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A DISCOURSE

ON THE DEATH OF

REV. THOMAS BRAINERD, D.D.

By REV. ALBERT BARNES.

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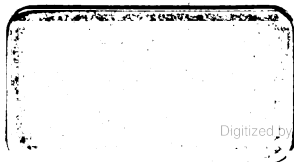
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DANIEL xii. 2, 3.—And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake—and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

They shine as stars here; constituting bright constellations shedding their radiance upon the earth. They are removed at death to shine in other spheres and worlds; shedding a brighter radiance there. To human view they seem to become extinct, as when a star in the sky seems to burn out, and to pass away forever. Those stars *may* pass away. The power that created them, and that made them so bright and beautiful, can as easily annihilate them; and, bright, and beaming, and beautiful as they are, they may have accomplished their purpose, and may have ceased to be. They are material; and they may perish. But it is not so with mind:—bright, beaming, illustrious mind. That does not die.

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It is not lost. It does not cease to shine. It is removed to other worlds ; it does not die. It leaves the earth indeed ; it is withdrawn from human view ; but it is transferred to other realms, to shine with undimmed and increasing lustre forever.

There is a difference in the brightness of those minds, both here, and in the world above, as there is a difference in the brightness of the heavenly bodies. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory." I. Cor. xv. 41. Those "stars" that God removes from earth to other spheres, shine with different brightness here, and will shine with different brightness forever. All that are "wise" will shine indeed "as the brightness of the firmament"—perhaps with collected radiance like the milky-way in the heavens, but they that "turn many to righteousness" will shine with particular and brighter lustre, as distinguished from others, forever and ever. All that are redeemed, all that in their appropriate spheres on earth, live to honor God, and to do good to men, will shine forever, but the brightest of those stars will be those who "turn many to righteousness." He who in another sphere of life, if a good man, would have shone brightly in the world above ; he who in other callings could have secured a place among those that shall shine forever and ever, will shine more brightly if he consecrates his life to the purpose of turning men to righteousness. He can make more of his own life ; he can make his influence radiate further over his own generation ; he can make it strike onward with more effectiveness, into the interminable future, than he could have done if his life, however brilliant and useful, had been spent on objects soon to pass away. Paul, as a christian man, if he had employed his eloquence in defence of liberty or violated rights, would have won and worn a bright crown among mortals, for Longinus places his name among the great orators of the world ; but Paul made more of his talents, and will wear a brighter crown, and will shine as a brighter star, from having employed his talents in

turning men to righteousness, than he could have done in the widest fields of secular usefulness, ambition, or glory.

The removal of a man of eminent usefulness from our world is not such a loss to the universe as the extinction of a bright star might be, or as the extinction of the soul would be. The earth is but an atom in the immensity of the vast domain over which God presides, and the widest sphere of labor and of usefulness here is inconceivably small as compared with that vast field in which the redeemed soul is to live and act forever. True it is a loss to earth, to friends, to the cause of truth, to the church, to a nation it may be, as if the soul had ceased to be. The mind sagacious to plan, to council, to execute, is withdrawn from earth; the lips eloquent in the cause of truth, are silent; the pastor is no longer in the pulpit, in the house of mourning, or by the bed-side of the sick:—he who guided the young, who warned the wicked, who strengthened the feeble, who comforted the sorrowful, who animated the desponding, is seen no more; he who brought the richness of his experience, and the maturity of his judgment to the aid of the great interests of truth and humanity, has passed away. Influence is of slow growth, and is of inestimable value in our world. It is that in a man's known talents, learning, character, experience, and position, on which a presumption is based that what he holds is true; that what he proposes is wise. When a man has reached the maturity of life, this is all that, in these respects, is the fruit of his experience—the growth of many years—and constitutes, in our world, the best inheritance of virtue and of truth. It is a protracted work to form such a character. Native talent, learning, discipline, conflict, toil, experience, moral worth, all enter with its formation; and when one of such a character is removed, another such slow process—the accumulation of many years—is necessary before it can be replaced. There is nothing more valuable in society than this; there is nothing more difficult to replace. A city burned may be built again. Soon the rubbish will be cleared away; the streets be widened and straitened; long lines of dwellings and warehous-

es rise from the ruins, and a busy population there again drive on the affairs of commerce, of manufacture, of trade. Fields visited with drought are soon fresh and green again. The hills and valleys are clothed with verdure and flocks, the grain falls before the reaper, and the wains groan heavily laden with sheaves. From the fields where armies have encamped or fought; where the harvest has been trodden down by passing and repassing legions, where the torch has made everything desolate, all traces of the war are soon removed; for trees are planted, and the harvests grow, and the earth is rendered fertile by blood, and the little mounds of earth which marked the place where brave men fell and died, are leveled also, and the plough passes over Marathon, and Waterloo, and Antietam, as it did before.

But though the useful man, the preacher, the pastor, the man of experience, the man of eloquence, is no more among the living, yet he is not lost to the universe, nor in a higher sphere, to the cause to which he devoted his life. There is an aggregate; a collection; a gain to the universe which constitutes *heaven*—for heaven is made up of all that is redeemed from earth. The results of all the wisdom, experience, and moral worth of earth are there, and what is gathered there will shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever.

