



The Reverend

*Mr. James Davenport's*  
*Confession & Retractions.*



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A LETTER from the Rev. Mr. SOLOMON WILLIAMS of *Lebanon* to the Rev. Mr. PRINCE of *Boston*, inclosing the Rev. Mr. DAVENPORT'S humble and ingenuous CONFESSION and RETRACTATIONS.

*Reverend Sir,*

THE enclos'd which comes open, you will see is a CONFESSION, and RETRACTATION, of the Rev. Mr. JAMES DAVENPORT; which he left with me *Yesterday*, and desir'd me to inclose in a Letter to you: praying that you would see that it is according to his *Desire forthwith publish'd*, and made known in the most open Manner. He desired me to assure you that the *whole of the Paper, and every Interline, was made and written with his own Hand*. And he is full, and free in it, and seems to be deeply sensible of his *Miscarriages, and Misconduct* in those Particulars, and very desirous to do all he possibly can to retrieve the *Dishonour which he has done to Religion, and the Injustice to many Ministers of the Gospel*; and in this as well as any other Way to promote the Service of Religion, and prevent any further Prejudices against the Work of God which he may have been the Occasion of raising or increasing. I must needs say for my own Part I desire to bless God for *that humble, and Christian-like Temper* he appears to be in; and can't but hope that God designs to use him as an Instrument of greater Service to the Honour of Christ, and the good of his Church. I am Sir with great Respect your unworthy Brother and humble Servant,

*Lebanon, August*

SOLOMON WILLIAMS.

2d. 1744.



The Rev. Mr. Davenport's

## Retractions.

**A**LTHO' I don't question at all, but there is great Reason to bless God for a *glorious and wonderful Work of his Power and Grace* in the *Edification* of his Children, and the *Conviction and Conversion* of Numbers in *New-England*, in the *neighbouring Governments* and *several other Parts*, within a few Years past ; and believe that the Lord hath favoured me, tho' most unworthy, with several others of his Servants, in granting special Assistance and Success ; the Glory of all which be given to **JEHOVAH**, to whom alone it belongs :

Yet after frequent Meditation and Desires that I might be enabled to apprehend Things justly, and, I hope I may say, mature Consideration ; I am now fully convinced and persuaded that *several Appendages to this glorious Work* are no essential Parts thereof, but of a *different and contrary Nature and Tendency* ; *which Appendages* I have been in the Time of the Work very industrious in and instrumental of promoting, by a misguided Zeal : being further much influenced in the Affair by the *false Spirit* ; which, un-  
observed

observed by me, did (as I have been brought to see since) prompt me to *unjust Apprehensions* and *Misconduct* in *several Articles*; which have been great Blemishes to the Work of God, very grievous to some of God's Children, no less ensnaring and corrupting to others of them, a sad Means of many Persons questioning the Work of God, concluding and appearing against it, and of the hardening of Multitudes in their Sins, and an awful Occasion of the Enemies blaspheming the right Ways of the Lord; and withal very offensive to that God, before whom I would lie in the Dust, prostrate in deep Humility and Repentance on this Account, imploring Pardon for the Mediator's Sake, and thankfully accepting the Tokens thereof.

The *Articles*, which I especially refer to, and would in the most public Manner *retract*, and *warn others against*, are these which follow, *viz.*

I. The Method I us'd for a considerable Time, with Respect to some, yea many *Ministers* in several Parts, in openly *exposing such as I fear'd or thought unconverted, in public Prayer or otherwise*: herein making my private Judgment, (in which also I much suspect I was mistaken in several Instances, and I believe also that my Judgment concerning several, was formed rashly and upon very slender Grounds.) I say making my  
private

private Judgment, the Ground of public Actions or Conduct ; offending, as I apprehend (altho' in the Time of it ignorantly) against the *ninth Commandment*, and such other Passages of Scripture, as are similar ; yea, I may say, offending against the Laws both of Justice and Charity : Which Laws were further broken,

II. By my *advising and urging to such Separations* from *those Ministers*, whom I treated as above, as I believe may justly be called rash, unwarrantable, and of sad and awful Tendency and Consequence. And here I would ask the Forgiveness of those Ministers, whom I have injured in both these Articles.

