

## ~Other Speakers S-Z: Classic Christian Writings:

In a booklet of excerpts from David Brainerd's Journal and Diary, Andrew Murray writes the following forward:

"God has no more precious gift to give to a church or an age than a man who lives as the embodiment of His will, and inspires those around him with the faith of what grace can do. We speak of the nineteenth century as one of missionary revival. It is remarkable how, in the previous century, God gave His church two men, whose biographies not only testify to intense life-sacrificing devotion to mission work, but specially help those who followed them to believe in the power of prayer as the essential element of service in the kingdom.

"David Brainerd and Henry Martyn were both powerful witnesses to faith in God's promise and the confident assurance that prayer would hasten the coming of the kingdom. Many a missionary who came after them owed the deepening of his faith in prayer to their example.

"This little volume of extracts from the life of David Brainerd has been prepared to bring some of the passages having reference to his intense and powerful praying within reach of all Christians. The one thing one could wish to say to all readers is: Beware of being content, and even delighted, with what you read of the intensity of Brainerd's prayers, and the wonderful answer that sometimes came so speedily and with such power.

"This delight may tempt you to rest content with the approval and the pleasure of knowing what he did. But this will profit little. Read, and pause, and read again, as in God's presence, until you hear the voice of the Spirit calling you to follow in the footsteps of God's servants. Ask grace to enable you to prove what the secret is of such intense love to souls, and such confident assurance that God will, in answer to your prayer, too, bestow blessing on those for whom you pray.

"And let us pray very specially that the church may be convinced of the sin of prayerlessness, and of the blessed possibilities of a life crying day and night to Him for His blessing on those who are still in darkness. May God bless every reader of this book."--Andrew Murray

## Few But Blessed Years

Walter Searle, friend of Andrew Murray who made selections from the Journal and Diary for including in the booklet, writes in the introduction, "Space does not permit of so many quotations as we should have liked to give, illustrating how intense and habitual was [Brainerd's] supreme passion for God's glory--such as this:

"'Oh, that I could spend every moment of my life to God's glory'; or this, a few days before he died: 'It refreshed my soul to think of former things, or desires to glorify God, and of the pleasures of living to Him.'

"This was his dedication of himself to missionary toils, after having weighed in the balance a life of comparative comfort in a civilized pastorate: 'Here am I, Lord, send me to the rough, savage pagans of the wilderness; send me from all that is called comfort even to death itself, if it be in Thy service and to promote Thy kingdom.'

"[Brainerd's] passion for God, his yearning for holiness, as well as his habitual practice of prayer, must ever make him a constraining influence. It is to this latter grace of his [the practice of prayer] that our attention is especially called. Let it be carefully noted how frequently he retired for prayer, how protracted, how fervent it was, even to profuse sweat, like John Fletcher; and how this was mixed, like the prayers of Moses, Daniel, Paul, and the Savior even, with fasting. Note again how he continually says, 'God enabled me to wrestle for multitudes of immortal souls.'"

Here are three diary entries:

December 1 "Both morning and evening, I enjoyed some intenseness of soul in prayer, and longed for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom in the world. My soul seems of late to wait on God for His blessing on the church. Oh, that religion might powerfully revive!"

December 22 "Spent this day alone in fasting and prayer, and reading in God's Word the exercises and deliverances of His children. Had, I trust, some exercise of faith, and realizing apprehension of divine power,

grace and holiness; and also, of the unchangeableness of God, that He is the same as when He delivered His saints of old out of great tribulation. My soul was sundry times in prayer enlarged for God's church and people. 'Oh that Zion might become the joy of the whole earth!' It is better to wait upon God with patience, than to put confidence in anything in this lower world. 'My soul, wait thou on the Lord'; for 'from Him comes thy salvation.'

July 12 "Towards night my burden respecting my work among the Indians began to increase much; and was aggravated by hearing sundry things, which looked very discouraging; in particular, that they intended to meet together the next day for an idolatrous feast and dance. Then I began to be in anguish. I thought that I must in conscience go and endeavor to break them up; yet knew not how to attempt such a thing. However, I withdrew for praying, hoping for strength from above.

"In prayer I was exceedingly enlarged, and my soul was as much drawn out as I ever remember it to have been in my life. I was in such anguish, and pleaded with so much earnestness and importunity, that when I rose from my knees I felt extremely weak and overcome; I could scarce walk straight; my joints were loosed; the sweat ran down my face and body; and nature seemed as if it would dissolve...."

#### After the Night Comes the Morning

After the night of weeping, came the joy of morning for Brainerd. "Prevailing prayer eventually brought down blessing like Elijah's prayer for rain." After a few years of intense and prayerful ministry among the savage Indians of the early American wilderness, before God called him above, Brainerd could write:

"To see those who were very recently savage pagans and idolaters, having no hope, and without God in the world, now filled with a sense of divine love and grace, and worshiping the Father in spirit and in truth, as numbers [of the Indians] have appeared to do, was not a little affecting; and especially to see them appear so tender and humble, as well as lively, fervent, and devout in the divine service..."

"This day makes up a complete year from the first time of my preaching to these Indians in New Jersey. What amazing things has God wrought in this space of time, for this poor people! What a surprising change appears in their tempers and behavior! How are morose and savage pagans, in this short period, transformed into agreeable, affectionate, and humble Christians, and their drunken and pagan howlings turned into devout and fervent praises to God! They 'who were sometimes darkness are now become light in the Lord.' May they 'walk as children of the light and of the day!' And now to Him that is of power to establish them according to the gospel, and the preaching of Christ--to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. Amen!"

A week before Brainerd died he wrote in his journal, "Oh, that [God's] kingdom might come in the world; that they might all love and glorify Him, for what He is in Himself; and that the blessed Redeemer might see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied! O come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly! Amen."

Searle concludes: "Let us, as we watch his heavenward translation, pray like Elisha, Oh, that we might receive a double portion of his spirit--his love for the heathen and his longing that the kingdom of Christ might speedily come."

The excerpts above are taken from David Brainerd's Testimony, selected by Walter Searle. To have your heart challenged and your faith strengthened by the account of such a fasting, praying firebrand for God as David Brainerd, ask for the booklet in magazine format when you write us this month, David Brainerd's Testimony.