

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

PAUL RAMSEY, ed., *Freedom of the Will*
JOHN E. SMITH, ed., *Religious Affections*
CLYDE A. HOLBROOK, ed., *Original Sin*

JONATHAN EDWARDS

The Great Awakening

A FAITHFUL NARRATIVE
THE DISTINGUISHING MARKS
SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE REVIVAL
LETTERS RELATING TO THE REVIVAL
PREFACE TO TRUE RELIGION BY JOSEPH BELLAMY

EDITED BY C. C. GOEN

PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY
WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

New Haven and London

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1972

A Faithful
NARRATIVE
OF THE
Surprizing Work of GOD
IN THE
CONVERSION
OF

Many HUNDRED SOULS in *Northampton*,
and the Neighbouring Towns and
Villages of ~~New-Hampshire~~ in *New-
England*.

In a LETTER to the Rev^d. Dr. BENJAMIN
COLMAN of *Boston*.

Written by the Rev^d. Mr. EDWARDS, Minister of
Northampton, on *Nov. 6. 1736*

And Published,

With a Large PREFACE,
By Dr. WATTS and Dr. GUYSE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN OSWALD, at the *Rose and Crown*, in
the *Poultry*, near *Stocks-Market*. M.DCC.XXXVII.

Price stich'd 1s. Bound in Calf-Leather, 1s. 6d.

A Faithful
NARRATIVE
OF THE
Surprizing Work of GOD
IN THE
CONVERSION
OF

Many HUNDRED SOULS in *Northampton*, and
the Neighbouring Towns and Villages of
the County of *Hampshire*, in the Province
of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New-England*.

In a LETTER to the Reverend
Dr. BENJAMIN COLMAN, of *Boston*.

Written by the Rev^d Mr. EDWARDS, Minister of
Northampton, *Nov. 6. 1736*.

Published with a Large PREFACE by the Rev.
Dr. WATTS and Dr. GUYSE of *London* :
To which a Shorter is added by Some of the
Reverend Ministers of *BOSTON*.

together with an ATTESTATION from Some of the
Reverend *Ministers of Hampshire*.

The THIRD EDITION.

O S T O N : N. E. Printed & Sold by S. KNEELAND
T. GREEN, over against the Prison in *Queen-street*. 1738.

have also been reports spread about the country, as though the first occasion of so remarkable a concern on people's minds here, was an apprehension that the world was near to an end, which was altogether a false report. Indeed, after this stirring and concern became so general and extraordinary, as has been related, the minds of some were filled with speculation, what so great a dispensation of divine providence might forebode: and some reports were heard from abroad, as though certain divines and others thought the conflagration was nigh; but such reports were never generally looked upon [as] worthy of notice.

The work that has now been wrought on souls is evidently the same that was wrought in my venerable predecessor's days; as I have had abundant opportunity to know, having been in the ministry here two years with him, and so conversed with a considerable number that my grandfather thought to be savingly converted in that time; and having been particularly acquainted with the experiences of many that were converted under his ministry before. And I know no one of them, that in the least doubts of its being the same spirit and the same work. Persons have now no otherwise been subject to impressions on their imaginations than formerly: the work is of the same nature, and has not been attended with any extraordinary circumstances, excepting such as are analogous to the extraordinary degree of it before described. And God's people that were formerly converted, have now partook of the same shower of divine blessing in the renewing, strengthening, edifying influences of the Spirit of God, that others have, in his converting influences; and the work here has also been plainly the same with that which has been wrought in those of other places that have been mentioned, as partaking of the same blessing. I have particularly conversed with persons about their experiences that belong to all parts of the county,⁹ and in various parts of Connecticut, where a religious concern has lately appeared; and have been informed of the experiences of many others by their own pastors.

'Tis easily perceived by the foregoing account that 'tis very¹ much the practice of the people here to converse freely one with another of their spiritual experiences; which is a thing that many have been disgusted at. But however our people may have, in some respects, gone

9. [FN-1 reads "country."]

