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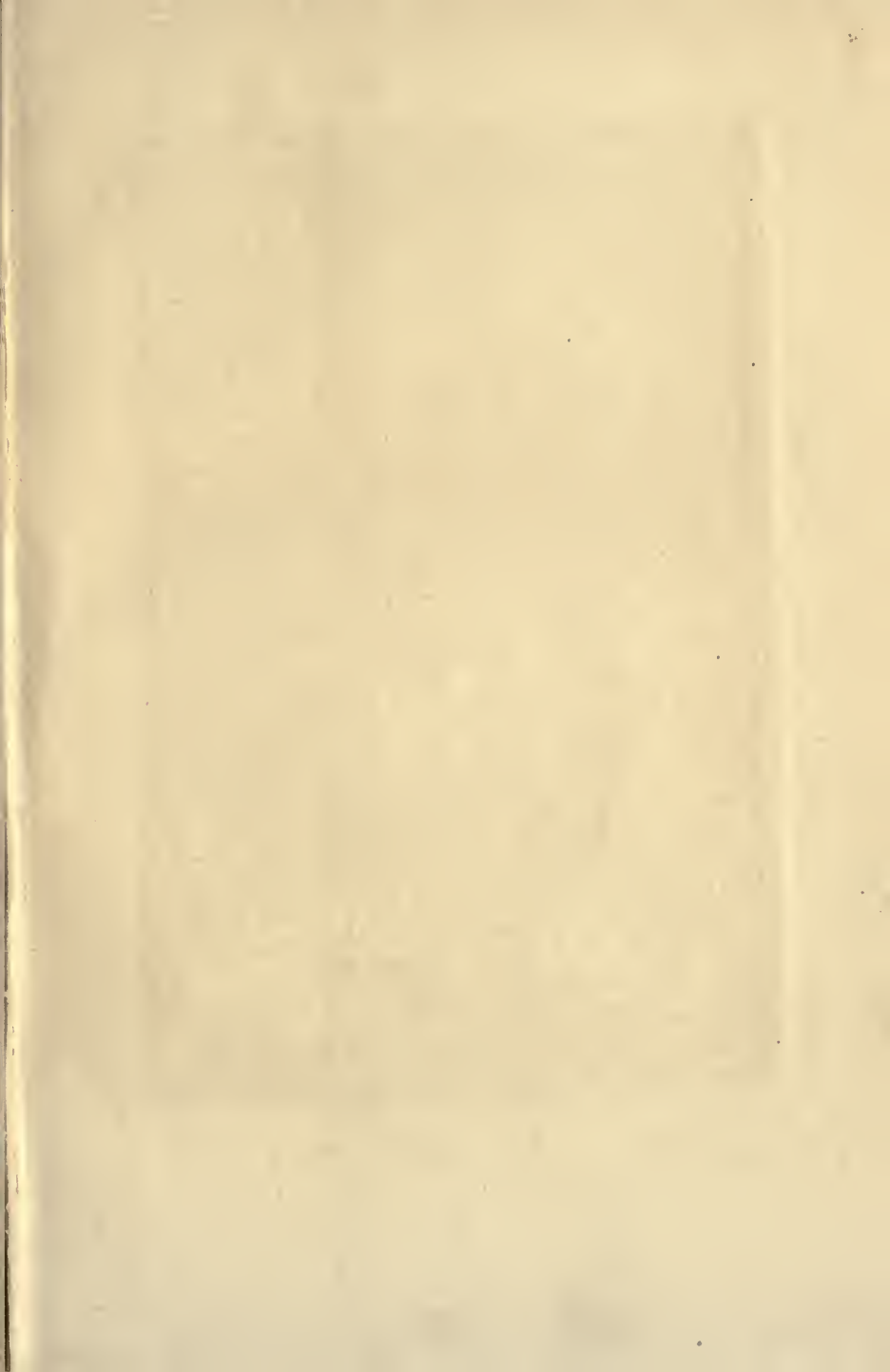
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REMINISCENCES OF
ANDREW A. BONAR
D.D.

EDITED BY HIS DAUGHTER

MARJORY BONAR

LONDON
HODDER AND STOUGHTON
27 PATERNOSTER ROW
1895

'Tis only for a season ;
How long we cannot tell,—
A quickly passing season,
And all will then be well.

We parted at the river,
They hasted on before ;
And we behind them tarried
On this tempestuous shore.

They went to be with Jesus ;
We could not stay their flight :
They rose above the darkness ;
We still remain in night.

They sweetly sleep in Jesus
Beyond the fear of ill ;
Theirs is the blessed resting ;
Ours is the watching still.'

Horatius Bonar.

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INTRODUCTION

THE reminiscences of our father, and the letters contained in this volume have been gathered from many sources, with the kind help of friends to whom I desire to express my gratitude. The sermons and addresses are taken in part from his own manuscript, and in part from the notes of hearers. The only two addresses which have had the benefit of his own revision are those on *Angel Workers* and on *What gives Assurance*, both of which were published some years ago in tract form. As the Diary was the disclosure of our father's inner life, these reminiscences will, it is hoped, recall, however imperfectly, that outer life which was known and read by the world through which he walked in the narrow path that leads to life.

'He being dead yet speaketh.' His memory is still an incentive to holiness. While he lived others said of him, 'I never met him without being the better for it.' The secret lay in his everyday fellowship with the Lord. He looked not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

Born in Edinburgh in 1810, he was carefully and lovingly trained by godly parents in all the things that concern salvation, but he speaks of himself as being

still without Christ till he was twenty years of age. When reading such books as Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, he used to feel seriously impressed; and the preaching of Edward Irving 'cast into his soul some of the first beams of light as to spiritual truth.' But what more than anything else impressed him, was to see one and another of his friends coming to Christ; then he longed to know that he too was born again. The great change seems to have come to him more gradually than suddenly, not in a time of revival, but in the solitude of his own room. On Sabbath, the 17th of October, 1830, while quietly sitting in a room for study which he shared with his brothers, reading Guthrie's *Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ*, he began to have a 'secret joyful hope,' that he really believed on the Lord Jesus. The fulness and freeness of divine grace filled his heart. '*I did nothing but receive,*' he says. No doubt of his acceptance in Christ ever again dimmed the clearness of his faith. Thirty years afterwards he wrote: 'I have been many many times unhappy for a time, but never led to doubt my interest in the Lord Jesus.' Again he says: 'For fifty years the Lord has kept me within sight of the Cross,' and his testimony after sixty years of life in Christ is, that the Lord has never once left him in darkness as to his interest in Him, all these years. Along with this clear sense of forgiveness he seems to have obtained a vivid apprehension of his union to Christ. His faith rested, not so much on the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ, as on His Person; and in His living companionship he walked all the days of his

life. He once related an incident of his student days, which must have made a great impression upon him, as he told it with much feeling. In his daily walk to one of the college classes he and his companions used to meet an old man going to business, who was sometimes walking along holding his hat a little way off his head. The peculiarity of the action excited the notice of those who met him, and some one asked the old man what he meant by it. He was at first reluctant to tell, but at last he said, 'Well, if you will know, I will tell you. As I walk along the street I have sometimes such fellowship with the Lord Jesus, that I feel as if He were close beside me, and I lift my hat in token of reverence.' Of his own experience our father wrote on his eighty-second birthday: 'It was in the year 1830 that I found the Saviour, or rather, that He found me and laid me on His shoulders rejoicing, and I have never parted company with Him all these sixty-two years.' While others were stumbling at dark doctrines, or searching into the depths of their heart's sinfulness, or looking within for signs of their regeneration, he was pressing on in a life of rejoicing and ever nearer fellowship with Him whose voice at the first had whispered in His ear, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.' He was inclined naturally to depression. Humiliation and self-abasement were everyday exercises of his spiritual life. The more striking was the current of joy that flowed steadily and without change all through his life. Sorrow fell to his lot. Disappointment chilled his hopes. Deeper waters crossed his pathway than even those nearest him ever knew. They

only heard the song with which he praised Him who had delivered him from all evil.

It is interesting to notice in connection with his conversion that William Guthrie, who wrote the *Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ*, owed the deepening, if not the beginning, of his spiritual life to Samuel Rutherford, under whom he studied in St. Andrews. If our father's religious life was modelled on that of another, it was on the life of the Reformers and Covenanters. He studied their writings and drank in much of their spirit. He had something of their strength and reality of purpose, the same fidelity to truth,—though with perhaps more love and less fiery vehemence,—often the same quaint habit of speech, and the same fervour of spirit which would have led him to lay down his life for the Lord he loved. Like John Welsh he spent hours in wrestling prayer for those who cared not to plead for themselves. Like Samuel Rutherford his one desire was to get a deeper insight into the love of the 'only lovely' Lord Jesus. The words of a Reformer and martyr, 'We have a good and gentle Lord, let us follow His steps,' might have been his own. He did not find it hard to unite a reverent belief in the most solemn and mysterious truths of the Bible with a joyous and triumphant hope. One who knew him well has written of him: 'Calvinism and the evangelical creed were never so fairly (their critics might say insidiously) recommended, as by this man who stood by every doctrine, even the most severe and difficult to believe, while he seemed to live in a perpetual sunshine, and to spread not gloom, but brightness and good-

nature wherever he appeared.' 'I believe everything that is in the Confession of Faith,' are his own words, 'but I believe more than is in it; for Jordan may overflow his banks.' Some might smile at his unquestioning faith, but there was none who did not envy him his unfailing gladness and unbroken serenity.

His conscientiousness led him, while still a student, to postpone his entrance on his studies in the Divinity Hall. 'I always kept back till I was in Christ before I could think of entering the Hall.' In 1831—a year after his conversion—he passed through the preparatory examination before the Presbytery, and his theological studies began. Left fatherless when only eleven years of age, he, along with his brothers and sisters, clung closely to the mother who was so worthy of their love and reverence, and looked up to their oldest brother James as the representative of the father who had been taken from them. Our father's name can hardly be dissociated from the names of his two older brothers, John and Horatius. Both of them were in the ministry before him, Horatius only a year earlier, and John some years before. Through a long life of service, they followed the same course, preaching the same truths, bearing the same testimony, each with his own special characteristics. His brother John, though less widely known than his two brothers, was distinguished for his culture and scholarship, and for the eloquence and grace of his preaching. He had an immense fund of humour, and held quite a unique place among his friends, with his genial kindness and exuberant flow of spirits. His loving interest in the spiritual welfare of his younger

brother is brought out in our father's Diary and in much of their early correspondence with each other.

A band of devoted men were at that time preparing for the ministry, of whom some remain unto this present day, but the most are fallen asleep. One of the survivors of that circle of friends, Dr. Moody-Stuart, writes of their early intercourse:—

‘My introduction to your father was in 1836, through his attached friend Robert M'Cheyne, when they were still students for the ministry. Robert M'Cheyne's father and family were members of the congregation to which I ministered before I was ordained, when St. Luke's was about to be built. It was to me a golden day when I first became acquainted with a young man so full of Christ. He introduced Andrew Bonar and then Horace and Somerville, and I invited them to meet in my house once a week for prayer. It was a singularly pleasant and fruitful meeting, for we were of one heart and one mind, and the Lord Jesus, according to His promise, was in the midst of us with the joy of His salvation.

‘Five years later, when Andrew was minister at Collace and M'Cheyne at Dundee, they sometimes met at Annat for conference and prayer. There is still fresh in my memory one bright forenoon, when we sat together in the garden-seat in heavenly fellowship, and not without the joy of the Holy Ghost. This early communion with them both I hope soon to renew in the heavenly inheritance, where they are now walking with the Lamb by the fountains of living waters, and with your father to remember all the way

by which the Lord has led us these twice forty years in the wilderness.' Dr. Moody-Stuart's recollections of our father are of 'his unfailing buoyancy of brightness through his daily rejoicing in the Lord. The joy of the Lord was his strength, with a fulness and a constancy that were quite singular.'

In 1838 each of that band of friends had found a sphere of labour. Our father's settlement at Collace followed a short assistantship at Jedburgh and some months of missionary work in the parish of St. George's Church, Edinburgh. The times were peculiar, and God raised up men of peculiar grace, mighty in the Scriptures, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. Darkness covered the land spiritually. The Gospel, because little preached, was little sought for. Like the sun bursting through the clouds came the great revival of 1839-40, which spread all over the land. Then followed, in 1843, the memorable Disruption, when, for conscience' sake, more than four hundred ministers of Christ severed their connection with the Established Church and formed the Free Church of Scotland. The effects of this event upon our father's work in Collace were in all respects for the better. He was left free to work as he chose among his people, and even during the trying time when they were without a church in which to worship, God's presence was felt among them, quickening and blessing. His marriage in 1848 increased his usefulness as a pastor, and brought to him new and deeper experiences of life. His later years at Collace seem to have cost him many anxious thoughts and much searching of heart. The full tide of revival had

ebbed, and the work of God was not so apparent as in earlier years. His sorrowful reflections in his Diary on this account recall a story he often used to tell in connection with a good old minister at the close of last century. Being much discouraged by the small attendance at the prayer-meeting, the old man one day added to the intimation of the time and place of meeting the sorrowful remark, 'But' I need hardly tell you, for none of you will be there.' As the people dispersed, they said to each other, 'The minister is vexed, we'll go this time;' and when the good man drew near the place of meeting, he saw with amazement that many were gathering together. 'How often,' he said to himself, 'have I come here with a sermon and found no congregation, and now I have come without a sermon and find a great congregation!' Retiring for a little while to an adjoining wood, he implored the Lord to give him a message and to add His blessing. Such was the power accompanying the word preached on that evening that a revival of religion began in that solemn hour, which had a mighty influence for two generations.

The people's estimate of our father's labours in Collace was very different from his own. 'When you came among us in 1839,' are their words on the occasion of his jubilee in 1888, 'Collace, as regards spiritual life, was comparatively a desert. When you left, it was like a watered garden—"a field that the Lord had blessed." The effects of your faithful testimony remain to this day, both in living souls and in the social and religious habits of the people.' His faithful

preaching was continually accompanied with blessing, both in his own parish and in the many places he was in the habit of visiting. A sermon of his on 'The Pearl of Great Price' was used in a singular way. A young woman whose heart was yearning for her father's conversion had been greatly struck with this sermon, which she had heard our father preach somewhere. When he came one day to her own village, she went to the door of the vestry to ask him to preach it again, but her courage failed, and she went back into church without having asked him, but praying that he might be led to it. Her prayer was heard; the sermon she so longed for was delivered, and was the means of her father's conversion.

Eighteen years of country pastorate were years of prayer and preparation for greater work. The attraction of a call to another field of labour in Glasgow in 1856 was the attraction of harder and more extended work,—to spend the best years of life in gathering out from one dark corner of the great city a people for the Lord. Bravely he toiled on, and there, as in Collace, gales of revival came to gladden and refresh. The greatest sorrow of his life fell upon him in 1864, in the height of his usefulness, when his wife was taken from him, and he was left with his five children to journey on without her loving help and counsel. Bitter as was the sorrow, it never turned him aside from his Master's work. 'I find preaching the Word one of my best consolations,' he says at one time; and again, 'God's Lethe is in some degree fruitfulness in time of affliction.' With less to bind him to earth, he sought with more

earnestness the things which are above. The loss of earthly joy brought to him more of the Saviour's presence. All his experiences combined to make him skilful in ministering to the spiritual needs of others. Especially was this felt in times of awakening. In 1839 and the years that followed he was constantly in contact with revival scenes. Very few still live to remember him as he was then, but in 'later times his influence was felt in every such movement. The Rev. Dr. Cuyler, of New York, writing to him in 1879, says, 'I asked our friend Moody who rendered him the most assistance in Great Britain. He answered, "The Lord Chancellor and Dr. A. A. Bonar,—the first one by attending my London meetings and giving me his powerful influence, and Dr. A. A. Bonar by helping me to deeper knowledge of the Word, and by his letters and counsels." There, my dear modest brother, is not that a jewel at least in advance from your heavenly crown?' His entire disinterestedness in this work and his single-minded desire for the glory of God and the salvation of souls were remarkable. After the revival of 1874, it was found that his congregation had received a larger share of blessing than any other in the city. But the pastor was not contented with only receiving. He rejoiced when many of his most devoted members became helpers in those different evangelistic agencies throughout the city which were the outcome of this movement, and he found it true in his own experience as well as in that of his people, that he that watereth others is watered also himself. Fresh life flowed by this means into his congregation, widening its interests

and expanding its energies and sympathies. Christians from other lands were attracted to his church as they passed through Glasgow, and many a casual visitor stayed at the close of a service to express his thanks for the spiritual quickening he had received. Still more memorable were the communion seasons, when many of God's people, widely separated in their church connection, met together round the table of the Lord in Finnieston, and enjoyed a foretaste of the fellowship above which is yet to come.

