

THE  
WORKS  
OF  
PRESIDENT EDWARDS,  
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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WITH

VALUABLE ADDITIONS AND A COPIOUS GENERAL INDEX.

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AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE  
OF THE  
**REV. DAVID BRAINERD,**

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL; MISSIONARY TO THE INDIANS FROM THE HONORABLE  
SOCIETY, IN SCOTLAND, FOR THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;  
AND PASTOR OF A CHURCH OF CHRISTIAN INDIANS IN NEW-JERSEY;

WHO DIED AT NORTHAMPTON, IN NEW ENGLAND, OCTOBER 9TH, 1747, IN THE 30TH  
YEAR OF HIS AGE:

CHIEFLY TAKEN FROM HIS OWN DIARY, AND OTHER PRIVATE WRITINGS,  
WRITTEN FOR HIS OWN USE.

REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRECEDING  
MEMOIRS OF MR. BRAINERD.

1. WE have here an opportunity, as I apprehend, in a very lively instance, to see the nature of true religion; and the manner of its operation, when exemplified in a high degree and powerful exercise. Particularly it may be worthy to be observed,

1. How greatly Mr. Brainerd's religion differed from that of some pretenders to the experience of a clear work of saving conversion wrought on their hearts; who, depending and living on that, settle in a cold, careless and carnal frame of mind, and in a neglect of thorough, earnest religion, in the stated practice of it. Although his convictions and conversion were in all respects exceeding clear and very remarkable; yet how far was he from acting as though he thought he had got through his work, when once he had obtained comfort, and satisfaction of his interest in Christ, and title to heaven! On the contrary, that work on his heart, by which he was brought to this, was with him evidently but the beginning of his work, his first entering on the great business of religion and the service of God, his first setting out in his race. His work was not finished, nor his race ended, until life was ended; agreeable to frequent Scripture representations of the Christian life. He continued pressing forward in a constant manner, forgetting the things that were behind, and reaching forth towards the things that were before. His pains and earnestness in the business of religion were rather increased than diminished, after he had received comfort and satisfaction concerning the safety of his state. Those divine principles, which after this he was actuated by, of love to God, and longings and thirstings after holiness, seemed to be more effectual to engage him to pains and activity in religion, than fear of hell had been before.

And as his conversion was not the end of his work, or of the course of his diligence and strivings in religion; so neither was it the end of the work of the Spirit of God on his heart: but on the contrary, the beginning of that work; the beginning of his spiritual discoveries, and holy views; the first dawning of the light, which thenceforward increased more and more; the beginning of his holy affections, his sorrow for sin, his love to God, his rejoicing in Christ Jesus, his longings after holiness. And the powerful operations of the Spirit of God in these things, were carried on, from the day of his conversion, in a continued course, to his dying day. His religious experiences, his admiration, his joy and praise, and flowing affections, did not only hold up to a considerable height for a few days, weeks or months, at first, while hope and comfort were new things with him; and then gradually dwindle and die away, until they came to almost nothing, and so leave him without any sensible or remarkable experience of spiritual discoveries, or

holy and divine affections, for months together; as it is with many, who, after the newness of things is over, soon come to that pass, that it is again with them very much as it used to be before their supposed conversion, with respect to any present views of God's glory, of Christ's excellency, or of the beauty of divine things; and with respect to any present thirstings for God, or ardent outgoings of their souls after divine objects: but only now and then, they have a comfortable reflection on things they have met with in times past, and are somewhat affected with them; and so rest easy, thinking all things are well; they have had a good clear work, and their state is safe, and they doubt not but they shall go to heaven when they die. How far otherwise was it with Mr. Brainerd, than it is with such persons! His experiences, instead of dying away, were evidently of an increasing nature. His first love and other holy affections, even at the beginning, were very great; but after months and years, became much greater and more remarkable; and the spiritual exercises of his mind continued exceeding great, though not equally so at all times, yet usually so, without indulged remissness, and without habitual dwindling and dying away, even until his decease. They began in a time of general deadness all over the land, and were greatly increased in a time of general reviving of religion. And when religion decayed again, and a general deadness returned, his experiences were still kept up in their height, and his holy exercises maintained in their life and vigor; and so continued to be in a general course, wherever he was, and whatever his circumstances were, among English and Indians, in company and alone, in towns and cities, and in the howling wilderness, in sickness and in health, living and dying. This is agreeable to Scripture descriptions of true and right religion, and of the Christian life. The change that was wrought in him at his conversion, was agreeable to Scripture representations of that change which is wrought in true conversion; a great change, and an abiding change, rendering him a new man, a new creature: not only a change as to hope and comfort, and an apprehension of his own good estate; and a transient change, consisting in high flights of passing affections; but a change of nature, a change of the abiding habit and temper of his mind. Nor a partial change, merely in point of opinion, or outward reformation; much less a change from one error to another, or from one sin to another; but a universal change, both internal and external; as from corrupt and dangerous principles in religion, unto the belief of the truth, so from both the habits and ways of sin, unto universal holiness of heart and practice; from the power and service of Satan, unto God.

2. His religion did apparently and greatly differ from that of many high pretenders to religion, who are frequently actuated by vehement emotions of mind, and are carried on in a course of sudden and strong impressions, and supposed high illuminations and immediate discoveries, and at the same time are persons of a virulent zeal, *not according to knowledge*.

His convictions, preceding his conversion, did not arise from any frightful impressions on his imagination, or any external images and ideas of fire and brimstone, a sword of vengeance drawn, a dark pit open, devils in terrible shapes, &c., strongly fixed in his mind. His sight of his own sinfulness did not consist in any imagination of a heap of loathsome material filthiness within him; nor did his sense of the hardness of his heart consist in any bodily feeling in his breast, something hard and heavy like a stone, nor in any imaginations whatever of such a nature.

