
Memories of Mrs. Abigail Eames, Wife of Thomas Eames

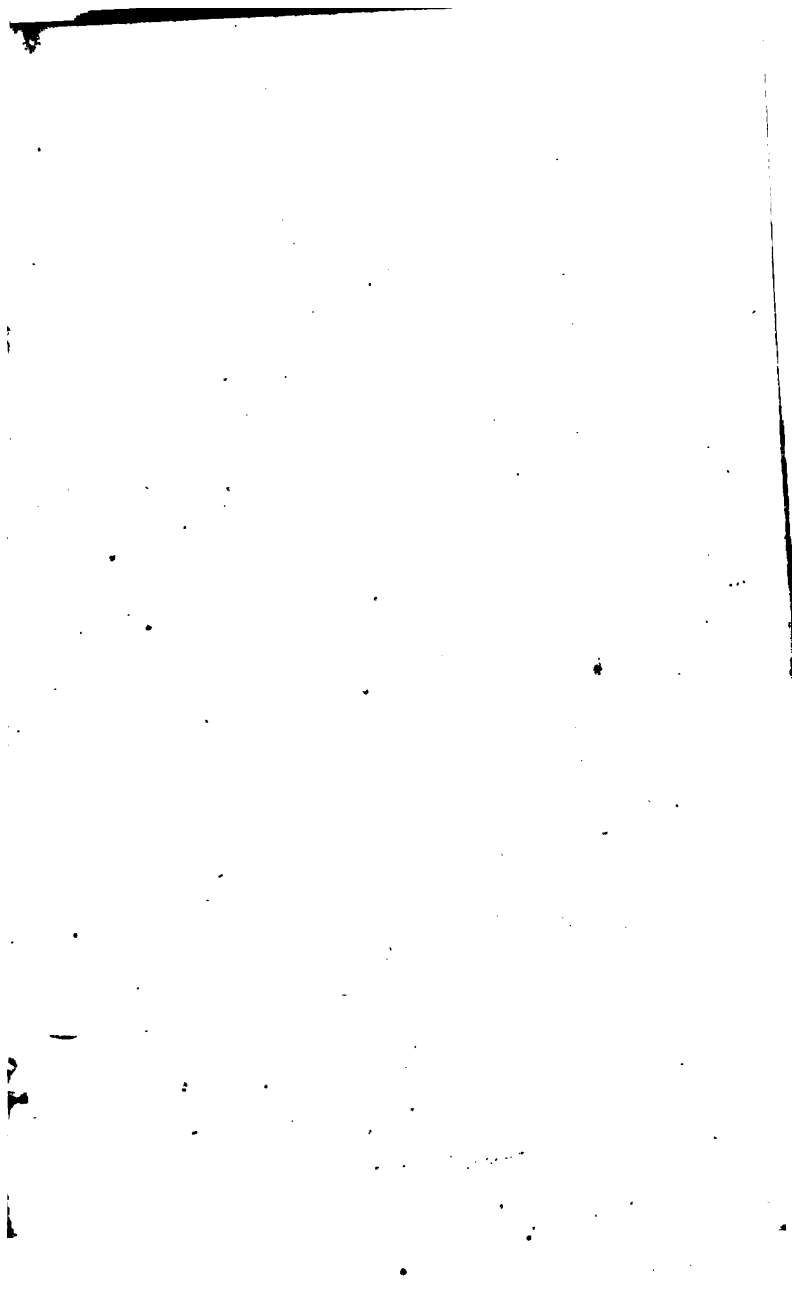
Eames Abigail

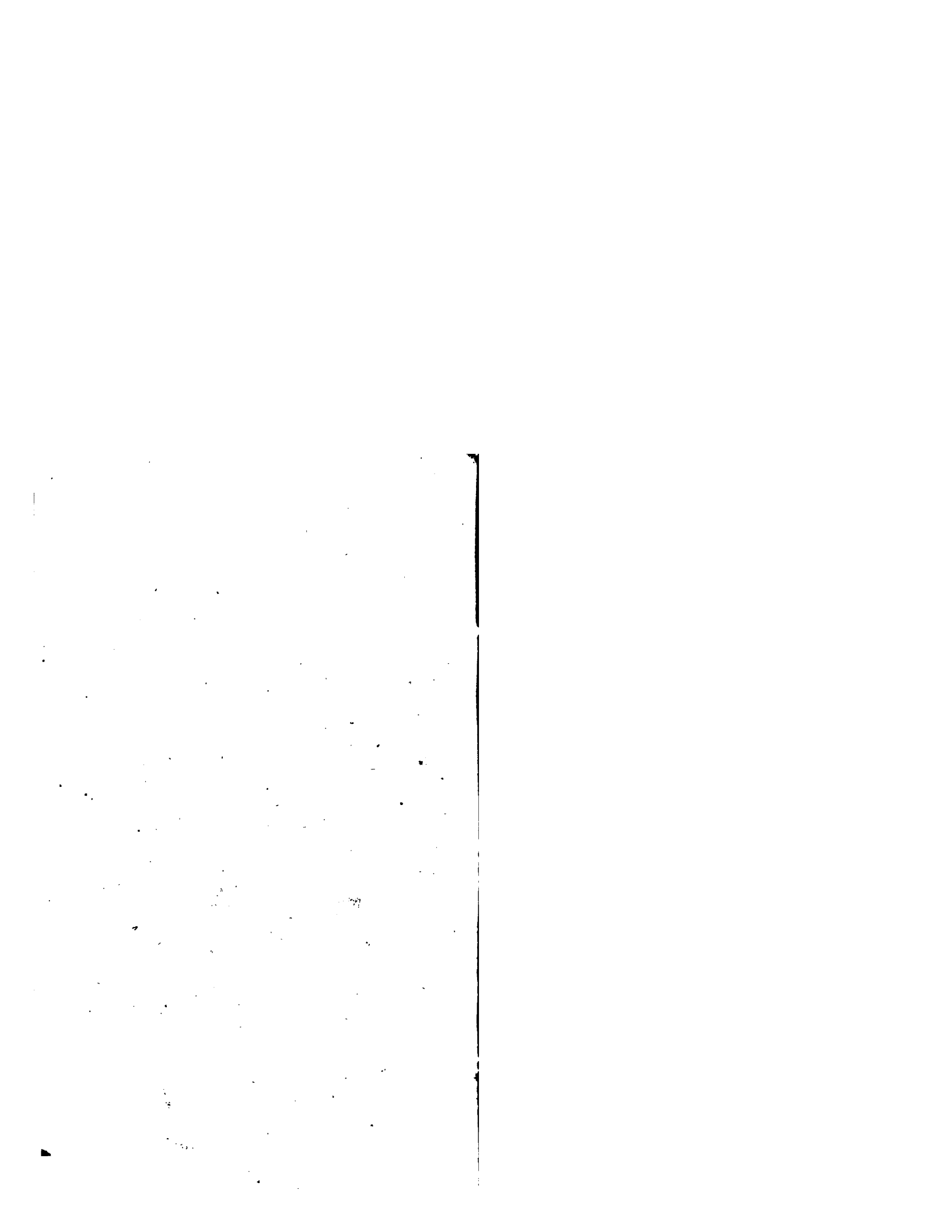
Title: Memories of Mrs. Abigail Eames, Wife of Thomas Eames

Author: Eames Abigail

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MEMOIRS

OF

MRS. ABIGAIL EAMES,

WIFE OF THOMAS EAMES.

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament."
Daniel xii, 3.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."
Psalms cxii, 6.

New-York,

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1836.

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Southern District of New-York, ss.

(L. S.) **BE IT REMEMBERED**, That on the seventh day of November, A. D. 1826, in the fifty-first year of the Independence of the United States of America, Thomas Eames, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"Memoirs of Mrs. Abigail Eames, wife of Thomas Eames. 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.' Daniel xii, 3. 'The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.' Psalm cxii, 6."

In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned." And also to an Act, entitled "An Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

JAMES DILL,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

PREFACE.

BIOGRAPHICAL Sketches of persons eminent for true piety, who have fought the good fight of faith, and finished their course in the possession of a well grounded hope of a blissful immortality, are peculiarly encouraging to those who are either just entering the way to life, or have made some progress therein; and especially to such as find themselves in a similar situation, and exercised in a similar manner.

