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# Sermon Notes of Jesse Townsend, a Presbyterian Minister in Palmyra, New York

*Introduction by John G. Turner*

After his youthful visionary encounter with God the Father and Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith Jr. recovered his strength and stumbled home. When Lucy Mack Smith, his mother, asked Joseph what the matter was, the boy reported that the church that attracted her and several of his siblings was false. He would not join it. “I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true,” the budding prophet informed his mother.<sup>1</sup>

There was little love lost between Presbyterians and Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century. Joseph Smith identified Presbyterians as among his chief persecutors, Latter-day Saints mocked aspects of Calvinist theology, and Presbyterian “home missionaries” sought to convert “deluded Mormons” in the Utah Territory.<sup>2</sup> This mutual religious animosity was not limited to Presbyterianism, of course. Protestants of all sorts denounced Mormonism as imposture, fraud, and heresy. Smith in turn described a religious atmosphere of contention and chaos: “Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist” (JS–H 1:5). It was all “strife of words and a contest about opinions” (JS–H 1:6). As part of their *raison d’être*, the Latter-day Saints rejected these and all other existing branches of Christianity. Out of a spiritual wasteland of Protestant apostasy, God

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1. On the relationship between Smith, early Mormonism, and Presbyterianism, see John Matzko, “The Encounter of Young Joseph Smith with Presbyterianism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 68–84.

2. R. Douglas Brackenridge, “Hostile Mormons and Persecuted Presbyterians in Utah, 1870–1900: A Reappraisal,” *Journal of Mormon History* 37 (Summer 2011): 162–228.

had finally restored Christ's one true church. Still, Smith singled out Presbyterianism as "not true."

It is difficult for Americans in 2020 to grasp the cultural significance of Presbyterianism two centuries ago. Today, Presbyterians are a tiny, declining religious minority, constituting less than a half percent of the American population. As of 1787, by contrast, Presbyterians stood alongside Congregationalists as the largest denomination in the new republic. Presbyterians and Congregationalists shared a common theological heritage, rooted in the Calvinist (Reformed) wing of the Protestant reformation. That Reformed heritage included an emphasis on divine sovereignty; a very high regard for the authority of scripture above ecclesiastical traditions, human reason, or other sources of revelation; a concern for properly ordered and governed churches, including the need for congregations to exercise moral discipline over their members; and an aversion to anything that smacked of Catholic ritual. Human salvation hinged on the eternal decrees of God. Humans could not in any way earn their salvation, nor could they of their own accord acquire the faith through which God saved them.<sup>3</sup> While Congregationalists emphasized the autonomy of local congregations and remained wary of synodical cooperation and authority, Presbyterian congregations participated in layers of governance by representative assemblies of ministers and elders.

Despite the rapid growth of Methodism and Baptist churches in the early years of the American republic, Presbyterians retained significant cultural authority through both their learned ministry and their evangelistic fervor. They understood themselves as the guardians of both orthodox Christian theology and the new nation's morals. As the minister and historian Sean Michael Lucas has quipped, Presbyterians in the Early Republic were a "church with the soul of a nation."<sup>4</sup> In 1801, Congregationalists and Presbyterians embarked on a cooperative venture to evangelize the American frontier. In what became known as the Plan of Union, Presbyterian or Congregational churches could install each other's ministers. In practice, the arrangement led many Presbyterian

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3. See useful summaries in David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2019), chap. 1; and E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), chap. 2.

4. Sean Michael Lucas, "Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Presbyterianism in North America," in *The Oxford Handbook of Presbyterianism*, ed. Gary Scott Smith and P. C. Kemeny (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 52.

churches in New York and farther west to install New England-born Congregationalists as their pastors.

