

and surroundings, the conditions and incidents of his being, and identified him with the conflicts and triumphs of the church in all times, and placed him among the foremost characters in religious history.

David Brainerd was born in Haddam, Connecticut, April 20, 1718, and died at Northampton, Massachusetts, October 9, 1747, in the thirtieth year of his age. His father was Hezekiah Brainerd, one of His Majesty's Council for that colony, and his maternal grandfather was the son of Rev. Peter Holart, the first minister of the gospel at Hingham, in England, and who, owing to the persecution of the Puritans in the mother country, came over to New England and was settled in the ministry at Hingham, Massachusetts. David was the third son of his parents. Two of his brothers likewise devoted their lives to the gospel ministry—Nehemiah, who settled at Eastbury, Connecticut, and who died before David, and John, who succeeded David among the Indians of New Jersey, and afterward labored as a home missionary among the whites, and was also for many years a trustee of the College of New Jersey.

David was left an orphan at the early age of fourteen. He seems to have been a very sober youth. He was thoughtful beyond his years, of a melancholy temperament, and somewhat inclined to a morbid conscientiousness. His religious exercises were quite marked when he was but seven or eight years of age; but his serious impressions wore off, and he had no further special convictions of sin or concern for his salvation until he was about thirteen years of age, when they returned upon him with increased power, and resulted, as he evidently believed at the time, in his conversion to God. Under his severe self-scrutiny, however, he afterward questioned the genuineness of these experiences, and thought that he was relying upon his own righteousness. But the careful reader of his life will be disposed to believe that at that early period he was really a subject of divine grace. When about twenty, he was visited with new light and power from on high—with an intensity of feeling, a depth of conviction in relation to sin and his undone condition, and a fullness of peace and rejoicing very unusual in one so young, and one who had always led a strictly moral and, in some respects, a religious life. This new baptism stirred his soul to its profoundest depths and was the starting point in a most extraordinary career of Christian attainment and personal consecration.

It is not surprising that Brainerd should date his conversion from this period of his life, so profound and so remarkable were his spiritual exercises and experiences. His own account of himself, during and preceding this eventful period—the operations of his mind and heart while the Holy Spirit of God was searching him, and trying him, and making thorough work with him, that he might be eminently fitted for the mission to which the Master had appointed him—is so intensely interesting and instructive that we must refer our readers to the *Memoirs* (pp. 2–15) for his own graphic account of it.