His first discovery of God or Christ, at his conversion, was not any strong idea of any external glory or brightness, or majesty and beauty of countenance, or pleasant voice; nor was it any supposed, immediate manifestation of God's love to him in particular; nor any imagination of Christ's smiling face, arms open, or words immediately spoken to him, as by name, revealing Christ's love to him; either words of Scripture, or any other; but a manifestation of God's glory, and the beauty of his nature, as supremely excellent in itself; powerfully drawing, and sweetly captivating his heart; bringing him to a hearty desire to exalt God, set him on the throne, and give him supreme honor and glory, as the king and sovereign of the universe; and also a new sense of the infinite wisdom, suitableness and excellency of the way of salvation by Christ; powerfully engaging his whole soul to embrace this way of salvation, and to delight in it. His first faith did not consist in believing that Christ loved him, and died for him, in particular. His first comfort was not from any secret suggestion of God's eternal love to him, or that God was reconciled to him, or intended great mercy for him, by any such texts as these: *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee; Fear not, I am thy God, &c.*, or in any such way. On the contrary, when God's glory was first discovered to him, it was without any thought of salvation as his own. His first experience of the sanctifying and comforting power of God's Spirit did not begin in some bodily sensation, any pleasant warm feeling in his breast, that he, as some others, called the feeling of the love of Christ in him, and being full of the Spirit. How exceeding far were his experiences, at his first conversion, from things of such a nature!

And if we look through the whole series of his experiences, from his conversion to his death, we shall find none of this kind.

Mr. Brainerd's religion was not selfish and mercenary: his love to God was primarily and principally for the supreme excellency of his own nature, and not built on a preconceived notion that God loved him, had received him into favor, and had done great things for him, or promised great things to him: so his joy was joy in God, and not in himself. We see by his Diary how, from time to time, through the course of his life, his soul was filled with ineffable sweetness and comfort. But what was the spring of this strong and abiding consolation? Not so much the consideration of the sure grounds

he had to think that his state was good, that God had delivered him from hell, and that heaven was his; or any thoughts concerning his own distinguished happy and exalted circumstances, as a high favorite of heaven: but the sweet meditations and entertaining views he had of divine things without himself; the affecting considerations and lively ideas of God's infinite glory, his unchangeable blessedness, his sovereignty and universal dominion; together with the sweet exercises of love to God, giving himself up to him, abasing himself before him, denying himself for him, depending upon him, acting for his glory, diligently serving him; and the pleasing prospects or hopes he had of a future advancement of the kingdom of Christ, &c.

It appears plainly and abundantly all along, from his conversion to his death, that that beauty, that sort of good, which was the great object of the new sense of his mind, the new relish and appetite given him in conversion, and thenceforward maintained and increased in his heart, was holiness, conformity to God, living to God, and glorifying him. This was what drew his heart; this was the centre of his soul; this was the ocean to which all the streams of his religious affections tended; this was the object that engaged his eager thirsting desires and earnest pursuits: he knew no true excellency or happiness but this: this was what he longed for most vehemently and constantly on earth; and this was with him the beauty and blessedness of heaven; which made him so much and so often to long for that world of glory; it was to be perfectly holy, and perfectly exercised in the holy employments of heaven; thus to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

His religious illuminations, affections and comfort, seemed to a great degree to be attended with evangelical humiliation; consisting in a sense of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness and odiousness; with an answerable disposition and frame of heart. How deeply affected was he almost continually with his great defects in religion; with his vast distance from that spirituality and holy frame of mind that became him; with his ignorance, pride, deadness, unsteadiness, barrenness! He was not only affected with the remembrance of his former sinfulness, before his conversion, but with the sense of his present vileness and pollution. He was not only disposed to think meanly of himself as before God, and in comparison of him; but amongst men, and as compared with them: he was apt to think other saints better than he; yea, to look on himself as the meanest and least of saints; yea, very often as the vilest and worst of mankind. And notwithstanding his great attainments in spiritual knowledge, yet we find there is scarce anything that he is more frequently affected and abased with a sense of, than his ignorance.

How eminently did he appear to be a meek and quiet spirit, resembling the lamb-like, dove-like spirit of Jesus Christ! How full of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy! His love was not merely a fondness and

zeal for a party, but a universal benevolence; very often exercised in the most sensible and ardent love to his greatest opposers and enemies. His love and meekness were not a mere pretence, an outward profession and show; but they were effectual things, manifested in expensive and painful deeds of love and kindness; and in a meek behavior; readily confessing faults under the greater trials, and humbling himself even at the feet of those from whom he supposed he had suffered most; and from time to time, very frequently praying for his enemies, abhorring the thoughts of bitterness or resentment towards them. I scarcely know where to look for any parallel instance of self-denial, in these respects, in the present age. He was a person of great zeal; but how did he abhor a bitter zeal, and lament it where he saw it! And though he was once drawn into some degrees of it, by the force of prevailing example, as it were in his childhood; yet how did he go about with his heart bruised and broken in pieces for it all his life after!

Of how soft and tender a spirit was he! How far were his experiences, hopes and joys, from a tendency finally to stupify and harden him, to lessen convictions and tenderness of conscience, to cause him to be less affected with present and past sins, and less conscientious with respect to future sins, more easy in the neglect of duties that are troublesome and inconvenient, more slow and partial in complying with difficult commands, less apt to be alarmed at the appearance of his own defects and transgressions, more easily induced to a compliance with carnal appetites! On the contrary, how tender was his conscience! How apt was his heart to smite him! How easily and greatly was he alarmed at the appearance of moral evil! How great and constant was his jealousy over his own heart! How strict his care and watchfulness against sin! How deep and sensible were the wounds that sin made in his conscience! Those evils that are generally accounted small, were almost an insupportable burden to him; such as his inward deficiencies, his having no more love to God, finding within himself any slackness or dulness in religion, any unsteadiness, or wandering frame of mind, &c. How did the consideration of such things as these oppress and abase him, and fill him with inward shame and confusion! His love, and hope, though they were such as cast out a servile fear of hell, yet they were such as were attended with, and abundantly cherished and promoted, a reverential filial fear of God, a dread of sin, and of God's holy displeasure. His joy seemed truly to be a rejoicing with trembling. His assurance and comfort differed greatly from a false enthusiastic confidence and joy, in that it promoted and maintained mourning for sin. Holy mourning, with him, was not only the work of an hour or a day, at his first conversion; but sorrow for sin was like a wound constantly running: he was a mourner for sin all his days. He did not, after he received comfort and full satisfaction of the forgiveness of all his sins, and the safety of his state, forget his past sins, the sins of his youth, that were committed

