

Isaiah Pratt's Vision: "had seen hell and had seen Christ," 1742

Isaiah, son of John and Bathshebah Pratt, b. Feb. 14, 1723 (*Westborough Vital Records*, 85).
Isaiah Pratt m. Zeruah Marsh, Mar. 2, 1746 (*Hardwick Vital Records*, 226).

Bathshaba Fay m. John Prate, Jan. 4, 1716 (*Marlborough Vital Records*, 250). She was b. Jan. 1, 1693, daughter of John and Elizabeth Fay (*ibid.*, 68).

According to Lucius R. Paige, *History of Hardwick, Massachusetts. With a Genealogical Register* (Boston, 1883), 457, Isaiah Pratt "m. Zerviah, wid. of Samuel Marsh and dau. of William Thomas (much older than himself and already the mother of nine children), 2 Mar. 1746-7, and had *Bathsheba*, b. 30 Jan. 1747-8; *Temperance*, b. 7 Aug. 1750, d. unm. 17 Dec. 1814, having been idiotic and a town pauper from her early childhood. Isaiah the f. was a soldier in Capt. Samuel Robinson's company, 1756, and died during that campaign, prob. on the 20th of October, as his pay-roll was made up to that day. His w. Zerviah d. 18 Ap. 1798, a. 89, having been a pauper for more than thirty years."

1742 February 9 (Tuesday). N.B. Mr. James Fay came for me to go and see *Isaiah Pratt* who lay in a Strange Condition at his House -- not having Spoke nor been sensible ever since nine o'Clock last night. I went to him and seeing him lye so insensible, and his pulse *exceeding Slow* I advised them to send for Dr. Gott to bleed him, but sitting by him and rousing him by Degrees he came *to*. Many were present and were astonished. When he regained his senses he Said he had not been to Sleep; had seen Hell and had seen Christ; and said Christ told him his name was in the Book of Life etc. When he had taken some Slender Food he yet further revived and Spake more freely. We gave Thanks and prayed and I gave some Exhortation. N.B. One of the Deacons of the Church was there who took me aside to lament to me his Dullness and backwardness in the Things of God. These Things are now (blessed be God) more frequent which heretofore were very rare. May God increase them and furnish me abundantly for His Work in every part of it!

1742 February 11 (Thursday). Brother Hicks and his son here, upon their Journey to Cambridge. Capt. Goddard¹ also here. Mrs. Pratt with her son were here according to my appointment to acquaint me further with what he had Seen, or apprehended he saw, in the Time of his Trance, or reverie t'other Night. He having informed me of his Seeing (as he thought) the Devil who met him as he seemed to be in the way towards Heaven and told him that there was no room for him there; of his seeing Hell and hearing the most dreadful noise of roaring and crying; his seeing Heaven So wondrously happy a place as nobody could tell but those that were there; and Christ, who looked more pleasant than ever he had seen any man, and who had a great Book before him, and in turning over the Leaves of it told him that his name was there, and shewed it him; and that he had seen a great many more Things which were such Great Things that he could not Speak of them. I told him that these Things were not to be depended upon but that the Apostle *Peter* has cautioned us, saying that we have a more sure word of prophecy to which we should do well to take heed etc. I endeavoured further to instruct, direct and Comfort him and to lay the Charges

¹Capt. Edward Goddard of Framingham.

of God upon him. P.M. I preached at Mr. *James Fay's* on Luk. 19.9 to a great multitude -- and it pleased God to give it some success. As soon as the Exercise was over Deacon Fay² broke forth with a loud noise, with Tears of Joy and blessed God he saw this Day etc.: desiring that I would in due Time have an Exercise at his House -- and bore a Message from his Brother, old Mr. Samuel Fay³ that I would have one at his also -- which it was a chearful thing to hear, considering his Temper and Conduct for some years past. The rest of the people Seemed so inclined to religious Matters that they did not freely go away. Many tarried to discourse of the Affairs of their Souls and hear of the Experiences of one another. Ex. gr. Deacon Fays, Mr. *James Fays*, Mr. *Merriams* (of Grafton), Lieut. *Tainters*⁴ etc. At Eve several young men here to be instructed in singing.

1742 May 2 (Sunday). On Eph. 5.14. P.M. repeated on Heb. 13.17 to page 19, occasioned by the late Separation of Mr. Frink from his pastoral office. Mrs. *Bathsheba Pratt* here, being greatly distressed for the Hardness of her Heart notwithstanding that She had been a member in full Communion above 20 Years.

²Deacon John Fay.

³Samuel, son of John Mary Fay, b. Oct. 11, 1673 (MVR, 70).

⁴Simon Tainter of Westborough.