1. [FN-1 reads "very very," probably a typographical error.]

to extremes in it, yet 'tis doubtless a practice that the circumstances of this town, and [of] neighboring towns, has naturally led them into. Whatsoever people are in such circumstances, where all have their minds engaged to such a degree in the same affair, that 'tis ever uppermost in their thoughts; they will naturally make it the subject of conversation one with another when they get together, in which they will grow more and more free: restraints will soon vanish; and they will not conceal from one another what they meet with. And it has been a practice which, in the general, has been attended with many good effects, and what God has greatly blessed amongst us. But it must be confessed, there may have been some ill consequences of it; which yet are rather to be laid to the indiscreet management of it than to the practice itself: and none can wonder, if among such a multitude some fail of exercising so much prudence in choosing the time, manner, and occasion of such discourse, as is desirable.

[*Two Notable Converts*]

But to give a clearer idea of the nature and manner of the operations of God's Spirit, in this wonderful effusion of it, I would give an account of two particular instances. The first is an adult person, a young woman whose name was Abigail Hutchinson. I pitch upon her especially because she is now dead, and so it may be more fit to speak freely of her than of living instances: though I am under far greater disadvantages, on other accounts, to give a full and clear narrative of her experiences, than I might of some others; nor can any account be given but what has been retained in the memories of her near friends, and some others, of what they have heard her express in her lifetime.

She was of a rational understanding family: there could be nothing in her education that tended to enthusiasm, but rather to the contrary extreme. 'Tis in no wise the temper of the family to be ostentatious of experiences, and it was far from being her temper. She was before her conversion, to the observation of her neighbors, of a sober and inoffensive conversation; and was a still, quiet, reserved person. She had long been infirm of body, but her infirmity had never been observed at all to incline her to be notional or fanciful, or to occasion anything of religious melancholy. She was under awakenings scarcely a week, before there seemed to be plain evidence of her being savingly converted.

She was first awakened in the winter season, on Monday, by some-

thing she heard her brother say of the necessity of being in good earnest in seeking regenerating grace, together with the news of the conversion of the young woman before mentioned, whose conversion so generally affected most of the young people here.² This news wrought much upon her, and stirred up a spirit of envy in her towards this young woman, whom she thought very unworthy of being distinguished from others by such a mercy; but withal it engaged her in a firm resolution to do her utmost to obtain the same blessing; and considering with herself what course she should take, she thought that she had not a sufficient knowledge of the principles of religion to render her capable of conversion; whereupon she resolved thoroughly to search the Scriptures; and accordingly immediately began at the beginning of the Bible, intending to read it through. She continued thus till Thursday: and then there was a sudden alteration, by a great increase of her concern, in an extraordinary sense of her own sinfulness, particularly the sinfulness of her nature and wickedness of her heart, which came upon her (as she expressed it) as a flash of lightning, and struck her into an exceeding terror. Upon which she left off reading the Bible in course as she had begun, and turned to the New Testament, to see if she could not find some relief there for her distressed soul.

Her great terror, she said, was that she had sinned against God. Her distress grew more and more for three days; until (as she said) she saw nothing but blackness of darkness before her, and her very flesh trembled for fear of God's wrath: she wondered and was astonished at herself, that she had been so concerned for her body, and had applied so often to physicians to heal that, and had neglected her soul. Her sinfulness appeared with a very awful aspect to her, especially in three things, viz. her original sin, and her sin in murmuring at God's providence, in the weakness and afflictions she had been under, and in want of duty to parents, though others had looked upon her to excel in dutifulness. On Saturday, she was so earnestly engaged in reading the Bible and other books that she continued in it, searching for something to relieve her, till her eyes were so dim that she could not know the letters. Whilst she was thus engaged in reading, prayer, and other religious exercises, she thought of those words of Christ, wherein he warns us not to be as the heathen, that think they shall be heard for their much speaking [Matt. 6:7]; which, she said, led her to see that she had trusted to her

2. [Above, p. 149.]

own prayers and religious performances, and now she was put to a non-plus, and knew not which way to turn herself, or where to seek relief.

While her mind was in this posture, her heart, she said, seemed to fly to the minister for refuge, hoping that he could give her some relief. She came the same day to her brother, with the countenance of a person in distress, expostulating with him, why he had not told her more of her sinfulness, and earnestly inquiring of him what she should do. She seemed that day to feel in herself an enmity against the Bible, which greatly affrighted her. Her sense of her own exceeding sinfulness continued increasing from Thursday till Monday; and she gave this account of it, that it had been an opinion, which till now she had entertained, that she was not guilty of Adam's sin, nor any way concerned in it, because she was not active in it; but that now she saw she was guilty of that sin, and all over defiled by it; and that the sin which she brought into the world with her, was alone sufficient to condemn her.