The Rev. Thomas Brainerd was born in Leyden, in Lewis County, in the State of New York, on the 17th of June, 1804. He belonged to the family of Brainerds rendered illustrious by the life and labors of David Brainerd, missionary to the Indians; a man known and honored in other lands as well as in our own, and to be known and honored as a man endowed with the true spirit of a martyr in all coming time. The ancestor of this entire family was a little boy who was brought from Exeter, in England, in 1649, named Daniel Brainerd. He came with the 'Wyllis' family, one of the most affluent and respectable in Harford, Connecticut, and remained in that family till he was twenty-one years of age.

At that age, he with twenty-seven others, young men of his

own age, went about thirty miles below Hartford, and selected for settlement, a tract of land twelve miles square, comprehending nearly equal portions on each side of the Connecticut river, and founded the town of Haddam. That poor boy, reared as a farmer, became a prosperous, an influential, and a very respectable man. He was the greatest landholder in Haddam, he aided in establishing the first church in Haddam; almost the first year of the settlement he was chosen as a deacon in the church, and "wisely laid the foundation of his family hopes in the fear of God." It is said that "at least thirty-three thousand persons in the United States have looked back to that lone boy as the head of their family." His influence as a man; and as a Christian, has been deeply felt in each subsequent generation. Not a few of those descended from him have occupied a high position in the church and in the state.*

The father of Dr. Brainerd was a respectable farmer; a pious man; somewhat prone to depression of spirits; a man who trained his family in the fear of God. Of the early years of Dr. Brainerd, and of the exact training in the family, we have little direct knowledge. I have referred to his ancestors to show that he inherited some of the best blood which has gone into the formation of the New England character, and with a view of explaining, in some measure, what his own subsequent life was, for much of that same spirit which actuated the founder of the family, and which has distinguished the family in its various branches, entered into his own character.

In respect to his own early training, I cannot be wrong in supposing that his account, in his life of John Brainerd, of the ordinary course of training in the family of the Brainerds, in accordance with the general course of family discipline in New England, was derived from what occurred substantially in his own father's house. At any rate, his own subsequent character and life can be best explained on the supposition that

* Life of John Brainerd, pp. 24-30.

this was the kind of training under which he was reared. As the account in itself is instructive; as it may be presumed that it expressed his own views on the subject of the discipline of a family; and as I think it cannot but be useful to bring it before the congregation in this form at this time, I will copy a portion of the description.

“ We had enforced on us in early life, with too little effect, we fear, many of the principles which formed the characters of David and John Brainerd one hundred and fifty years ago.

“ A boy was early taught a profound respect for his parents, teachers, and guardians, and implicit, prompt obedience. If he undertook to rebel, his will was broken by persistent and adequate punishment. He was accustomed every morning and evening to bow at the family altar; and the Bible was his ordinary reading-book in school. He was never allowed to close his eyes in sleep without prayer on his pillow.

“ At a sufficient age, no caprice, slight illness, or any condition of roads or weather, was allowed to detain him from church. In the sanctuary he was required to be grave, strictly attentive, and able on his return at least to give the text. From sundown Saturday evening until the Sabbath sunset, his sports were all suspended, and all secular reading laid aside, while the Bible, the New England Primer, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Baxter's Saint's Rest, &c., were commended to his ready attention and cheerfully pored over.

“ He was taught that his blessings were abundant and undeserved, his evils relatively few and merited, and that he was not only bound to contentment, but gratitude. He was taught that time was a talent to be always improved; that industry was a cardinal virtue, and laziness the worst form of original sin. Hence he must rise early, and make himself useful before he went to school; must be diligent there in study, and be promptly home to do 'chores' at evening. His whole time out of school must be filled up by some service—such as bringing in fuel for the day, cutting potatoes for the sheep, feeding the swine, watering the horses, picking the berries, gathering the vegetables, spooling the yarn, and running all

errands. He was expected never to be reluctant, and not often tired.

“He was taught that it was a sin to find fault with his meals, his apparel, his tasks, or his lot in life. Labor he was not allowed to regard as a burden, nor abstinence from any improper indulgence as a hardship. His clothes, woolen and linen, for summer and winter, were mostly spun, woven, and made up by his mother and sisters at home; and, as he saw the whole laborious process of their fabrication, he was jubilant and grateful for two suits, with bright buttons, a year. Rents were carefully closed and holes patched in the ‘every day’ dress, and the Sabbath dress always kept new and fresh.

“He was expected early to have the ‘stops and marks,’ the ‘abbreviations,’ the ‘multiplication table,’ the ‘ten commandments,’ the ‘Lord’s Prayer,’ and the ‘Shorter Catechism,’ at his tongue’s end.

“Courtesy was enjoined as a duty. He must be silent among his superiors. If addressed by older persons, he must respond with a bow. He was to bow as he entered and left the school, and bow to every man or woman, old or young, rich or poor, black or white, whom he met on the road. Special punishment was visited on him if he failed to show respect to the aged, the poor, the colored, or to any persons whatever whom God had visited with infirmities. He was thus taught to stand in awe of the rights of humanity.

“Honesty was urged as a religious duty, and unpaid debts were represented as infamy. He was allowed to be sharp at a bargain, to shudder at dependence, but still to prefer poverty, to deception or fraud. His industry was not urged by poverty but by duty. Those who imposed upon him early responsibility and restraint led the way by their example, and commended this example by the prosperity of their fortunes and the respectability of their position as the result of their virtues. He felt that they governed and restrained him for his good, and not their own.