Though our father's estimate of his work and of his attainments was humble, others recognised his gifts and gave him honour. The University of Edinburgh conferred on him, in 1874, the degree of Doctor of Divinity. In 1878 he, with some reluctance, allowed himself to be elected to the Moderatorship of the Assembly of the Free Church, which was held that year in Glasgow. In nominating him to the office, the retiring Moderator, Dr. Goold, made a happy allusion to the similarity of the circumstances to those of the first Assembly which met in Glasgow in 1638, at which Alexander Henderson was unanimously nominated as Moderator by the votes of his brethren—*'none being contrair except his own.'* The people of Finnieston were not behind others in doing honour to their minister. In 1881 they had celebrated his semi-jubilee as their pastor, and in 1888 a remarkable gathering was held to celebrate his fifty years' work as a minister of Christ. Representatives of the Church of God from all parts of Scotland, from England, from America, gave their testimony to the blessed influence of his words and of his

writings, and to the seals God had put upon his faithful ministry.

Seven years previously, in 1881, he accepted an urgent invitation from Mr. Moody to visit America and be present at the Northfield Conference, held in the month of August. Notwithstanding his seventy-one years, he faced the discomforts of a sea voyage and the heat of an American summer, and, accompanied by his eldest daughter, spent two months on the other side of the Atlantic. He astonished his friends at Northfield by his wonderful vigour—sometimes walking two or three miles a day in the excessive heat, besides giving addresses and talking to the students and others, who listened eagerly for the weighty words that fell from his lips. Often he expressed his thankfulness to God for this visit to Northfield, and for the opportunity then given to him of enjoying fellowship with so many of God's people whose names he had long loved and honoured. He returned home with his heart glowing, and leaving behind him a fragrant memory.

The last years of his life were full of unremitting labour. He was obliged to withdraw gradually from some of his former work, but he laboured more fervently in prayers for his family, for his friends, for his congregation, for all the world. He felt himself drawing very near the world to come. 'I have been thinking to-night,' is one of the solemn entries in his Diary, 'that perhaps my next great undertaking may be this: appearing at the judgment-seat of Christ, when I give an account of my trading with my talents.' His poet-brother, Horatius, after two years of weakness and suffering, was taken

home in 1889. Two years later his brother John quietly 'fell asleep,' in the eighty-ninth year of his age. And so the life-long fellowship of the three brothers was broken up; but 'only for a season.' Our father had agreed, after much persuasion, to the appointment of a colleague, and in September 1891—the anniversary of his own ordination at Collace fifty-two years before—the Rev. D. M. M'Intyre, of College Park, London, was inducted as co-pastor and helper in his work at Finnieston. With the burden of his labours thus lightened, his friends rejoiced in the thought that years of service might yet be granted to him; but the long, laborious life was drawing to a close. On the 30th of December 1892, he gently passed within the veil. 'He walked with God, and was not, for God took him.'

His memory is cherished by those who knew him and loved him, but by many who never saw his face he will be held in grateful remembrance for what he has written. His books are valued not for their literary merit—though he had learning and scholarship of no ordinary kind—but for the light they cast upon the Word of God and its teaching. By those who love to search the Scriptures devoutly and reverently they will always be treasured. Of his *Commentary on Leviticus*, Mr. Spurgeon writes, 'I often consult your "Leviticus," and never in vain;' and of his other book, *Christ and his Church in the Book of Psalms*, 'Your valuable volume on the Psalms has long been in my library, and had a high place in my esteem. I have been, for some years, compiling extracts from all authors illustrating the Psalms, which extracts will be issued with my own

commentary ; and I am under great obligation to you for choice pieces which I have taken the liberty to cull.'

The most widely known of his works, the *Memoir of the Rev. R. M. M'Cheyne*, is written in a simplicity of style that at once strikes the reader. Its immense circulation has made its author's name known all over the world, and many an honoured servant of Christ owes his first inspiration to the work of God to this record of a brief but blessed life. A singular blessing follows its course. A lady reading it in her house in the Highlands of Scotland finds life to her soul as she reads. An unconverted curate in the Church of England has M'Cheyne's *Sermons* sent to him by his brother. He begins to read them to his congregation, as he has been doing with others, and is amazed, after a few Sabbaths have passed, to find his people coming to him with questions about things they had never spoken of before. An American gentleman, brought to Christ while reading the *Memoir*, comes to Dundee to spend his first Sabbath in Scotland in St. Peter's, that he may worship in the church where Robert M'Cheyne used to preach. In 1845 our father's impression of the past year's work at Collace, was that little blessing had attended his ministry. 'The *Memoir of M'Cheyne* and my tract on *Baptism* seem to me the chief way in which the Lord has been using me to any extent.' How little could he then foresee the influence to be exerted in time to come by these memorials of his friend's life and ministry.

In the *Memoir* he describes Mr. M'Cheyne's preaching

as 'being in a manner the development of his soul's experience,'—'a giving out of the inward life.' The same might be said of his own. It never was his ambition to be a great preacher. He spoke to the heart of his hearers, simply and directly, not thinking of how to please them, but delivering a message from the Lord. As early as 1835 he writes: 'I never before felt the extreme difficulty of being absorbed in the desire of saving souls as my sole object, and of taking the glory of God as my simple aim. I think it is a rule of Scripture (Jeremiah i.) that, going with God's message and in His strength, we are sure to be sustained.' 'I find that simply to receive Him and wait upon Him is as difficult a matter as to speak of Him aright.' After thirty-six years of preaching 'Christ and Him crucified' his experience is that 'Christ is more than ever precious to me in His atonement, righteousness, merit, heart. Nothing else satisfies me. I only yearn to know Him better, and preach Him more fully.' He never went to the pulpit without preparation, yet none more entirely depended on the power of the Holy Spirit to make the word preached effectual. Some of his own words in reference to Mr. M'Cheyne might with truth be applied to himself. 'There has been one among us who dwelt at the mercy-seat as if it were his home—preached the certainties of eternal life with an undoubting mind—and spent his nights and days in ceaseless breathings after holiness and the salvation of sinners. Hundreds of souls were his reward from the Lord ere he left us; and in him have we been taught how much one man may do who will only press farther

into the presence of his God, and handle more skilfully the unsearchable riches of Christ, and speak more boldly for his God.' To one was granted only a short time in which to labour, to the other a long ministry of more than fifty years ; but both have heard the words, ' Well done, good and faithful servant ! '

The succeeding chapters of this book have been written to bring out in detail some parts of our father's life and character, to show, not a perfect man, but one who more than most around him bore on his forehead the impress of holiness. As they read, his old hearers and those who remember his life as portrayed in these pages will recall the words of the beloved Apostle ; ' And now, little children, abide in Him ; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. '

GLASGOW, 1895.

We the undersigned members of the Exegetical
society hereby declare our intention
read during the course of next year
Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah or one or
two of them in Hebrew - and one of the
books of the New Testament in Greek.

Henry Moncreiff.

Andrew A. Bonar.

Rob Kinnear

Thos Brown

Father Wood

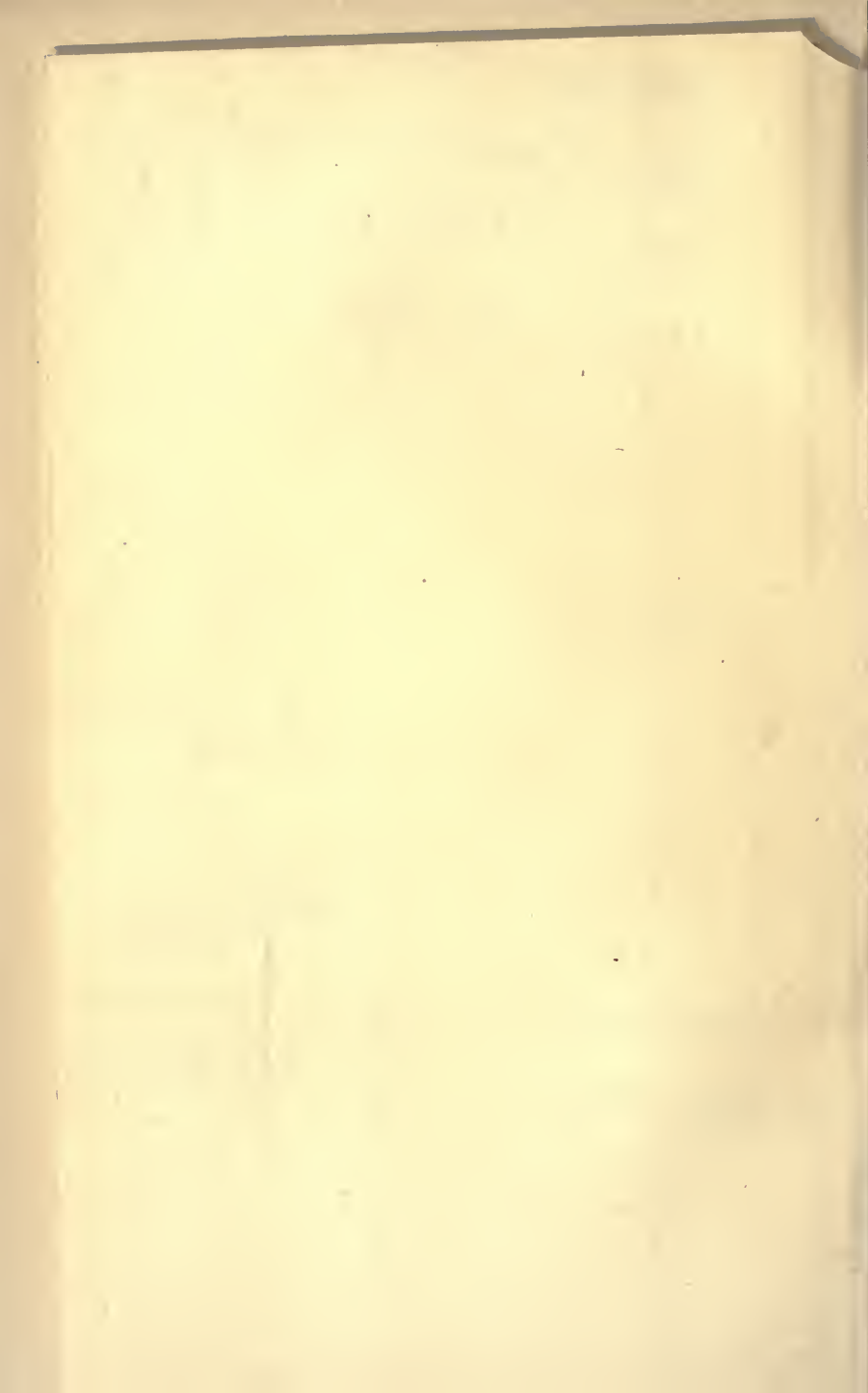
John Thomson.

Mrs. Somerville

George Smeaton

Prof. Murray W. Cheyne.

Aug
1838.



A MINISTER OF CHRIST

'Oh the peace, the quiet love, which a good man sheddeth around him ! He seeketh not the haunts of crowds. He hath no one place, one time, one way of doing good ; but wherever he is he findeth it, in preventing the evil ; wherever there is evil, there is his vocation. He is always in his workshop, and his tools are ever at his hand ; for truth and righteousness and pity and love are the tools with which he everywhere worketh the work of goodness. I start from the image which I conceive, because it doth so rebuke us all with its unseen labour and unheard-of diligence.'

—*Edward Irving.*

CHAPTER I

THE events of a ministry are not easily recalled after the lapse of sixty years. Two generations have passed away since the days when Andrew Bonar went in and out among the people of Jedburgh, but his name lingers in and around the old town, for 'the memory of the just is blessed.' There are still some who remember that their father or their mother belonged to 'Mr. Bonar's class.' It was in Jedburgh, in 1835, that he preached his first sermon, after passing through the regular course of study in the Divinity Hall of Edinburgh. There his first ministerial experiences were gained. The visitation of the prisoners in the jail gave him an insight into the evil of the human heart which he never forgot;¹ and his intercourse with Mr. Purves, his senior minister and friend, seems to have been the means of stimulating him in the study of prophetic truth, as well as in other ways. He never forgot those to whom he had ministered in Jedburgh. When staying at Hawick in 1878, he spent a day along with the Rev. Duncan Stewart in revisiting his old field of labour. Some who professed to have come to Christ during his ministry there were dear to him, and he spent a great part of the afternoon in climbing stairs and finding them out. 'He remembered every one

¹ 'An absent God and a present Devil' was one prisoner's account of her experience in the jail.

well, their name, their spiritual history, etc. Some had not shone for Christ so brightly as they might have done, but he did not pass them by. He had a word for each as he thought they needed. He seemed to have far greater delight in looking after these sheep that afternoon than in viewing the pleasant scenery round Jedburgh.'

One of his reminiscences of the people was a story of a half-witted man whom he used to visit. This poor man had found Christ and had learned to rejoice in the thought of His return to earth. He went to Edinburgh on a visit, and came home much dissatisfied with the ministers. When asked why, he said, 'Oh, they a' flee wi' ae wing!' They preached Christ's First, but not His Second Coming.

During his work as missionary in St. George's, Edinburgh, to which he removed at the close of 1836, Mr. Bonar's interest in the Jews was quickened by contact with several of them both in public and private. Hardly had he begun to feel at home in his first charge at Collace when he was appointed one of the four who formed a deputation in the year 1839 from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to the Land of Israel. This event gave a colour to all his future ministry. A stone from Mount Sinai, an olive-leaf from Gethsemane, a shell from the shores of the Lake of Galilee, a piece of Desert shittim-wood, were texts by which he made the scenes and incidents of the Bible real and living, and from which he preached the love and faithfulness of 'that same Jesus' whose feet would one day stand again upon Mount Olivet.

A beautiful incident, which he often related, occurred at Kelso when Mr. Bonar was on a visit to his brother Horatius. He was addressing a meeting there, and, when showing some ears of barley which he had plucked

on Mount Zion, he said, 'If God keeps His threatenings so faithfully (Micah iii. 12), will He not keep His promises?' Next day, an old woman sent for him, and, as soon as he entered her house, she held up her hands and exclaimed, 'Oh, those ears of barley! those ears of barley!' He asked her what she meant, and she said she had just thought when he was speaking the night before that if God kept His word about ears of barley, would He not keep it about the salvation of a soul? And all her doubts fled.

The parish of Collace in Perthshire, where Mr. Bonar was ordained in 1838, lies at the foot of the hill of Dunsinnane, where once stood Macbeth's Castle, and from which there is a wide view over several counties of Scotland. The associations of the place were all in harmony with the young minister's love for everything of antiquarian interest. On the hill of Bandirran, close by Dunsinnane, are remains of a Druidic circle. A farm in the neighbourhood bears the name of Balmalcolm, and not far off is the hamlet of Cairnbeddie—'the cairn of Macbeth.' Tradition says that a green mound on the farm of Lawton is the spot where Macbeth used to administer justice. Over the doorway of the Dunsinnane burying-place in Collace churchyard is a small Saxon arch, said to have been taken from the little village of Thorngreen,¹ where once stood a house adorned by the stones of Macbeth's Castle.² The first Protestant minister of Collace was the Rev. James Anderson, who was ordained to the ministry of that parish in the sixteenth century. He wrote a poem entitled 'The Winter Night,'—a warning to his flock against Popery,—and dedicated it to John Erskine of

¹ Thorngreen, Sachar, and Kinrossie, were little villages in the parish of Collace.

² These details are extracted from a note-book in which Dr. Bonar has collected everything of interest connected with Collace.