On the Sabbath day she was so ill that her friends thought it not best that she should go to public worship, of which she seemed very desirous: but when she went to bed on the Sabbath-day night, she took up a resolution that she would the next morning go to the minister, hoping to find some relief there. As she awaked on Monday morning, a little before day, she wondered within herself at the easiness and calmness she felt in her mind, which was of that kind which she never felt before; as she thought of this, such words as these were in her mind: "The words of the Lord are pure words, health to the soul and marrow to the bones."³ And then these words came to her mind, "The blood of Christ cleanses [us] from all sin" [I John 1:7]; which were accompanied with a lively sense of the excellency of Christ, and his sufficiency to satisfy for the sins of the whole world. She then thought of that expression, "'tis a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun" [Eccles. 11:7]; which words then seemed to her to be very applicable to Jesus Christ. By these things her mind was led into such contemplations and views of Christ, as filled her exceeding full of joy. She told her brother in the morning that she had seen (i.e. in realizing views by faith) Christ the last night, and that she had really thought that she had not knowledge enough to be converted; "but," says she, "God can make

3. [The first part of the quotation is from Ps. 12:6; the second part appears to be adapted from Prov. 3:8. Cf. also Prov. 16:24.]

it quite easy!" On Monday she felt all day a constant sweetness in her soul. She had a repetition of the same discoveries of Christ three mornings together, that she had on Monday morning, and much in the same manner at each time, waking a little before day; but brighter and brighter every time.

At the last time on Wednesday morning, while in the enjoyment of a spiritual view of Christ's glory and fulness, her soul was filled with distress for Christless persons, to consider what a miserable condition they were in: and she felt in herself a strong inclination immediately to go forth to warn sinners; and proposed it the next day to her brother to assist her in going from house to house; but her brother restrained her, by telling her of the unsuitableness of such a method. She told one of her sisters that day that she loved all mankind, but especially the people of God. Her sister asked her why she loved all mankind. She replied because God had made them. After this, there happened to come into the shop where she was at work, three persons that were thought to have been lately converted; her seeing them as they stepped in one after another into the door so affected her, and so drew forth her love to them, that it overcame her, and she almost fainted: and when they began to talk of the things of religion, it was more than she could bear; they were obliged to cease on that account. It was a very frequent thing with her to be overcome with a flow of affection to them that she thought godly, in conversation with them, and sometimes only at the sight of them.

She had many extraordinary discoveries of the glory of God and Christ; sometimes, in some particular attributes, and sometimes in many. She gave an account that once, as those four words passed through her mind, "wisdom," "justice," "goodness," and "truth," her soul was filled with a sense of the glory of each of these divine attributes, but especially the last; "truth," said she, "sunk the deepest!" And therefore as these words passed, this was repeated, "Truth, truth!" Her mind was so swallowed up with a sense of the glory of God's truth and other perfections, that she said it seemed as though her life was going, and that she saw it was easy with God to take away her life by discoveries of himself. Soon after this she went to a private religious meeting, and her mind was full of a sense and view of the glory of God all the time; and when the exercise was ended, some asked her concerning what she had experienced: and she began to give them an account; but as she was relating it, it revived such a sense of the same things that her strength failed; and

they were obliged to take her and lay her upon the bed. Afterwards she was greatly affected, and rejoiced with these words, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" [Rev. 5:12].

She had several days together a sweet sense of the excellency and loveliness of Christ in his meekness, which disposed her continually to be repeating over these words, which were sweet to her, "meek and lowly in heart, meek and lowly in heart." [Matt. 11:29] She once expressed herself to one of her sisters to this purpose, that she had continued whole days and whole nights in a constant ravishing view of the glory of God and Christ, having enjoyed as much as her life could bear. Once as her brother was speaking of the dying love of Christ, she told him that she had such a sense of it that the mere mentioning it was ready to overcome her.