“He learned to identify himself with the interests he was set to promote. He claimed every acre of his father’s ample farm,

and every horse and ox and cow and sheep became constructively his, and he had a name for each. The waving harvests, the garnered sheaves, the gathered fruits, were all his own. And besides these, he had his individual treasures. He knew every trout hole in the streams; he was great in building dams, snaring rabbits, trapping squirrels, and gathering chestnuts and walnuts for winter store. Days of election, training, thanksgiving, and school-intermissions were bright spots in his life. His long winter evenings, made cheerful by sparkling fires within, and cold clear skies, and ice-crueted plains, and frozen streams for his sled and skates, were full of enjoyment. And then he was loved by those whom he could respect, and cheered by that future for which he was being prepared. Religion he was taught to regard as a necessity and luxury, as well as a duty. He was daily brought into contemplation of the Infinite, and made to regard himself as ever on the brink of an endless being. With a deep sense of obligation, a keen sensitive conscience, and a tender heart, the great truths of religion appeared in his eye as sublime, awful, practical realities, compared with which earth was nothing. Thus he was made brave before men for the right, while he lay in the dust before God.

“Such was Haddam training one hundred years ago. Some may lift their hands in horror at this picture, but it was a process which made moral heroes. It exhibited a society in which wealth existed without idleness or profligacy; social elevation without arrogance; labor without degradation; and a piety which by its energy and martyr endurance, could shake the world.

“We are not to suppose that boyhood passed under these influences was gloomy or joyless: far from it. Its activity was bliss; its growth was a spring of life; its achievements were victories. Each day garnered some benefit; and rising life, marked by successive accumulations, left a smile on the conscience and bright and reasonable hopes for the future.

“We might have desired that this Puritan training had left childhood a little larger indulgence—had looked with interest

at present enjoyment as well as at future good,—had smiled a little more lovingly on the innocent gambols, the ringing laughter, the irrepressible mirth of boyhood ; and had frowned less severely on imperfections clinging to human nature itself. We might think that, by insisting too much on obligation and too little on privilege,—too much on the law and too little on the gospel,—too much on the severity and too little on the goodness of the Deity,—the conscience may have been stimulated at the expense of the affections, and men fitted for another world at an unnecessary sacrifice of their amiability and happiness in the present life.

“ But in leaving this Puritan training, the world had ‘gone farther and fared worse.’ To repress the iniquity of the age and land, to save the young men for themselves, their country and their God, I believe we shall gain most, not by humoring childhood’s caprices and sneering at strict households, strict governments, and strict Sabbaths, but by going back to many of the modes which gave to the world such men as John Hampden, William Bradford, Jonathan Edwards, Timothy Dwight, and David and John Brainerd.”*

In seeking for those elements which entered into the character of Dr. Brainerd, and those influences which made him what he was, it is important to bear this method of early training in the family in remembrance. At the same time, I could say nothing more appropriate on this occasion, and nothing that would be more useful, than to let Dr. Brainerd himself thus speak on a subject so important as the proper training of the young.

The leading events of his life are soon told. What prompted him to leave his early home, and to enter on the study of the law, I know not. He did, however, what was very common in the part of the country where he was raised. At the age of seventeen, in the year 1821, he left his home to teach school, for the purpose of obtaining the means of a professional education. After teaching about three years, he commenced the

*Life of John Brainerd, pp. 45—49.

study of law, in the village of Rome, in the county of Oneida, first with Alanson Bennett, Esq., and then with the Hon. Henry A. Foster, and the Hon. Chester Hayden.

In the meantime, however, and near the close of those preparatory studies, an important event had occurred, which led to an entire change of his purpose of life. It was in that vicinity that the Rev. Charles G. Finney, who had himself been a lawyer, began his labors in the ministry, and his most marked early success as a preacher occurred in that place in a revival of religion of great power. In that revival, nearly every merchant, almost every lawyer, and almost every man of influence, was converted, and among the converts was young Brainerd. His course of life, up to that time, had been moral and correct. He had been preserved from vices to which all are exposed in early life; and in his case there had been one instance, at least, in which he had been preserved from danger of ruin, by an event which bears a strong resemblance to the manner in which Dr. Paley was saved from a similar danger, and with a like perception of his early promise. "You are a great fool," said a friend to young Paley, when he saw him yielding to temptations and becoming the companion of young men of dissipation. "You," said he, "have talents, which may raise you to eminence, if you will cultivate them. These young men, your companions, have not, and it is of little consequence what becomes of them." Paley took the hint so roughly given, forsook his companions, and placed his name among those which are most eminent in English literature. In the public house where young Brainerd boarded, there was a number of young men who spent their nights in drinking and carousing. On one of those evenings, young Brainerd happened to be among them. The keeper of the house went into the room and said, "Brainerd, you had better go to bed. Those young men are going to ruin. But you were born for better purposes." He, too, took the hint, and was ever afterward saved from the temptation. No man through life was a more thorough temperance man than he was.

I am ignorant of the mental exercises through which he passed at that time. I know only that he became a member of the church in Rome, in 1825; that he at once abandoned his profession; that he chose the profession of the ministry without hesitation; and that his conversion changed the entire current of his life. With a view to secure the means of prosecuting his theological studies, he spent a year in teaching in Philadelphia. During that time he was connected with the church of the Rev. James Patterson, and entered heartily with him into every measure for promoting the interests of religion in the northern part of the city.

