

Sure we are that no unprejudiced mind, possessed of the facts of the case on which the act was based, as carefully stated by President Edwards and also by Brainerd himself in his journal and letters, can come to any other conclusion than that the college authorities erred in expelling him in the first instance for so slight an offense; erred in inflicting the severest academical punishment in their power for a word spoken in confidence to two or three college mates and intimate religious friends with no malicious intent; that they erred again in refusing to accept his very humble and penitent confession and restore him to his standing; and again erred by their strange and relentless persistency in refusing the request of a large number of the most distinguished clergymen in the colonies, that Brainerd might be allowed to take his degree with the class from which he was expelled the year before. Had his alleged offense been tenfold more serious than it was, we cannot see how their conduct in this instance could be justified, especially in view of the peculiar circumstances of the case and the fact that the offending party had made a prompt and manly acknowledgment. But the offense in fact was a *trifling* one, and one that the offended tutor and the faculty of the college ought not to have laid to heart or made a serious fuss over. If the authorities of Yale or of any other college in the land *to-day* should expel a student for such an offense, a cry of shame and indignation would ring throughout the land.

The offense consisted of two particulars: The first a hasty and foolish remark, reflecting on the piety of one of the tutors, made in private to two or three fellow students and overheard and reported by another student who happened to overhear it. The other item was in going to a religious meeting in the town when the college had forbidden attendance on such meetings. *That was the whole of the offense.* It seems scarcely credible to us in these days. The *last* item must be ruled out. For no college rulers had a right, legal or moral, to enact such a rule. It was a high-handed assumption of power, and was a fling at the promoters of the great religious Revival which then agitated and divided New Haven and many other parts of New England. And whether the other offense—the words applied to tutor Whittlesey—were true or false, there was, as all must admit, a great deal to excuse or palliate the offense in the spirit and occurrences in the life around him at the time the words were spoken.

A great religious movement was then on foot. Whitefield and other apostles of the new evangelism had fired the hearts of multitudes. Excitement ran high. The revival had shaken the town of New Haven and the mass of college students had come under its power, Brainerd among the rest, who entered into the work with all the intensity of his earnest nature. “Ministers of long standing,” and churches without number, were divided in regard to these “New Lights,” as they were