Dun. When Mr. Bonar came to the parish, the old minister to whom he acted as colleague had already been there for nearly fifty years, but there was only one woman who was known to have received any good from his ministry. He was very much afraid of some one coming who would preach the 'new doctrines.' Mr. Bonar was presented to the parish through the influence of Mr. Nairne of Dunsinnane, who continued always a true friend to him and to the cause of the Free Church in the neighbourhood. Mr. Nairne, it is said, asked Mr. M'Cheyne if he would leave Dundee and come to Collace. He said 'No ; but I will tell you of a much better man,' and named his friend Andrew Bonar. On hearing of his presentation to the parish, Mr. M'Cheyne wrote to him :—

'Dundee, 17th July 1838.

'MY DEAR ANDREW,—I have several times been on the very point of writing you to wish you joy of your presentation to the church of Collace. May it indeed be a gift from His hand who hath done and will do all things well. There are many tokens for good about it, so that you must feel yourself very much called by God. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee ; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, a prophet unto the nations." "Paul an apostle, not of man, neither by man." "*Certainly* I will be with thee, and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee." All these are sweet words, for just as there is no greater misery than to run unspent, of our own private motion or self-esteem, so there is no greater joy than to be called of God as was Aaron, to receive not only "grace," but "apostleship."

'Now then, dear Andrew, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech men by us. We, then, as fellow-workers with God must beseech men not to receive the grace of God in vain. May God count you faithful, putting you into the ministry, and may the arms of your hands be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. For a while you were like Moses. It "came into your heart" to be a minister of God's Word to deliver Israel out of Egypt, for you supposed that your brethren would have understood how that by your hand God would deliver souls.

But they understood not, and so you fled to the land of Midian and called your name "Gershom," for you said "I am a stranger here." But when the set time was expired the Angel Jehovah of the Bush that burned, yet was not consumed, has met thee in the wilderness—"and *now*, come, I will send thee into Egypt." Dear Andrew, forgive thy younger brother speaking to thee as if he were an elder—one that must ever sit at thy feet and walk in thy footsteps, following thee in as far as thou followest Christ. God has also visited your friends with sore bereavement, to remind you that it is no permanent connection you are going to form,—that you must have the same faith as Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who all dwelt in tents in the land of promise, declaring plainly that they seek a country. . . . I hear of your preaching, and am refreshed by the very echo of it. . . . My people have a great attachment to you. . . . I long to know all your feelings. I heard from Mr. Nairné, who says that all the godly people of the countryside are rejoicing. I long to have an open door to preach in these rural retreats. May the Lord appear to you saying, "Fear not, for I am with thee—for I have much people in this parish." Good-bye. May He keep you in perfect peace. Peace upon Israel.—Yours affectionately,

ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE.'

It is interesting to find Mr. M'Cheyne in the same year giving his friend kindly advice about his style of preaching and how to improve it: 'Dear Andrew, study to express yourself very clearly. I sometimes observe obscurity of expression. Form your sentences very regularly. . . . It sometimes strikes me you begin a sentence before you know where you are to end it, or what is to come in at the end.'

Once, when referring to the first sermon he ever preached, Mr. Bonar said, 'In looking over my notes I find I made a great mistake. I had no "heads." When we are young men we are apt to think this is the right way to preach—going straight on from topic to topic; but the hearers need pegs on which to hang the truth.'

The people were not greatly impressed by his first sermon, and this inclined the old minister the more

in his favour. Years after an honest man said to Mr. Bonar, 'It's a gude thing, sir, we didna like ye at first, or we wadna hae had ye noo!'

The country is one of great natural beauty. The village of Collace lies half-hidden among trees and hedgerows in the rich, level lands of Strathmore. To the north the long dark line of the Grampians throws a distant grandeur over the soft Lowland scenery. Near the scattered cottages of the village the square tower of the parish church peeps out from the trees. Dunsinnane House was Mr. Bonar's first home at Collace, and then he came to the Kirkton, an old-fashioned, ivy-covered house by the roadside, close to the church. The garden was separated from the churchyard only by a wall, and one day, not long after their arrival, the servant rushed into the parlour exclaiming, 'Eh, sir, they're buryin' a bairn at the back door!' His sister Christian came with him to this house, and it was a frequent resort of his mother and the rest of the family. The Kirkton is associated with the visits of Robert M'Cheyne, who often rode over from Dundee to give his services at Collace. As he came to the door one wintry day, he said, 'I have been riding all the way to-day through the pure white snow, and that verse has been in my mind all the time, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."' One of his sayings is still remembered in Collace: 'Bethany was known in Scripture not so much as Bethany, but as "the town of Mary and her sister Martha."' I wonder who in this place gives the name by which it is known in heaven? It will not be known there as Collace, but as the town of—perhaps some bedridden believer up in the hills.' While preparing the 'Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews,' Mr. M'Cheyne and Mr. Bonar exchanged work for a few weeks, that they might have fewer interruptions in

their writing. Some one asked the old minister then how he was getting on with 'that wild man from Dundee'? and his reply was, 'Mr. Bonar is bad enough, but that man is ten times waur!' Of a Sabbath-day during that time Mr. M'Cheyne wrote, 'I preached on "Jesus loved Martha" in the morning. The old minister spoke much on *popular arts, and handling the word of God deceitfully*; but I did not mind. I preached in the afternoon in the church—nearly quite full—on "Give us of your oil."'

Mr. Bonar's old servant used to tell, years afterwards, of Mr. M'Cheyne's last visit to Collace. He preached in the church, and 'the folk were standin' out to the gate, and the windows were pulled down that those outside might hear. Mr. Cormick (of Kirriemuir) spoke first, and then Mr. M'Cheyne preached on "Lest I myself should be a castaway." I had to come awa' after he began, and I could see from the house the kirk lighted up, and oh, I wearied sair for them to come hame! They stayed at the kirk that nicht till eleven. The folk couldna gi'e ower listenin', and Mr. M'Cheyne couldna gi'e ower speakin'. I mind the time when Mr. Bonar couldna get his tea ta'en for folk comin' and speerin' if conversion was true. Oh, to hear Mr. M'Cheyne at prayers in the mornin'! It was as if he could never gi'e ower, he had sae muckle to ask. Ye would hae thocht the very walls would speak again. He used to rise at six on the Sabbath mornin', and go to bed at twelve at night, for he said he likit to have the whole day alone with God.'

A servant-girl, in a house where he stayed, described him as '*deein*' to hae folk converted.' A minister in the north was so impressed with his daily life of holiness that he said, 'He is the most Jesus-like man I ever met with,' and went to his room to weep. Dr. Candlish

remarked to Dr. Moody-Stuart, 'I can't understand M^cCheyne; grace seems to be natural to him.'

One or two of Mr. M^cCheyne's letters to Mr. Bonar, both before and after the settlement of the latter at Collace, are full of interest. One is dated, Dundee, 13th September 1836:—

'MY DEAR ANDREW,—Your kind letter has just found me, and rejoices me much. I have often, often wished to see your face in this the scene of my labours and trials. Indeed, I need much to be refreshed by you, and I do hope that God will give you not a prosperous journey only, but a full heart, that I who tarry at home may share in the spoil. . . . Oh, to be kept lying in the dust while we work for God! I am often given up to feel the desperate wickedness of my heart, and I believe it is all to keep me in the dust. Now, my dear Andrew, be sure to make out your visit to me and refresh me with your presence. . . . On Thursday evening is my prayer-meeting, which you must join us in. I shall be so happy to get a word from you that will encourage me and my people. On Thursday I will take you round my parish. On Friday I will make you write a sermon, on Saturday commit it, and on Sabbath preach it; and you shall have one from me. Do consent to this if you can, and we shall have another from you in the evening. I must not write any more, as it gets late. It quite lightens me to think you are coming. . . .

'And now farewell. "I have many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee. But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee."—Your faithful friend,

ROBERT MURRAY M^cCHEYNE.

'I subjoin a map that you may find the house where I live; it is about five minutes' walk further west than the church—the west-most lane in Dundee going down to the sea.'

Another was written when Mr. Bonar was working as missionary in Edinburgh, without any prospect of being sent to a sphere of labour of his own.

'19th January 1838.

'MY DEAR ANDREW,—I am sorry this is Friday night, or I would have written much more at length. Yet a word may convey my

kind wishes to you for this year we have begun, and may remind you of your feeble brother in the north, who needs all the encouragement you have to spare—and specially needs to be carried upon your shoulder and on your breast when you are within the veil. I return you your sermon on "Lord, my heart is not haughty." I had no intention of carrying it away with me when I asked it from you, or would have got your leave first. I hope you did not need it. It has been a sweet word to me, and I have often thought of it. My soul is far from being like a weaned child. I sometimes tremble when I think that afflictions will be needful to wean my soul. . . . You would hear that Mr. Reid is to remain at Chapelshade. . . . Dear Andrew, God is keeping you in the hollow of His hand. When a warrior begins to fight, he never throws his best dart at the enemy first. He throws some weak arrows among them, just to begin the contest; he keeps his polished shaft for the hottest of the fight. Your day is coming, or, if you be lifted away from the scene of conflict to the land of peace and triumph, we will both adore the Sovereign Father of our Lord Jesus, who loves some so well that He must have them to minister to Himself in praises rather than in conflicts. I send you your tract on the Jews, of which I have made large use. I last night gave the substance of it to my prayer-meeting, and engaged their interest very much in behalf of the dearly-beloved of God's soul. I quite agree with you in thinking them the first object of all missionary exertion, and hope hereafter to devote more and more of my thoughts and prayers to them. . . . Tell me when you will come over and see me and preach to my people. . . . Do write and tell me the meaning of any parts of the Bible. I am very ignorant, and thirst for knowledge of the Word—but most of Jesus Himself, the true Word. May He abide in you—you in Him.—Yours affectionately,

R. M. M'CHEYNE.'

A letter which shows another side of Mr. M'Cheyne's character, is one which he wrote to his doctor, who had refused to send in a bill for his services. Mr. M'Cheyne enclosed his fee, along with these lines :—

'Dear Doctor, I fear you will think me too merry,
But it strikes me you're making two bites of a cherry.
You know when a patient won't swallow a pill,
You never consult his sweet mouth or his will,

You say, "Take the physic or you may depend on 't
 You'll never get well, come, drink—there's an end on 't."
 Dear Doctor, allow me to borrow a leaf
 From your book of prescriptions, commanding and brief.
 "Hoc aurum et papyr," mix—pocket—call "Dust!"
 And swallow it quickly. Come, Doctor, you must.
 I had rather want stipend, want dinner, want tea,
 Than my Doctor should ever work wanting his fee.
 Forgive this intrusion—and let me remain,
 In haste, your affectionate R. M. M'Cheyne.'
 'Dulce est desipere in loco.'

Dundee, April 4, 1838.

Mr. M'Cheyne's early death, though regarded as an irreparable loss to the Church of God, was destined, through the publication of his *Memoir*, to effect perhaps a greater work than his prolonged life could have accomplished. Mr. Bonar's love for him was touchingly apparent in his after-life. The 25th of March was always remembered as the day on which Robert M'Cheyne went home. In 1873 he writes, after a visit to St. Peter's, Dundee, 'There is still some peculiar fragrance in the air round Robert M'Cheyne's tomb!'

When in America in 1881, his thoughts went back to his friend through all the long years since 1843, when looking on scenes of which they had often talked together. He writes:—

Saturday, 20th August 1881.—'How deeply interested would Robert M'Cheyne have been to-day had he been with us! He who used to speak of this place. It was really strange to me and wonderful that this morning I should be on the way to Northampton where so much work was done for God in other days. The day was beautiful, everything bathed in sunshine. . . . We came to what was the old street where Jonathan Edwards' house stood. . . . The two great elm-trees in front of the house are remarkable in themselves. It was under these the man of God and his wife used to sit, so that the spot became like the oak of Mamre, God meeting them there; and in those days the

ground all round was a grove of pines where Jonathan Edwards used to walk and pray.'

His thoughts were still dwelling on old memories of his friend, when next day he writes again :—

'Filled with alarm and regret in reviewing the Lord's mercies to me, in using me to write the *Memoir of R. M. M'Cheyne*, for which I am continually receiving thanks from ministers. Why was I commissioned to write that book? How poor have been my returns of thankfulness. Oh, when shall I attain to the same holy sweetness and unction, and when shall I reach the deep fellowship with God which he used to manifest?'

The history of the *Memoir of M'Cheyne* would in itself be enough to fill a volume. The wonderful blessing which has everywhere followed its circulation was always attributed by the author to the prayer offered at the time of its publication; and is also owing, doubtless, to the prayer which has followed its course ever since.

The members of the Deputation to the Jews in 1839, returned into the midst of scenes of revival in their own land. The blessing reached Collace as well as other places, and the pastor's heart rejoiced to find souls seeking Christ in all parts of his parish. There was great depth and reality in the work of grace, deep conviction of sin, and correspondingly clear apprehension of the way of salvation. Many remarkable conversions occurred among old and young. One man who had been a drunkard was brought to the Saviour and became afterwards an elder in the church, and a consistent follower of Christ. On his death-bed he said, 'I am going to the God of the Bible to enjoy Him. I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Another describing his conversion, said, 'Havena I been stoopid, sir? It was sae simple, just as if I had stoopit down and lifted up a clod at my feet.'

A sawyer, who was busy at his work when the light broke upon him, was so filled with joy that he began to preach to his fellow-workman, and had to cry, 'Lord, keep back some o' the licht, for this poor vessel is not able to contain it.' One who was very anxious dreamed that she saw a wide river rolling between her and Christ. She looked and looked at Him on the other side, and as she looked, she suddenly found herself beside Him! She awoke, and saw the meaning of her dream.

A man in the village of Sachar was so terribly awakened, that for many days he was almost ready in his misery to take away his own life. He became a useful member of the church after his conversion, and his frequent prayer at their prayer-meetings used to be 'Wauken them up, Lord, wauken them up!' A very sad case occurred of a man deeply awakened under William Burns' preaching at Dundee, and for days in great agony of mind. After a time all his concern passed away, and he lived and died in indifference.

Coming out of church one Sabbath, Miss Bonar met an old woman weeping, and in great distress of mind. 'Many of the sermons,' she said, 'had grippit her before, but none had grippit her sae sair as this.' She found peace in believing, and along with some others, began a prayer-meeting in the village of Sachar where she lived. A little company of factory girls used to walk seven miles from Stanley to attend the services at Collace. They had to cross the river Tay on their way, and, when they were returning home late one night, the ferryman refused to take them over, so they lay down cheerfully to sleep among the bushes till the morning.

The thirst for the word of God was very great. Not only did the people walk long distances to hear, but they never seemed to grow tired of listening. One evening, Mr. Milne had come from Perth, and Mr.

Manson from the neighbouring village of Abernyte to take part in a meeting at Collace, and it was agreed that each of them should give a short address. Mr. Milne spoke first, and became so interested in his subject—'a well of water springing up to everlasting life'—that he went on for two hours. The people sat motionless, and, quite unconscious of how long he had spoken, he turned to Mr. Manson as he finished, and said, 'Now, brother, you will say a word!'

When Mr. Bonar came to Collace there were perhaps not more than half a dozen living Christians in the place.¹ From those days of revival the parish began to assume a different aspect even outwardly. Few, if any, idlers were to be seen outside the cottage-doors on a Sabbath day, and family worship was conducted morning and evening in nearly every household. 'Drops from heaven fell' on every side, yet still the pastor longed for more. 'Oh that Collace were full of prayer like Kilsyth! Oh that the church were full of people weeping for sin, and oh that there were needing to be psalms sung to drown the weeping of the people as they get a sight of their sins!'

'It is truly encouraging,' he writes to his brother Horatius, 'to hear of souls awakened, and yet it is also alarming that there should be so few,—alarming to ourselves who preach, since we have a promise. I often feel quite certain that my own prayerlessness is the reason why so few of my people are awakened. The thought fills me with pain, and excites me to a new course of prayer.'

¹ He used often to quote the old rhyme which before those days was not applicable to Collace :

'Truth and grace cam' by Collace,
And by the door o' Dron,
But the coup and the stoup o' Abernyte
Mak' mony a merry man.'

'There have been some interesting cases of conversion. But when is the heaven to become black with clouds and winds, and the rain to fall in a Carmel-flood?'

'I rejoice with you,' he writes to Mr. Manson, '[at tidings of revival]. I try my own soul by this test,—can I be as glad at this news as if my own parish had been the scene of these wonders?'