In October, 1828, he entered the Theological Seminary in Andover, and graduated there in the class of 1831. He was ordained as an evangelist in New York, October 7th, 1831, and went immediately to the West, as a home missionary. In December of that year he was settled as pastor of the Fourth Church in Cincinnati, where he labored two years. In March, 1833, he became editor of the *Cincinnati Journal*, which he conducted, together with the *Youth's Magazine*, until the autumn of 1836, nearly four years. During that period he assisted the Rev. Dr. Beecher as a preacher in the Second Presbyterian Church of that city, an event which laid the foundation of mutual confidence and affection for life. In October, 1836, he was called to the pastoral charge of the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, where he commenced his labors February 1st, 1837. His pastoral life here embraced a period of just about thirty years—as eventful years in the history of the Church and of our own country as any that have occurred since we became a nation. The history of those years is familiar to you all.

I have referred, with a special design, to the fact that Dr. Brainerd was converted under the preaching of the Rev. Charles G. Finney; that he was early associated in labor with the Rev. James Patterson; and that he was more intimately, and for a longer time, associated with Dr. Lyman Beecher; for it was by the influence of these men and their preaching, more than by any other cause, perhaps unconsciously to him.

self, that his character as a preacher was formed. Perhaps no three men could be named whose character and mode of preaching would be more likely to influence a mind like his. He himself was indeed original. He copied no one. He probably never set any man before him as a model; he transferred to himself in no perceptible manner, the language, the modes of thought, or the theological opinions of another man; but there was, if I mistake not, a silent influence of great power which went forth from his early connection with those men, which greatly affected his subsequent character as a preacher and pastor. Two of these men have passed away; hundreds, perhaps thousands, will bless the name of each one of them forever, as the instrument, under God, of their conversion.

Charles G. Finney.—Dr. Brainerd's earliest religious impressions were probably received from him. Mr. Finney had himself been a lawyer, and would have been distinguished as a lawyer if he had continued to pursue that profession. Not always safe in his theological opinions, and not having been trained to great thoroughness in theological learning, he was, nevertheless, a man of great power in showing to men the danger of false hopes; in setting forth the real nature of religion; in driving men from their subterfuges and refuges of lies; in proclaiming the terrors of the law and the fearfulness of the world to come; in laying open to men the delusions of their own hearts; and above all, in proclaiming the majesty of God and the greatness of eternal things, and in making all things else dwindle to nothingness before the Eternal One, and the eternal world. Few men in our country have been as well fitted to act on the higher order of minds, or to bring men, proud in their philosophy or their own righteousness, to the foot of the cross.

James Patterson.—Not graceful in manner; not polished in sentences and periods; not aiming at beauty of style; and not courting the praises of men—with a keen eye that penetrated the soul; with a tall and impressive form; with unpolished but most forcible gestures; with an earnestness of manner that showed that his whole soul was on fire; never awed by the

fear of any man; ready to do good in any way, whether in approved or unapproved modes, if the hearts of men could be reached; at home, alike in the fields, in the highways, and in the sanctuary; preaching everywhere; talking everywhere; praying everywhere; most fearful in his warnings of sinners, most terrible in portraying the wrath to come, and yet most affable, genial, pleasant in his intercourse with men—he lived and labored for the sole purpose of converting men. He had an unwavering faith in revivals of religion, and his ministry was made up of successive revivals rapidly following each other, bringing great multitudes into the kingdom of God.

Dr. Lyman Beecher.—Than he there has been, in our country, no man more eloquent in the pulpit; no man that could make a more effective use of the Anglo-Saxon language. Clear, rapid, discriminating; placing truth in a few words in the light of a sunbeam; rising often to the highest flights of oratory; often exhibiting the most beautiful poetic conceptions in language most expressive of those conceptions; and then, as with a sledge-hammer, driving great thoughts through the soul until you were penetrated through and through with them; piling on arguments until you were crushed and weary; not always equal, and sometimes falling so low that you wondered where was the great power of the man—but even then in what seemed to be tame, and dull, and sombre, like a dull day, by some new and startling thought suddenly illuminating all as by a flash from the heavens—he labored, too, for revivals of religion. I have sat while he was urging great thoughts through my soul till I was weary and could bear no more. His eye was then eloquent. The adjusting of his spectacles was eloquent; his whole manner was eloquent. He sought revivals as the glorious triumph of the Gospel; and his great thoughts and his keen words were designed to secure this result. There has been but one man in this country that understood the Saxon part of our language as well as Dr. Beecher—Daniel Webster.

Dr. Brainerd, whether he was conscious of any influence from

these sources or not, carried much of all this into his subsequent life ; and his style of public speaking was formed much on these models. He would have risen high in the profession which he had first chosen. He had been endowed with those talents which we naturally associate with the best efforts at the bar—a deep knowledge of human nature ; a quick perception of the point at issue ; power of disentangling that from all other points ; skill in debate ; abundance of illustration and of anecdote ; the power of perceiving the weak points of an adversary and the strong points of his own cause ; keenness of sarcasm and invective, if necessary ; the power of anticipating the point of defence of an adversary ; readiness in summoning to his memory all that he knew ; and a power seldom equalled of showing the heinousness of guilt, and the evils of a violation of law.