The subject of the following Memoir, as will be seen by the perusal of the ensuing pages, after being awakened to a sense of her lost condition, was long and severely exercised previous to her obtaining an evidence of justification through the atoning blood. While an unwillingness to forsake all for Christ undoubtedly was the grand obstacle, it is conceived that the want of a correct view of the Scriptural doctrine of grace and salvation, full and free, and truly possible to all, greatly contributed to hinder that coming to Christ, and living faith in him, which is indispensably needful in order to the obtaining pardon and acceptance with God. To know the truth, and embrace it in the love of it, is the way of true peace; while error leads on in a dark, uncomfortable course.

In compiling these Memoirs, it has been endeavoured, both in the extracts from her diary and letters,

as much as could consistently be done, to make use of her own words. In some cases, while the ideas have been retained, it has been found necessary to express them in different terms ; and in some few instances, to introduce an idea, or to fill up a sentence, a few words have been added.

MEMOIRS.

I WAS born on the 26th of August, 1769, in Canaan, Fairfield county, and state of Connecticut; of poor, but honest and industrious parents. My father, whose name was John Defrees, was brought up a Presbyterian; and was a moral man, but a stranger to vital religion. My mother (as her father was a rigid Churchman) was educated an Episcopalian. Her mother, who was a very pious woman, early taught her the principles of religion, which seemed to make a lasting favourable impression on her mind: for, as I have been told, she was very remarkable, even when a child, for her modesty and good behaviour. My father was married to her before she was fifteen years of age. They lived in harmony. I have heard my father say, he never had a word of difference with her in his life. Kind to the poor, and universally beloved, she lived the life of the righteous, and died their death.

