

were ; whereby it is evident how dangerous a thing it is to trust to such pretended revelations, and neglect the word of God, which is our only rule, both as to faith and manners.

The Court hearing of her thus speak, gathered from her own words that she walked by such a rule as cannot stand with the peace of any State or Church, for such bottomless revelations, if they be allowed in one thing, they must be admitted for a rule in all ; and upon such a foundation were built the tragedies of Munster and other places, and might be also in America, if such things went on after this sort ; for they who are above reason and Scripture will be subject to no control. The Court, therefore, finding no hope of her being persuaded to recal her opinions, or reform her way, judged it necessary to proceed against her by such a sentence as necessarily required her departure out of the country. The church likewise passed a sentence of excommunication upon her, by Mr. Cotton's consent and approbation, as well as of the church.<sup>1</sup>

This discovery of a new rule of practice by immediate revelation, and the consideration of such dangerous consequences, which have and might follow thereof, occasioned the Court to disarm all such of that party, as had their hands to the petition aforesaid, and some others who had openly defended the same, (which was a true shibboleth, whereby the disaffected were discovered,) except they would give satisfaction to the magistrates therein ; which some presently did, about twenty in all : others made a great question about bringing in their arms, but they were too weak to stand it out, and therefore at the last submitted.<sup>2</sup>

#### CHAP. XXXIX.

*The occasion of spreading erroneous opinions in New England, and much disturbance occasioned thereby in and about Boston, in the years 1636, 1637, etc.*

MRS. HUTCHINSON, of whom large mention is made in the foregoing chapter, did by degrees discover two

<sup>1</sup> See page 336.—H

<sup>2</sup> See Sav. Win. i. 247.—H.

dangerous errors, which she brought with her out of England, (it being not probable that she gathered them from the ministry of Mr. Cotton, or any other minister in New England.) The one was, that the Holy Ghost dwelt personally in a justified person; the other was, that nothing of sanctification can help to evidence to believers their justification. From these two grew many other branches; as that our union with the Holy Ghost is such, that a Christian remains in himself dead to any spiritual action, and hath no gifts or graces, other than such as are in hypocrites, nor any other sanctification than the Holy Ghost himself. There joined with her in those opinions, or in some other very near them, one Mr. Wheelwright, brother-in-law to her, sometimes a silenced minister in England, of whom mention is also made in the former chapter.

The other ministers of the Bay hearing of those things, came to Boston about the end of October, 1636, in the time of the General Court, and entered a conference in private with the elders, and others there, to the end that they might know the certainty of these things; if need were that they might write to the church of Boston, about them, to prevent, (if it were possible,) the dangers which seemed to hang over that and the rest of the churches. At this conference Mr. Cotton was present, and gave satisfaction to them, so as he agreed with them all in the point of sanctification, and so did Mr. Wheelwright; so as they all did hold, that sanctification did help to evidence justification, the same he had delivered plainly in public divers times; but, for the indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost, he held that still, but not union with the person of the Holy Ghost, so as to amount to a personal union.

A few days after, sc. October 30th, some of Boston church being of the forementioned opinion, were laboring to have the said Mr. Wheelwright to be called to be a teacher there. It was propounded the Lord's Day before, and was this day moved again for a resolution. One<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "This, we cannot doubt, was Winthrop himself," says Mr. Savage, Win. i. 202.—H.

of the church stood up, and said he could not consent: his reason was, because the church being well furnished already with able ministers, whose spirits they knew, and whose labors God had blessed in much love and sweet peace, he thought it not fit (no necessity urging,) to put the welfare of the church to the least hazard, as he feared they should, by calling in one whose spirit they knew not, and one who seemed to dissent in judgment, and instanced in two points, which he delivered in a late exercise there: 1. That a believer was more than a new creature. 2. That the person of the Holy Ghost and a believer were united. Hereupon the Governor, Mr. Vane, spake, that he marvelled at this, seeing Mr. Cotton had lately approved his doctrine. To this Mr. Cotton answered, that he did not remember the first, and desired Mr. Wheelwright to explain his meaning. He denied not the points, but showed upon what occasion he delivered them. Whereupon, there being an endeavor to make a reconciliation, the first replied, that although Mr. Wheelwright and himself might agree about the points, and though he thought reverently of his godliness and abilities, so as he could be content to live under such a ministry, yet, seeing he was apt to raise doubtful disputations, he could not consent to choose him to the place. Whereupon the church gave way, that he might be called to office in a new church, to be gathered at Mount Wollaston, now Braintree. Divers of the brethren took offence at this speech against Mr. Wheelwright; whereupon the same brother spake in the congregation the next Lord's Day, to this effect: that, hearing how some brethren took offence at his former speech, and for that offences were dangerous, he was desirous to give satisfaction. The offence, he said, was in three things: 1. For that he charged that brother in public, and for a thing so long since delivered, and had not first dealt with him privately. For this he acknowledged that it was a failing; but the occasion was, that, when he heard the points delivered, he took them in a good sense, as spoken figuratively, seeing the whole scope of the doctrine

was sound, and savoring of the spirit of God ; but hearing, very lately, that he was suspected to hold such opinions, it caused him to think he spake as he meant. The second cause of offence was, that in his speech appeared some bitterness. For that he answered, that they well knew his manner of speech was always earnest in things which he conceived to be serious ; and professed that he did love that brother's person, and did honor the gifts and graces of God in him. The third was, that he had charged him to have held things which he did not. For this he answered, that he had spoke since with the said brother ; and for the two points,—1. That a believer should be more than a new creature, and 2. That there should be a personal union between the Holy Ghost and a believer,—he denied to hold either of them, but by necessary consequences he doth hold both ; for he holds, (said he,) that there is a real union with the person of the Holy Ghost, and then of necessity it must be personal, and so a believer must be more than a creature, viz. God-man, as Christ Jesus. For though, in a true union, the two terms may still remain the same, &c., as between husband and wife, he is a man still and she is a woman, (for the union is only in sympathy and relation,) yet in a real or personal union it is not. Now whether this were agreeable to the doctrine of the Gospel, he left to the church to judge, hoping the Lord would direct their teacher to clear these points fully, as he had well done, in good measure, already. Withal he made this request to the brethren, that, (which he said he did seriously and affectionately,) seeing those variances grew, (and some estrangement withal,) from some words and expressions which were of human invention, and tended to doubtful disputation, rather than to edification, and had no footing in Scripture, nor had been of use in the purest churches for three hundred years after Christ, that, for the peace of the church, they might be forborne, (he meant the person of the Holy Ghost, and real union;) he concluded, that he did not intend to dispute the matter, (as not having place nor calling thereunto ;) yet, if any brother desired to

see what light he walked by, he would be ready to impart it to him. How this was taken by the congregation it did not appear, for no man spake to it. This speech was very solid, rational, and candid, and if men's minds had not been strangely forestalled with prejudice against the truth, and a secret inclination to novelties and error, it might have put a stop to ||that|| confusion they at Boston were at that time running into.

A day or two after, the same brother wrote his mind fully, with such Scriptures and arguments as came to hand, and sent it to Mr. Cotton.

The Governor, Mr. Vane, a gentleman pretending much to wisdom and piety, held, with Mr. Cotton, the indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost in a believer, and went so far beyond the rest, as to maintain a personal union with the Holy Ghost. But the Deputy, Mr. Winthrop, (a gentleman not inferior in natural abilities, but much better grounded in the true principles of learning, both divine and human,) together with Mr. Wilson, the pastor, and divers others, denied both; and the question proceeded so far by disputation, (in writing, for the peace sake of the church, which all were tender of,) as, at length, they could not find the person of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, nor in the primitive churches three hundred years after Christ; so that all, agreeing in the chief matter of substance, came to this, viz. that the Holy Ghost is God, and that he doth dwell in believers, (as the Father and Son are also said to do,) but whether by his gifts and power only, or by any other manner of presence, seeing the Scripture doth not declare it, it was earnestly desired that the word person might be forborne, being a term of human invention, and tending to doubtful disputation in this case. For though the word person be used in the Hebrews, i. 3, yet in the Greek it is hypostasis, or subsistence, not *προσωπον*, which is to be rendered person.

At a General Court, occasionally called in December following, (that was intended for a Court of Election,) the ministers were called for advice about composing and

pacifying the difference among the churches in point of opinion. The Governor having declared the occasion to them, Mr. Dudley desired that men would be free and open, &c. ; another of the magistrates spake, that it would much further the end they came for, if men would freely declare what they held differing from others, as himself would do, in what point soever he should be opposed. The Governor said, that he would be content to do the like, but that he understood the ministers were about it in a church way, which he spake upon this occasion ; the ministers had met, a little before, and had drawn into heads all the points, wherein they suspected Mr. Cotton did differ from them, and had propounded them to him, and pressed him to a direct answer, affirmative or negative, to every one of which he had promised, and had taken time for. This meeting being spoken of the day before in the Court, the Governor took great offence at it, as being without his privity, etc., which this day one<sup>1</sup> of the ministers told him as plainly of, (with all due reverence,) and how he had saddened the spirits of the ministers, that he should be jealous of their meetings, or seem to restrain their liberties, etc. The Governor excused his speech as sudden, and upon a mistake. The same minister told him also, that within less than two years since, the churches were at peace, etc. The Governor answered, that the light of the Gospel brings a sword, and the children of the bond woman would persecute those of the free woman, and such like canting language. The minister besought him humbly to consider his short experience in the things of God, and to beware of peremptory conclusions, which he perceived him to be very apt unto ; he declared further what had been observed, both in the Low Countries and here, as the principal reasons of new opinions and divisions thereupon, viz. pride, idleness, and ungrounded knowledge, &c. Mr. Wilson, pastor of Boston, made a serious speech of the condition of the churches, and the inevitable danger of separation, if those differences and alienations among brethren were not speedily remedied ; and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Hugh Peter.—H.

laid the blame on those new opinions, risen up amongst them; which all the magistrates, except the Governor and two others, did confirm, as did all the ministers also, except two.

In this discourse a question arose about sanctification. Mr. Cotton, in his sermon that day, had laid down this ground, that evident sanctification was a ground of justification, and thereupon had taught that, in cases of spiritual desertion, true desires of sanctification was found to be sanctification as our divines usually hold; and further, if a man were laid so flat upon the ground, as he could see no desires, &c., but only, as a bruised reed, did wait at the foot of Christ, yet here was matter of comfort, for this was found to be true sanctification in the root and principle of it.

The question here grew, whether any of these, or evident sanctification, could be evident to a man without a concurrent sight of his justification. The Governor and Mr. Cotton denied it; but this was one of the questions disputed afterwards in the Synod.

But the speech of Mr. Wilson, it seems, did stick in many of their stomachs, and was taken ill by Mr. Cotton himself and divers others of the church of Boston, so as he and divers of them went to admonish him. But Mr. Wilson and some others could see no breach of rule, seeing he was called by the Court about the same matter with the rest of the elders, and exhorted to deliver their minds freely and faithfully, both for discovering the dangers, and means of help; and the things he spake of were only in general, and such as were under a common fame; and being questioned about his intent, he did not mean Boston church, nor the members thereof, more than others. But this would not satisfy, but they called him to answer publicly, on the Lord's Day, December 31, and there the Governor pressed it violently against him, and most of the congregation, except the Deputy and a few more, and many of them with much bitterness and reproaches; but he answered them all with words of truth and soberness, and marvellous wis-

dom. It was strange to see, how the common people were led by example to condemn him, in that which it is very probable divers of them did not understand, nor the rule which he was supposed to have broken; and that such as had known him so long, and what good he had done for the church, should fall upon him with such bitterness for justifying himself in a good cause; for he was a very holy upright man, and for faith and love inferior to none in the country, and most dear to all men, beside prejudiced people. The teacher joined with the greater, part at that time, in their judgment of him, (not without some appearance of prejudice,) yet with much wisdom and moderation. They were eager to proceed to present censure, but the teacher staid them from<sup>1</sup> that, telling them he might not do it, because some opposed it, but gave him a grave exhortation. The pastor was not much troubled at it, accounting it but man's day; Barnabas was sometimes carried away with the error of the rest. The next Lord's Day the said Mr. Wilson preached, notwithstanding, and the Lord so assisted him as he gave great satisfaction, and the Governor himself gave public witness to him.

One<sup>2</sup> of the brethren wrote to Mr. Cotton about it, and laid before him divers failings, (as he supposed,) and some reasons to justify Mr. Wilson, and dealt very plainly with him. Mr. Cotton made a very loving and gentle answer, clearing his intentions, and persisting in his judgment of Mr. Wilson's offence, laying down divers arguments for it. The said brother replied to him in like loving manner, and desired leave to shew his letter to Mr. Wilson, which he readily assented unto. But for an answer to his arguments, he forbore to reply to Mr. Cotton, (because he was overburdened with business,) but wrote to the two ruling elders, (whom the matter more concerned,) and, by way of defence of Mr. Wilson, answered all Mr. Cotton's arguments.

Upon these occasions many errors broke out publicly in the church of Boston,—as that the Holy Ghost dwelt in a believer, as he did in Heaven; that a man is

<sup>1</sup> For in the MS.—H.    <sup>2</sup> Winthrop, says Sav. Win. i. 211.—H.



justified before he believes ; and that faith is no cause of justification : and others superadded more,—as that the letter of the Scripture holds forth nothing but a covenant of works ; and that the covenant of grace was the spirit of the Scripture, and was known only to believers, and that this covenant of works was given by Moses in the ten commandments ; and [that] there was a seed, viz. Abraham's carnal seed, went along in it, and there was a spirit and life in it, by virtue whereof a man might attain to any sanctification in gifts and graces, and might have spiritual and comfortable communion with Jesus Christ, and yet be damned. After, it was granted that faith was before justification, but it was only passive, an empty vessel, &c. ; but, in conclusion of all, the ground of all was found to be assurance by immediate revelation.

All the congregation of Boston, in a manner, except four or five, closed with these opinions, or the most of them ; but one of the brethren wrote against them, and bore witness to the truth, together with the pastor, and very few others joined with them. Things being brought to this pass, the rest of the ministers taking offence at some doctrines delivered by Mr. Cotton, and especially at some opinions, which some of his church did broach, (for he seemed to have too good an opinion of, and too much familiarity with, those persons,) and drew out sixteen points, and gave them to him, entreating him to deliver his judgment directly in them, which accordingly he did, and many copies of them were dispersed about. Some doubts he well cleared, but in some things he gave not satisfaction. The rest of the ministers replied to these answers, and at large showed their dissent, and the grounds thereof ; and, at the next General Court, held the 9th of March following, they all assembled at Boston, and agreed to put off all lectures for three weeks, that they might bring things to some issue.

But whatever private conferences or means were used, the differences in the said points of religion increased more and more, and the ministers on both sides, (there being only Mr. Cotton and Mr. Wheelwright on one

part,) did publicly declare their judgment in some of them, so as all men's mouths were full of nothing else; and about this time, February 3, there being a ship in the harbor, bound for England with many passengers, Mr. Cotton took occasion to speak to them about the differences, &c., and willed them to tell our countrymen that all the strife amongst them was about magnifying the grace of God; one party<sup>1</sup> seeking to advance the grace of God within us, and the other to advance the grace of God towards us, (meaning by the one justification, by the other sanctification,) and so bade them tell them, that, if there were any among them that could strive for grace, they should come hither, and so declared some particulars. Mr. Wilson spake after him, and declared, that he knew none of the elders or brethren of the churches, but did labor to advance the free grace of God in justification, so far as the word of God required; and spake also about the doctrine of sanctification, and the use and necessity of it; by occasion whereof no man could tell (except some few who knew the bottom of the matter) where any difference was; which speech, though it offended those of Mr. Cotton's part, yet it was very seasonable to clear the rest, who otherwise would have been reputed to oppose free grace. This only occasion increased the contention, and raised great alienations of minds, and the members of Boston (frequenting the lectures of other ministers) did make much disturbance by public questions, and objections against their doctrines, which did any way disagree from their opinions; and it began to be as common there to distinguish between men, by being under a covenant of works and a covenant of grace, as in other countries between Protestants and Papists. For, at the General Court the next year,<sup>2</sup> one Greensmith was punished, for saying all the ministers in the country preached a covenant of works, but two;<sup>3</sup> but, notwithstanding his talking of an appeal, he was committed till he submitted to the sentence, which was in part to make an acknowledgment in all the congregations of the country.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Person*, by mistake, in the MS.—H.

<sup>2</sup> 1637.—H.

<sup>3</sup> Cotton and Wheelwright.—H. <sup>4</sup> See Sav. Win. i. 214, 234, ii. 348.—H.

At the next General Court, which was on the 9th of March, 1636,<sup>1</sup> they questioned the proceedings against Mr. Wilson, and, by the greater part, his speech was approved, and declared to be a seasonable caution, and no charge or accusation.

And at that time the ministers, being called to give their advice about the authority of the Court in things concerning the church, did all agree of these two things: 1. That no member of Court ought publicly to be questioned by the church, for any speech in the Court, viz. which concerned the Court, and [the] authority thereof. The reason was, because the Court may have sufficient reason that may excuse the same, which yet may not be fit to acquaint the church with, being a secret of state. The second thing was, that, in all such heresies and errors of any church member as are manifest and dangerous to the state, the Court may proceed without tarrying for the church; but if the opinions be doubtful, &c., they are first to refer them to the Church. At this Court, likewise, when Mr. Wheelwright was questioned for his sermon, which seemed to tend to sedition, &c., near all the church of Boston presented a petition to the Court for two things among others; 1st. That as freemen they might be present in cases of judicature. 2dly. That the Court would declare that they might deal in cases of conscience before the church. This was taken as a groundless and presumptuous act, especially at this season, and was rejected with this answer, that the Court had never used to proceed judicially, but it was openly; for matter of consultation and preparation in causes, they might and would be private.

Such were the uncomfortable agitations in those times, both in the church and Court, by reason of new opinions. But for the difference between Mr. Cotton, and his party, and Mr. Wilson, there was a reconciliation made betwixt them the next summer, viz. in August, (Mr. Hooker being then in the Bay, and Mr. Davenport at Boston,) for ||there|| was a day appointed for a conference amongst the elders, or a Synod, on the 30th of August,

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<sup>1</sup> 1637, N. S.—H.

and a day of humiliation on the 24th, with consent of the magistrates. At their private meetings some reconciliation was made between Mr. Cotton and Mr. Wheelwright, and Mr. Wilson, he professing that, by his speech in the Court, with which they were so much offended, he did not intend the doctrine of Mr. Cotton or Mr. Wheelwright, delivered in the public congregation, but some opinions, (naming three or four,) which were privately carried on in Boston and other parts of the country; and accordingly Mr. Cotton declared so much in the congregation the Lord's Day following. And for the rest of his speech, it was agreed by all the ministers to be inoffensive, considering his call thereto by the Court. This sudden change was the more observed by some, who were privy that Mr. Wilson had professed so much before, both privately to the elders, and publicly in the congregation, and that the said opinions had been delivered to the elders of Boston in writing, as those which Mr. Wilson intended. But every thing is beautiful in its season; sometimes when men's eyes are held they cannot see that which else is very manifest and easy to be discerned.