He closes a letter asking Mr. Manson to come and preach, with the words, 'I wish you would bring out with you the trumpet that awakes the dead.'

Dr. Bonar's memory was full of recollections of the preachers and preaching of those times. He used to tell an anecdote of Mr. Burns as an instance of how God overrules for good what seem to us the mistaken impulses of his people. He went one day to Perth to attend a meeting in St. Leonard's, at which Mr. Burns was to preach. When Mr. Bonar arrived at the manse, Mr. Burns exclaimed, 'Oh, this is most providential. I have a strong impression that I should be in Dundee to-night. You and Mr. Milne will take this meeting.' 'But,' they remonstrated, 'you are advertised to preach here.' 'Oh, you two will do it,' he said, and left the room, returning bag in hand to say good-bye. There was nothing for it but that they should go to the church and conduct the meeting. Mr. Bonar gave the first address, and Mr. Milne followed. Some days after, as Mr. Milne was riding to Bridge of Earn, a woman ran out of her house to speak to him. 'Oh, sir,' she said, 'I will never forget Monday night. I was awakened by the first address, and led to Christ by the second!'

Mr. Burns preached one evening in Sachar, and his prayer greatly impressed the people. He asked for the young minister that the Lord would put a sharp sickle

in his hand, that he might gather in many souls to Christ, and for the old minister he prayed, 'Lord, bless the old man who has been so long in this parish. May his flesh come again like that of a little child.'

When Dr. Hamilton was minister in the neighbouring village of Abernyte, a man in his parish used to walk over to Collace to church. He apologised for doing so and said, 'It's because Mr. Bonar is no sae learned as you!' A good woman, who used to worship in Abernyte church in Mr. Manson's time, said to a friend one evening, as they walked home from church to her house at the foot of Dunsinnane Hill, 'I wish I had a memory like Mr. Manson.' 'Toots, woman,' was her friend's reply, 'if you were to be a minister you would have a memory like him, but you're no' a minister, and ye dinna need it!' This woman came to live in Perth in her old age, and, when attending the Conference meetings, Mr. Bonar always went to see her. On the last visit he paid to her, she did not know him, and did not even look up when told some one had come to see her. At last he began to speak, and, at the sound of his voice, she started up exclaiming, 'It's my ain auld minister!' and flung her arms round his neck!

After the Disruption of 1843,¹ the Free Church congregation met for some time in a tent near Kinrossie, and many a remarkable scene was witnessed there. People came from miles round to be present at the Communion services. Long after, Dr. Bonar looked back to those times with peculiar tenderness, and often on the morning of the Summer Communion in Finnieston (held on the same day as in Collace), remembered his old flock in the country. 'Our Communion was very sweet,' he writes in June 1843, 'immense crowds of people.

¹ Some one met the old minister after the Disruption and asked how he was getting on. 'Oh fine,' was his reply, 'opposition's the life of trade!'

About sixty of the St. Peter's people came from Dundee. I have got great comfort in my young communicants. Six of them I believe to be really new creatures in Christ Jesus.'

One who used often to hear him preach in those days, and who afterwards became an elder in his church in Finnieston, Mr. J. H. Dickson, has given some recollections of these Communion services. 'My remembrances of Mr. Bonar's ministry in Collace are mostly connected with Communion seasons. There were no conferences then, but, after the great revival of 1840-41, groups of people used to come from the surrounding districts—not because the gospel was not preached in those places, but the new life which the revival brought, made Christians long for the fellowship of these Communion seasons in Perth, Blairgowrie, and Collace. Great blessing was received, and earnest prayer went up for weeks before such seasons. The one most fixed in my memory was held in June after the Disruption. The congregation met in a large canvas tent. The day was bright and sunny. Mr. Bonar's closing address after the Tables was on Song iv. 6: "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away." He referred to Mr. M'Cheyne as standing on the "mountain of myrrh" till the day break, and, as he pointed to the bread and wine before him as shadows that would flee away, there came a great hush over the congregation, and then the sound of sobbing from the Dundee people who were present, at the mention of their beloved minister's name. Mr. Bonar himself was much affected; indeed it was a weeping congregation.' Of other such days Mr. Bonar writes:—

'It was a good day yesterday, brother, especially at evening-tide. Mr. Cormick was very lively and solemn, the Supper itself a time to my own soul when I felt oneness with Jesus. . . . When

breezes from Lebanon blow, what a world the eternal world appears, and what a Lord is the Lord of glory !'

'Yesterday I felt a little of "abounding grace," and the blessedness of being sure yet to be holy, holy, holy. It seemed a very short day—"the sun hastened to go down," I thought. We would need a *long* eternity, or heaven would be no heaven, it would be so soon over.'

'I rode up to Blairgowrie to the Lord's Supper. I felt that there the gift of God to sinners, and the heart of God to sinners, is so fully and exclusively set forth that the Lord's Table is really the *stereotyping of the Gospel*.'

After a Communion season an elderly woman, who had lately been converted, said, 'I canna say much, but my heart's like a burnin' coal !'

THE GOOD PASTOR

‘ Chosen not for good in me,
Wakened up from wrath to flee,
Hidden in the Saviour’s side,
By the Spirit sanctified.
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love, how much I owe.’—*R. M. M^cCheyne.*

CHAPTER II

AMONG the thatched cottages of Kinrossie, with its pretty village green and antique market-cross, stands the Free Church of Collace. Not far distant, on the edge of Dunsinnane wood, is the manse, hidden from view more than it was forty years ago by the growth of trees and hedges. A vine and a fig-tree climb up on either side of the old study window, and over other two windows are carved the Hebrew words, '*He that winneth souls is wise*' and '*For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry.*' The path from the manse through Dunsinnane wood became a spot hallowed by prayer and communion with God. One day a man going along that way heard the sound of voices in the wood, and found Mr. Bonar kneeling there in prayer with two young men. The manse was finished a few months after his marriage in 1848. An old woman in the parish, when Mr. Bonar told her that he was going to be married, remarked with more plainness than politeness, 'Weel, sir, I hope it's a' richt, but we women are awfu' cheats!' This same old woman said of a minister who had come from the other side of the river to preach to them, 'He wasna worth his water-fraucht!' In those days it was no uncommon sight to see one and another in church stand up during the sermon to shake off drowsiness, and sometimes Mrs. Bonar would touch a sleepy hearer with her parasol.

Mr. Bonar thought nothing of preaching twice and then riding several miles in the evening to preach somewhere else, or to visit a sick person. Every Sabbath morning at ten o'clock he conducted a Bible class for young men and women, which was attended with much blessing, and was the means of stirring up many to search the Scriptures, and of leading them to Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. An old woman, who had learned to love God's Word, said to Mr. Bonar, 'I wonder how God's people get through the Bible, for I am often stopped a whole day at one verse.' A young woman said to him, 'I often wanted to die after I found Christ, for I was afraid of sinning. But one day I remembered Christ's words: "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil that is in the world;" and I don't want to die now.' The experience of another was very peculiar. She was so sorely tried by the Tempter that she went out into the fields alone, hoping to get rid of his evil suggestions. But Satan followed her and told her that the Old Testament was not true. She turned to the New Testament, but he said that was not true either. When she came as far as the Metre Psalms he told her *they* were not true, but she got a little rest at the paraphrase: 'Behold the Saviour on the Cross.' At another time the devil tried to persuade her that there was no God, and that she had no soul. When tempted at last to disbelieve everything, she sat down and told him that the places mentioned in the Bible were real, for Mr. Bonar had seen them when he was in Palestine. But the Tempter said, 'Mr. Bonar is a liar!'

Many interesting incidents occurred in connection with his visitation. He went to see an old bed-ridden man who reminded him of a sermon he had preached ten years before. 'I mind,' the old man said, 'you

spoke about the Cave of Adullam. "Do you like the Cave, and do you like the Captain? Then come in—come in—no other condition." My, *it sank into my heart like oil.*' He asked a boy to hold his horse one day, while he went into a cottage. As he was remounting, and putting his foot in the stirrup, he turned to the lad and said, 'Do you ever think you have a soul?' The question was never forgotten. Coming home one night from a meeting at Rait, he lost his way, and as he wandered about he said to himself, 'Can I give thanks for this?' In a short time he came to a house, and was just going to the door to ask direction for his way home, when a girl came out and exclaimed, 'Mr. Bonar! you're the very person I want to see.' He found she was in great distress of mind, and was able to give thanks that, in losing his way among the hills, he had been led to find a soul. Returning home late one night from a meeting, he heard of the serious illness of one who had been formerly in his service, and at once had his pony saddled, and rode three miles to see him. After this he continued his visits every day till he recovered. He fixed a certain night for calling on a young married couple, when he was likely to find them both at home. The night came, and with it a storm of wind and rain. They said to each other, 'There will be no minister here to-night,' but, true to his word, the minister appeared at the hour appointed.

One winter evening, when walking to Scone to preach, he overtook a woman on the road, and began to talk to her, giving her a tract when they parted. Some time after, he noticed a widow in church, who waited after service was over, and said to him, 'I am the woman you spoke to that dark night on the road to Scone and never saw. You gave me a tract. My son at home, long ill, had been troubled about himself, and that tract

was the very one for him, and brought light to his soul. He made me come over from Kinnaird to tell you.'

It was his habit in the country to rise at six o'clock in the summer mornings, and seven o'clock in winter. 'You'll be thrashin' your strae the nicht, sir,' was the remark of one of his people on a Saturday evening, for, even then, Saturday was carefully set apart for prayer and preparation for the Lord's Day. His sermons were not always fully written out, and in the pulpit he only used little pieces of paper on which the 'heads' were jotted down in shorthand. When preaching one day in the tent at Kinrossie, a puff of wind blew away his notes, and the people had such a horror of sermon-reading that nobody would lift them up. It is needless to say the minister continued his sermon without them.¹

Mrs. Bonar's letters and his own give bright little glimpses of their life at Collace. Three children were born in the manse, and, until after their removal to Glasgow, death did not cast its shadow over their home. The first Sabbath in church after his marriage Mr. Bonar gave out these lines of the Sixteenth Psalm to be sung:—

'Unto me happily the lines
In pleasant places fell;
Yea, the inheritance I got
In beauty doth excel.'

His quiet humour showed itself in various ways. A good man in the parish maintained that, because he and his wife were believers, their children would be born without sin. Mr. Bonar tried to reason with him, and

¹ As Moderator of the Free Church General Assembly in 1878 he read his opening address with the greatest difficulty. This was the only time he was known to read a sermon or address.

then said in his quiet way, 'Wait and see!' When his child was a few months old the man came back to him and said, 'I see, sir, you were quite right!' His description of a brother-minister, who had not his own bright hopefulness, was, '— is like one of the Emmaus disciples: "he walks *and is sad*."' One of his elders used to recall his visits with him to a neighbouring farm, where he went to hold a meeting in the evening. The road was full of ruts and holes, and sometimes Mr. Bonar would be standing in mud up to the ankles, laughing and making fun of his droll appearance. In one of his letters to Mrs. Bonar from Collace, he says:—

'I am enjoying myself to-night by the fireside alone, for it is very cold. Nothing new to tell you. . . . Our people think "Mr. John (Dr. Bonar of Greenock) was uncommon lively" this time. . . . I happened to meet L. P. at her door to-day. She has been "complaining," and here is her account of herself: "You see I pu'ed neeps when they were frosty without my gloves, and so the cauld grippit my two hands, and spilt all the bluid, and raised the influenza."'

Another time he writes to Mrs. Bonar in Edinburgh:—

'A taste of solitude helps to make you and anything of yours more prized than ever. The cuckoo is sending his note through the woods now, and the young grass is appearing. Part of the walks are gravelled. The corn is breering.¹ . . . Watch (the dog) has imitated you—that is, he is away seeing his friends. . . . Take a farewell look at Minto Street for me; I'll never forget it—the houses down to No. 49² are all familiar to me, and your green before the door, and the rooms where we used to sit. If we get so fond of an earthly abode, what shall we feel to a mansion in the Heavens, or to a place in the New Earth where no decay shall ever enter? Meanwhile, live on Him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Take this as your text, and think on it all the time of the flitting.'

¹ Appearing above ground.

² Mrs. Bonar's home in Edinburgh where her marriage took place, April 4th, 1848.

During one of his visits to Ireland, before his marriage, in very stormy weather, he wrote the following little allegory and sent it to 49 Minto Street:—

‘There was a pilgrim whose lot it was to cross the sea and go up and down the land of Israel. He had been in many perils by sea and by land, from robbers and from burning heat, and yet was no way injured. He could still sing, “O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness.” He sat down one day, and, no doubt thinking of the storms that often toss the little boats on the Lake of Galilee, he told the following story:

THE STORY

‘I knew a daughter of Zion who feared the Lord and trusted with all her heart in His grace. She had herself been brought through a land of deserts and of pits, and never had found Him a wilderness. She read and believed the words written in Matt. vi. 25-34, which Levi the son of Alpheus was commanded to write by the Holy Ghost. But still, through temptation and a fearful heart, she often forgot *the Person who spoke those words*: and always in such seasons care arose in her soul. One dark night there arose a strong wind; it tore down the boughs of aged trees, it raised the waves of the sea to a great height, it shook many dwellings, and it roared loudly over all. This godly daughter of Zion heard it, and her heart grew fearful in behalf of one for whom she often prayed, and who loved and prayed for her. No doubt she believed that her God cared for him, and that not a hair of his head could fall without our Father; but still she feared and was very “careful.” She imagined him to be on the sea, very pale and sick, the ship heaving on the waves, and its planks creaking as if they would break, the sky dark, the rain falling in torrents. There was nothing sad, but she thought it possible. In this state of mind she could not praise the Lord, her harp lay unstrung. She could not pray; she had no sweet meditation. Nay, her body was worn out with sleeplessness and care.

‘Morning came, the sun shone peacefully all around. A messenger arrived. She heard that the object of her care had never set foot on the ship, but had spent, and was to spend, some days on land in more than usual rest. Upon this she began to remember Ps. cxxvii. 2, and said to her soul reproachfully, “Alas, I might have all that time been engaged in better thoughts! I

might have prayed, praised, and exercised faith in the care of my High Priest. Even my body might have been the better of this, as well as my soul." From that day forth (says the pilgrim who tells the story, and who often to this day thinks upon that daughter of Zion) she learned to be less anxious, I trust, and to be more satisfied with *the Lord's knowing how to keep His own*, whether *she* knows or not.'

'A good story for next *Christian Treasury*, and a good motto would be Luther's words to Philip Melanchthon: "Philip must be fold to cease from the attempt of *being himself the ruler of the world*."'

Mrs. Bonar, when Isabella Dickson, was brought to Christ during the times of revival in Edinburgh in 1842. Along with her friend, Miss Gifford (afterwards the wife of Dr. Alex. Raleigh), she attended a prayer-meeting for the Jews, held in St. Andrew's Church. Mr. M'Cheyne spoke at this meeting, and what he said interested her, but it was the impression of his personal holiness, rather than his words, that most deeply affected her. 'There was something singularly attractive about Mr. M'Cheyne's holiness,' she told her husband afterwards. 'It was not his matter nor his manner either that struck me; it was just the *living epistle of Christ*—a picture so lovely, I felt I would have given all the world to be as he was, but knew all the time I was dead in sins.' On reading a letter in the last chapter of *M'Cheyne's Memoir*, from one who had been impressed in a similar way, she felt startled, it was so like her own experience. Mr. Bonar's acquaintance with her began during the long and trying illness of her mother, whom she nursed with unwearied devotion till her death in 1847. During this sad time the Twenty-third Psalm was her never-failing resort. She once said, in reference to it, 'O, if you only knew all that I have got by it! Sometimes when they sing it in church it is too much for me. I don't know what I would have done without it and

the orphan's verse, Psalm xxvii. 10.' When, years after his beloved wife's pilgrimage was over, her husband lay down to rest at the end of his long life-journey, the words of the Twenty-third Psalm, sung by his dying bed, calmed the hearts of his children as they watched his gentle passage through the valley of the shadow of death into the Father's house beyond.