Dr. Brainerd's power eminently was that of a public speaker—a public speaker in regular and set discourses, but perhaps more strikingly in debate. His early opportunities of scholarship had not been great, and the state of his health and his abundant public duties and his active life had prevented his greatly enlarging his scholarship. He had, indeed, by reading, by observation, by conversation, stored his mind with a great amount of information on the subjects most important for him to know ; but it did not pertain, in any remarkable degree, to either scientific or literary subjects. Of information to be derived from the daily press, perhaps no man surpassed him ; of information derived from observation and a keen sagacity, there were none of his brethren who were his equals. His literary labors were mostly confined, with one exception, which I shall have occasion to notice, to a few sermons, to a few articles in our Quarterly Review, and to the newspaper press. To the latter, alike by his taste and by his conviction that in this way truth could be best promulgated, regulating the public mind and correcting public errors, he contributed much ; and there are few men, even of those devoted to the newspaper press, that could reach the public in this way in a more timely, sagacious, and effective manner.

As a public speaker, alike in the pulpit and in deliberative bodies, with no particular advantage of manner, but with much, arising from his nervous temperament, that would seem to promise little, he yet had a power which few men possess. In preaching, he often plunged at once into the middle of his subject, and made most direct and earnest appeals to the reason and conscience; in debate, he seized at once upon the real point in question, and pressed that with a power of argument, with a fervor of language, with an amplitude of illustration, and with a severity of invective and sarcasm, if necessary, which few men have ever exhibited in debate. His language in his public discourses, whether extemporaneous or written, was as nearly perfect as possible; and often his happiest efforts—efforts seldom surpassed—were in extemporaneous address. No man could use the English language better; from the lips of no one could fall more pertinent and fit words; more complete sentences; more beautiful figures; more striking illustrations. In description, in statement, in argument, in warning, in appeal, in invective, his language presented the best forms of our Anglo-Saxon tongue. Often in a public assembly—in such a vast concourse as was assembled in the great hall in 1857—when the interest of the meeting languished, a few words from him roused the vast assembly; when the course of things was taking an unprofitable direction, a few remarks from him, with no reflection cast on others, changed the current of remark and feeling, and gave in a moment, a new aspect to the course of things.

When he fell so suddenly by death, there occurred that of which the prophet Isaiah speaks as a great public calamity, when God takes away "the eloquent orator;" or, as it is expressed more appropriately in the margin, and with an eminent adapt- edness to his case, "*the skillful of speech.*" Isa. iii, 3. No words could better describe Dr. Brainerd's eloquence than to say that he was "skillful of speech;" none could better represent the impression which his eloquence made on his hearers. No man could hear him, in his happiest moods, without being impressed with the force and beauty of our own

English tongue, and the greatness of the endowment of being able to speak in such words for truth and for God.

For the endowment of being "skillful of speech" is one of God's great gifts to man ; one of the noblest and the most marvelous of our talents ; one which, as much as any other, alike in the original power and in the highest forms of that power, shows the Creator's greatness and wisdom. No philosopher has been able to explain how man at first learned to speak ; none could teach man to speak if God had not taught Adam ; none who deny the miraculous agency of the Creator can explain how it is.

And it is worthy of such an origin as it had. Alike in the daily intercourse of life, in our business, in our enjoyments, and in all the great purposes of Divine Providence in the advancement of the interests of the world, it shows itself worthy of such an origin. For speech has been connected with all the purposes of justice. It has been a prime agent in the defence of liberty. It has been identified with the triumphs of religion and the salvation of souls. Speech in the Senate house ; speech in the hall of justice ; speech before a battle ; speech in a pulpit has been identified with all the triumphs of justice, liberty and religion in the world. There is no power like the power of Demosthenes, Cicero, Burke, Chatham, Webster. It sways the passions, and the will, and the intellect, and the imaginations of men, as the trees of the forest are moved by the mighty winds, and, more than to the power of arms in battle, is the progress of the world to be traced to the power of language.

It is most noble, and reaches its highest and most distinct results, when employed in proclaiming the Gospel to men. The pulpit is its loftiest place, and there the purposes of God in speech are most signally accomplished. In defending the truth of God, in proclaiming his will, in publishing the great facts of redemption, in persuading men to turn from sin, in making known the realities of eternity, in inviting a lost race to the cross—that is its highest office and its sublimest employment. Paul on Mars' Hill, in proclaiming the Gospel, was

greater than Demosthenes thundering against Phillip ; Whitfield at the collieries, was greater in the results of his speaking, than Burke in the splendors of Westminster Hall on the trial of Warren Hastings, or than Patrick Henry when he summoned the American colonies to freedom.

The success of Dr. Brainerd as a pastor depended not only on the character of his preaching, but, in a large degree, on his character as a man. His frank, open, genial manners ; the fact that he was accessible at all times ; his affability ; the interest which he took in the wants of others ; his sympathy with the poor, the sick, and the bereaved ; his happy addresses on funeral occasions ; and especially his appreciation of the feelings, the aspirations, and the strugglings of young men, contributed in an eminent degree to this, and, to an unusual extent, he retained these characteristics in advancing years, when he had reached a period of three-score. From any thing that appears, his preaching, and his mode of intercourse with the young, was as attractive in his last years, as it had been at any former period of his life. Probably at no period of his life were there more young men, in proportion to the whole number in attendance on his ministry, than in his last years, and it was one of the things that eminently gladdened his heart, in all the discouragements from the position of his church—which he felt indeed keenly—that while numbers of his best families were removing in the general tide that was, and is, setting to other parts of the city, he was still drawing around him the young, the enterprising, and the prosperous, just as they were forming their character, to sustain this ancient and venerable church.

Dr. Brainerd, as a pastor, had one peculiarity in his labors and plans, which it is not improper to advert to, as it, in his case, was attended with marked success. It was, that while he labored earnestly for revivals of religion, and relied on such works of grace in promoting the progress of religion, he looked for the most marked success at a certain season of the year. The ordinary labors of the autumn and winter were almost uniformly followed by special efforts,

mostly in the form of protracted meetings, in the close of the winter, and the beginning of the spring ; and then he hoped to gather, as in a harvest, the result of the labors of the year. These efforts were almost uniformly successful, and a large portion of those received into the church, during his ministry here, were admitted at that season of the year. At such times his own labors and anxieties were so exhausting as to make, in his case, the ordinary rest to which pastors, with other men, look forward in the Summer months, absolutely indispensable.

Dr. Brainerd was a man whose labors and influence could not be confined to his own particular church, or to his own denomination, or to religion alone. He was not made to be a mere "parish minister," and the churches of our own denomination here and elsewhere, and the cause of religion in general, and the interests of patriotism and the country, owe much to his zeal, his talents, his large catholic spirit, and his patriotism.

Philadelphia, and especially our own denomination, owes much to his counsels, and to his persevering efforts, in the establishment of the churches which have been organized here since he became pastor of this church.*

*In his "Quarter Century" Sermon, delivered nearly five years ago, he makes the following reference among other things, to what he had done in this respect:

"During my ministry here, I have been called to deliver an address at the laying of the corner stone of Calvary Church, Olivet Church, Walnut Street Church, W. P., German Street Church, Rising Sun Church, Norriton Church, Reeseville Church, Camden Church, O. S. Church at Bridesburgh, Third Church, Elizabethtown, N. J., Central Church, Wilmington, Del., Rev. Mr. Dunning's Church, Baltimore and others.

"By order of Presbytery, I organized Calvary Church, Green Hill Church, Rising Sun Church, Camden Church, Beverly Church, and some others. I was also present in the little circle which planned the establishment of the Presbyterian House; now a treasure to our denomination. The *Presbyterian Quarterly Review* originated in a council of the late Dr. Gilbert, Dr. Parker, Rev. Mr. Barnes, and myself.

"I have preached at the installation of the Rev. Dr. Jenkins, Calvary Church; Rev. Dr. Darling, Clinton street; Rev. Dr. Patton, Western Church, Rev. Mr. Gould, Norristown; Rev. Mr. Mears, Camden; Rev. Mr. Bliss, Beverly; Rev. Mr. Eva, Kensington; and of some others which I do not now recall, as I keep no journal. I have never coveted these services, but have always shrunk from them when duty would permit."

The renovation of this church was owing very much to his conviction of the necessity of such renovation, that it might maintain the position which it had long held, and to his personal efforts.*

The Green Hill church had its origin entirely in his convictions of the necessity of such a church in that part of the city. His own residence, for seven years, owing to feeble health, was in that part of what is now the city, but what was then a suburb, lying quite beyond the city, but which he saw would soon demand a church of our denomination. The lot on which the church stands was secured by him, and a considerable part of the funds for building the church, was raised by his own personal efforts †

To him almost entirely it is owing that the Clinton street church is now connected with our denomination. It was about to pass from the congregational denomination to other hands, and that it did *not* pass to a denomination in no way connected with us, is to be ascribed to his determination of purpose. He formed the plan of securing it to our denomination, and he and the Rev. Anson Rood, by personal solicitations and efforts, secured the amount necessary to carry out the purpose.

The Calvary church owes its establishment much to his efforts, and to his counsels, and it may be safely said, that if it had not been for his efforts, and for his remarkable influence over men of wealth, this enterprise would never have been carried through. Forty meetings were held, sometimes protracted to a late hour in the night, in consultation on the plan, and in efforts to secure its success. From those meetings he was almost

* Of this he says in his "Quarter Century" Sermon.

"When I came to this church edifice it was barn like in its aspects. We had no Vestibule; no Lecture, Sunday School, nor Business rooms. Our weekly lectures were held in the great dimly-lighted church; our Sunday School in the high galleries and high-backed pews. We have not dwelt in ceiled houses, and allowed the house of our God 'to lie desolate.' By the appropriation of thirty thousand dollars, all paid, you have made this edifice worthy of the age and the cause to which it is devoted."

† He says in his "Quarter century" Sermon, that he 'gave two months of successful labor towards erecting the Gothic edifice on Girard avenue.'

never absent ; and in all that was doubtful about it, he never lost his confidence in it, or faltered in his own purpose that it should be accomplished. Often did his voice rouse and animate those assembled, when desponding or doubtful; and often did his appeals, and his ready wit—even when there was some hazard of giving offence in such appeals—create new zeal in the cause. He could say things which others could not have said without giving offence. On one occasion, when the whole enterprise seemed to hang in doubt, he rose and said with deep gravity and solemnity : “ Gentlemen, there are certain christian graces which those in your condition have never had the privilege of exercising. The grace of submission in times of poverty the grace of a deep sense of dependence on God for your daily bread ; the grace which they exercise who, at the head of a family, see their children crying for bread; and the grace needed to sustain the heart in the night-watches, when a man does not know where provision is to come from to supply the morning meal—these and similar graces of the Christian, you have never had the opportunity of exercising ; and probably never will. The grace which you are called upon to exercise is that which arises from the right use of property—from devoting it to God in promoting his cause ; from doing what is necessary to be done to secure the spread of religion around you—and if you do not do this, *the Lord have mercy on your souls*”. Any man might well have hesitated as to what would be the effect of such an appeal. From some men it would have been received with cold silence, or would have stirred up wrath. There was, indeed, at the close of this singular speech, a momentary silence, and then all present burst out into a loud laugh—and his object was accomplished.

To his efforts, also, associated with the members of this church and congregation, it is owing that the German Street church has been completed, and has been retained to our denomination, and at the time of his death he had projected a new enterprise in the extreme South-eastern part of the city, with an ultimate reference to the establishment of a church.

Dr. Brainred, though he was a decided Calvinist in his doc-

trinal views, and a thorough Presbyterian in his convictions on the proper mode of the organization and government of the church ; and though in all that long conflict which has been waged with the other ' Branch' of our denomination—alike in the trial of Dr. Beecher, for heresy, when he was associated with him as a preacher; in the debates of the General Assembly previous to the division, of which he was a member;* in the division of the church in 1838 ; and in all the long period since, now nearly thirty years, he has been thoroughly identified, on the firmest conviction of truth and justice, with our branch of the church, true to its rights, to its principles, and to its interests, yet he was not a bigoted man, or a man who regarded all the interests of truth, of religion, and of humanity, as confined to his own denomination. In the Temperance cause ; in Union Prayer meetings; in promoting the interests of religion in general ; in public matters, he did not make it a subject of enquiry whether they were controlled by Presbyterians, or whether his own denomination was to acquire strength or credit as being prominent in such public movements. As long as the great prayer meetings in Jayne's Hall shall be remembered, Dr. Brainerd will be remembered as having, with that holy man of the Baptist denomination, Dr. Kennard, and Dudley Tyng, of the Episcopal, both now with him before the throne of the same Saviour, contributed as much as any other man to the interest and the success of the meeting.

It occurred before his death that there was an opportunity of evincing, in a manner such as there has never before been an opportunity of evincing, the love of country; and in that fearful struggle of four years, all that was the proper fruit of his early training, and of the Puritan doctrine which he had been taught to believe, and all that was generous, large-hearted

* He was a member of the General Assembly in May, 1866, the year before the " Excluding Acts," leading to the division of the church were passed. His being a member of the Assembly that year was the immediate occasion of his being employed during the Summer as a stated supply in the Pine Street church, which resulted in his being called to the church as its Pastor.

and patriotic in his nature, was fully developed. He felt, as few even then felt, that all that was dear to liberty was at stake. He felt more keenly than most men feel the evil of treason and rebellion. He appreciated in the highest degree the blessings of liberty for which our fathers fought in the war of Independence, and anticipated with more apprehension than most men did the evils which would result if the rebellion should be successful. He was not formed to be a military man, and he was too old, and his health too much impaired, even if his position had not prevented it, to join in the active defence of his country. But he could defend by his eloquent appeals the righteous cause; he could denounce in such burning words as few men could use the evils of treason and rebellion; he could stimulate and animate his own people in sustaining the government; he could encourage his own young men to give themselves to the service of their country; he could counsel and animate them as they left their homes for the field of strife, perhaps not to return again; he could meet the soldier on his way to the battle-field at the "Refreshment Room," and encourage him in his purpose, and could greet him again on his return, weary, or sick, or wounded, and minister to his wants; and he could visit the great hospitals of our city, as a minister of consolation to impart comfort to the wounded, the sick, and the dying. And it was done; done as this work was done by no other pastor in this city. For four years he was under as intense excitement as his physical frame could bear:—an excitement unintermitted by day and by night, wearing on his exhausted nervous system, perhaps hastening the event which we mourn to-day. From this intense excitement he found no rest, no intermission—until that eventful night when the news ran through the city that "General Lee and his army had surrendered." Then thousands crowded the streets. Then the sound of joy and rejoicing was heard every where. Then tears of joy flowed freely. Then men met men as they had not done for four years before. Then, in as sublime a scene as our country has witnessed, thousands of voices spontaneously joined in front of the building where the Decla-

ration of Independence was made, in singing to Old Hundred,

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,”

and then—who could have done it more appropriately than he—Dr. Brainerd led the vast multitude in expressing thanks to God.

Beyond his newspaper labors, a few sermons, a few tracts and a few articles in our Presbyterian Quarterly—of which he was one of the founders, and of which he continued to be one of the editors to the time of his death, Dr. Brainerd’s published productions are not numerous. It is remarkable, and it was singularly appropriate, that the only literary work of considerable magnitude in which he engaged, was the Life of a member of the Brainerd family, who was comparatively unknown, and who died seventy years since: a modest, earnest, humble, patient, and laborious missionary. The name of *David Brainerd* was known as far as that of any man in modern times who has engaged in the work of missions. That name has been most influential in promoting the present movement in the work of converting the world. More than perhaps by any other man, the character of Henry Martyn had been formed, and his zeal awakened, by the character and life of David Brainerd. But the name of *John*, his brother and his successor, not less pious and devoted to his Master’s cause, was little known. He had labored in obscurity; he had not been remarkably successful in his work among the Indians; he had become an humble pastor in an obscure church; and he had died with no one as yet to record his worth, and to perpetuate the record of his labors.

It occurred to Dr. Brainerd to endeavor to rescue from forgetfulness what could be recovered respecting his life and labors, and to hold him up, also, as an example to the church and the world. To this work he gave the leisure of the last years of his life. On that work he bestowed a great amount of labor, in correspondence and in traveling, and gathered all that there was to be gathered, alike in this country and in Europe, in memory of a man little known, and over whose remains for

nearly seventy years there was not even a stone to mark the place of his rest; for whom, as Dr. Brainard remarked, "no Gazette heralded his departure, no orator gave him an eulogy, and no generous appreciation raised him a monument."*

This work, most happily executed, and which furnishes a ground for regret that its author gave no more to the world through the press, might be appropriately considered as the biography of three men of rare piety and usefulness. *David Brainerd*, a sketch of whose life is necessarily given to prepare the way for the notice of his brother and successor, *John*, the obscure and unknown, but faithful missionary; and the *author himself*. Some of Dr. Brainerd's best thoughts, and some of the happiest specimens of his writing, and specimens that will compare favorably with any others found in our best writers, occur in that volume. As a specimen of his style and manner, and as an illustration of the remark which I have just made, I will copy a single paragraph, alike for its own beauty, and for the justness of its reflections.

"In moving into the future, it is the destiny of man to move into relative darkness. Every individual human advance is an adventure in paths dim, difficult, and perilous, never yet trodden; an experiment of labors and perils not yet endured, of responsibilities yet to be discharged, and of aims and elevations yet to be surmounted. No wonder that in these circumstances man looks around him to inquire 'Has any one mapped out the way? Has any one successfully threaded the difficult and dreary paths? Has any one borne the labors and overcome the dangers? Has any one scaled the heights, and laid his hand on the proffered prize?'"

"The martial spirit is kept alive by the great names and achievements of its heroes: its Cæsars, Wellingtons, and Napoleons. Science renews its energy in communion with the names of its Galileos, Lockes, and Newtons. Men are brave to strike for human freedom under the shelter of the great examples of Hampden, Cromwell, and Washington. The bio-

**Life of John Brainard*, pp. 434, 435.

ographies of the eminent dead not only furnish illustrations of what the living may be, and do, and dare ; they not only lift men above the crowd to a higher estimate of human capacity and power ; they do more through the social principles by which one is set to imitate the good works which he contemplates in others. The church of God has always availed itself of these principles of our nature ; and while war has cherished its heroes, and science its devotees, christianity has wisely embalmed the memory of her great teachers, her saints, and her martyrs. It is well it is so ; for, however dwarfed may be the present age in any grace or attainment, the true and growing christian can find solace, sympathy, and companionship with the more excellent men and things of the past," pp. 10, 11.*

It was also a remarkable—can we suppose it to have been otherwise than a Providential arrangement—that the last public service of Dr. Brainerd should have had reference to the name which he himself bore, and that it should have occurred in the very place, "The Forks of the Delaware," where these brothers—David and John whose memory he had thus contributed to perpetuate and embalm, had successively labored. A church had been founded at Easton,† called the "Brainerd church," in honor of the labors of David Brainerd, and he was invited to address the "Brainerd Missionary Society" in that church. It was his closing work on earth. Feeble, then; with a trembling frame; with a voice so weak as scarcely to be audible ; under the influence of a state of body which was in a few weeks to remove him from earth, he performed his last public services there on earth, and finished the labors of a life spent in eminent usefulness in the church of God.‡

* For similar specimens of beautiful writing, and of valuable sentiments, I may refer to pp. 88-91 ; 93-95 ; 102, 103 ; 122.

† On the Missionary Field of David Brainerd.

‡ That sermon has been published under the title, "The last sermon of the Rev. Thomas Brainerd, D. D." It is on the text, "Let no man despise thy youth."

Like David Brainerd, and like most of his family, he was a man subject to depression of spirits ; and he apprehended much, as his own father had suffered much, in the closing scene of life. He apprehended paralysis, perhaps months or years of helplessness, and at the same time months or years of mental darkness and depression. From both these he was mercifully preserved. In a moment, almost in the twinkling of an eye, without any thing unusual to excite apprehension or alarm, without pain, without consciousness, he was taken from earth to heaven. Could the warmest affection for him have ordered the circumstances of his death more mercifully or kindly ?*

I trust that it will not be regarded as inappropriate, in conclusion, to refer, in a word, to my own personal feelings, and my own sense of loss, when he was so suddenly taken away. Never before have I so felt that I stood alone on the shores of the great ocean of eternity, as I felt then, and why should not the personal friendship of so many years be allowed to utter its feelings, in sympathy with a mourning congregation, on an occasion like this ?

Why should not the memory of other days come over my soul here ? Why should I not speak of the loss which I have sustained as well as you ? Why should I not be permitted, while I speak of his public life, also to bear my testimony to him as a warm hearted, true, generous, sincere, and affectionate friend ? For, for an unusual period in human life—for thirty years—we were united in such intimacy and friendship as rarely exists on earth, and is still more rarely prolonged for such a period :—for we lived and labored side by side ; we took sweet counsel together ; we traveled together ; we prayed together ; we rejoiced together ; we mourned together. We had no envies, jealousies, or heart-burnings, and there was nothing to be forgiven on either side when he died. We rejoiced each in the success of the other as if it were his own success—for it was success in the cause which we both loved, and in the advancement of that Master's

* He died at Scranton, Pennsylvania, August 21, 1866.

kingdom which we were both endeavoring to promote. When he was buried, I felt as if half of myself was in that coffin, and was committed to that grave—how could I help it? I have younger friends among my brethren, dear to my heart, and securing daily more and more my affections, but you must approach the period where the ominous number “ threescore and ten” is not remote, to understand how a man feels when the friend of thirty years—and such a friend—is committed to the tomb.