before his conversion; but the remembrance of them, from time to time, revived in his heart, with renewed grief.—That in Ezek. xvi. 63, was evidently fulfilled in him, *That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth anymore, because of thy shame; when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.* And how lastingly did the sins that he committed after his conversion, affect and break his heart! If he did anything whereby he thought he had in any respect dishonored God, and wounded the interest of religion, he had never done with calling it to mind with sorrow and bitterness: though he was assured that God had forgiven it, yet he never forgave himself: his past sorrows and fears made no satisfaction with him; but still the wound renews and bleeds afresh, again and again. And his present sins, that he daily found in himself, were an occasion of daily, sensible and deep sorrow of heart.

His religious affections and joys were not like those of some, who have rapture and mighty emotions from time to time in company; but have very little affection in retirement and secret places. Though he was of a very sociable temper, and loved the company of saints, and delighted very much in religious conversation and in social worship; yet his warmest affections, and their greatest effects on animal nature, and his sweetest joys, were in his closet devotions, and solitary transactions between God and his own soul; as is very observable through his whole course, from his conversion to his death. He delighted greatly in sacred retirements; and loved to get quite away from all the world, to converse with God alone, in secret duties.

Mr. Brainerd's experiences and comforts were very far from being like those of some persons, which are attended with a spiritual satiety, and put an end to religious desires and longings, at least to the edge and ardency of them; resting satisfied in their own attainments and comforts, as having obtained their chief end, which is to extinguish their fears of hell, and give them confidence of the favor of God.—How far were his religious affections, refreshments, and satisfactions, from such an operation and influence as this! On the contrary, how were they always attended with longings and thirstings after greater degrees of conformity to God! And the greater and sweeter his comforts were, the more vehement were his desires after holiness. For it is to be observed, that his longings were not so much after joyful discoveries of God's love, and clear views of his title to future advancement and eternal honors in heaven; as after more of present holiness, greater spirituality, a heart more engaged for God, to love and exalt and depend on him, an ability better to serve him, to do more for his glory, and to do all that he did with more of a regard to Christ as his righteousness and strength; and after the enlargement and advancement of Christ's kingdom in the earth. And his desires were not idle wishings and wouldings, but such as were powerful and effectual, to animate him to the earnest, eager pursuit of these



things, with utmost diligence, and unfainting labor and self-denial. His comforts never put an end to his seeking after God, and striving to obtain his grace; but on the contrary, greatly engaged and enlarged him therein.

His religion did not consist only in experience, without practice. All his inward illuminations, affections and comforts seemed to have a direct tendency to practice, and to issue in it; and this not merely a practice negatively good, free from gross acts of irreligion and immortality: but a practice positively holy and Christian, in a serious, devout, humble, meek, merciful, charitable, and beneficent conversation; making the service of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, the great business of life, which he was devoted to, and pursued with the greatest earnestness and diligence to the end of his days, through all trials. In him was to be seen the right way of being lively in religion. His liveliness in religion did not consist merely or mainly in his being lively with the tongue, but in deed; not in being forward in profession and outward show, and abundant in declaring his own experiences; but chiefly in being active and abundant in the labors and duties of religion; not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and serving his generation according to the will of God.

It cannot be pretended, that the reason why he so much abhorred and condemned the notions and experiences of those whose first faith consists in believing that Christ is theirs, and that Christ died for them; without any previous experience of union of heart to him, for his excellency, as he is in himself, and not for his supposed love to them; and who judge of their interest in Christ, their justification, and God's love to them, not by their sanctification and the exercises and fruits of grace, but by a supposed immediate witness of the Spirit by inward suggestion; I say it cannot be pretended, that the reason why he so much detested and condemned such opinions and experiences, was, that he was of a too legal spirit; either that he never was dead to the law, never experienced a thorough work of conviction, was never fully brought off from his own righteousness, and weaned from the old covenant, by a thorough legal humiliation; or that afterwards, he had no great degree of evangelical humiliation, no living in a deep sense of his own emptiness, wretchedness, poverty, and absolute dependence on the mere grace of God through Christ. For his convictions of sin, preceding his first consolations in Christ, were exceeding deep and thorough; his trouble and exercise of mind, by a sense of sin and misery, very great and long continued; and the light let into his mind at his conversion and in progressive sanctification, appears to have had its genuine humbling influence upon him, to have kept him low in his own eyes, not confiding in himself, but in Christ, *living by the faith of the Son of God, and looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus to eternal life.*

Nor can it be pretended, that the reason why he condemned those, and

other things, which this sort of people call the very height of vital religion, and the power of godliness, was, that he was a dead Christian, and lived in the dark (as they express themselves), that his experiences, though they might be true, were not great; that he did not live near to God, had but a small acquaintance with him, and had but a dim sight of spiritual things. If any, after they have read the preceding account of Mr. Brainerd's life, will venture to pretend thus, they will only show that they themselves are in the dark, and do indeed *put darkness for light, and light for darkness*.

II. The foregoing account of Mr. Brainerd's life may afford matter of conviction, that there is indeed such a thing as true experimental religion, arise: from immediate divine influences, supernaturally enlightening and convince: the mind, and powerfully impressing, quickening, sanctifying and governing the heart; which religion is indeed an amiable thing, of happy tendency, are of no hurtful consequence to human society; notwithstanding there having been so many pretences and appearances of what is called experimental vital raga that have proved to be nothing but vain, pernicious enthusiasm.