Often during those eighteen years of seclusion Mr. Bonar wondered what might await him in the future, and if his work might not some day lie in a wider field. Several invitations came to him from other places, but he did not see God's call in any of them. It needed a very clear indication of His will to make him think of leaving his beloved flock. While in London at one time, he wrote to his brother-in-law, Mr. William Dickson :—

'Many an upbraiding do I meet with for what they count the "folly and absurdity" of continuing to feed a few sheep at Collace, rather than agree to plunge into the mass of misery among souls here. But, nevertheless, I am not moved from my belief that the Lord may mean to work more in a very small spot than in a great city, while, at the same time, He may use country shepherds to go up now and then to the city, and tell what things the Lord has made known to them.'

In regard to a definite call to London, he wrote :—

'As to London, I shall be slow to move in such a matter. I sometimes think that Satan may occasionally try in such ways to extrude a minister—it is not always the moving of the cloudy pillar.'

When his removal to Glasgow began to be seriously talked of, he wrote to one of his friends :—

'I am much pressed to consider the subject of Glasgow evangelisation—in short, to agree to be called to a district and church about to be erected in Finnieston in Glasgow. I have prayed, considered, and in every way reviewed the matter as impartially

as I could, and the result is I am feeling my way toward it. The thousands in that part of Glasgow (it is quite like a district of London) made me yearn ; so few to care for them, and every day more houses built, and more souls arriving, richer and poorer. What think you? To leave Collace I have always thought would be like Abraham leaving Ur of the Chaldees—that is, nothing but the clear call of the God of glory would effect it ; but this seems to me like His call.'

The affection which united minister and people was often touchingly manifested after their separation, as well as during their long intercourse. It is more than thirty years since the pillar-cloud led him away from Collace on another stage of his journey heavenward, but his memory is lovingly cherished by those who still remain, and he is mourned for as if he had left them but yesterday.

'Little as I am acquainted with the Lord, I will leave it as my testimony that there is none like Him. God has been good to a soul that but poorly sought Him. Often, on riding home on Sabbath evenings, I have felt "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. . . ." Believer, is He not all this to you? O sinner, O unsaved ones of my flock, He might be more than all this to you! Young people, whom I greatly long for, remember what James Laing¹ said to one, 'Remember, if I see you at the left hand, I told you to come to Christ.' Shall I see any of these faces on which I have so often looked, and those which have so oft looked up to me, on the left hand? Shall any one here gaze on an angry Judge? any hear Him say, Depart? I beseech you, receive Christ . . . to-day. I beseech you, by remembrance of past Sabbaths, by the many witnesses that the Lord sent among you from time to time, by the messages of

¹ *The Lily Gathered*, by Rev. R. M. M'Cheyne.

grace so many and so varied, by the joy that your salvation would give above as well as here and to yourselves, by the thought of approaching death, by the thought of the Lord's speedy coming, by the opening of yonder veil, when eternity shall receive you, and time be for ever gone, receive Christ now.'¹

¹ Mr. Bonar's Farewell Sermon at Collace, preached on the 19th of October 1856.

IN THE CITY

‘When God comes to a man He does not only say “Arise, receive!”
but “Arise, shine!”’—*A. A. B.*

CHAPTER III

IT was on a dreary December day in 1856 that the first congregation assembled in Finnieston Free Church, Glasgow, for the induction of the minister. He is described as being at that time a 'tall, straight, and somewhat spare man, about forty-five years of age, with hair just tinged with grey.' The addresses were long, and one of the members of Presbytery on the platform made a sign to him to sit down, and even pushed a chair forward with his foot ; but he remained standing. The incident was a trivial one, but to those who knew him it was characteristic. Ten or twelve people formed the nucleus of the congregation, and three elders from Free St. Matthew's Church kindly gave their help to the new Territorial Mission Church, until it was able to stand by itself. One of these elders, Mr. Andrew Nielson, remained in the congregation, and became one of its best and truest helpers.

The attendance on the first Sabbath was large, but for many a day after there was only a sprinkling of people in the church. The district round was closely populated, and circumstances altogether combined to make Dr. Bonar feel 'like a missionary to the heathen, who has to spend months in learning the language and habits of the people.' . . . 'I must be content gradually to get acquainted with the faces and characters and the ways of my poor district, and to seek openings among

the indifferent, the drunken, the lazy, the ignorant, the practical atheists, the bitter Papists, the formal professors, the young and old, sick and healthy.'

'I have plenty of work, but few Jacobs are finding the ladder between heaven and earth. Most sleep on, and then journey on to eternity with their staff in hand, and nothing more—little comfort on earth, and none at all beyond earth. O for the Spirit's out-pouring!'

The devoted teacher of Grace Street School had been carrying on work in the district before the church was built, and many others—office-bearers, tract-distributors, Sabbath-school teachers—now added their help. At the close of 1857 the roll of communicants was 136, and the usual attendance at church from 400 to 500. Dr. Bonar used to recall the first inquirer who came to his house—a young woman dressed in deep mourning, and in great distress. He asked her if she had met with some bereavement lately. She replied, 'Yes, I have lost a brother, but I am not mourning so much for him, but that I can't find my Saviour.' It was two years before the work really began to tell on the neighbourhood; then the wave of the American revival swept over Scotland and touched Finnieston, and days of blessing followed. A gentleman one day asked, 'How are things doing with you? How are you getting on?' 'Oh, we are looking for great things,' was Dr. Bonar's reply. 'You must not expect too much,' said his friend. 'We can never hope for too much,' he responded. He sowed the seed unweariedly, and always in hope, carrying the word of life into the lanes and dark closes, day after day, and week after week. Some who remember those days speak of him as being then in his fullest vigour of mind and body. Nobody escaped his notice, and his quickness in recognising faces was remarkable.

Not unfrequently he was asked by Roman Catholics in the district to perform the marriage ceremony for them. He always accepted these invitations, for they gave him an opportunity of setting forth the simple gospel to the company—mostly Roman Catholics—who assembled on the occasion. He was invariably well received, and welcomed with the words, 'Come along, yer Riverence!'

The first meeting of workers in the congregation numbered only twelve. Long after, in reviewing the past, Dr. Bonar referred to their small beginnings and said, 'We can say with Jacob, With our staff we passed over Jordan, and the Lord very soon made us two bands. We will hear a great deal in the day of the Lord of how the workers found the lost pieces of silver.' He used to say about different methods of work, 'There is more originality in a full heart than in anything else.' At one of the yearly workers' meetings, which became so memorable in the history of the congregation, he spoke specially to visitors and collectors, quoting Isaiah xxxii. 20, 'Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters,' etc. 'You know that the ox is the symbol of laborious strength, and the ass is not a little remarkable for its stubbornness. If you would be persevering and successful in your work, including as it does among other things such weary climbing of stairs, you will have need of this strength of the ox, and this patient stubbornness of the ass!' When reminding collectors of their opportunities of speaking a word for the Master as they went from house to house, he said, 'God blesses those who do more than they are required to do.' At a workers' meeting in later times he read 1 Corinthians xvi. 16, 'Submitting yourselves one to another'—'accommodating yourselves—specially *singers*—falling in with other people's ways of working. We are not to look for

thanks from men. Christ says if we do we are no better than the publicans.' 'If you say your hands are full, it is just what they ought to be!'

'I never like to hear any one say, "I never trouble others with my religion." A believer *must* trouble others with his religion.'

'If you shine as lights now, and cast your light on the shadows around you, you will hear of it in the ages to come. If you do not, God will get others to do it.'

'I have come to believe this to be almost invariably true, that seldom is anything good proposed to us but we have something to object to in it at first. This seems to be the reason for the expression used by our Lord—"Thrust forth labourers." We are all unwilling to go. The truth is, we are all a little lazy. We need to be "thrust forth."'

'Remember,' he said, 'the Lord never uses angels to preach the gospel. It must be sinners that tell sinners what it is that takes away sin. God sends His people,—"You know every bush in which the sheep hide—go you and seek for them." God knew what a wrench it would be for Philip to leave the great awakening in Samaria and go to meet *one* soul in the wilderness; so He sent His angel to tell him to go. It was as if Christ said to him, "*I* left the ninety-and-nine in the wilderness, to go to seek the one lost sheep. Go *you* and find that lost one in the desert.''

"Without Me ye can do nothing." Christ has willed that the world should be influenced through the instrumentality of the Christian; so that, as we say, Without Him *we* can do nothing, He, as it were, says, Without you *I* can do nothing, as if He needed our services.'

'You said you had no time,' he writes to a brother minister. 'Have you not time for all *duty*, and this was a *duty*?'

It was not the minister's fault if any of his people stood idle in the vineyard. If a stranger came from the country to join Finnieston Church, Dr. Bonar's common practice was to take him with him to the Bible class, then to see the Sabbath-school in Grace Street, and generally, before many days had passed, he found himself installed as a Sabbath-school teacher or a district visitor, or in some way a helper in the work of the congregation. 'The way to rise high in Christ's kingdom is to serve much ;' and he carried out this axiom in his own life, and taught others the secret of the same blessedness.

'Lengthened life should be lengthened work.'

'Some good men are very peremptory in asking God to give them souls. That may not be the best service you can do for God. The best service you can give Him is *to submit to His will*.'

'The best part of all Christian work is that part which only God sees.'

'Service for the Master that everybody praises is very dangerous service. Perhaps in the day the Master returns the name of one we never heard of in the Church of Christ may be the highest, because he did most, simply for the Master.'

To those who were prevented from doing active work, but were serving God amid the small duties of daily life, he used to say, 'Remember, there is a reward for "thinking upon His name" (Mal. iii. 16). That is a quiet way of doing good, and open to every one.'

'We are to be rewarded, not only for work done, but for burdens borne ; and I am not sure but that the brightest rewards will be for those who bore burdens without murmuring.'

'Burdens are part of a believer's education.'

'Self-forgetting work is heavenly work.'

‘Christ’s obedience was His taking up our undone work.’

A friend wrote to him, telling him that he felt discouraged in his work. He replied, not by letter, but by a parable :

‘While tunnelling the Alps, one of the workmen began one day to think upon his arm, and to speculate on its feebleness. Comparing it with the greatness of the work to be done, he forthwith sat down, sad and depressed. “Stronger men are needed here. Who am I to bore through Mont Cenis?” He uttered this moan aloud, and a voice was heard, a voice from one who was watching over the work and the workmen. The voice said kindly, but at the same time half upbraiding, “Did I not know what your arm could do, and what it could not do, when I sent you to propel, by careful attention to your steam apparatus, that wedge of steel? Think of that little wedge of steel *tipped with diamond*. Why moan over your feeble arm?” A friend of yours, Jeremiah of Anathoth, was asked to carry God’s message to a people whom he thought he could in no ways impress, and so he wished to refuse, saying, “Ah, Lord God, I cannot speak, for I am a child (נַעַר).” “Very well,” replied the speaker, “a mere boy can carry a message. Go on—go at once. *I am with thee*. I will make thee an iron pillar and brazen wall against the whole land.” Up, up at once, and forget your feebleness. *Think of Him whose power accomplishes the mighty work*, and how He asks you simply to see that the wedge of diamond-tipped steel be in its right place.’

‘God can do anything,’ he said, ‘by or for a man in Christ.’ A minister, who was having a time of revival in his country congregation, expressed a wish that some of his city brethren would come and help him. Dr. Bonar said quietly, ‘I thought you said the Master was with you. Why do you want any of us?’

Every Sabbath was a time of labour from morning to evening, but, though not outwardly a day of rest, it was to him ever ‘a delight.’ Beginning at half-past ten with the Elders’ Prayer-Meeting in the vestry, his labours went on till nine o’clock at night. Sometimes

he left home earlier in the morning, hoping to find some one at that hour whom he might induce to go to church or to the Bible-class. Besides conducting the two regular services, he generally went into the little prayer-meeting held during the interval of worship in the session-house. On the day on which the church was opened, a band of godly people were present from Jordanhill, near Glasgow, and met together to wait for the afternoon service. The only place they found in which to wait was beside the stove of the church, and there they gathered to spend the hour in prayer. This was the beginning of a prayer-meeting which has ever since been continued. At half-past five the young men's Bible-class was held, and when that was over, and a visit paid to the Sabbath-school, there was always an evening service in church or mission-hall. He was fond of open-air preaching, and sometimes preached from the steps of the church to a crowd reaching to the other side of the street. It was not without many regrets that the church in Finnieston Street was abandoned, in 1878, for a larger and more commodious place of worship near the West End Park. Uncomfortable and badly ventilated as it was, the old church had many hallowed associations, and more than one could point to a seat in one corner or other, and say, 'I was born there.' Even the old bell had a mission of its own, calling in careless dwellers in the streets around to hear the words of life and salvation. Over the door of the new church are carved the three Hebrew words, לָקַח נַפְשׁוֹת חַיִּים 'He that winneth souls is wise.' They were put there as an indication of the object of the church's existence, and also in the hope that some Jews passing by might see them, and come in to worship the God of Abraham. Dr. Bonar preached from these words on the day on which the church was opened, explaining

that 'winning' was the word used to describe a hunter stalking game, and reminding 'soul-winners' that their work must be done in a wise way. 'How carefully David prepared to meet Goliath! He chose five smooth stones out of the brook. He did not assume that one would be lying to his hand when he needed it. Never go to the Lord's work with meagre preparation.'

At the close of that day's service he referred to the comfortable place in which they were now met, and said, 'We read in the New Testament that our Lord made the five thousand sit down "because there was *much grass* in the place." That is why we have provided cushions in the pews. We believe the Lord Jesus is not indifferent to your comfort.'

In connection with the new church an incident occurred which he always referred to with deep thankfulness to God and gratitude to his friends. The cost was very much greater than had been anticipated, and the debt which for some time rested on it was a cause of grave anxiety to the congregation. Many suggestions were made as to how it was to be cleared off, and among other things a bazaar was proposed, of which he strongly disapproved. He suggested delay as to further plans until the matter had been made a subject of special prayer. A full meeting of elders and deacons was called, and the time was spent in earnest prayer for God's guidance. About a fortnight afterwards, one of his elders called upon him one morning. He was busy in his study, and looking more than usually bright. 'I have something to show you this morning,' he said, and taking a letter from his pocket, he added, 'Here is our bazaar! This contains a cheque for £1000. The Lord has heard and answered our prayers.'

This gift was sent by friends of Dr. Bonar's, and transmitted to him by Dr. J. H. Wilson of the Barclay

Church, Edinburgh, who had been the originator of this generous scheme for lightening the burden which lay upon both minister and people. In sending it he wrote to Dr. Bonar :—

‘I only wish I could convey to you the expressions of grateful and affectionate regard with which the letters abound ; and while the object is not a personal, but a congregational one, I need not say that it is on purely personal grounds that the whole thing has been done, in the belief that it would be a small contribution to your comfort and freedom in working, in having this burden somewhat lessened.’

Dr. Bonar wrote in reply :—

‘Glasgow, 15th January 1881.

‘MY DEAR DR. WILSON,—“It is more blessed to give than to receive”—may this blessedness be yours ! I cannot tell you how this most brotherly act of kindness surprised me and filled me with thankfulness. You could not have done a kinder thing to myself, as well as to my people, for this debt has been of late a most serious burden, and a hindrance to efforts in various directions. And let me mention that it cannot but have an effect on us spiritually ; for it is the answer to special prayer begun. I strongly opposed the scheme of a bazaar when one or two of our Deacons’ Court proposed it, and we at last agreed to set apart an evening for prayer on the whole matter. On the appointed evening we had a very good attendance of elders and deacons, and the prayers were fervent and hopeful. And then, we, as a Court, set ourselves to form a scheme which, in the course of a good many years would, if successful, leave us entirely free. This most unexpected and generous gift will wonderfully stimulate our efforts. We do heartily thank the disinterested friends who have taken part in this movement, and will use the words of Ezra, “Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers which hath put such a thing as this into thine heart.”

‘Meanwhile, reminding yourself, Colonel Young, and all the other unknown friends, of Matt. x. 42 and Heb. vi. 10,—Believe me, dear brother, yours affectionately and gratefully,

‘ANDREW A. BONAR.’

There was much pleasant intercourse between the minister and his co-workers. The office-bearers have

happy recollections in early years, of evenings when they used to convoy him home from the meetings to his house in St. Vincent Crescent. Many a helpful talk they had as they walked along, till they reached the door, where they still stood chatting together till Mrs. Bonar's quick ear caught the sound of voices, and she came out to welcome her husband home. It was at such times that he poured out one incident after another of his work and rich experience, often conveying a deep lesson, and in some cases a lifelong impulse to those who listened.

