

Articles and Sermons :: David Brainerd, Missionary -Donald J. Wolfram

David Brainerd, Missionary -Donald J. Wolfram - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/5/30 2:49

David Brainerd, Missionary

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." (John 7:37)

If you were to be asked, who were the two best known missionaries to the American Indians, what would your answer be? Or would you have any idea? Some of you might be able to come up with one name: David Brainerd, but did you know that John Wesley, as a young man, "devoted himself to the evangelization of the Red Indians," as F. W. Boreham phrased it?

John Wesley, as you may recall, lived a long and fruitful life, almost to the age of ninety. David Brainerd died at twenty-nine, yet his work and his influence have not even to this day, ceased to have a profound effect on those who have read his Journal or his life story. These two men were deeply affected by that great invitation of Jesus that is our text: If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

John Wesley, F. W. Boreham tells us, "invariably found comfort in that sublime proclamation, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink!' In his later life, David Brainerd turned to it often, but before he came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ that verse irritated him. He was twenty-one, had been brought up in a Puritan home, was orphaned at fourteen, but now he began reading a book entitled Guide to Christ. The verse brought only irritation, opposition.

Some time later he was walking in the same remote place when he came to that verse. Instead of irritating him, this time, says Boreham, it captivated him. It brought about a transforming, saving work in his heart and life. Now he said that he "wondered that all the world did not see and comply with this way of salvation." At that time the great missionary societies had not yet been founded. What could he do to tell the whole world about the Saviour? Could he go to China, or India, or Africa? Impossible. After all, he was not strong or hardy. Boreham says that "this frail young consumptive racked with his cough and never free from pain, passed from tribe to tribe, telling everywhere the story of the Cross."

Those of us who were born in New Jersey, or have spent time there, should be interested to know that his most successful preaching to the Indians was in New Jersey. When he was preaching to one group almost all of them were in tears, and the more he told of "the love and compassion of God in sending His Son to suffer for the sins of men, the more they wept." On another occasion, at a communion service, "the whole company was dissolved in tears.

For five years he continued his strenuous labors. Time after time you may read in his journal excerpts such as this:

This evening I was much assisted in meditating on that precious text: Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink! I longed to proclaim such grace to the whole world of sinners.

Or, on another occasion:

On the sunny side of a hill in the wilderness, I preached all day, to people who had come twenty miles to hear me, on Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink! I was scarce ever enabled to offer the free grace of God to perishing sinners with more plainness.

Yes, he was only twenty-nine when he died, but his influence lingers on. William Carey, the young shoe cobbler, in accordance with the counsel of John Wesley, read Brainerd's biography, and caught the vision for India. Henry Martyn, after graduation from Cambridge, instead of pursuing a career in law, became a missionary to India, and later Persia. It was Brainerd's biography that made him a missionary. When John Wesley was concerned about the spiritual life of his English Conference he gave this exhortation: "Let every preacher read carefully the Life of David Brainerd!"

Some of you may want to take that advice today, but even more important, if you have not already done so, I urge you to accept that invitation, that earnest entreaty of the Saviour, Jesus Christ: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

nk."

Re: David Brainerd, Missionary -Donald J. Wolfram - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2006/5/30 11:50

Quote:

-----Let every preacher read carefully the Life of David Brainerd!

Let every layman also read it...

(<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/works2.ix.html>) The Life and Diary of the Rev. David Brainerd

In Christ,

Ron