He had just returned from a party of pleasure when his conflict began. Another was the man mentioned in my former letter as having been so opposed to the sovereignty of God, in the dispensations of his grace. The rest, for ought that appeared, were as hopeful candidates for heaven as many professors. From observing the effects

which the light of God's presence had upon false hopes, a trembling reflection arose, 'How many such hopes will probably be chased away by the opening light of eternity!' The Lord seemed come to "search Jerusalem with candles" and to find out those who were "settled on their lees." The church felt the shock. No less than three conversed with me in one week on the expediency of withdrawing from the sacrament. That same presence which at Sinai made all the church and even Moses "exceedingly fear and quake" rendered it now a time of trembling with professors in general. Nevertheless it was, in respect to most of them, a season of great quickening and a remarkable day of prayer. Two persons have been for several months under deep dejection, which at times bordered on despair; one, being extremely weakened by ill health; the other, having experienced such dreadful heart-risings against God as to be terrified into the apprehension that her condemnation is sealed. Some, after having had, so far as we can judge, a saving change pass upon their hearts, have had seasons of thick darkness. One person, after the dawn of a joyful morning, was for two or three months overshadowed with a cloud, and by turns appeared in almost total despair, and notwithstanding he had such apprehensions of guilt and danger that sleepless and "wearisome nights" were "appointed" to him; yet he verily thought, (to use his own frequent expression) *that he was as stupid as the beasts*, and that his stupidity was daily increasing; though to others it was evident that what he considered the increase of his stupidity, was only the increase of his anxiety about it. In other

instances, the enemy has attempted to divert people from their anxiety with premature hopes.

We have met with little or no open opposition to the work; the corruptions of those who were not drawn into it, having been held in awe by a present God. It is apprehended there has scarcely been a person in town, of sufficient age for serious thought, who has not felt an unusual solemnity on his mind. A general reformation of morals and sobriety of conduct are observable through the town. Family prayer has been remarkably revived. On the day of the general election of state officers, (a day usually devoted to festivity) the young people, of their own accord, assembled in the sanctuary; where, by their particular desire, a sermon was delivered to them; and they went home generally agreed that one day spent in the courts of the Lord was better than a thousand wasted in vanity. Upon the whole, it is a given point among the candid that much good and no hurt has been produced by this religious revival, and that it would be a matter of exceeding joy and gratitude, if such a revival should be extended through the world.

In this work, the divine spirit seems to have borne strong testimony to the truth of those doctrines which are generally embraced by our churches, and which are often distinguished by the appellation of Calvinism. These doctrines appear to have been "the sword of the spirit" by which sinners have been "pricked in their hearts," and to have been "like as a fire and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." It is under the weekly display of these that the work has been carried on in all our towns.

These have been the truths which the awakened have deeply felt, and these the prominent objects in view of which the young converts have been transported. The scenes which have been opened before us have brought into view what to many is convincing evidence that there is such a thing as *experimental religion*; and that mere outward morality is not the qualification which fits the soul for the enjoyment of God. People, who before were of inoffensive conduct and of engaging social affections, have been brought to see that their hearts were full of enmity to God; and now give charitable evidence of possessing tempers, to which before they were utter strangers. It may be added, that some of the subjects of the work now acknowledge that they lived many years in dependence on a moral life, (and one of them, driven from this ground, tried to rest on the Universal plan;) but they are now brought to see that they were "leaning on a broken reed," and no longer rest on supposed *innocence or good works*, but on HIM who came to save the chief of sinners. I am, &c.

E. D. GRIFFIN.

New-Hartford, Sept. 1800.

LETTER XII.

From the Rev. WILLIAM F. MILLER of Windsor, Wintonbury Parish.

GENTLEMEN,

WE have reason to rejoice that the Lord reigns; for, as a gracious God, he is wonderfully visiting many parts of our Zion, with his salvation. In his great mercy, he has poured out upon many of our towns the spirit of grace and of supplication. He has carried on a blessed revival of

religion, in such a distinguishing manner, as to convince serious, attentive observers, that the same mighty power of the Holy Ghost, which wrought so efficaciously on the day of Pentecost, is still displayed in the building up of his church, in the world. In this extensive work of grace, he has confounded and silenced many of the enemies of the gospel, especially that class of them, who, while they professedly believed the sacred scriptures, denied the necessity of the special agency of the Holy Ghost in the regeneration of sinners. For such has been the peculiar and glorious nature of the work, that it has been evidently seen to be the work of God, and not of man: That, when a Paul has planted, and an Apollos watered, God has given all the increase; so that all has eventually depended on the blessing of the divine spirit, in making the gospel effectual, in the calling of sinners to repentance. Such extraordinary seasons of the out-pouring of the divine spirit are, therefore, worthy of remembrance, since they serve to destroy the strong holds of error and vain philosophy; and to bring a backsliding people to the real knowledge of God. They prove, beyond a doubt, that the Holy Ghost operates in the hearts of men as a convincer and a comforter; and that, since our Saviour's ascension to glory, he has been sent down to convince the world of sin, because they have not truly believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. As, therefore, in the course of the past and of the present year, there has, in the judgment of charity, appeared to be such a glorious work among the people of whom I have the ministerial care, it may be useful to follow the example of others,