It was this arrangement that helped bring Jesse Townsend to Palmyra. Shortly after the Smith family's late-1816 move to Palmyra, fifty-six men and women established Western Presbyterian Church in the village. In keeping with the Plan of Union, Western Presbyterian Church invited a Congregationalist to Palmyra as its prospective minister. Native to Andover, Connecticut, Townsend was a graduate of Yale College and had served Congregational churches in Massachusetts and New York. More recently, he had overseen an academy in Utica, New York; his several moves suggest that his career was not especially illustrious. The members of Western Presbyterian, however, liked him well enough to install him as their pastor in 1817. During Townsend's pastorate, the Presbyterians built and dedicated a church building, the first meeting house in the village itself. Townsend remained in Palmyra for three years, then accepted a commission from the American Home Missionary Society and went to Illinois and then Missouri. Following his time on the frontier, Townsend returned to Palmyra and filled pulpits there and in neighboring towns.<sup>5</sup>

In his later years, Townsend made harsh critiques of Smith and his supporters. In December 1833, Townsend joined other Palmyra residents in denouncing Joseph Smith Sr. and his namesake son as "entirely destitute of *moral character, and addicted to vicious habits*."<sup>6</sup> Later that same month, Townsend elaborated on his criticisms. He alleged that Smith had duped the once-prosperous Martin Harris into bankrolling the publication of the Book of Mormon. Townsend described Smith as "a person of questionable character, of intemperate habits, and latterly a noted *money-digger*."<sup>7</sup> Western Presbyterian's former minister did not include any information that indicates that he was personally acquainted with the Smith family or with other early members of the Church of Christ.

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5. On Townsend's background, see Franklin Bowditch Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College* (New York: Henry Holt, 1912), 4:695–96; *New York Observer*, September 1, 1838, 140; Matzko, "Encounter of the Young Joseph Smith with Presbyterianism," 74.

6. George N. Williams and others, December 4, 1833, in E[ber] D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio.: n.p., 1834), 261–62, italics in original.

7. Townsend to Phineas Stiles, December 24, 1833, in Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1867), 288–91, italics in original.

By contrast, members of the Smith family almost certainly heard Townsend preach. At an unknown date, Lucy Mack Smith and her children Hyrum, Samuel Harrison, and Sophronia joined Western Presbyterian. Even if they did so after Townsend vacated its pastorate, they had probably at least visited the church during his years of active ministry. Western Presbyterian Church's 1819 dedication would have drawn a large crowd from the surrounding area.<sup>8</sup> The Presbyterian Smiths stopped attending the church by 1828 at the latest, and the church suspended their access to the Lord's Supper in 1830.

The sermons published here provide us with insight into what messages the Smiths might have heard at Western Presbyterian. At the very least, they provide the opportunity to examine the Presbyterian message—or, rather, one example of it—on its own terms rather than through the vituperative war of words between the early Latter-day Saints and their detractors. The sermons are revealing not because of any unusual eloquence or contribution to Presbyterian theology, but rather because Townsend preached on very typical subjects: the sinfulness of all human beings, the urgency of repentance, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the sovereignty of God.

Reformed (Calvinist) theologians in the Early Republic argued among themselves about the most biblical and reasonable ways to understand original sin, human agency, and divine sovereignty. Across the board, however, Presbyterian ministers placed a very high value on God's sovereignty, depicting God as the moral governor of the universe. Townsend reminded congregants "that it is God who governs the [world] and all things in it, that the sovereign and absolute disposal of all things is in his hands, that no evil can befall any but at the divine command or holy disposal of God."<sup>9</sup> Thus, when members of the community mourned a death, Townsend reminded them that their loved ones perished not because of a cruel twist of fate, but because God so willed "to bring about some benevolent purpose."<sup>10</sup> For instance, when children or young adults died, it provided the living with a reminder that they should not delay repentance. "Forgiveness must be obtained in the present world," Townsend warned, "or it can never be obtained."<sup>11</sup>

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8. Matzko, "Encounter of Young Joseph Smith with Presbyterianism," 76.

9. Jesse Townsend, sermon, December 13, 1807, Durham, New York; repeated in 1818 in Palmyra.

10. Jesse Townsend, sermon, November 20, 1814, Madison, New York, after the death of Mrs. Judith Taylor.

11. Jesse Townsend, sermon, March 20, 1808, Durham, New York; repeated February 2, 1811, Madison, New York; and May 10, 1818, Palmyra.