If any insist, that Mr. Brainerd's religion was enthusiasm, and nothing but a strange heat, and blind fervor of mind, arising from the strong fancies and dreams of a notional, whimsical brain; I would ask, if it be so, that such things as these are the fruits of enthusiasm, viz., a great degree of honesty and simplicity, sincere and earnest desires and endeavors to know and do whatever right, and to avoid everything that is wrong; a high degree of love to God, delight in the perfections of his nature, placing the happiness of life in him not only in contemplating him, but in being active in pleasing and serving him; a firm and undoubting belief in the Messiah, as the Saviour of the world, the great Prophet of God, and King of God's church; together with great love to him, delight and complacency in the way of salvation by him, and longing for the enlargement of his kingdom; earnest desires that God may be glorified and the Messiah's kingdom advanced, whatever instruments are made use of uncommon resignation to the will of God, and that under vast trials; great and universal benevolence to mankind, reaching all sorts of persons without distinction, manifested in sweetness of speech and behavior, kind treatment, mercy, liberality, and earnest seeking the good of the souls and bodies of men; attended with extraordinary humility, meekness, forgiveness of injuries, and love to enemies; and a great abhorrence of a contrary spirit and practice; not only as appearing in others, but where-insoever it had appeared in himself; causing the most bitter repentance, and brokenness of heart on account of any past instances of such a conduct: a modest, discreet and decent deportment, among superiors, inferiors and equals; a most diligent improvement of time, and earnest care to lose no part of it; great watchfulness against all sorts of sin, of heart, speech and action:

and this example and these endeavors attended with most happy fruits, and blessed effects on others, in humanizing, civilizing, and wonderfully reforming and transforming some of the most brutish savages; idle, immoral, drunkards, murderers, gross idolaters, and wizards; bringing them to permanent sobriety, diligence, devotion, honesty, conscientiousness, and charity: and the foregoing amiable virtues and successful labors all ending at last in a marvellous peace, unmovable stability, calmness and resignation, in the sensible approaches of death; with longing for the heavenly state; not only for the honors and circumstantial advantages of it, but above all, for the moral perfections, and holy and blessed employments of it: and these things in a person indisputably of a good understanding and judgment: I say, if all these things are the fruits of enthusiasm, why should not enthusiasm be thought a desirable and excellent thing? For what can true religion, what can the best philosophy do more? If vapors and whimsey will bring men to the most thorough virtue, to the most benign and fruitful morality; and will maintain it through a course of life, attended with many trials, without affectation or self-exaltation, and with an earnest, constant bearing testimony against the wildness, the extravagances, the bitter zeal, assuming behavior, and separating spirit of enthusiasts; and will do all this more effectually, than anything else has ever done in any plain known instance that can be produced; if it be so, I say, what cause then has the world to prize and pray for this blessed whimsicalness, and these benign sort of vapors!

III. The preceding history serves to confirm those doctrines usually called the doctrines of grace. For if it be allowed that there is truth, substance or value in the main of Mr. Brainerd's religion, it will undoubtedly follow, that those doctrines are divine: since it is evident, that the whole of it, from beginning to end, is according to that scheme of things; all built on those apprehensions, notions, and views, that are produced and established in the mind by those doctrines. He was brought by doctrines of this kind to his awakening, and deep concern about things of a spiritual and eternal nature; and by these doctrines his convictions were maintained and carried on; and his conversion was evidently altogether agreeable to this scheme, but by no means agreeing with the contrary; and utterly inconsistent with the Arminian notion of conversion or repentance. His conversion was plainly founded in a clear, strong conviction, and undoubting persuasion of the truth of those things appertaining to these doctrines, which Arminians most object against, and which his own mind had contended most about. And his conversion was no confirming and perfecting of moral principles and habits, by use and practice, and his own labor in an industrious disciplining himself, together with the concurring suggestions and conspiring aids of God's Spirit: but entirely a supernatural work, at once turning him from darkness to marvellous light, and from the power of sin to the dominion of divine and

holy principles; an effect, in no regard produced by his strength or labor, or obtained by his virtue; and not accomplished until he was first brought to a full conviction that all his own virtue, strength, labors and endeavors, could never avail anything to the producing or procuring this effect.

A very little while before, his mind was full of the same cavils against the doctrines of God's sovereign grace, which are made by Arminians; and his heart was full even of a raging opposition to them. And God was pleased to perform this good work in him just after a full end had been put to this cavilling and opposition; after he was entirely convinced, that he was dead in sin and was in the hands of God, as the absolutely sovereign, unobliged, sole disposer and author of true holiness. God's showing him mercy at such a time is a confirmation, that this was a preparation for mercy; and consequently, that these things which he was convinced of were true: while he opposed these things, he was the subject of no such mercy; though he so earnestly sought it, and prayed for it with so much painfulness, care and strictness in religion: but when once his opposition is fully subdued, and he is brought to submit to the truths which he before had opposed, with full conviction, then the mercy he sought for is granted, with abundant light, great evidence, and exceeding joy, and he reaps the sweet fruits of it all his life after, and in the *valley of the shadow of death*.

In his conversion he was brought to see the glory of that way of salvation by Christ, that is taught in what are called the doctrines of grace; and thenceforward with unspeakable joy and complacence, to embrace and acquiesce that way of salvation. He was in his conversion, in all respects, brought to those views, and that state of mind, which these doctrines show to be necessary. And if his conversion was any real conversion, or anything besides a mere whim, and if the religion of his life was anything else but a series of freaks of a whimsical mind, then this one grand principle, on which depend the whole difference between Calvinists and Arminian, is undeniable, viz., that the grace or virtue of truly good men, not only differs from the virtue of others in degree, but even in nature and kind. If ever Mr. Brainerd was truly turned from sin to God at all, or ever became truly religious, none can reasonably doubt but that his conversion was at the time when he supposed it to be. The change he then experienced, was evidently the greatest moral change that ever he passed under; and he was then apparently first brought to that kind of religion, that remarkable new habit and temper of mind, which he held all his life after. The narration shows it to be different, in nature and kind, from all that ever he was the subject of before. It was evidently wrought at once, without fitting and preparing his mind, by gradually convincing it more and more of the same truths, and bringing it nearer and nearer to such a temper: for it was soon after his mind had been remarkably full of blasphemy, and a vehement exercise of sensible enmity against

God, and great opposition to those truths, which he was now brought with his whole soul to embrace, and rest in, as divine and glorious, and to place his happiness in the contemplation and improvement of. And he himself (who was surely best able to judge) declares, that the dispositions and affections, which were then given him, and thenceforward maintained in him, were most sensibly and certainly, perfectly different in their nature, from all that ever he was the subject of before, or that he ever had any conception of. This he ever stood to and was peremptory in (as what he certainly knew) even to his death. He must be looked upon as capable of judging; he had opportunity to know: he had practised a great deal of religion before, was exceeding strict and conscientious, and had continued so for a long time; had various religious affections, with which he often flattered himself, and sometimes pleased himself as being now in a good estate. And after he had those new experiences, that began in his conversion, they were continued to the end of his life; long enough for him thoroughly to observe their nature, and compare them with what had been before. Doubtless he was *compos mentis*; and was at least one of so good an understanding and judgment, as to be pretty well capable of discerning and comparing the things that passed in his own mind.

It is further observable, that his religion all along operated in such a manner as tended to confirm his mind in the doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty, man's universal and entire dependence on God's power and grace, &c. The more religion prevailed in his heart, and the fuller he was of divine love, and of clear and delightful views of spiritual things, and the more his heart was engaged in God's service; the more sensible he was of the certainty and the excellency and importance of these truths, and the more he was affected with them, and rejoiced in them. And he declares particularly that when he lay for a long while on the verge of the eternal world, often expecting to be in that world in a few minutes, yet at the same time enjoying great serenity of mind, and clearness of thought, and being most apparently in a peculiar manner at a distance from an enthusiastical frame, he at that time saw clearly the truth of those great doctrines of the gospel, which are justly styled the doctrines of grace, and never felt himself so capable of demonstrating the truth of them.

So that it is very evident Mr. Brainerd's religion was wholly correspondent to what is called the Calvinistical scheme, and was the effect of those doctrines applied to his heart: and certainly it cannot be denied that the effect was good, unless we turn Atheists or Deists. I would ask whether there be any such thing in reality, as Christian devotion? If there be, what is it? What is its nature? And what its just measure? Should it not be in a great degree? We read abundantly in Scripture, of loving God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, and with all the strength, of delighting in

God, of rejoicing in the Lord, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the soul's magnifying the Lord, thirsting for God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the soul's breaking for the longing it hath to God's judgments, praying to God with groanings that cannot be uttered, mourning for sin with a broken heart and contrite spirit, &c. How full is the book of Psalms, and other parts of Scripture, of such things as these! Now wherein do these things, as expressed by, and appearing in Mr. Brainerd, either the things themselves, or their effects and fruits, differ from the Scripture representations? These things he was brought to by that strange and wonderful transformation of the man, which he called his conversion. And does not this well agree with what is so often said, in Old Testament and New, concerning the giving of a new heart, creating a right spirit, a being renewed in the spirit of the mind, a being sanctified throughout, becoming a new creature, &c.? Now where is there to be found an Arminian conversion or repentance, consisting in so great and admirable a change? Can the Arminian produce an instance, within this age, and so plainly within our reach and view, of such a reformation, such a transformation of a man, to scriptural devotion, heavenly-mindedness, and true Christian morality, in one that before lived without these things, on the foot of their principles, and through the influence of their doctrines?

And here is worthy to be considered, not only the effect of Calvinistical doctrines, as they are called, on Mr. Brainerd himself, but also the effect of the same doctrines, as taught and inculcated by him, on others. It is abundantly pretended and asserted of late, that these doctrines tend to undermine the very foundations of all religion and morality, and to enervate and vacate all reasonable motives to the exercise and practice of them, and lay invincible stumbling-blocks before infidels, to hinder their embracing Christianity; and that the contrary doctrines are the fruitful principles of virtue and goodness, set religion on its right basis, represent it in an amiable light, give its motives their full force, and recommend it to the reason and common sense of mankind. But when can they find an instance of so great and signal an effect of their doctrines, a bringing infidels, who were at such a distance from all that is civil, human, sober, rational, and Christian, and so full of inveterate prejudices against these things, to such a degree of humanity, civility, exercise of reason, self-denial and Christian virtue? Arminians place religion in morality: let them bring an instance of their doctrines producing such a transformation of a people in point of morality. It is strange, if the all-wise God so orders things in his providence, that reasonable and proper means, and his own means, which to himself has appointed, should in no known remarkable instance be instrumental to produce so good an effect; an effect so agreeable to his own word are mind, and that very effect for which he appointed these excellent means; then they should not be so successful as

those means which are not his own, but very contrary to them, and of a contrary tendency; means that are in themselves very absurd, and tend to root all religion and virtue out of the world, to promote and establish infidelity, and to lay an insuperable stumbling-block before pagans, to hinder their embracing the gospel: I say, if this be the true state of the case, it is certainly pretty wonderful, and an event worthy of some attention

I know that many will be ready to say, it is too soon yet to glory in the work, that has been wrought among Mr. Brainerd's Indians; it is best to wait and see the final event: it may be, all will come to nothing by and by: to which I answer, not to insist that it will not follow, according to Arminian principles, they are not now true Christians, really pious and godly, though they should fall away and come to nothing, that I never supposed every one of those Indians, who in profession renounced their heathenism and visibly embraced Christianity, and have had some appearances of piety, will finally prove true converts: if two thirds, or indeed one half of them, as great a proportion there is in the parable of the ten virgins, should persevere, it will be sufficient to show the work wrought among them, to have been truly admirable and glorious. But so much of permanence of their religion has already appeared, as shows it to be something else besides an Indian humor or good mood, or any transient effect in the conceits, notions, and affections of these ignorant people, excited at a particular turn, by artful management. For it is now more than three years ago, that this work began among them, and a remarkable change appeared in many of them; since which time the number of visible converts has greatly increased: and by repeated accounts, from several hands, they still generally persevere in diligent religion and strict virtue. I think worthy to be here inserted, a letter from a young gentleman, a candidate for the ministry, one of those appointed by the honorable Commissioners in Boston, as Missionaries to the Heathen of the Six Nations, so called; who, by their Order, dwelt with Mr. John Brainerd, among these Christian Indians, in order to their being prepared for the business of their mission. The letter was written from thence to his parents here in Northampton, and is as follows.

BETHEL, *in New Jersey*, Jan. 14, 1747–8.

HONORED AND DEAR PARENTS:

After a long and uncomfortable journey, by reason of bad weather, I arrived at Mr. Brainerd's the sixth of this instant, where I design to stay this winter; and as yet, upon many accounts, am well satisfied with my coming hither. The state and circumstances of the Indians, spiritual and temporal, much exceed what I expected. I have endeavored to acquaint myself with the state of the Indians, in general, with particular persons, and with the school, as much as the short time I have been here would admit of. And notwithstanding my expectations were very much raised, from Mr. David

Brainerd's Journal, and from particular informations from him, yet I must confess, that in many respects, they were not equal to that which now appears to me to be true, concerning the glorious work of divine grace amongst the Indians.

The evening after I came to town, I had opportunity to see the Indians together, whilst the Rev. Mr. Arthur preached to them; at which time there appeared a very general and uncommon seriousness and solemnity in the congregation: and this appeared to me to be the effect of an inward sense of the importance of divine truths, and not because they were hearing a stranger; which was abundantly confirmed to me the next Sabbath, when there was the same devout attendance on divine service, and a surprising solemnity appearing in the performance of each part of divine worship. And some who are hopefully true Christians, appear to have been at that time much enlivened and comforted, not from any observable commotions then, but from conversation afterwards: and others seemed to be under pressing concern for their souls. I have endeavored to acquaint myself with particular persons, many of whom seem to be very humble and growing Christians; although some of them, as I am informed, were before their conversion most monstrously wicked.

Religious conversation seems to be very pleasing and delightful to many, and especially that which relates to the exercises of the heart. And many here do not seem to be real Christians only, but growing Christians also; as well in doctrinal, as experimental knowledge. Besides my conversation with particular persons, I have had opportunity to attend upon one of Mr. Brainerd's catechetical lectures, where I was surprised at their readiness in answering questions which they had not been used to; although Mr. Brainerd complained much of their uncommon deficiency. It is surprising, to see this people, who, not long since were led captive by Satan at his will, and living in the practice of all manner of abominations, without the least sense even of moral honesty, yet now living soberly and regularly, and not seeking every man his own, but every man, in some sense his neighbor's good; and to see those, who but a little while past, knew nothing of the true God, now worshipping him in a solemn and devout manner, not only in public, but in their families, and in secret, which is manifestly the case; it being a difficult thing to walk out in the woods in the morning, without disturbing persons at their secret devotion. And it seems wonderful, that this should be the case, not only with adult persons, but with children also. It is observable here, that many children, if not the children in general, retire into secret places to pray. And as far as at present I can judge, this is not the effect of custom and fashion, but of real seriousness and thoughtfulness about their souls.

I have frequently gone into the school, and have spent considerable time there amongst the children; and have been surprised to see, not only their



diligent attendance upon the business of the school, but also the proficiency they have made in it, in reading and writing, and in their catechisms of divers sorts. It seems to be as pleasing and as natural to the children to have their books in their hands, as it does for many others to be at play. I have gone into a house where there has been a number of children accidentally gathered together, and observed, that everyone had his book in his hand, and was diligently studying of it. There is to the number of about thirty of these children, who can answer to all the questions in the assembly's catechism; and the bigger part of them are able to do it, with the proofs, to the fourth commandment. I wish there were many such schools: I confess that I never was acquainted with such an one, in many respects. O that what God has done here may prove to be the beginning of a far more glorious and extensive work of grace among the Heathen. I am your obedient and dutiful son,

JOB STRONG.

P. S. Since the date of this, I have had opportunity to attend upon another of Mr. Brainerd's catechetical lectures; and truly I was convinced, that Mr. Brainerd did not complain before of his people's defects in answering to questions proposed, without reason: for although their answers at that time exceeded my expectations very much; yet their performances at this lecture very much exceeded them.

IV. Is there not much in the preceding memoirs of Mr. Brainerd to teach and excite us to duty, who are called to the work of the ministry, and all that are candidates for this great work? What a deep sense did he seem to have of the greatness and importance of that work, and with what weight did it lie on his mind! How sensible was he of his own insufficiency for this work; and how great was his dependence on God's sufficiency! How solicitous, that he might be fitted for it! And to this end, how much time did he spend in prayer and fasting, as well as reading and meditation; giving himself to these things! How did he dedicate his whole life, all his powers and talents to God; and forsake and renounce the world, with all its pleasing and ensnaring enjoyments, that he might be wholly at liberty, to serve Christ in this work; and to please him who had chosen him to be a soldier, under the *Captain of our salvation!* With what solicitude, solemnity, and diligence, did he devote himself to God our Saviour, and seek his presence and blessing in secret, at the time of his ordination! And how did his whole heart appear to be constantly engaged, his whole time employed, and his whole strength spent in the business he then solemnly undertook, and was publicly set apart to! And his history shows the right way to success in the work of the ministry. He sought it as a resolute soldier seeks victory, in a siege or battle; or as a man that runs a race, for a great prize. Animated with love to Christ and

souls, how did he labor always fervently, not only in word and doctrine, in public and private, but in prayers day and night, wrestling with God in secret, and travailing in birth, with unutterable groans and agonies, until Christ was formed in the hearts of the people to whom he was sent! How did he thirst for a blessing on his ministry; and *watch for souls, as one that must give account!* How did he *go forth in the strength of the Lord God*; seeking and depending on a special influence of the Spirit to assist and succeed him! And what was the happy fruit at last, though after long waiting, and many dark and discouraging appearances! Like a true son of Jacob, he persevered in wrestling, through all the darkness of the night, until the breaking of the day.

And his example of laboring, praying, denying himself, and enduring hardness, with unfainting resolution and patience, and his faithful, vigilant, and prudent conduct in many other respects, which it would be too long now particularly to recite, may afford instruction to missionaries in particular.

V. The foregoing account of Mr. Brainerd's life may afford instruction to Christians in general; as it shows, in many respects, the right way of practising religion, in order to obtain the ends of it, and receive the benefits of it; or how Christians should run *the race set before them*, if they would not run in vain, or run as uncertainly, but would honor God in the world, adorn their profession, be serviceable to mankind, have the comforts of religion while they live, be free from disquieting doubts and dark apprehensions about the state of their souls; enjoy peace in the approaches of death, and *finish their course with joy*. In general, he much recommended, for this purpose, the redemption of time, great diligence in the business of the Christian life, watchfulness, &c. And he very remarkably exemplified these things.

But particularly, his example and success with regard to one duty in special, may be of great use to both ministers and private Christians; I mean the duty of secret fasting. The reader has seen, how much Mr. Brainerd recommends this duty, and how frequently he exercised himself in it; nor can it well have escaped observation, how much he was owned and blessed in it, and of what great benefit it evidently was to his soul. Among all the many days he spent in secret fasting and prayer, that he gives an account of in his Diary, there is scarce an instance of one, but what was either attended or soon followed with apparent success, and a remarkable blessing, in special incomes and consolations of God's Spirit; and very often, before the day was ended. But it must be observed, that when he set about this duty, he did it in good earnest; stirring up himself to take hold of God, and continuing *instant in prayer*, with much of the spirit of Jacob, who said to the angel, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*.

VI. There is much in the preceding account to excite and encourage God's people to earnest prayers and endeavors for the advancement and en-

largement of the kingdom of Christ in the world. Mr. Brainerd gave us an excellent example in this respect. He sought the prosperity of Zion with all his might. He preferred Jerusalem above his chief joy. How did his soul long for it, and pant after it! And how earnestly and often did he wrestle with God for it! And how far did he, in these desires and prayers, seem to be carried beyond all private and selfish views! Being animated by a pure love to Christ, an earnest desire of his glory, and a disinterested affection to the souls of mankind.

As there is much in Mr. Brainerd's life to encourage Christians to seek the advancement of Christ's kingdom, in general; so there is, in particular, to pray for the conversion of the Indians on this continent, and to exert themselves in the use of proper means for its accomplishment. For it appears, that he, in his unutterable longings and wrestlings of soul for the flourishing of religion, had his mind peculiarly intent on the conversion and salvation of these people, and his heart more especially engaged in prayer for them. And if we consider the degree and manner in which he, from time to time, sought and hoped for an extensive work of grace among them, I think we have reason to hope, that the wonderful things, which God wrought among them by him, are but a forerunner of something yet much more glorious and extensive of that kind; and this may justly be an encouragement, to well disposed, charitable persons, to *honor the Lord with their substance*, by contributing, as they are able, to promote the spreading of the gospel among them; and this also may incite and encourage gentlemen who are incorporated, and intrusted with the care and disposal of those liberal benefactions, which have already been made by pious persons, to that end; and likewise the missionaries themselves, that are or may be employed; and it may be of direction unto both, as to the proper qualifications of missionaries, and the proper measures to be taken in order to their success.

One thing in particular, I would take occasion from the foregoing history to mention and propose to the consideration of such as have the care of providing and sending missionaries among savages; viz., whether it would not ordinarily be best to send two together! It is pretty manifest, that Mr. Brainerd's going, as he did, alone into the howling wilderness, was one great occasion of such a prevailing of melancholy on his mind; which was his greatest disadvantage. He was much in speaking of it himself, when he was here in his dying state; and expressed himself, to this purpose, that none could conceive of the disadvantage a missionary in such circumstances was under, by being alone; especially as it exposed him to discouragement and melancholy: and spoke of the wisdom of Christ in sending forth his disciples by two and two; and left it as his dying advice to his brother, never to go to Susquehannah, to travel about in that remote wilderness, to preach to the Indians there, as he had often done, without the company of a fellow

missionary.

VII. One thing more may not be unprofitably observed in the preceding account of Mr. Brainerd; and that is the special and remarkable disposal of Divine Providence, with regard to the circumstances of his last sickness and death.

Though he had been long infirm, his constitution being much broken by his fatigues and hardships; and though he was often brought very low by illness, before he left Kaunaameek, and also while he lived at the Forks of Delaware; yet his life was preserved until he had seen that which he had so long and greatly desired and sought, a glorious work of grace among the Indians, and had received the wished for blessing of God on his labors. Though as it were in deaths oft, yet he lived to behold the happy fruits of the long continued travail of his soul, and labor of his body, in the wonderful conversion of many of the Heathen, and the happy effect of it in the great change of their conversation, with many circumstances which afforded a fair prospect of the continuance of God's blessing upon them: thus he did not depart, *until his eyes had seen God's salvation.*

Though in that winter that he lay sick at Mr. Dickinson's in Elizabethtown, he continued for a long time in an extremely low state, so that his life was almost despaired of, and his state was sometimes such that it was hardly expected he would live a day to an end; yet his life was spared a while longer; he lived to see his brother arrived in New Jersey, being come to succeed him in the care of his Indians; and he himself had opportunity to assist in his examination and introduction into his business; and to commit the conduct of his dear people to one whom he well knew, and could put confidence in, and use freedom with, in giving him particular instructions and charges, and under whose care he could leave his congregation with great cheerfulness.

The providence of God was remarkable in so ordering it, that before his death he should take a journey into New England, and go to Boston: which was, in many respects, of very great and happy consequence to the interest of religion, and especially among his own people. By this means, as has been observed, he was brought into acquaintance with many persons of note and influence, ministers and others, belonging both to the town and various parts of the country; and had opportunity, under the best advantages, to bear a testimony for God and true religion, and against those false appearances of it that have proved most pernicious to the interests of Christ's kingdom in the land. And the providence of God is particularly observable in this circumstance of the testimony he there bore for true religion, viz., that he there was brought so near the grave, and continued for so long a time on the very brink of eternity; and from time to time looked on himself, and was looked on by others, as just leaving the world; and that in these circumstances he should be so particularly directed and assisted in his thoughts and views of

religion, to distinguish between the true and the false, with such clearness and evidence; and that after this he should be unexpectedly and surprisingly restored and strengthened, so far as to be able to converse freely; and have such opportunity, and special occasions to declare the sentiments he had in these, which were, to human apprehension, his dying circumstances; and to bear his testimony concerning the nature of true religion, and concerning the mischievous tendency of its most prevalent counterfeits and false appearances; as things he had a special, clear, distinct view of at that time, when he expected in a few minutes to be in eternity; and the certainty and importance of which were then, in a peculiar manner, impressed on his mind.

Among the happy consequences of his going to Boston, were those liberal benefactions that have been mentioned, which were made by pious-disposed persons, for the maintaining and promoting the interest of religion among his people: and also the meeting of a number of gentlemen in Boston, of note and ability, to consult upon measures for that purpose; who were excited, by their acquaintance and conversation with Mr. Brainerd, and by the account of the great things God had wrought by his ministry, to unite themselves, that by their joint endeavors and contributions they might promote the kingdom of Christ, and the spiritual good of their fellow creatures, among the Indians in New Jersey, and elsewhere.

The providence of God was observable in his going to Boston at a time when not only the honorable commissioners were seeking missionaries to the Six Nations; but just after his journal, which gives an account of his labors and success among the Indians, had been received and spread in Boston: whereby his name was known, and the minds of serious people were well prepared to receive his person, and the testimony he there gave for God; to exert themselves for the upholding and promoting the interest of religion in his congregation, and amongst the Indians elsewhere; and to regard his judgment concerning the qualifications of missionaries, &c. If he had gone there the fall before, when he had intended to have made his journey into New England, but was prevented by a sudden great increase of his illness, it would not have been likely to have been in any measure to so good effect: and also if he had not been unexpectedly detained in Boston: for when he went from my house, he intended to make but a very short stay there: but Divine Providence, by his being brought so low there, detained him long; thereby to make way for the fulfilling its own gracious designs.

The providence of God was remarkable in so ordering, that although he was brought so very near the grave in Boston, that it was not in the least expected he would ever come alive out of his chamber; yet he wonderfully revived, and was preserved several months longer: so that he had opportunity to see, and fully to converse with both his younger brethren before he died; which was a thing he greatly desired; and especially to see his brother John,

with whom was left the care of his congregation; that he might by him be fully informed of their state, and might leave with him such instructions and directions as were requisite in order to their spiritual welfare, and to send to them his dying charges and counsels. And he had also an opportunity, by means of this suspension of his death, to find and recommend a couple of persons fit to be employed as missionaries to the Six Nations, as had been desired of him.

Although it was the pleasure of a sovereign God, that he should be taken away from his congregation, the people that he had begotten through the gospel, who were so dear to him; yet it was granted to him, that before he died he should see them well provided for every way: he saw them provided for with one to instruct them, and take care of their souls; his own brother, whom he could confide in: he saw a good foundation laid for the support of the school among them; those things that before were wanting in order to it, being supplied: and he had the prospect of a charitable society being established, of able and well-disposed persons, who seemed to make the spiritual interest of his congregation their own; whereby he had a comfortable view of their being well provided for, for the future: and he had also opportunity to leave all his dying charges with his successor in the pastoral care of his people, and by him to send his dying counsels to them. Thus God granted him to see all things happily settled, or in a hopeful way of being so, before his death, with respect to his dear people. And whereas not only his own congregation, but the souls of the Indians in North America in general, were very dear to him, and he had greatly set his heart on the propagating and extending the kingdom of Christ among them; God was pleased to grant to him, however it was his will that he should be taken away, and so should not be the immediate instrument of their instruction and conversion, yet that before his death, he should see unexpected extraordinary provision made for this also. And it is remarkable, that God not only allowed him to see such provision made for the maintaining the interest of religion among his own people, and the propagation of it elsewhere: but honored him by making him the means or occasion of it. So that it is very probable, however Mr. Brainerd, during the last four months of his life was ordinarily in an extremely weak and low state, very often scarcely able to speak; yet that he was made the instrument or means of much more good in that space of time, than he would have been if he had been well, and in strength of body. Thus God's power was manifested in his weakness, and the life of Christ was manifested in his mortal flesh.

Another thing wherein appears the merciful disposal of Providence with respect to his death, was, that he did not die in the wilderness, among the savages at Kaunaumeeck, or the Forks of Delaware, or at Susquehannah; in a place where his dying behavior and speeches might be observed and re-

membered, and some account given of them for the benefit of survivors; and also where care might be taken of him in his sickness, and proper honors done him at his death.

The providence of God is also worthy of remark, in so overruling and ordering the matter, that he did not finally leave absolute orders for the entire suppressing of his private papers; as he had intended and fully resolved, in-somuch that all the importunity of his friends could scarce restrain him from doing it, when sick at Boston. And one thing relating to this is peculiarly remarkable, viz., that his brother, a little before his death, should come from the Jerseys unexpected, and bring his Diary to him, though he had received no such order. Mr. Brainerd himself, as was before observed, was much in taking notice, when near his end, of the merciful circumstances of his death; and said from time to time, that God had granted him all his desire.

And I would not conclude my observations on the merciful circumstance of Mr. Brainerd's death, without acknowledging with thankfulness, the gracious dispensation of Providence to me and my family, in so ordering, that he (though the ordinary place of his abode was more than two hundred miles distant) should be cast hither, to my house, in his last sickness, and should die here: so that we had opportunity for much acquaintance and conversation with him, and show him kindness in such circumstances, and to see his dying behavior, hear his dying speeches, to receive his dying counsels, and to have the benefit of his dying prayers. May God in infinite mercy grant that we may ever retain a proper remembrance of these things, and make a due improvement of the advantages we have had in these respects! The Lord grant also, that the foregoing account of Mr. Brainerd's life and death may be for the great spiritual benefit of all that shall read it, and prove a happy means of promoting the revival of true religion in these parts of the world.