Some time before her death, she was seized with a lingering consumption; which she endured with great patience and resignation. When the disease, which baffled the efforts of medical skill, had brought her to the borders of the grave, she called her family around to take her last farewell. In the most affectionate manner she took my father by the hand, and expressed her love to him, and concern for his welfare. He asked her if she was willing to die? With perfect composure she replied, "Yes; with all my heart, I am ready and willing to go." He added, "Are you willing to leave me and the children?" "Yes," said she, "Christ is

far better ; though if it had been the Lord's will, I should be glad to see to their bringing up ; but the will of the Lord be done ; I am content to go."

Having taken her leave of my father, and her father and mother, she next called her children, and beginning with the eldest, gave to each her dying charge, and bade them all farewell. Then turning to my father, she pointed with her finger, and said, "Do you not see Christ stand there with a chariot waiting for me?" He replied, "No ; do you see him?" "Yes," said she, and fell into a swoon. By the use of a smelling bottle she was revived, and said, "How could you bring me back again to this troublesome world? but a step, and I should have taken hold of the hand of my blessed Saviour." She continued to speak as long as she was able, expressing her earnest desire to depart and be with Christ, till at length the final moment arrived, when she closed the scene in triumph.

She was, at the time of her death, in her twenty-seventh year. I was then in my seventh year ; and though so young when she died, I have much cause for gratitude for the instructions she gave me. I still remember them with much comfort. From time to time, after this, I was followed with serious impressions, which, for a season, would interrupt my childish sports ; then I would return to them again ; till one sabbath, when about nine or ten years of age, reading, with one of my mates, a small book, by Dr. Watts, on the sufferings of Christ, strong convictions seized my mind : we both were melted into tears, and began to converse about Him who had suffered so much for sinners, and for children, and wished to become acquainted with him. At another time, after my father's second marriage, as he sat reading in the Bible, and talking with my stepmother, concerning death, judgment, and eternity, my attention was much excited, and as he repeated the word *eternity!* with great emo-

tion, and spoke of it under a feeling sense of its import, I was greatly surprised ; having never heard so much on the subject before. This set me to reading the Bible ; and for this purpose I often retired to some lonely place, and frequently was much affected with what I read. At length, however, I sinned all my convictions away, and became highly delighted with dancing and card-playing, especially the latter ; with which it might be said I was truly infatuated. And thus, in my wild career, I madly ran the downward road to ruin. Serious reflections, however, would occasionally mar my carnal joys.

When in my fifteenth year, my father with his family removed to Ridgefield. Latter part of January 1783, when we had been in Ridgefield about two or three months, considerable noise was made concerning a revival of religion among the Baptists ; to whom some, by way of derision, gave the name of *Separates*. Although quite unacquainted with them, I went one sabbath, with the multitude that thronged their meetings, to hear Mr. Justus Hull preach. Though inconsiderate, careless, and secure when I came, under the preaching of the word I was led to see my dangerous condition. His text was in Gen. xxiv, 49. I saw I did not deal kindly and truly with my Master,—and my need of an interest in the Lord Jesus. After returning from the meeting, the text and the subject were continually ringing in my ears ; “ And now, if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me ; and if not, tell me ; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.” Now the pains of hell gat hold upon me ; I found trouble and sorrow. Again and again I went to hear the preacher, but durst not let any one know my state. I mourned in secret places, and often was much affected under the word, and made promises to myself to be religious ; but for fear of reproach, still joined with my youthful companions in their merry meetings. I thought I must go, or they would have it

that I was a *Separate*; and that seemed worse than death to me. The way of transgressors is hard; for ah! how severely would conscience lash me for it! My heart would sink like a millstone within me. Oh the torments of my mind! How many times did I resolve, and re-resolve, to forsake my wicked companions, and turn to God; then break my resolutions, and still go on! What a mercy that I was not cast off for ever! Sinning and repenting, I pursued the dismal road, till I had well nigh accomplished my ruin. Could I have been a Christian, and no one know it, how gladly would I have been one! But the cross I feared greatly; and to have my name cast out as evil seemed more than I could bear.

But the work of the Lord went on and prospered, and many were convicted and converted; yet I remained in deep distress, and began to think, "Now the Lord has forsaken me; I am given up to the devil, and to a reprobate mind." Sometimes I thought I would never go to meeting again, nor read my Bible more. To be converted, I thought I never could, I was such a notorious wretch; and yet I could not live without it. There was no escape; die I must, unless the Lord would have mercy on me! Above, was a frowning God; beneath, a gaping hell! My case appeared singular. Once I had a favourable opinion of myself, and thought others worse than I was: now, I seemed the wickedest wretch on earth. Not that I had been guilty of outbreaking sins; but foolish talking, jesting, joking, and living a life not according to the Scriptures; God was not in all my thoughts.—I was without God in the world.

Still I continued unwilling to give up all for Christ. The love of the world, the fear of the loss of its favour, and of being forsaken by my mates on the one hand, and on the other the fear of being forsaken of God, greatly distressed me. I looked on myself as alone, and for about a year concealed the troubles of my