He took a loving interest in all parts of the work of the church, and his sympathy smoothed away many difficulties. He would slip quietly into one of the little kitchen-meetings, taking his seat among the hearers, then rising to give a word of cheer and encouragement at the close. His presence in a meeting acted at all times like a charm. As he came in, overflowing with brightness and kindness, his progress, as he went from one to another shaking hands, could be traced by the ripple of light that passed over every face. Not unfrequently at a tea-meeting or social gathering, the opening was delayed, and the explanation given, 'The minister has not finished shaking hands with the people yet!'

He once told as an illustration of the words in Heb. x. 24: 'Let us consider one another,' etc., an experience of his own when in the country. There was one man who always sat in the front seat in the gallery, and kept his eye fixed on the minister as if to help him on. If he said anything this good man liked very much, he would look at him with an expression which said 'That's good! come on!' and it cheered the preacher's heart. He thought this was an example of 'provoking to love and good works.'

His readiness to learn from others was very remarkable, and he had the faculty of drawing out what was best in every one. 'A true disciple,' he said, 'is always learning. Every believer we meet with has something for us if we could only get it. We are wrong if we are not trying to draw out of others what God has given them. Never think you can be of no use to another disciple. God does not give everything to one. Aquila and Priscilla could do a good deal even for Apollos.'

At a meeting in the church one evening, two good men had spoken who were rough and uneducated. Dr. Bonar listened to them with evident enjoyment, and when some one spoke of it to him afterwards, he said, 'If you are very thirsty you will not be particular about the dish you drink out of.'

The work of the Holy Spirit went on silently from week to week, making the ordinary services wells of salvation to thirsting souls. Every Sabbath, to use an expression of his own, there 'was more joy even in happy Heaven, because lost ones were being found.' Each time of revival in Glasgow left its impress more or less on Finnieston. Dr. Bonar did not always approve of all the methods employed by those who were sent to carry on the work, but that did not hinder him from identifying himself with any such movement. He believed God could work even where there might be much imperfection, and he and his people were never left unrefreshed when heavenly showers were falling. The revival under Mr. D. L. Moody in 1873-74 was a marked period in his city ministry. He threw himself into it with his whole heart, helping and sympathising in every possible way. In no congregation were the results of the work more apparent than in Finnieston, and never was the pastor's heart more full of joy. One instance among many others of the Lord's presence

at these times, occurred after Mr. Moody's visit to Glasgow when services were continued in Finnieston Church. As Dr. Bonar came into one of these meetings after it had begun, he walked to the front of the platform, and, laying his hand on the rail, he said, 'I feel the breath of the Holy Spirit in this place to-night.' The words, and the solemn way in which they were uttered, were the means of awakening a young woman who was present.

The news of 'a sound of abundance of rain' in any part of the world, specially in the mission field, Jewish or heathen, gladdened his heart, and made him long to hear the same 'joyful sound' at home. When writing to Dr. J. H. Wilson, in 1859, he says:—

'You will have heard of the good news from our Jewish school in Constantinople—ten in one week brought to Christ's feet. I hear, too, of some real work in Aberdeen. The Lord is coming near us. I feel often like Isa. xxiv. 16, on which I was preaching lately. When news comes of "glory to the Righteous One" elsewhere, it goes through my heart with something like a chill, and makes me cry "My leanness! my leanness! Woe unto me!"'

When news came of revival work in the fishing-villages, he used to say, 'The Lord Jesus has still a warm heart to the fishermen!'

'Tell it everywhere,' was his advice on hearing of blessing in any place, 'that is the way to spread it.'

ECHOES OF SPOKEN WORDS

'Sabbath-days are well-days in the desert journey—days when we fill the waterskins to journey on to another well.'—*A. A. B.*

CHAPTER IV

THE congregation that gathered round Dr. Bonar in Finnieston Church was attracted, not by the eloquence of the preaching,¹ but by its simplicity, and the fresh light the preacher threw upon the Scriptures, making them appear to many like a new book. Strangers had to grow accustomed to the peculiarities of his voice, and his habit of letting it suddenly drop just when the hearer's attention was fixed. A good lady in his congregation once remonstrated with him about this, and told him how provoking it was to his hearers to lose some of his very best things. 'How do you know they are the best, if you don't hear them?' was his retort. He liked to tell of a worthy couple who joined his church and told him where their seat was. The woman said, 'I hear you quite well, but he (meaning her husband) says he does not; but *I say, are ye sure ye attend?*' The most ignorant among his hearers could understand his simple unfolding of truth, while many a striking saying fell from his lips as he leaned in his characteristic way over the pulpit, and talked quietly to those before him. The most fearful felt their faith strengthened by his joyous confidence in the things of which he spoke. Eternal things came very near, and unseen things became real, as they listened to one who spoke as if already among them.

¹ 'You know I am no speaker—only a talker,' he says in a letter to a friend.

'Suppose that I, a sinner, be walking along yon golden street, passing by one angel after another. I can hear them say, as I pass through their ranks, "A sinner! a crimson sinner!" Should my feet totter? Should my eye grow dim? No; I can say to them, "Yes, a sinner—a crimson sinner, but a sinner brought near by a forsaken Saviour, and now a sinner who has boldness to enter into the Holiest through the blood of Christ."

'When Jesus tells us of the glory and beauty of the New Jerusalem,—lest we should think it incredible that feet like ours should ever tread the golden streets, or hands like ours ever pluck the fruit of the Tree of Life, or lips like ours ever taste the water of that pure river,—He says, "John, write: These sayings are *faithful and true.*"

'If you ask me "What is glory?" well, I can't tell you, but I know that it is a hundred times better than grace.'

'We are like children trying the strings of the harp which we expect yet to use.'

'Never be offended at Christ's providences. He will recompense all to you, even in this life. O believer, *keep Him to His promise!*'

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Then you have everything but heaven!'

'We have more to do with the world to come than with this world.'

'The nearer you come to Him the better, for you will then be further from the world, and the world will have least power over you.'

'"No man could learn that song," etc. (Rev. xv. 3). Because there is something in each one's experience that another cannot borrow.'

'What a happy thing it is that it is the "kingdom of

God our Saviour" (2 Peter i. 2). We know *Him* so well. It was He who put our robe of righteousness on us. We would be lonely in the great company if we did not know Him so well. Would it not be a great comfort to the dying thief that Christ said, "To-day, . . . *with Me* in Paradise!"

One Sabbath, when preaching on the image of God being restored, and the time when 'we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is,' he suddenly exclaimed, 'O my people, you won't know your minister on that day!'¹ 'It will be ecstasy,' he said at another time, 'to have made this attainment—to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind.' To those to whom that time seemed very far off, and to whom the trials and difficulties in the way were very great, he would point out the strength and the sufficiency of His grace who had promised to complete the good work He had begun.

'Faith keeps us, but God keeps our faith.'

'If the Father has the kingdom ready for us, He will take care of us on the way.'

'God will not give us an easy journey to the Promised Land, but He will give us a safe one.'

'We do not need new swords, new spears, new arms. We only need more eye-salve to see Who is on our side.'

'Jesus left His disciples in the little boat on the Lake of Galilee purposely, that He might come to them in the fourth watch of the night and deliver them. I think He would have come to them sooner—perhaps in the first or second watch—if *they had trusted Him.*'

¹ A stranger—a young careless girl—sitting in his church one Sabbath, smiled as he suddenly and seemingly irrelevantly exclaimed, 'Come, blessed resurrection morn!' In after years the words, in the very tones in which they were uttered, came to her over and over again with such power that she marvelled at God's mercy in using what had only excited her ridicule at the time, to quicken and refresh her on her dying bed.

‘None of God’s pilgrims fall by the roadside.’

‘It is the mark of every quickened soul,’ he used to say, ‘that he feels his heart going *upward*, as, after His resurrection, Christ would be thinking of *going home*.’

‘If you have not *two* heavens, you will never have *one*. If you have not a heaven *here*, you will never have one *yonder*.’

‘Judah had a rich land for his inheritance, but Lévi had a rich God.’

‘Lot would not give up Christ, but he would not give up much *for* Christ.’

“‘The world’ is all that is outside of the soul’s spiritual life.’

‘The world is so blind that it did not see the Light of the World when He came. How, then, can you expect that it will see His people?’

When preaching in Collace Church in 1842 he reminded his people of the many offers of salvation they had had during four years of faithful ministry, and said to them, ‘These walls are a witness, and their lingering echoes will be witness when I am in the grave. Angels have seen the cup of life held out from this pulpit and put to your lips.’

The same faithful earnestness characterised his preaching at all times, and made his declaration of the love of God in Christ peculiarly sweet and persuasive.

‘O men and brethren, look at that Cross, and listen to what it says: “He that hath the Son hath life.” I often think, when the Lord is thus pressing you to accept Christ, He has not only stood at the door and knocked, but He has, as it were, opened the door a little to try to persuade you.’

“Weep not for Me, weep for yourselves and for your children.” It is so like Christ to dry up other people’s tears, and let His own flow.’

'The Lord left our Saviour in the grave three days that no one might dispute the reality of His death—that there might be time, as it were, to count the pieces of the Ransom-money. When His disembodied spirit was in Paradise these three days, it was like uttering "Finished! Finished! Finished!" over the hills of Paradise.'

'We are asked to accept this salvation—to let this love into our heart, without shedding a single tear, unless it be a tear of love and gratitude.'

'Look into the Fountain, and the very looking will make you thirsty.'

'Take the water of life "freely," though you cannot allege a single reason why you should take it. Yet take it "without a cause."'

'No one who is anxious to have a Saviour has committed the unpardonable sin.'

'What God does in saving Gospel-hearers is to show them *with* power what they have previously known *without* power.'

'Our unwillingness is our inability.'

'"There is no man that sinneth not;" this truth is the hypocrite's pillow, but the believer's bed of thorns.'

'Christ is the lever by which God moves a world of souls.'

'God does not say, "Pay what you *can*," but "Pay what you *owe*."'

'A cloak of profession will make an awful blaze in that day when He burns the stubble.'

'God is a sin-hater, but a soul-lover.'

'The natural heart keeps no record of sin; it is only God's law which does so.'

'The Shepherd can number His sheep, but the sheep can't. Christ's favourite expression, when speaking of His saved ones, is "many." Our Shorter Catechism

should have said, "elected *many* to everlasting life." I am not sure but we shall be in the majority yet when we are gathered into the kingdom.'

'The Ransom-money is the only current coin at the court of heaven, and it has the resurrection stamp upon it. We used to speak of a "king's ransom," but guess, if you can, what the value must be of a ransom that sets free nations, kingdoms, peoples!'

'Lord, we bespeak blessing for to-morrow' was often his prayer on Saturday evening at family worship; and he went into the pulpit in the expectation that this prayer would be answered. Many of the worshippers were brought, by his opening prayer in church, into the very presence of God, and felt that they needed no more to strengthen them for that day's journey through the wilderness. Some of his petitions are graven on the memory of his hearers:—

'Good Shepherd, gratify Thyself by saving me!'

'Remember us, O Lord! and when we have said this we have said everything, for Thou knowest what to do next.'

'Thou dost not give away the children's bread. Surely, then, thou keepest it for the children. Give it now to us.'

'Give us a taste of the grapes of Eshcol that we may long for the Promised Land.'

'Lord, before we put in the sickle, we ask Thee to whet it.'

'When we pray in the morning to be filled with the Spirit, may we expect to be filled all day with thoughts of Christ.'

'Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle.'

'When we are forgetting Thee, recall us to communion with Thyself by some text, some word of Thine own.'

‘O make us sincere to the core of our heart by the help of Thy Holy Spirit, for it’s not natural!’

‘Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! that arm that has plucked many a brand from the burning, and has been folded round many a lamb!’

‘“Visit us with Thy salvation”—for there are folds and folds of the robe of righteousness that we would fain have Thee to unfold to us.’

‘We ask for conviction. We do not ask that it may be very deep, for we make idols of so many things that we might make an idol of our conviction. So we do not say anything about the depth, but we ask for the reality.’

‘If our hands that should grasp the heavenly treasure are kept closed because they are filled with earthly things, *deal with us*, Lord, until we stretch out empty hands, suppliants for Thy blessing.’

‘If Thy people cannot say they have come to the land where “they hunger no more, neither thirst any more,” they can at least say they neither hunger nor thirst while the Lamb is leading them through the desert.’

‘Let us seek to be delivered from trifling prayers and contentment with trifling answers,’ he once said solemnly; and at another time, ‘Is not this a lamentable state of things that there should be so much to get and so few to ask!’ Closet prayer he considered as ‘an ordinance of God for every believer,’ affecting all the providences of a day, and closely linked with meditation on the Word. ‘You say, “If I pray I’ll prosper.” That is only half the truth. If you meditate on the Word and pray, you’ll prosper.’ ‘Prayer will be very lame and dry if it does not come from reading the Scriptures.’ ‘May we be able to spread our Bibles on the Mercy-seat, and read them by the light of the cloud of glory,’ he once

prayed. He spoke of prayer as 'seed sown on the heart of God ;' meditation, as 'letting God speak to us till our heart is throbbing ;' and fasting, as 'abstaining from all that interferes with prayer.'

'I do not think,' he said, 'we ever pray the Lord's Prayer with all our heart, without laying up something we shall be thankful for in the future.'

'It is not right for God's people to say when a matter for prayer is put before them, "O, what can *my* prayers do?" What can *your God* do?'

'God likes to see His people shut up to this, that there is no hope but in prayer. Herein lies the Church's power against the world.'

'It is a sign the blessing is not at hand when God's people are not praying much.'

'Hezekiah's prayer got a large answer. When you send in a petition to the Lord leave a wide margin that He may write a great deal on it.'

'Always follow your work with believing prayer' was his counsel to a busy worker. When presiding at a district prayer-meeting, a request for prayer was handed in by a woman whose 'husband had gone amissing.' Dr. Bonar began his prayer thus: 'O Lord, here is a sad case,—a man amissing. Thou wast once amissing Thyself, but Thy parents sought Thee till they found Thee in the Temple. Lord, seek and find this poor man and restore him to his wife and family.' At the close of a missionary meeting he was asked to pray, and in doing so drew the thoughts of those present to the Lord's promise to His Son in the Second Psalm: 'Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for thine inheritance,' etc. His solemn closing appeal sent a thrill through the audience: 'Saviour, *ask, and the Father will give Thee.*' After illustrating the truth that God gives us as much as we ask for by the story of Joseph's brethren getting all the

sacks filled that they brought to him, he said in prayer : 'O Lord, Thou art our Joseph. We bring to Thee our empty sacks. Do Thou fill them all!'

One Sabbath, when explaining to the children how when they were weak then they were strong, he referred to the fact that the finest fruits, such as grapes and melons, grow upon stalks so weak that if left to themselves they would trail along the ground, never ripen, and be destroyed. The gardener has to prop them up and support them firmly that they may grow and come to perfection. In like manner the Good Gardener has to tend and support His weak plants, and to graft them into the True Vine, that they may grow in Him and bring forth fruit fit for the Master's use. Then he offered the touching request : 'Lord, pity the weakness of the plants that bear the fruit of the Spirit.'

His prayer one New Year's Day was memorable to those who were present :—

'Thou tellest our wanderings, and Thou hast been writing an account of our lives up till this date. This year Thou hast begun a new chapter. Lord, may there be always in it something about Thy glory. "This day My servant gave a cup of cold water and plucked a brand from the burning." Perhaps Thou wilt come Thyself this year, and finish the record by telling that at this point Thou didst come Thyself with the crown!'

His thanksgiving-prayers on Communion Sabbaths will long be remembered, and many of his requests before and at the Tables.

'The clouds which have arisen from the marshes of our sins need new bursts of the Sun of righteousness to melt them away. Shine forth! shine forth!'

'As the bread is broken and the wine is poured out, may we feel that He is scarcely an absent Saviour, though unseen.'

: 'As we get into the enjoyment of Thy love may we find that we need scarcely any other heaven either here or hereafter—only more of that love and the continuance of it.'

'Lord, if Thou lookest for us, Thou wilt find us under the apple-tree.'