Once, when she came to me, she told how that at such and such a time she thought she saw as much of God, and had as much joy and pleasure as was possible in this life, and that yet afterwards God discovered himself yet far more abundantly, and she saw the same things that she had seen before, yet more clearly, and in another, and far more excellent and delightful manner, and was filled with a more exceeding sweetness; she likewise gave me such an account of the sense she once had, from day to day, of the glory of Christ, and of God in his various attributes, that it seemed to me she dwelt for days together in a kind of beatific vision of God; and seemed to have, as I thought, as immediate an intercourse with him as a child with a father: and at the same time, she appeared most remote from any high thought of herself and of her own sufficiency; but was like a little child, and expressed a great desire to be instructed, telling me that she longed very often to come to me for instruction, and wanted to live at my house that I might tell her her duty.

She often expressed a sense of the glory of God appearing in the trees, and growth of the fields, and other works of God's hands. She told her sister that lived near the heart of the town, that she once thought it a pleasant thing to live in the middle of the town, but now, says she, "I think it much more pleasant to sit and see the wind blowing the trees, and to behold⁴ what God has made." She had sometimes the powerful breathings of the Spirit of God on her soul, while reading the Scripture, and would express a sense that she had of the certain truth and divinity thereof. She sometimes would appear with a pleasant smile on her countenance; and once when

4. [FN-1 inserts here, "in the country." See above, p. 44.]

her sister took notice of it, and asked why she smiled, she replied, "I am brimful of a sweet feeling within!" She often used to express how good and sweet it was to lie low before God, and the lower (said ^o she) the better; and that it was pleasant to think of lying in the dust all the days of her life, mourning for sin. She was wont to manifest a great sense of her own meanness and dependence. She often expressed an exceeding compassion and pitiful love, which she found in her heart towards persons in a Christless condition; which was sometimes so strong that as she was passing by such in the streets, or those that she feared were such, she would be overcome by the sight of them. She once said that she longed to have the whole world saved; she wanted, as it were, to pull them all to her; she could not bear to have one lost.

She had great longings to die, that she might be with Christ; which increased till she thought she did not know how to be patient to wait till God's time should come. But once when she felt those longings, she thought with herself, "If I long to die, why do I go to physicians?" Whence she concluded that her longings for death were not well regulated. After this she often put it to herself, which she should choose, whether to live or to die, to be sick, or to be well; and she found she could not tell, till at last she found herself disposed to say these words: "I am quite willing to live, and quite willing to die; quite willing to be sick, and quite willing to be well; and quite willing for anything that God will bring upon me! And then," said she, "I felt myself perfectly easy, in a full submission to the will of God." She then lamented much that she had been so eager in her longings for death, as it argued want of such a resignation to God as ought to be. She seemed henceforward to continue in this resigned frame till death.

After this her illness increased upon her: and once after she had before spent the greater part of the night in extreme pain, she waked out of a little sleep with these words in her heart and mouth: "I am willing to suffer for Christ's sake, I am willing to spend and be spent for Christ's sake; I am willing to spend my life, even my very life for Christ's sake!" [cf. II Cor. 12:15]. And though she had an extraordinary resignation with respect to life or death, yet the thoughts of dying were exceeding sweet to her. At a time when her brother was reading in Job, concerning worms feeding on the dead body [Job 21:26, 24:20], she appeared with a pleasant smile; and

5. [FN-1 reads "says."]

being inquired of about it, she said it was sweet to her to think of her being in such circumstances. At another time, when her brother mentioned to her the danger there seemed to be that the illness she then labored under might be an occasion of her death, it filled her with joy that almost overcame her. At another time, when she met a company following a corpse to the grave, she said it was sweet to her to think that they would in a little time follow her in like manner.

Her illness in the latter part of it was seated much in her throat; and swelling inward, filled up the pipe so that she could swallow nothing but what was perfectly liquid, and but very little of that, and with great and long strugglings and stranglings, that which she took in flying out at her nostrils till she at last could swallow nothing at all. She had a raging appetite to food, so that she told her sister, when talking with her about her circumstances, that the worst bit that she threw to her swine would be sweet to her: but yet when she saw that she could not swallow it, she seemed to be as perfectly contented without it, as if she had no appetite to it. Others were greatly moved to see what she underwent, and were filled with admiration at her unexampled patience. At a time when she was striving in vain to get down a little food, something liquid, and was very much spent with it, she looked up on her sister with a smile, saying, "O Sister, this is for my good!" At another time, when her sister was speaking of what she underwent, she told her that she lived an heaven upon earth for all that. She used sometimes to say to her sister, under her extreme sufferings, "It is good to be so!" Her sister once asked her why she said so. "Why," says she, "because God would have it so: It is best that things should be as God would have 'em: it looks best to me." After her confinement, as they were leading her from the bed to the door, she seemed overcome by the sight of things abroad, as shewing forth the glory of the Being that had made them. As she lay on her deathbed, she would often say these words, "God is my friend!" And once looking up on her sister with a smile, said, "O Sister! How good it is! How sweet and comfortable it is to consider, and think of heavenly things!" And [she] used this argument to persuade her sister to be much in such meditations.