There was great hope that the Assembly of the ministers, this year called together, would have had some good effect for the composing the troubles and dissensions about matters of religion; but it fell out otherwise. For although Mr. Wheelwright had been clearly confuted and confounded in the Assembly, yet they persisted in their opinions, and were as busy in nourishing and carrying on contentions (the principal of them) as ever before; yea, were rather the more engaged in defending their errors, upon occasion of the proceedings against him and ||Mrs.|| Hutchinson in the Court, and in the said Assembly. For now were other grosser errors openly professed and maintained by them, that before were only secretly carried, by way of inquiry, and so many of Boston tainted with them, as Mr. Cotton, finding how he had been abused, and made (as himself said) their stalking-horse, (for they pretended to hold nothing but

| Mr. |

what Mr. Cotton held, and himself did, at the first, think the same,) did spend most of his time, both publicly and privately, to discover those errors, and reduce such as were gone astray. The magistrates also, with the ministers, spent two or three days together in consultation how to redress those growing evils.

Some of those growing evils or errors were these :

That there is no inherent righteousness in a child of God.

That we are not bound to the law, no, not as a rule.

That the Sabbath is but as other days.

That the soul is mortal till it be united to Christ.

That there is no resurrection of the body, &c.

But, by the blessing of God upon all endeavors, the church of Boston at last having agreed, with one consent, to pass the sentence of excommunication against Mrs. Hutchinson, for many moral evils in her conversation, as well as for corrupt opinions, many, who had been seduced by her, by what they heard and saw that day were, through the grace of God, brought off quite from her errors and settled in the truth.

And at a general fast, on the 13th of December, 1638, Mr. Cotton, in his sermon that day at Boston, did confess and bewail, as the churches', so his own, security and credulity, whereupon so many dangerous errors had gotten up and spread in the churches, and went over all the particulars, and shewed how he came to be deceived; the errors being formed (in words) so near the truth which he had preached, and the falsehood of the maintainers of them was such, as they usually would deny to him what they had delivered to others. He acknowledged that such as had been seducers of others (instancing in some of those of Rhode Island, though he named them not) had been justly banished; yet, he said, such as only had been misled, and others who had done any thing out of misguided conscience, (not being grossly evil,) should be borne withal, and first referred to the church, and if that could not heal them, they should rather be imprisoned or fined, than banished, it being likely that no other church would receive them.

At the General Court in March, 1638,<sup>1</sup> divers of the chief military officers of Boston, who had been favorers of the Familistical persons and opinions, being sent for by the Court, and told that they desired good satisfaction from them, having reason to be jealous of them, ingeniously acknowledged that they had been deceived and misled by the appearance, which was held forth, of advancing Christ and debasing the creature, which, since, they had found to be otherwise, and that their opinion and practice tended to disturbance and delusion; and so blessed God, that had so thoroughly discovered their error and danger to them.

### CHAP. XL.<sup>2</sup>

*A Synod called in New England, Anno 1637, at Cambridge. The occasion and success thereof.*

THE forementioned commotions in the country occasioned [by] the spreading of sundry Familistical opinions, which had received too much countenance and growth under the wing of the former Governor, required the help of the ecclesiastical, as well as the civil, power, to suppress and scatter them; and therefore the General Court of the Massachusetts judged it necessary to call an Assembly of all the elders of the churches, throughout the country, to consider thereof.

Many of the foresaid opinions were fathered upon Mr. Cotton, or were supposed to be gathered from some positions laid down by him in his public preaching, the which, being reduced to several heads, were discussed by the Synod when they met together in the first place, as well for the clearing of the truths in question, as the vindicating the honor of that reverend divine, not a little eclipsed by the laying those opinions to his charge.

When the Synod was assembled, Mr.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Hooker and Mr. Peter Bulkley were chosen moderators for the first day, and continued all the rest of the Synod;

<sup>1</sup> This is New Style. See Sav. Win. i. 256.—H.

<sup>2</sup> Originally xxxix in the MS.—H.

<sup>3</sup> At Newtown, (now Cambridge,) Aug. 30, 1637.—H.