At the close of the Communion Sabbath in October, 1886, Mr. Inglis of Dundee, who had been assisting in the services, asked prayer for himself and his people. Dr. Bonar took up the request in his closing prayer:—

'Lord Jesus, Thou art the Intercessor. Present his petition to the Father, and add our names to it, for blessing on himself and his elders, on his congregation, on his missionary. And one thing more, Lord Jesus, come quickly Thyself!'

The old-fashioned form of service was always retained in Finnieston: the Action Sermon, the Fencing¹ of the Table, the three Tables following, and then the Closing Address with its message to old and young. The fragrance of these services and the words then spoken, still linger in the hearts of many of God's children.

'At the Table, remember Christ and forget yourself.'

'Jesus is walking to-day among the seven golden candlesticks, and He will stop here, at our Communion Table, to see if any of you want anything from Him.'

'There is nothing between a sinner and the Saviour, but there *is* something between the sinner and the Lord's Table.'

'However weak you are, if you value supremely the atoning blood, come to the Table.'

¹ 'Fencing,' he always explained as declaring by whose authority the Table was spread. The word is used in old Scotch law.

‘God’s people have a ravenous hunger for a crucified Christ.’

“Little children” is the name for the family of God in every place and at every time. John learned the name from Christ at the first Communion Table. He only said it once, and John, leaning on His bosom, caught it up and repeated it.’

‘At the Lord’s Supper (John xiii. to xvi.) the characteristics of six of the disciples are seen. John, the type of a true communicant, realising his own sinfulness and liability to fall, but yet not rising from his place on Christ’s bosom. Judas, to outward appearance as near as John, but an unworthy communicant, hardened, often warned, but to no purpose. Peter, ardent and warm-hearted, but one who yielded too much to feeling, forgetting that feelings fail, though faith does not. Thomas, a suspicious, questioning, sad cast of mind, but a real disciple. Jude, a thoughtful, growing Christian. Philip, a slow mind, from want of meditation and reflection, not grasping the truth sufficiently.’

Many years ago, a lady from a neighbouring congregation took shelter from the rain in the porch of Finnieston Church, on a Communion Sabbath, while Dr. Bonar was giving an address from Matt. xxvi. 48: ‘That same is He: *hold Him fast.*’ She could not hear the address, but over and over again, as she stood in the porch, the words of the text came to her ear like a message from the Lord, ‘That same is He: *hold Him fast.*’ The first part of the closing address was specially for the children, who always gathered in the front seats of the gallery, and were quiet and interested spectators while the bread and wine were handed to the communicants. Sometimes their thoughts were directed to a Communion time of long ago on the heathery moors, under the open sky, or to Communion Sabbaths

not so long before, in the days of the minister's own boyhood, in Lady Glenorchy's Chapel in Edinburgh. When pressing the children to come to Christ, and then, with their parents, to come to the Lord's Table, he told the story of an old gentleman whom he remembered in the Chapel, who did not become a communicant till he was fifty years of age. He did not know the Lord when he first went to speak to the minister, Dr. Jones, about joining the church, and he told him he was not ready to become a communicant. It was not till he had come back six times that he was able to say he knew the Lord, and had a right to come to His Table. In applying the story to the children Dr. Bonar told them he wanted them to be like that good old man, 'not in being so long of coming, but in being sure that you are saved before you come. It is the same bread for the grown people and for the children. I am an older man now than almost any of my congregation, and I find 'I give out the same food I need for myself.'

The address never concluded without reference to the Lord's Second Coming as the motive for more earnest work, and more earnest prayer.

'Do much, and say little about it, and think not about what brethren say of you. Pray much, and you will be very near the King, for He has a special love to petitions.'

'Behold, I come quickly.' O sinner, are you ready for that long eternity? What if it comes to you some day suddenly? O believer, have you done all you would fain do? Is it no fault of yours if souls are not saved? O elders, are you devising means for winning souls? O deacons, are you like Stephen, of whom I often say he thought in the midst of his deacon's work how to commend his Lord? O people of God, are you remembering that "*quickly*"? Time is short.

Are you praying much? Are you letting your light shine?’

‘Christ’s nearer coming casts deeper solemnity over every Communion.’

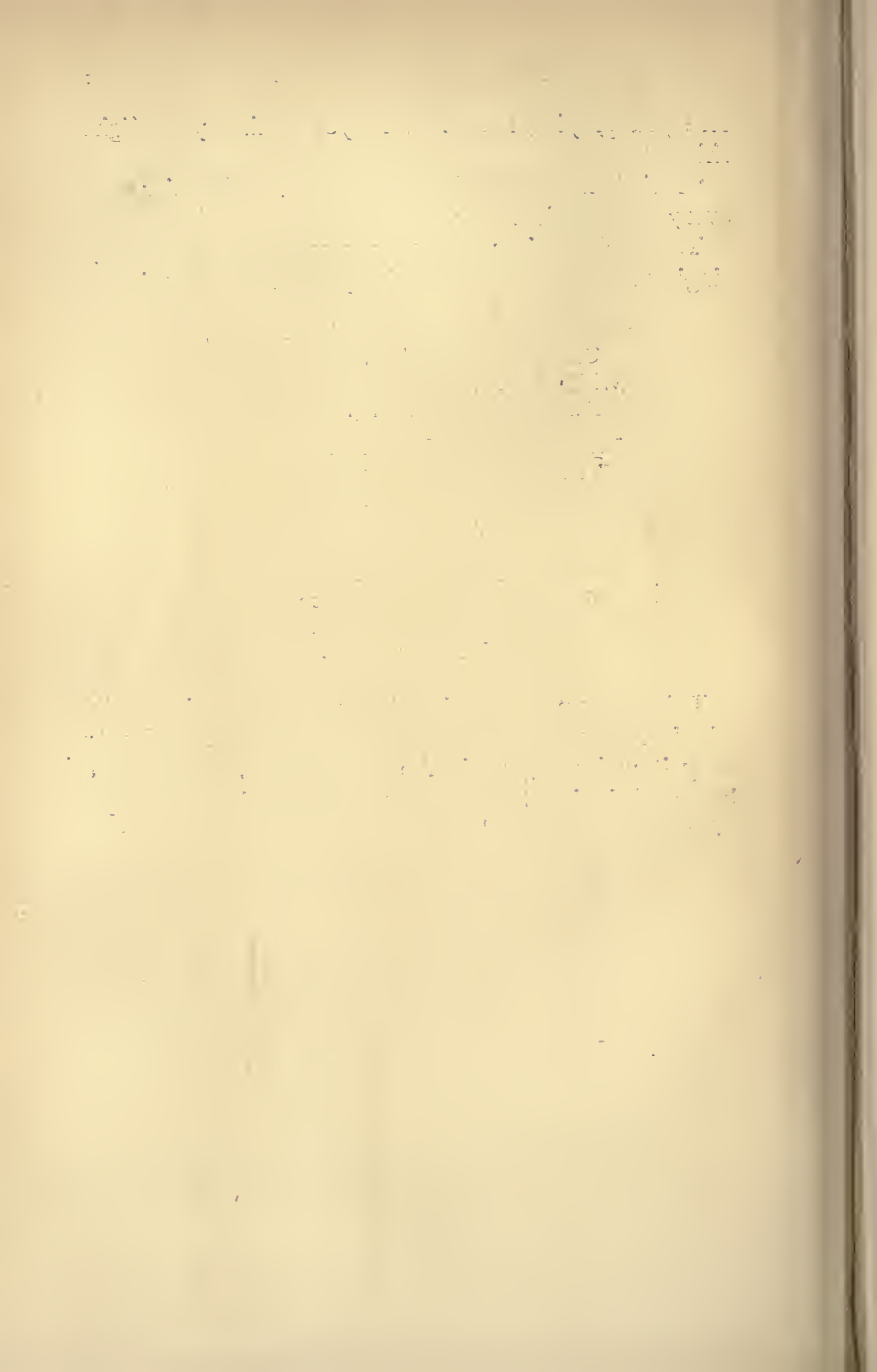
The day’s services were always brought to a close by singing three verses of the Ninety-eighth Psalm :—

‘With harp, with harp, and voice of psalms,
Unto JEHOVAH sing :
With trumpets, cornets, gladly sound
Before the Lord the King.

Let seas and all their fulness roar ;
The world, and dwellers there ;
Let floods clap hands, and let the hills
Together joy declare

Before the Lord ; because He comes,
To judge the earth comes He ;
He’ll judge the world with righteousness,
His folk with equity.’

This custom, begun in Collace, was continued in Finnieston, and wherever or whenever that psalm is sung it will always stir the heart of Dr. Bonar’s old hearers, bringing back hallowed recollections of ‘days of heaven upon earth.’



A BASKET OF FRAGMENTS

‘I beseech you to keep Christ, for I did what I could to put you within grips of Him. I told you Christ’s testament and latter-will plainly, and I kept nothing back that my Lord gave me. I gave Christ to you with good-will.’—*Samuel Rutherford.*

CHAPTER V

THERE was no part of a minister's work which he did not try to render useful both to himself and to others. A marriage, a baptism, a funeral, were all opportunities for good. At Collace, he heard of a woman awakened by his address at her marriage ceremony.¹ He sometimes, on such occasions, referred to Proverbs xii. 4: 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband,' and paraphrased it thus: 'She makes his house a palace, and himself a king.' 'Remember,' he would say, 'God grudges you nothing if you take it from His hands through Christ.' At other times, he spoke of husband and wife as 'helpmeets,' and compared them to the two sides of an arch, with love as the keystone: 'And see what burdens an arch can bear!'

The baptismal service was never a mere form, but a time when all the congregation felt that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were drawing near to bless.

'The sacraments of the New Testament are signs between Heaven and earth. Baptism is a sign from Heaven that God remembers little children, and looks upon them in love, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto Me," etc. The Lord's Supper is a sign from earth to Heaven that we remember our Lord's dying command: 'This do in remembrance of Me"; and keep it till He come.'

¹ See *Diary and Letters*, p. 119.

‘I consider the baptism of infants to be, not a confession of our faith, but of God’s interest in us. I am in the way of putting it thus: “Remember, parents, to tell your children that on the day of baptism they were presented to the Three Persons, and the water was meant to be a sign and seal that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit offered salvation to them. Ask them, have you accepted the gift offered?’

He called on a young mother in Collace soon after the birth of her first-born son, and, after asking what name she meant to give the baby, he said, ‘I never knew the meaning of these words in Psalm ciii.—‘Like as a father pitieth his children,’ etc.—till I heard my own little infant cry. How I pitied her, how I wanted to help her, and yet I couldn’t!’ When the parents brought the child to be baptized a few weeks afterwards, he gave him the name ‘William,’ though he had not been reminded of it. After the service he said to them, ‘Ah, you forgot to write down the baby’s name, but there will be no mistake about it on that day when it is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.’

‘How solemn it is for you,’ he said to another before the baptism of her little one, ‘to look on that child and wonder, “will that head ever wear a crown of glory? and will these lips ever sing His praises? and will these eyes ever see the King in His beauty?”’

One Friday evening a stranger from the Highlands came to the manse to ask that his baby might be baptized on the following Sabbath. While talking with him Dr. Bonar found that he was not a communicant, though evidently a converted man. He asked him why he was not, and the man replied that a very peculiar experience was needed to fit any one for going to the Lord’s Table. Dr. Bonar tried to show him that an interest in Christ was sufficient, but the man still kept

to his point. At last, seeing he was deeply in earnest, he told him he could not baptize his child on the coming Sabbath, but asked him to go home and search the New Testament for the qualifications laid down as necessary for admission to the Lord's Table, and to return in a fortnight and tell him what he had found. The man came back at the time appointed, but with a very different expression on his face. He and his wife had looked through the New Testament, but could find no extraordinary experience mentioned as necessary, so he was ready now to go to the Lord's Table. His after-life testified to his sincerity and faith in Christ.

At a baptism on one occasion, he spoke to the parents about Jesus as being the only holy child ever born on our earth. The mother reminded him of this when her baby was taken away soon after, and added, 'My little one is just as spotless now.'

His love for the children showed itself in the interest with which he followed them year by year. Each had a place in his prayers, and they fully returned his affection. They would linger in the church as he went from the pulpit to the vestry, in the hope of having his hand laid on their head, and hearing him call them by their name. One little child called him 'the minister with the laughing face.' It was not uncommon in Collace to see groups of children round him as he rode about from place to place on his pony. One of the touching sights on the day on which he was buried, was that of the children round the grave, with their sad and wistful faces. Some time after his death, a little child was heard praying, 'O God, bless Mr. M'Intyre, and send back Dr. Bonar, for we're wearying to see him!' He spoke with unhesitating certainty of the conversion of children.

'We ask Thee, Lord, to raise up a generation of

believing children. We do not ask Thee for a generation of believers, but of believing children. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Faith is a gift, and a gift that a child can take.'

'A young hand may be placed on the head of the scapegoat as well as an old hand.'

'God's heart is so quick and so tender that He can hear the hosanna of a little child.'

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise"—Thou hast filled up the choir of heaven.'

'Christ would have wanted one of the marks of Incarnate God if the story of His blessing the little children had not been narrated, for "Behold, God is mighty and despiseth not any."'

The Apostle Matthew, he used to say, must have been very fond of children, for his Gospel is full of references to them. He thought Paul must have been a famous preacher to children, for he had so much to tell about. He had been in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils in the sea, in shipwrecks, etc. And he did preach to the children, for he witnessed 'both to small and great' (Acts xxvi. 22).

Wherever he went, he liked to visit the Sabbath school, and used to urge other ministers to provide something specially for the children on Communion Sabbaths. At Crossford, where he often visited his friend Mr. Manson, he was not unfrequently the means of helping and cheering the teachers in their work. His words are still remembered: 'Be sure and aim at the conversion of the children. They are never too young to come to Jesus. I hope you pray for each of your scholars by name. That has a wonderful effect on your teaching. Never come to your classes without first being in prayer.' 'Kindness to those you teach is

part of the teaching,' he used to say. In a country village where he was staying, he was told that the children had a bad habit of running after passing carriages. He took the opportunity at a children's meeting in the evening of asking them to tell him the name of the only man we read of in the Bible who ran after a carriage. The answer was 'Gehazi; and he was not a man to be imitated!'

Not being able to be present one evening at the monthly meeting of his Sabbath-school teachers, he sent the following *Report* to the Superintendent:—

'MEETING OF TEACHERS IN JERUSALEM

(2 Chron. xxx. 22)

MONTH OF ABIB, A.C. 726

'*The Superintendent.*—The King; his name Hezekiah, *i.e.* "Jehovah is my strength."

'*The Teachers.*—Levites who "taught the good knowledge of the Lord. Some of them discouraged; they spoke of their difficulties, those they taught not always caring for their teaching, and many of them very dull in understanding. Some of the teachers spoke of fancying they had not the gift of teaching, and should resign.

'*The Superintendent's Address.*—Hezekiah "spake to the heart" (see margin). Hezekiah "spake to . . . all." Hezekiah reminded them that their theme was "the knowledge of the Lord." It was a royal and hearty word in season. *N.B.*—A note of his address: "My friend Isaiah reminds me that it is this knowledge that is to fill the earth one day, as the waters cover the sea. Go on, then. Tell the "Good Tidings." Tell them to reason with our God, who can make their scarlet sins disappear, and their souls be whiter than the snow, through the "good knowledge" of Him who is to come.

'The meeting was held in the hall on Mount Zion, within sight of the palace. It was a very happy meeting. Our reporter refers to the lively "singing and the great gladness;" and mention is made of the prayers also going up to Jehovah's dwelling-place.'

His interest in the members of his young women's Bible-class was unwearied, and many owe their first religious impressions to his faithful lessons. To them, as to the members of the young men's class, he succeeded in imparting a love for God's Word and for Scripture truth which became characteristic of them.

One Tuesday evening at the class, he referred to 'the bricks of Babylon'—how every brick had on it the king's stamp. 'So,' he said, 'everything we do should have the King's stamp on it.' One of his hearers, not long after, was set to the tedious work of cleaning a feather-bed. Many a time she felt tempted to hurry over it, but 'the bricks of Babylon' kept ringing in her ears, and she had to do it all faithfully. When Dr. Bonar called to see her, she said to him, 'O these bricks of Babylon were a trouble to me!' 'Were they on your dusters and brooms?' he asked. 'No, on a feather-bed!' she replied, to his great amusement. The story was repeated to a servant, who said, 'Well, I hate cleaning the knives, but I can't but do them thoroughly now.'