The need to console communities in the face of death was a perennial task for ministers, as Joseph Smith would experience during the 1830s and early 1840s. One might compare Townsend's November 20, 1814, sermon with the words of Joseph Smith after the 1844 death of King Follett. Smith offered his followers a very different sort of consolation.

Townsend often commented on the complex relationship between human freedom and divine sovereignty. "Men and angels are," he taught, "and ever will be, like himself [God], free moral agents."<sup>12</sup> At first glance, this resembles Lehi's counsel to his son that humans "have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, . . . free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men" (2 Ne. 2:26–27). Townsend's understanding of human freedom, however, was far more attenuated than Lehi's. No creature, the minister taught, could act "independently of his Creator."<sup>13</sup> Humans did possess the freedom to act on their wills, but those wills did not include what Townsend termed "a self-determining power."<sup>14</sup> Most significantly, humans could not reform their corrupt wills of their own accord. Only God could do so. "If God by his holy Spirit do not change their hearts," Townsend preached, "they will never set about the duties of a religious life, but will persist, all their life long, in the same course of sinning against God in which they are now going, and will die in their sins and be eternally miserable."<sup>15</sup> In other words, humans were free, but only free to keep on sinning unless God converted them. Why then the constant prods toward repentance? Calvinists had ready answers to this objection. God used the Word of God—the words of the Bible and the words of orthodox ministers—to bring his elect to repentance. Those men and women who heeded the Word of God, recognized the depths of their sinfulness, repented of it, and turned toward God were in all likelihood among the elect.

What Townsend preached on human freedom and the human will fits squarely within the Edwardsean New Divinity movement of Reformed theology. Although Townsend graduated from Yale prior to the presidency of Timothy Dwight (a grandson of Jonathan Edwards),

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12. Jesse Townsend, sermon, December 13, 1807, Durham, New York; repeated in 1818 in Palmyra.

13. Jesse Townsend, sermon, December 13, 1807, Durham, New York; repeated in 1818 in Palmyra.

14. Jesse Townsend, sermon, July 8, 1808, Durham, New York; repeated August 6, 1808, Greenfield, New York; May 12, 1811, Madison, New York; and July 6, 1819, Palmyra.

15. Jesse Townsend, sermon, July 8, 1808, Durham, New York; repeated August 6, 1808, Greenfield, New York; May 12, 1811, Madison, New York; and July 6, 1819, Palmyra.

his ideas are a crude reflection of what Edwards had proclaimed in his treatises on *The Freedom of the Will* and *Original Sin*. Like Edwards, Townsend placed a central emphasis on the heart, acknowledged the freedom and even the necessity of the will to act in accordance with its motives, and insisted that only God could reform those motives.<sup>16</sup>

Joseph Smith was one of many religious thinkers in the first half of the nineteenth century to reject what one might charitably term the paradoxes of sovereignty and agency one finds in Townsend's sermons. In Smith's "translation" of the King James Bible, he altered "no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" to "except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me."<sup>17</sup> Smith's successors sounded similar notes. "The volition of the creature is free," Brigham Young preached in 1866.<sup>18</sup> Calvinism was a theological bugbear and foil for the Latter-day Saints, as it was for many other American religious movements in the nineteenth century. Indeed, by the time of the Church of Christ's 1830 founding, Calvinism was decidedly on the wane. Even many Presbyterians, such as the renowned evangelist Charles Finney, dispensed with the careful doctrinal discussions of divine sovereignty and busied themselves with the task of organizing revival meetings and orchestrating mass conversions. Finney and like-minded revivalists employed "new measures"—including savvy publicity and preaching designed to produce an emotional response—to prod hesitant sinners toward repentance. These developments led to a schism within American Presbyterianism, as "Old School" churches more committed to traditional Calvinist verities split from their "New School" counterparts in 1837.

Despite his denunciations of the "Mormonites," Jesse Townsend in many respects was an irenic Presbyterian, not a theological combatant. He opposed the "noise and tumult" that the Latter-day Saints associated

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16. Allen C. Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1989). For a shorter summary, see Guelzo, "After Edwards: Original Sin and Freedom of the Will," in *After Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), chap. 3.

17. Peter J. Thuesen, *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 128, citing *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts*, ed. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 46–47, 69, 456–57.

18. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool and London: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 11:272 (August 19, 1866).

with revival meetings, and, contrary to the stereotype of intra-Protestant competition in Joseph Smith's History, Townsend actively opposed such disharmony. After Townsend's 1838 death, his obituary described him as one of "the *old school* of New England divines," but a minister who favored whatever "measures of the day, whether *new* or *old*, as were instrumental in the salvation of souls."<sup>19</sup> These sermons provide a sense of the measures Jesse Townsend employed during his Palmyra years and, therefore, a clearer sense of the Protestant Christianity that the Smiths encountered during the late 1810s and 1820s.

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## Excerpts from Jesse Townsend Sermon Notes

*Jesse Townsend (1766–1838) served as pastor of the Western Presbyterian Church in Palmyra, New York, between 1817 and 1820. The Church History Library acquired notes Townsend wrote for eight sermons. Many of the sermons were first given by Townsend in Durham and Madison, New York, then used again later in Palmyra.*

*BYU Studies staff members Veronica Anderson, Hannah Charlesworth, Saralee Dunster, and Alec Harding transcribed Townsend's sermon notes. A sample of their transcription is featured here. Digital images of Townsend's sermons are available from the Church History Library at: <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/record?id=5c2d7f04-a91f-49a5-a0b3-20187b58bb43&view=summary>. The entire collection of BYU Studies transcriptions are also available from the Church History Library here: <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/record?id=72c1b75a-9ceb-445b-af66-0742331bd027&view=browse>.*

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19. Townsend obituary, quoted in Matzko, "Encounter of Young Joseph Smith with Presbyterianism," 75–76, italics in original.



Durham Dec<sup>r</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> 1807-  
Palmyra 1818

Jeremiah 13.16. Give glory to | the Lord your God, before he | cause darkness, & before your | feet stumble upon the dark | mountains, & while ye look | for light, he turn it into the | shadow of death, & make it | gross darkness.

God's ancient covenant | people, having apostatized from | him & grown very corrupt; to | warn them of their sin & danger, & to | let them know that their true re|formation & nothing short of that ~~wou~~ | ~~would~~ could avert the judgments threatened | against them, God sent to them ~~this rebel~~ | ~~ious people~~ his prophet Jeremiah. | The warnings, threatenings, & counsels | given to ~~that people from God~~ <them> by | that prophet, are for our admoni|tion & ~~learning~~ at this age of the [[world]], [pg. [1]] for, God is the same. yesterday to|day & for ever, & the sins of his | people are now as provoking to <him> hi | as ever they were; & he is now as | able to punish them for their sins | as ever, & as desirous of their repent|ance and reformation as ever; he is | still lo[a]th to give any up to destru|tion.

In the chapter which contains | our text, we find the prophet at|tempting to awaken that stubborn[n] | & secure people to repentance | by leading them to consider <what> ~~what~~ | judgments of God would <come> ~~could~~ | ~~illegible~~ | upon them unless they did truly | repent & reform. He gives them | to understand by the sign of a girdle | spoiled, that their pride should be | storied, & by the sign of bottles filled | with wine, ~~he gives them to under~~ | ~~stand~~, that their counsels should be | blasted. In consideration of the | threatenings. denounced against [pg. [2]] them, he calls upon them to repent | & to humble themselves before God.

In the context we find a judgment | threatened against that people; such | an one, as should in a ~~degree~~ <manner> take | away their senses & bring them to | be greatly at a loss what to do <or>, which | way to look for relief from their trou|bles. The evil <then> coming upon them | unless they <repented &> reformed,, is spoken of | under the figure of bottles filled | with wine, & dashed one against | another. ~~See verses 12-15~~. . .

This is in the first place, to | own & be sensible, that it is | God who governs the [[world]] & all things | in it, that the sovereign & abso|lute disposal of all things is | in his hands, that no evil | can befall[] ~~us~~ any but at the | divine command or holy | disposal <of God>; that his kingdom | ~~ruled~~ <rules> over all, & that not a | sparrow falls to the ground | without his notice, or with|out our heavenly Father, by | whom the hairs of our

heads are | all numbered. Without a deep | sense of these things, we cannot | give glory to God, in a day of | adversity. If we are in affliction, to give glory to **God** <him> in our | affliction, we must be sensible | of **the** <his> hand of **God** in our afflictions, & of our dependence | ~~illegible character~~ <on> him for help in a day of [pg. [11]] trouble, to deliver us from evils, | felt or feared. To glorify **God** <him>, we | must have a deep felt sense | that it is an **absolute** <a solemn> truth | that **God** <he> in infinite wisdom | & perfect justice governs [[the]] | [[world]], & all things in it. He, that | disbelieves this, will never put | his trust in God, nor **will he** | commit himself & his concerns into **the** <his> hands of **God**; | & <nor **will he**> leave all, at his wise & holy | disposal. But all, who rightly | believe in the adorable perfections | of **God** <Jehovah>, & are willing to give glory | to **the Lord their God** <him>, will cheerful|ly commit themselves <&> all their | ways into **the** <his> hands of **God**, **will** | trust in him & live to him, | **will** <and> study to please him, & **be** | **afraid** <& fear> to displease him, by | doing any thing dishonorable [pg. [12]] | to his great & holy name. . . . The | fact is no creature can act in | a single instance independent|ly of his Creator. The divine in|fluence extends over all crea|tures, from the highest angel | **down** to the smallest & most [pg. [14]] inconsiderable insect. It extends in | **the** most **minute** minutely **manner** to [[the]] | whole natural & to <the> **whole** moral | [[world]], [[world]], holding all creatures & **all** events | & **all** circumstances & appendages | of events at his own most holy | wise, righteous & absolute disposal, but yet all in such a | wonderful manner **as** <that> men | & ; angels are, & ever will be, | like himself, free moral | agents. No second cause, tho' | ever so powerful, can act inde|pendently of the first cause. . . .

Palmyra July 6th 1819— | S. N. M. H. Jn<sup>ry</sup> | 24th 1830<sup>20</sup>

Durham July 8th 1808. —

Greenfield August 6th 1808

Madison May 12<sup>th</sup> 1811 – Rucus | 1813—

Acts 24. 25. And as he reason|ed of [[righteousness]], temperance [temperance], & judgment to | come, Felix trembled, & answered, “Go thy | way for this time; when I have a conve|nient season I will call for thee.

Paul the apostle <from a bitter persecutor> was made, by the | grace, of God, a most affectionate friend of the | Lord Jesus [[Christ]] & of his [[church]]. For his zeal | for [[Christ]] & his cause, he <had enemies, by

20. These few lines were written sideways on the left margin of the page.

whom> ~~became subject to persecu|tion~~ <he was persecuted.>. While he was at ease & security in | ~~the ways of sin & persecuting the~~ [[church]] of [[Christ]], | he was free from persecution: but when he | had become a friend & follower of [[Jesus Christ]] & | ~~had commenced~~ a preacher of the cross | of ~~[[Christ]]~~, the enemies of the [[Christian]] religion | ~~set themselves to work~~ <attempted> to destroy him; they | went about to kill <him> but not succeeding | in this ~~according to their intentions, they~~ | ~~next made their~~ <they> attempted to ruin him | by false accusation; In this Paul stood [pg. [123]] upon his defence, ~~this~~ <which> brought him before | the civil powers. Here he answered for | his life & doctrines & preached [[Christ]] to Felix, | the Roman governor & his wife Drusilla; | “& as he reasoned of [[righteousness]], temperance, | & judgment to come, Felix trem|bled, & answered, Go thy way for this | time; when I have a convenient | season I will call for thee.”

