



# **The Hidden Smile of God: The Fruit of Affliction in the Lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd (The Swans Are Not Silent)**

*John Piper*

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Bunyan • Cowper • Brainerd

John Bunyan suffered long-term imprisonment, even when a simple promise to cease preaching would have freed him, and he was moved to rely on God even more... Despite month after month of debilitating depression, William Cowper's poetry reflected the sustaining character of God and led him to worship more deeply... David Brainerd so desired to honor God that through the loneliness of wilderness ministry and the agony of tuberculosis, he pressed on, transforming world missions forever.

When Augustine handed over the leadership of his church in A.D. 426, his successor was so overwhelmed by a sense of inadequacy that he declared, "The swan is silent," fearing the spiritual giant's voice would be lost in time. But for 1,600 years Augustine has not been silent-and neither have the men who faithfully trumpeted the cause of Christ after him. Their lives have inspired every generation of believers and should compel us to a greater passion for God.

In this noteworthy Swans Are Not Silent book, John Piper invites you into the lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd to discover how God takes the privilege of faith and strengthens it with trials so that we experience a greater hunger for him. The perseverance of these godly servants exemplifies the essential fruit that affliction can produce in your own life. Their enduring faith will fortify you in your suffering, reminding you that "behind a frowning providence, God hides a smiling face." And their stories and witness will inspire in you a similar passion for the supremacy of God in your life.

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