III. I confess I have been much led astray by *following Impulses* or Impressions as a Rule of Conduct, whether they came with or without a Text of Scripture ; and my neglecting also duly to observe the Analogy of Scripture : I am persuaded this was a great Means of corrupting my Experiences and carrying me off from the Word of God, and a great Handle, which the *false Spirit* has made use of with Respect to a Number, and me especially.

IV. I believe further that I have done much Hurt to Religion by *encouraging private Persons to a ministerial and authoritative Kind or Method of exhorting* ; which is particularly observable in many such being much puffed up and *falling into*  
the

*the Snare of the Devil*, while many others are thus directly prejudic'd against the Work.

V. I have Reason to be deeply humbled that I have not been duly careful to endeavour to remove or prevent Prejudice, (where I now believe I might then have done it consistently with Duty) which appear'd remarkable in the Method I practis'd, of *singing with others in the Streets* in Societies frequently.

I would also penitently confess and bewail my *great Stiffness* in retaining these *aforesaid Errors* a great while, and Unwillingness to examine into them with any Jealousy of their being Errors, notwithstanding the friendly Counsels and Cautions of real Friends, especially in the Ministry.

Here may properly be added a Paragraph or two, taken out of a *Letter from me* to Mr. Barber at *Georgia*; a *true Copy* of which I gave Consent should be publish'd lately at *Philadelphia* :  
 “----- I would add to what Brother T----- hath  
 “ written on the awful Affair of Books and  
 “ Cloaths at *New-London*, which affords Grounds  
 “ of deep and lasting Humiliation; I was to  
 “ my Shame be it spoken, the Ringleader in  
 “ *that horrid Action*; I was, my dear Brother,  
 “ under the powerful Influence of the *false*  
 “ *Spirit* almost one whole Day together, and Part  
 “ of

“ of several Days. The Lord shewed me after-  
 “ wards that the Spirit I was then acted by was  
 “ in it’s Operations void of true inward Peace,  
 “ laying the greatest Strefs on Externals, neglec-  
 “ ting the Heart, full of Impatience, Pride and  
 “ Arrogance ; altho’ I thought in the Time of  
 “ it, that ’twas the Spirit of God in an high  
 “ Degree ; awful indeed ! my Body especially  
 “ my Leg much disorder’d at the same Time,\*  
 “ which Satan and my evil Heart might make  
 “ some Handle of.----”

And now may the holy wise and good God,  
 be pleas’d to guard and secure me against *such*  
*Errors* for the future, and stop the Progress of  
 those, whether Ministers or People, who have  
 been corrupted by my Words or Example in  
 any of the above mention’d Particulars ; and if it  
 be his holy Will, bless *this public Recantation* to  
 this Purpose. And Oh ! may he grant wishal,  
 that such as by Reason of the aforesaid *Errors and*  
*Misconduct* have entertained unhappy Prejudices  
 against Christianity in general, or the late glorious  
 Work of God in particular, may by this Account  
 learn to distinguish the *Appendage* from the *Sub-*  
*stance* or *Essence*, that which is *vile* and *odious*

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\* I had the *long Fever* on me and the cankry Hu-  
 mour raging at once.

from that which is *precious, glorious and divine*, and thus be entirely and happily freed from all those Prejudices refer'd to, and this in infinite Mercy through Jesus Christ : and to these Requests may all God's Children, whether Ministers or others say, *Amen.*

*July 28. 1744.*

## *James Davenport.*

*P.S.* In as much as a Number, who have fallen in with and promoted the *above said Errors and Misconduct*, and are not alter'd in their Minds, may be prejudic'd against this *Recantation*, by a Supposition or Belief, that I came into it by Reason of Desertion or Dulness and Deadness in Religion : It seems needful therefore to signify, what I hope I may say without boasting, and what I am able thro' pure rich Grace to speak with Truth and Freedom ; that for *some Months* in the Time of my coming to the *above said Conclusions and Retractions*, and since I have come through Grace to them ; I have been favoured a great Part of the Time, with a sweet *Calm and Serenity of Soul and Rest in God*, and sometimes with special and remarkable Refreshments of Soul, and these more free from corrupt Mixtures than formerly : *Glory to God alone.*

*J. D.*