While Paul was making his | defence before Felix, the Judge on | the bench felt himself arraigned, by | an accusing conscience, ~~before~~ <at> a higher | tribunal, that he himself, tho' setting | to judge upon one, who was accused ~~to~~ | him of being a disturber of the peace of | society & ~~diserving~~ deserving of the punishment | of the civil law, was indeed guilty | before God of the sin of unrighteous|ness, & ~~of~~ unchastity, & that he had | great reason to expect to be cast in | the judgment of the great day. Feeling | ~~himself~~ self-condemned for his own wick|edness of heart & life, he trembled; [pg. [124]] but what did he do, while he had these | convictions? Did he ~~then~~ make enquiry | of the prisoner at the bar, as a minister | of [[Christ]], what he should do to be saved? Did he | show any signs of penitence & of true | reformation? No; these things appear to | have been painful to him; & there|fore he was for putting them off for an|other time. He fancied that the pre|sent time was not so convenient a | season to attend to his soul's concerns | as some other season might be. Perhaps | he was ashamed to have his convictions | known in court; or ~~he~~ might have | been unwilling to become immediately | attentive to the duties of a religious | life. He appears, however, to <have> been ashamed | to avow publicly his opposition of heart to | the <cutting> truths which he had just heard, & there|fore to carry the idea that he was not | callous to conviction, he pretended to | the ~~prisonar~~ prisoner at the bar, that these things | should have his attention at another time. | ~~But~~ “When I have a convenient season I | will call for thee.” But do we hear | any thing further of his convictions, that [pg. [125]] he ever after found a season more con|venient than the present in which <to attend> to his | soul's concerns? We find indeed that he

¶ was such a trimmer that <two' years after> when he went ¶ out of office, willing to shew the Jews a ¶ pleasure he left Paul bound, Perhaps ¶ he did this to secure his reappointment ¶ to office. At any rate, Felix appears as un¶regenerated persons' commonly do under the ¶ first stages of awakening & conviction. ¶ with whom a disposition to procrastinat¶ate the duty of repentance is ever prev¶alent, & *that* which originates from the total ¶ indisposition of the heart to divine things. . . .

Now ¶ if this is the present taste of the heart, ¶ & the will has not a self-determining power, & does originate its own ¶ exercises, but acts in the view of motive [pg. [133]] & <the gratification of> its own biases & wrong taste, be a ¶ motive in view of which the will chooses ¶ then, it follows, that, if sin<sup>rs</sup> feel a ¶ present disposition of heart to procrastinate the duty of repentance toward ¶ God & faith on the Lord [[Jesus Christ]], & a careful obedience of the ¶ d—g laws [[Christ]] of [[Christ]]'s ¶ kingdom, that they are at present ¶ in such a condition, & possessed of ¶ such a temper, that unless <if> God ¶ by his holy Spirit <do not> change their ¶ hearts, they will never set about ¶ the duties of a religious life, but ¶ will persist, all their life long, in ¶ the same course of sinning ag<sup>t</sup> ¶ God in which they are now going, & ¶ so will die in their sins & be eternal|ly miserable. If, O sin<sup>rs</sup>, when you ¶ are called upon to repent & believe ¶ the gospel & to set about the du|ties of true religion with a love to ¶ them & with with zeal & engagedness [pg. [134]] of heart, as your <a duty> immediately obligato|rey, you are indisposed to the duty, ¶ & resolved to hazard the experiment ¶ of continuing in the love & practice ¶ of your sins a little longer, with the ¶ delusive hope, that by & by you will ¶ find a season convenient to attend ¶ to your soul's concerns, you hereby ¶ show that your hearts are totally ¶ depraved, entirely of a wrong <disposition> taste, ¶ & that hereafter you will be as ¶ much indisposed to duty as you now are, unless <if> God <do not> <changes your> gave you a ¶ new hearts; that short of the sove|reign grace of God, which you con|tinually abuse, you will never ¶ lay hold on eternal life, but will ¶ pursue the same ,beaten tract ¶ in which you have hitherto been ¶ going, & <it> will land <you> in eternal ¶ misery. The same disposition which ¶ <now> leads sinners to put off the duty [pg. [135]] of repentance toward God & of faith ¶ on the Lord [[Jesus Christ]], will continue unless ¶ God sees fit to removes it by changing ¶ their hearts. And what do sin<sup>rs</sup> ¶ do? Do they do any thing to lay ¶ God under obligation to change their ¶ hearts? No: they roll sin as a sweet ¶ morsel under their tongues, & will ¶ not come to [[Christ]] that they might ¶ have life. . . .