Nowhere, perhaps, was his personal influence more strongly felt than in his young men's Bible-class, and there was no part of his work which in his later years he gave up more reluctantly. Its first place of meeting was in the little room behind the old church, where for many a year, in spite of discomfort and inconvenience, the young men gathered round the teacher, who was ever bringing to them out of his treasure things new and old. One book of Scripture after another was opened up with unflinching freshness and originality. Not long before his death he was singularly pleased with a letter he received from one who for years had wandered about the world, and had carried with him, through all his vicissitudes, the memory of Sabbath evenings in the Bible-class. 'After seeing so much of

the world, and, after passing my fortieth year, there is nothing which has so deeply impressed itself on my life, and engrained itself into my very existence, as the solemn lessons you taught us in your Bible-class.' And when pressed by temptation and the allurements of sin on every side, 'there were silent voices speaking to me from that Bible-class which I dared not disobey.'

When members of the class left town or went abroad, he was never too busy to write to them, and their letters were a source of constant interest and pleasure to him. The young men, on their part, felt the sympathy of a heart that was always young. In his busiest time he has been known to call on a young man in his lodgings at ten o'clock at night, hoping to find him at home then, as he had been unsuccessful before. He would go far out of his way on a Sabbath evening to take a young man with him to the class, walking along with his arm in his, and chatting in a way that put him entirely at his ease. A question as to his spiritual welfare would be accompanied by a kindly touch of his hand on the young man's shoulder. 'That touch remains with me still,' said one, long years after.

Sometimes he had a gathering of the students connected with the church at his house, and these meetings he always greatly enjoyed.

'Last night,' he writes of one such occasion, 'I had at my house a gathering of students connected with the congregation—about thirty. . . . At worship I showed them that Paul went to college at Jerusalem,—was a clever student,—had for his professor Gamaliel, the very best in his line,—imbibed all his views, etc. But the Lord transferred him to another college, when he, at a holiday time, had taken a trip to Damascus, and had offered to be of any use to his idol, Gamaliel.'

At the close of one of these gatherings he prayed

with peculiar solemnity: 'And when we all meet together again, may it be with our bosom filled with sheaves!'

The young men who used to gather together in Finnieston, are scattered now all over the world. The meeting-time has not yet come, but when it does, it will be true of them: 'these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.'

AMONG HIS PEOPLE

'I think I have got more good from visiting my people than from any book of practical theology I ever read.'—*A. A. B.*

CHAPTER VI

TO the members of his congregation Dr. Bonar was both friend and father. Not only was he quick to recognise their faces, but their different circumstances touched and interested him, and made him feel his visitation a pleasure and benefit to himself as well as to them. 'He was that ta'en up about *me*,' were the words of one of them, as she recalled his thoughtful interest in her in times of need.

How much importance he attached to this part of a pastor's work is shown in a letter written to Dr. Somerville from Collace in the year 1850:—

' . . . There is a blessing resting on visiting. What else is fitted to make us know the state of our flocks? Were it not for their good but only for our own, is not this department of work most important? It is only thus we can know our people's spiritual state, and I would go on in this work weekly, if not daily, even if not a soul got good from it but myself. I see the sad wounds of my flock—I see their slow growth in grace—I discover how few really are awakened, how few are in earnest, how very few are saved. It is humbling and painful beyond most things. Of course, there is a kind of visiting which is simply useless, if not hurtful, to minister and people, but visiting with this design is truly soul-exercise. It is a luxury oftentimes to find out truth in the Word, and prepare our sermons for the people, so we need this self-denying mixture to temper our preparations. I daresay you admit all this as much as I do, and yet still cry, "O for a way of profitably visiting!" Dear brother, this is the gift of God. Holiness of heart and life is what I find I need more than anything, a heart daily filled and burning with fresh views of divine love. This is what I seldom

have in visiting, and yet I see that if I had that, it would make visiting like the gardener going among his plants and watering them as he saw need, while the Sabbath sermons would be the heavy showers.'

His methods of finding out the state of his people's minds were often very ingenious. He and some other ministers were discussing this subject one day. He said, 'I find it a very good plan to ask when I am visiting, "What was your chapter at family worship this morning?"' In this way I find out whether they *have* family worship, and if they have paid attention to it!

He used to tell with great enjoyment of a remark made by some women as they watched him passing their door in the mission district. 'Why does Dr. Bonar walk so fast?' said one of them. 'Why,' said another, 'do you not know the messengers of the gospel must go swiftly?'

One day he called on a good woman, and found her busy at her washing-tub. 'O Doctor,' was her salutation, 'you always find me in a mess.' 'But there's some one helping you,' he replied. 'No,' she said wonderingly. 'Yes,' he said, 'your Elder Brother is with you.' 'From that day to this,' said the good woman, 'I have never begun a day's work without remembering "My Elder Brother is with me."'

One who was attending his communicants' class told him that she was not yet one of God's children, but was very anxious about her soul. She had been brought up carefully, but had been taught more of the Law than of the Gospel, and it was hard for her to believe that salvation could be hers by the simple acceptance of Christ. While talking with her one day, Dr. Bonar drew a hymn-book out of his pocket and read the well-known lines:—

'Nothing either great or small—
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.'

Then he said to her, 'I think you are trying to put a bit to Christ's robe of righteousness.' The words rang in her ears all day, and, just before going to bed, the light shone into her heart, and she saw the simplicity of the way of salvation. She said, 'I felt full of shame to think I had been doing such a thing.' From day to day she went on feeding on the truth, and learning more and more of the Word of God from her pastor's lips; but she had not openly confessed Christ to those around her, though she felt she ought to do so. 'One evening at the prayer-meeting,' she said, 'I got the word I had been waiting for for six months. Dr. Bonar was speaking about the "anointing oil," in Exodus xxx. 22-32, as a type of the Holy Spirit given to believers. "Some of you," he said, "have had the oil poured over you, but *you wipe off the drops with your hand.*"'

When calling on a member of his congregation one day, she said to him, 'Do you know how I first came to know I was saved? I dreamed that you were talking to me, and at last, as you rose to go away, you said, "So you don't want to be indebted to Another?"' I awoke and saw it all.'

To an aged member of his flock he said, 'You must keep fast hold of the text which was written for you: "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you" (Isaiah xlv. 4). Just as you carried the children when they were young, so the Lord says He will carry you now when you are old.' His words dropped by the wayside were the seeds of life to many. A Sabbath scholar never forgot the impression made upon him by the minister putting his hand on his shoulder one night and saying, 'Matthew, be like Matthew the publican. He left all, rose up, and followed Jesus.' Meeting a young friend on the street he asked her what her name was. She said, 'Christina.' 'Well,' he

said, 'you have Christ in your name. I hope you have Him in your heart.' One November afternoon he called upon a student who had just joined his Bible-class. The sun was shining into the room, and Dr. Bonar remarked upon it and said, 'I am sure it does not hinder you in your studies; and if you have the Sun of righteousness shining in your heart would it not help you?' When visiting one who was ill, he turned to a stranger who was sitting in the room, and asked her if her name was in the Lamb's Book of Life? She said, 'Oh, sir, my name is not in your books.' 'Oh no,' he said, 'not in my books, but is it in the Lamb's Book?' 'I hope so,' she replied, and quoted the verse, 'If we hope for that we see not,' etc. 'Oh, but that is not the meaning of the verse at all,' said Dr. Bonar, 'you must have more than a hope,' and he showed how she might even now know that her name was in the Book of Life. The conversation was blessed to her, and she became a true child of God.

His acts of loving ministry were countless. He would toil up long flights of stairs to take a new remedy to some one in pain, or to find lodgings for one who was friendless and homeless. He would carry a bottle of beef tea in his pocket to a sickly woman, or a picture-book to while away the long hours of a child's illness. A servant who had belonged to the church left for a situation in the south of England, where she remained for fifteen years. During all that time, Dr. Bonar wrote frequently to her, and sent her each of his little books as they were published, 'and,' she said, 'I am only one of many to whom he did the same.' No service was too small for him to do for any of Christ's little ones, and the joy of his service was as remarkable as its ceaselessness. 'Love is the *motive* for working,' he used to say, 'joy is the *strength* for working.' His sunny face as he

came into a sick-room brought healing with it, and his brightness was infectious. 'Now, remember,' he said to some friends in parting, 'whenever I see you looking sad or downcast, I will ask you when you cut the Book of Psalms out of the Bible!'

One day he called on an invalid and said, 'I have brought you a new medicine.' 'What is it?' she asked, 'Here it is. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine!"'

If sent for to pray with careless people when dying he seldom or never refused, but he did not consider it a necessity to go. He thought they made it a sort of extreme unction; but to visit God's people in sickness he considered a duty. Ministering to the 'household of faith' was a form of service he constantly pressed upon others, and presented to them in various aspects. 'It is no small matter to help one another,' he would say. 'To keep a believer's lamp bright is one of the highest benefits you can confer on a dark world.' 'God loves His saints so much that He will give a reward to any one who gives one of them a cup of cold water!'

'Paul says that, even for the sake of comforting the saints, he would wish to abide in the flesh.'

After preaching in Dudhope Church, Dundee, one Sabbath, upon John the Baptist in prison, a gentleman came into the vestry and said to him, 'I am going to see a dying elder, I will try to tell him what you have been saying.' 'Ay,' said Dr. Bonar, 'and tell him Christ will come to visit *him*, though He did not go to visit John; that was for our sake.' His friend, Mr. Manson, when laid aside by illness, had spoken of himself as a 'cumberer of the ground.' Dr. Bonar wrote to him:—

'You say it is not wonderful that you are not getting strength, for you are "only a cumberer." Brother, it is cumberers that are spared!'

His sympathy with those in sorrow had been learned by passing through the same sad discipline. When Mrs. Bonar was so unexpectedly taken away from him in October, 1864, he wrote to his brother Horatius:—

‘I think that the Lord who used to give me health to work is now saying, “Will you seek to glorify Me by bearing and enduring?”’

To other friends he wrote:—

‘Our time is shortening. The Master has been reminding me of this very solemnly, changing the blue sky over my head by the shade of lasting sorrow.

“But yet I know I shall Him praise.”’

‘We must learn more and more how to *suffer*. “Thy will be done” is one of the heavenly plants that Jesus left the seed of when He was here. We must cultivate it in our garden. And so also there is another, “The Lord thinketh upon me,”—a plant cultivated by King David when he was an exile in the wilds of En-gedi. This plant is the believer’s “Forget-me-not.”’

An old friend had been talking with him one day, soon after Mrs. Bonar’s death, and as they referred to the many friends who had gone before, and specially to his own great loss, Dr. Bonar was for a few moments quite overcome. Then, quickly recovering himself, he said in his bright way, ‘But the best is yet to come!’ He had been engaged to give an address to the Young Men’s Literary Society on an evening just a day or two after Mrs. Bonar’s funeral. He could not take the subject he had intended, but he came as he had promised, and gave an address on some things connected with the Holy Land. The inexpressible sadness of his whole appearance, and his marvellous self-control, made a deep impression on all who were present. ‘God does not tell us,’ he said, ‘to *feel* it is for the best, but he does ask us to *believe* it.’

‘Master, that disciple is weeping,’ would be enough to

draw the Saviour's attention when on earth. And we can all so speak to Him still.'

'I often read at funerals the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, and I do it with this connection in my mind: "There shall be no more sorrow, nor death, nor pain, nor crying," and "I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely." I always feel that the Lord wanted to put these things within sight of one another. If we would draw more of the living water from the wells of salvation, we should have less sorrow. Drink more, believer. What aileth thee, Hagar? The well is just beside thee. Drink, and go on your way.'

Hearing of the sudden death of one of his people he hastened to the house to see the daughter who was left an orphan. He did not say almost anything to her, but gently put his arm round her and laid her head on his shoulder. When the news of his own sudden removal passed from one to another, from many lips broke the sorrowful words, 'I have lost my best earthly friend!' and some wept for him as they had never wept for any friend on earth before.

It was often a matter of surprise that strong and vigorous as he was himself, he could sympathise so tenderly with the sick and suffering. His words to them were always full of comfort.

'It is worth while being wounded to have the hands of the Great Physician upon you.'

'If we cannot say like Paul "this light affliction," let us at any rate try to say, "It is but for a moment."'

'Those who sing loudest in the kingdom will be those who on earth had the greatest bodily suffering. We pity them now, but then we shall almost envy them.'

'We have got more from Paul's prison-house than from his visit to the third heavens.'

'A believer is an Æolian harp, and every event of his life is just the passing wind drawing out the music. And God hears it.'

"In the world ye shall have tribulation," *but draw the closer to Me.*

There were two thoughts he often left with God's people in sickness. One was that they might do a great work for the Lord by praying much, and that it is really promotion to be, not down in the valley with Joshua, but with Aaron and Hur on the mountain-top. The other thought was that they are *teaching angels* (Eph. iii. 10). Angels learn much by visiting God's people. They know nothing of suffering themselves, but they learn from the patience and joyfulness of suffering believers. When the sick one enters heaven, some of the angels will say, 'Oh, here is my teacher come!'

Many outside of his own congregation sent for him in times of sickness or trouble. One Saturday evening a lady called at the manse and begged him to go to see her son, who was hopelessly ill. As he went into the room the young man closed a ledger that was lying on the table before him, and said, 'There, now, I've written the last word I'll ever write in it.' 'And what then?' asked Dr. Bonar. They drew their chairs to the fire-side and began to talk together. Little by little the Spirit of God began to work, and the dying man was led to Christ. His joy was quite unusual—so great that his mother was afraid it might be a delusion. One day when Dr. Bonar was with him, he said to him, 'You will be experiencing something of the joy unspeakable.' 'It's more than that,' said the dying man, 'it is so great. It is joy *unthinkable.*' A young man, whom he visited at another time, was brought to the Saviour on his deathbed, and filled with great

peace in believing. He had been careless and worldly until he was taken ill. One day listening to a brass band playing under his window, the tune recalled to him former scenes of gaiety in which he had taken part, and the thought, 'Am I going into eternity with all these sins upon my soul?' forced itself upon him, and was the means of his awakening. As he drew near his end, he one day said to Dr. Bonar, 'Do you think my mind can be growing weak, for I don't care now for any but the common texts, such as "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost!"' Shortly before his death he said, 'Jesus came so near to me last night, that I almost felt Him breathing.'

Not long before his death Dr. Bonar was asked to visit a family in great affliction. They were not members of his church, but he went at once, and continued his visits till they were no longer needed. Both father and daughter were dying at the same time. The former was full of joy at the prospect of being with Jesus, and could sing of victory in the midst of great bodily weakness. With the daughter it was different. She had peace, but not the confident assurance and joy that her father had. This troubled her not a little, and she told Dr. Bonar how it distressed her. He said, 'Well, Jeanie, you have peace, have you not? You are resting on what the Lord Jesus has done for you? You see your father was much older when he came to the Lord, and he had more to be forgiven. Consequently his joy at so many sins forgiven is greater than yours.' This answer cheered and comforted her, and so much blessing did she get from his continued visits that she longed daily and hourly for them. Six weeks after her father's death she fell asleep in Jesus on a Sabbath morning. Throughout the day before, whenever there was a ring

or knock at the door, she said to her mother, 'I hope this is Dr. Bonar now, mother!' Shortly before she passed away she was heard saying, 'Do come now, quickly, Lord Jesus. Oh, please do come!'

A young woman was taken to the hospital, incurably ill. Dr. Bonar went to see her, and before leaving said to her, 'Remember us in prayer.' She had been feeling very sad, and these words were like new life to her. It was not 'we will remember you,' but 'you will remember us'; and she saw there was still work for her to do, though laid on a bed of sickness.

One who suffered much said when he asked her if she were not longing to be at rest, 'No, I am not wearying for death, but I do hope the Lord may come before I die!'

'Think upon the Lord when you can, and He will think upon you when you can't,' he used to say to sick people. In all his visitation, fear in going to cases of sickness was unknown to him. During the smallpox epidemic in Glasgow he visited some patients week after week. When missionary in St. George's, