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SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

Evangelical Magazine,

FOR THE YEAR 1796.

BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF THE LATE REV. DAVID BRAINERD, OF NEW-ENGLAND,

MISSIONARY TO THE AMERICAN INDIANS.

PART III.

(From the commencement of his successful labours to the close of life.)

LIKE the disciples of old, Mr. Brainerd had been toiling hard, through a long dark night, and had caught nothing; when it pleased the Lord to appear and direct him where to cast the net for a successful draught. For visiting several ministers in the province of New-Jersey, where he was for the recovery of his health, and hearing of a few Indians in that province, at a place called

CROSWEEKSUNG,

he felt a strong impulse on his mind to invite them to partake of the blessings of the Gospel.

Here he arrived the 19th of June, 1745, and finding four women and eight children, he preached to them, and informed them of his willingness to visit them again the day following. They, feeling somewhat of the power of the word, and desirous, like the Samaritan woman, that others might be partakers of the same blessing, travelled from ten to fifteen miles around to apprize their friends of his intention; so that, on his return, he found an increased auditory, who all heard with remarkable attention. These inviting others, he had, in the course of one week, the pleasure of being surrounded

by a congregation of about forty persons. But what afforded him far superior delight, was the considerable concern they expressed for the safety of their souls, and the earnest and affectionate manner in which they requested him to preach twice a day, that they might gain as much instruction from him as possible. Though his constitution was exceedingly impaired by his late exertions, and especially by lodging on the ground for several weeks together during his excursion to Susquahannah, he could not resist their pressing solicitation, being persuaded God had inclined them thus to inquire after the way of salvation. He had likewise the satisfaction to see the providence of God concur with their wishes in promoting this work; for while they were walking, in the interval of worship, at a little distance from the place where they daily assembled, they killed three deer, which proved a seasonable supply, without which they could not have subsisted together, and attended on the means of grace, as many of them were at a considerable distance from their own habitation, in a barren spot where it was impossible for them to procure food.

Having laboured among them for a fortnight, he was greatly amazed to see the degree of knowledge some of them had attained; and thinking it his duty, as soon as health permitted, to revisit his own people, at the Forks of Delaware, about eighty miles distant, he left them, but with great reluctance; for, on taking leave, they earnestly besought him speedily to return, promising they would all meet and live together during his continuance, and endeavour to collect the other Indians, who were more remotely situated, to receive the benefit of his instructions. One told him, with many tears, "She wished God would change her heart;" another "that she wanted to find Christ;" and an old man, one of their chiefs, being in great distress of soul, wept bitterly.

Returning again to the Indians at *Delaware*, and preaching on the 14th of July, they shed many tears during the service; the Spirit of the Lord being evidently present, convincing them of their sin and misery. A few days after, he baptized his interpreter and his wife, who were his first fruits among the heathen, and of whose experimental knowledge he had the clearest evidence. He likewise baptized their children, after the example of the Apostles, who, on a profession of faith in those who embraced Christianity, immediately administered the ordinance to them and their households. Then, giving them particular advice and direction,

ion, he left them for awhile, and early in the month of August renewed his visit to the little flock in New-Jersey.

He was happy to find that the impressions, made on his former visit to *Crosweeksung*, were by no means effaced, as many of them were under deep concern for an interest in Christ. Without waiting till the more remote Indians could be collected, he preached from Rev. xxii. 7. to about twenty adults, and was enabled, he says, in a manner somewhat *uncommon*, to set forth the Lord Jesus Christ, as a kind and compassionate Saviour, inviting distressed and perishing sinners to accept everlasting mercy. The effect was surprising. They all discovered vehement longing of soul after Christ to save them from the misery they felt and feared.

Being invited by a neighbouring minister to assist in the administration of the Lord's Supper the day following, he took the Indians with him, who were much affected with what they saw and heard. A change in their manner began now to appear. In the evening they would not sup till they had sent for him to come and ask a blessing on their food; and when he reminded them how, in times past, they had feasted in honour of devils, and neglected to give God thanks, they wept abundantly.

The next day, in concluding the public work, he particularly addressed himself to the Indians, who sat in a part of the house by themselves, and the Lord applied the word to them with power, so that he found them at night universally inquiring what they should do to be saved, except one woman, convinced under his preaching in June, who was set at liberty, and filled with the love of Christ. Their whole conversation among themselves now turned on religious matters; and so surprisingly tender were their consciences, that a few words about the concerns of their souls produced many tears and groans.

The next morning, before they set out for their own place, he discoursed at the house where they lodged; and in the evening, on their return, he preached from 1 John, iv. 10. to fifty-five persons, forty of whom were capable of attending divine service with understanding. Great was their attention, and the divine influence was truly wonderful. Scarce three in the forty could refrain from tears and bitter cries. They all, as one man, seemed in an agony of soul to obtain an interest in Christ. The more he represented the compassion of God, in sending his Son to suffer for the sins of men, and the more he invited them to partake of his love, the more their distress was aggravated, because they felt themselves

themselves unable to come. Two persons obtained relief and comfort on grounds which appeared to be solid, rational, and scriptural. When he asked them what more they wished God to do for them, now he had brought them into a state of joy and peace in believing? they replied, "they wanted Christ to wipe their hearts quite clean." What he himself felt is better conceived than expressed. He stood rebuked for his former unbelieving fears, and tasted joy mingled with astonishment. "Surprising," says he, "were now the *doings of the Lord*, that I can say no less of this day, and I need say no more of it, than that *the arm of the Lord* was powerfully and marvellously *revealed*."

This was an auspicious beginning, but it was only the morning of a glorious noon. For two days after, while he was preaching with *uncommon* freedom to about sixty-five persons on the Gospel feast*, there was much visible concern among them; but afterwards, when he spoke to those individuals whom he perceived to be most distressed, the power of God seemed to descend upon the assembly like a rushing, mighty wind, and with an astonishing energy bore down all before it. He stood amazed at the influence which seized the audience, and could compare it to nothing more aptly than the irresistible force of a mighty torrent or swelling deluge, which, with an insupportable weight and pressure, sweeps before it whatever is in its way. Almost all persons, of whatever age, were bowed down with concern together; and scarce one was able to withstand the shock of this surprising operation. Old men and women, who had been drunken wretches for many years, and some little children, not more than six or seven years old, appeared in distress for their souls, as well as persons of middle age. The most stubborn hearts were now obliged to bend. A principal man among them, who before was secure and self-righteous, because he knew more than the generality of the Indians, now lamented his guilty state. Another man in years, who had been a murderer, a *powow*, or conjuror, and a notorious drunkard, was brought now to cry for mercy with many tears, and to complain that he could be no more concerned though in so great danger. In every part of the house, and even out of doors, they were almost universally praying and crying for mercy; and numbers of them could neither go nor stand: But none seemed to take notice of those about them, but prayed as freely as if they had been every

* Luke, xiv. 16---23.

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one alone in the closest retirement. Their concern was perfectly rational. Those who had been awakened long before, complained chiefly of the badness of their *hearts*, and those newly awakened, of the badness of their *lives* and *actions*. Those who had lately obtained relief, were filled with comfort, and seemed to rejoice in Christ Jesus; and some of them taking their weeping friends by the hands, told them of the goodness of Christ, and the happiness that is to be enjoyed in him, and invited them to come to him and give up their hearts. Others, in the most honest and unaffected manner, were lifting up their eyes to heaven, as if crying for mercy for the distressed ones around them.---One remarkable instance must not be omitted: A young Indian woman, who probably never so much as knew she had a soul, called at his lodging, and when he told her he intended presently to preach, laughed, and seemed to mock; but, before he concluded, she was so convinced of her sin and misery, that she seemed like one pierced through with a dart, and cried out incessantly. She could neither go, nor stand, nor sit, without being held up. After public service, she lay on the ground, praying for many hours together; and the burden of her prayer was, "Have mercy on me, and help me to give you my heart!"

Such an eminent display of the power of God was enough to convince an Atheist of the reality of his existence, and of the truth and importance of his word.

Notwithstanding his debilitated frame and great exertions during the six days he had been already there, he protracted his visit about three weeks longer, labouring like the husbandman in the time of harvest, fatigued with reaping his precious fruits, the ample recompence of all his toil.

His Indian hearers gradually increased, till their numbers amounted to ninety-five. Whenever they met, a blessed influence seemed to spread through the whole assembly, and it was lovely to behold almost all of them affected at the same moment, either with joy in Christ, or with a deep concern to obtain an interest in him. Many of the *white* people, who came to laugh or revile, were pricked to the heart, and became humble supplicants for mercy: For in most of his discourses he addressed himself to the consciences of these baptized heathens, and frequently preached entirely to them here and at *Delaware*.

The harvest being come, when the Indians are found at home, he resolved once more to carry the glad tidings of salvation among the numerous tribes along the banks of the *Susquahannah*; and having discoursed to his new con-

verts on the nature, obligations, and privilege of baptism, on the 25th of August he publicly baptized fifteen adults and ten children. Two sermons were preached by him on the solemn occasion, when multitudes of *white* people attended, whose conduct so depressed his spirits, that he could hardly go on in his work; for scores of them were gazing and walking about, and behaving with more indecency than any of the heathen he had ever addressed, exhibiting an awful reverse to the serious attention of the poor Indians.

The day following, before his departure, he preached on the durable nature of the consolations Christ bestows, in a certain degree, on his people here, and which will speedily be completed in heaven. The whole congregation was moved; and many of them, feeling their hearts burn with affection, became earnestly desirous of the enjoyment of Christ, and a state of perfect purity. Two weary and heavy-laden souls found deliverance; and an old Indian, who all his days had been an obstinate idolater, was constrained to give up his *rattles*, used for music in their idolatrous dances, to the Christian Indians, who quickly destroyed them.

Now, taking an affectionate leave of them for the present, and intimating how necessary it was the Spirit of God should go with him, without which nothing could be done among their brethren to any good purpose, he asked, if they would spend the remainder of the day in prayer for him, that God would succeed his endeavours? They cheerfully complied; and, leaving them about an hour before sun-set, they continued praying till break of day with such earnestness, that they were not aware it was later than their usual time to retire to rest, when the morning star appeared.

On his journey he stopped a few days, and preached at the Forks of *Delaware*, where the word was attended with greater power than usual. Many were seized with surprise and concern; some wept, and others cried out in an affecting manner. When he asked one, who had obtained comfort, why he now cried? he replied, "When he thought how Christ was slain like a lamb, and spilt his blood for sinners, he could not help crying, even when he was alone." Then, addressing his wife, who had likewise received consolation, he asked, why she wept? she answered, "Because the Indians here would not come to Christ as well as those at *Crosweeksung*." Several white people were also awakened, or at least startled, seeing the power of God so prevalent among the Indians.

Opposition now appeared. Those who were born after the flesh began to persecute those who were born after the Spirit.

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Some of the Indians who had always refused to hear him preach, enraged against those who attended his ministry, reviled them, and scoffed bitterly at Christianity.

Leaving them on the 9th of September, he prosecuted his journey; and probably after the blessed scene he had lately witnessed, his expectation of doing good was highly raised. But the wind bloweth where it listeth; sovereignty presides in the dispensation of mercy. Though he preached the same doctrine at *Shaumoking* and *Juneauta*, two of their principal places, no apparent good was produced, except that in the former place a congregation of fifty heard him with attention, and desired to be further instructed. In the latter, his repeated efforts to collect them together to hear were fruitless; the ill example of nominal Christians, who, for the sake of gain, supply them with spirituous liquors, and practise on them all manner of fraud, had filled them with an unconquerable prejudice.

Fatigued and depressed, he returned to *Delaware* about the latter end of the month, preached to his people on Tuesday the first of October, and invited them to accompany or follow him to *Crosweeksung*, where he preached on the Saturday, soon after his arrival, and found the same divine influence on the assembly as they had formerly experienced. Moved at the sight, he pathetically exclaimed, "O! what a difference between these and the Indians I lately treated with on *Susquahannah!* To be with *them* seemed like being banished from God and all his people; to be with *these* like being admitted into his family, *and* to the enjoyment of his divine presence."

During the three services, on the next day, the same power was felt, and the most desirable affection discovered in the people. Scarce a dry eye was to be seen among them; yet there was nothing boisterous, or unseemly; nothing that tended to disturb the public worship, but rather to encourage and excite a Christian ardour and spirit of devotion.

Having been ordained in the month of June, in the preceding year, he was obliged to attend with the rest of the Presbytery at East-Hampton, Long-Island, to assist and advise in settling an important affair in that church. But he returned, in about a fortnight, to these affectionate Indians, and spent the most part of the short remainder of his life among them; labouring occasionally in the neighbouring churches, particularly in assisting at the administration of the sacrament; and making a short excursion, in the ensuing spring, to *Delaware*, with six of the most judicious and se-

rious of his converts, in hopes that those, whose hearts had been obdurate under his instruction, might be won to Christ by their holy lives and heavenly conversation---a pious stratagem, which had a good effect, and induced some of the best disposed to settle at *Crosswecksung*.

Did our limits permit, it would be pleasing to detail all the blessed effects of his ministry, as he seldom preached but some were awakened, or set at liberty, and others abundantly refreshed. Though the influences of the Spirit of God on their assemblies were generally remarkable, yet there were some peculiar seasons of grace, when the impressions made were very extraordinary; particularly on the 29th of December, after he had been preaching on the New Birth, a number of white people from the neighbouring towns being present, as was usual on the sabbath, who as well as the Indians listened with earnest attention, uttering heavy sighs. Service being ended, several followed him to his house with tears in their eyes, inquiring what they should do to be saved. What he spoke was set home on their consciences in such a manner, that the house was soon filled with sighs and groans. The alarm spread: All flocked together, and were seized with universal concern. It appeared as if God had bowed the heavens, and come down. Old and young, careless and profane, as well as the serious and devout, became the subjects of this powerful influence. Some delivered from the fear of wrath to come were filled with love and praise; others were rejoicing to see so many striving to enter in at the strait gate, and endeavoured, by their exhortations, to push them forward; while others, with downcast looks, like condemned malefactors, were drowned in tears. Such joy unspeakable, and anguish inexpressible, appeared in their countenances that it seemed like the final day of account, or a mixture of heaven and hell. In these solemn circumstances he continued addressing them, individually or collectively, from half-past eleven in the forenoon, till after seven in the evening, with hardly half an hour's intermission.