She expressed on her deathbed an exceeding longing, both for persons in a natural state, that they might be converted, and for the godly that they might see and know more of God. And when those that looked on themselves as in a Christless state came to see her,

she would be greatly moved with compassionate affection. One in particular that seemed to be in great distress about the state of her soul, and had come to see her from time to time, she desired her sister to persuade not to come any more, because the sight of her so wrought on her compassions that it overcame her nature. The same week that she died, when she was in distressing circumstances as to her body, some of the neighbors that came to see her asked if she was willing to die. She replied that she was quite willing either to live or die; she was willing to be in pain; she was willing to be so always as she was then, if that was the will of God. She willed what God willed. They asked her whether she was willing to die that night. She answered, "Yes, if it be God's will." And [she] seemed to speak all with that perfect composure of spirit, and with such a cheerful and pleasant countenance that it filled them with admiration.

She was very weak a considerable time before she died, having pined away with famine and thirst, so that her flesh seemed to be dried upon her bones; and therefore could say but little, and manifested her mind very much by signs. She said she had matter enough to fill up all her time with talk, if she had but strength. A few days before her death, some asked her whether she held her integrity still, whether she was not afraid of death. She answered to this purpose, that she had not the least degree of fear of death. They asked her why she would be so confident. She answered, "If I should say otherwise, I should speak contrary to what I know: there is," says she, "indeed a dark entry, that looks something dark, but on the other side there appears such a bright shining light, that I cannot be afraid!" She said not long before she died that she used to be afraid how she should grapple with death; but, says she, "God has shewed me that he can make it easy in great pain." Several days before she died, she could scarcely say anything but just yes, and no, to questions that were asked her, for she seemed to be dying for three days together; but seemed to continue in an admirable sweet composure of soul, without any interruption, to the last, and died as a person that went to sleep, without any struggling, about noon, on Friday, June 27, 1735.

She had long been infirm, and often had been exercised with great pain; but she died chiefly of famine. It was, doubtless, partly owing to her bodily weakness that her nature was so often overcome, and

ready to sink with gracious affection; but yet the truth was, that she had more grace, and greater discoveries of God and Christ, than the present frail state did well consist with. She wanted to be where strong grace might have more liberty, and be without the clog of a weak body; there she longed to be, and there she doubtless now is. She was looked upon amongst us, as a very eminent instance of Christian experience; but this is but a very broken and imperfect account I have given of her; her eminency would much more appear, if her experiences were fully related, as she was wont to express and manifest them, while living. I once read this account to some of her pious neighbors, who were acquainted with her, who said, to this purpose, that the picture fell much short of the life; and particularly that it much failed of duly representing her humility, and that admirable lowliness of heart, that at all times appeared in her. But there are (blessed be God!) many living instances of much the like nature, and in some things no less extraordinary.

But I now proceed to the other instance that I would give an account of, which is of the little child forementioned.⁶ Her name is Phebe Bartlet, daughter of William Bartlet. I shall give the account as I took it from the mouths of her parents, whose veracity none that know them doubt of.

She was born in March, in the year 1731. About the latter end of April, or beginning of May, 1735, she was greatly affected by the talk of her brother, who had been hopefully converted a little before, at about eleven years of age, and then seriously talked to her about the great things of religion. Her parents did not know of it at that time, and were not wont, in the counsels they gave to their children, particularly to direct themselves to her, by reason of her being so young, and as they supposed not capable of understanding: but after her brother had talked to her, they observed her very earnestly to listen to the advice they gave to the other children; and she was observed very constantly to retire several times in a day, as was concluded, for secret prayer; and grew more and more engaged in religion, and was more frequent in her closet; till at last she was wont to visit it five or six times in a day: and was so engaged in it, that nothing would at any time divert her from her stated closet exercises. Her mother often observed and watched her, when such things occurred, as she thought most likely to divert her, either by

6. [Above, p. 158.]