The manner in which this work of God was begun and carried on deserves notice. For it was not by *the terror of the law*, but by preaching *Christ crucified*, that these striking conversions were effected: And, on these occasions, whatever text he took, his mind was led away from every previous arrangement, to set forth the dying love of the Lord Jesus, and the inestimable blessings of his salvation. As fast as the Indians came from remote places, the influence of the Holy Ghost fell powerfully on them, and they became subjects

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of grace without being previously prepared by any systematical views of the truth of the Scriptures, or the being and perfections of God. It is likewise remarkable, that they who were first convinced of sin, were the first who received comfort; and as their sorrows under conviction were pressing, so their joy afterward was proportionably great; but it had nothing in it *flighty* or *enthusiastic*---on the contrary, it was accompanied with humility and contrition of spirit, they themselves being surprised; as some of them observed to him, that even, "when their hearts were glad, they could not help crying." Nor could the attempts of the white people to terrify or prejudice the Indians impede the work, though they artfully propagated a thousand vile reports respecting Mr. Brainerd and his intentions, and added menaces to malignant falsehoods.

In the course of eleven months he baptized seventy-seven Indians, thirty-eight of whom were adults; at the same time he informs us, "there were many others of sufficient knowledge and seriousness to render them proper subjects of baptism." But he deferred the ordinance till the evidences of a saving change should be indubitable; fearing that a scandal would be brought on the Christian profession, if any one that had been baptized should relapse to his former idolatry.

He instituted a school under the care of a very godly person, who taught from thirty to forty children in the day, and frequently near twenty grown persons in the evening. The children were soon able to read the Psalms and New Testament, and to repeat the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. Persuaded that a systematical arrangement is best adapted to improve the mind, he frequently catechized young and old; and his lectures were often attended with peculiar benefit.

On the 24th of March, 1746, he numbered the Indians, to see how many souls God had collected to reside there, and found they amounted to one hundred and fifty, though at his first coming the whole number did not exceed ten. And as their subsistence depended principally on hunting, which obliged them frequently to be absent, and exposed them to many temptations; and as it was highly probable, from the multitudes who flocked from all parts to hear the word of life, that they would still greatly increase, if their situation and manner of life did not render it impossible for a large number to be associated together; he perceived how absolutely important it was, that they should be acquainted with husbandry, and able to raise the necessaries and comforts of life among themselves. He, therefore, advised them to remove from their present barren spot to a place about fifteen miles distant,

distant, and to clear and cultivate the lands, and build a little town, where they might live compactly and comfortably together, and regularly attend the worship of God. He lived to see these things accomplished, and a flourishing church of Christ established, to whom he administered the ordinances of the Gospel, eating and drinking with them in commemoration of the death of their common Lord, and performing all the endearing offices of a pastor and father in Christ.

In the winter of 1746, the decay of nature, accelerated by the tedious journey his zeal prompted him again to make to the *Susquahannah* Indians, interrupted his laborious exercises. For four months together he was laid up at Elizabeth-town, two miles from Cranberry, where his Indians resided. But recovering a little, he rode to them on the 18th of March, 1747, and after singing and expounding a psalm, prayed with them: And this was the last interview he ever had with his people. Soon after, by the advice of his friends, he set out on a journey for New-England, hoping his health might yet be recovered by a change of air and riding. But it pleased God, who approved and prospered the works of his hands, and pitied the complicated infirmities of his suffering child, to take him to himself, in that better world, where "the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick;" for on the 9th of October, 1747, after he had long languished on a bed of sickness, at Northampton, in New-England, during which he frequently experienced strong consolation, he departed this life, surrounded by affectionate friends, among whom was his brother John, who succeeded him in his mission and pastoral office, and who refreshed him, in his dying moments, by the recent tidings he brought to him from his dear Indians.

A CONVERSION.

Mr. Editor,

I THOUGHT the following concise account of a circumstance, which has transpired under my immediate notice, would not be unacceptable to those of your readers, who, being themselves the subjects of a gracious work of God's Spirit, delight to contemplate its commencement and progress in others.

A man, who is the father of a very numerous family, had been accustomed, as the major part of labouring people are, to a loose, disorderly, intemperate way of living. His tongue was inured to blasphemy, and his conduct unrestrained. For some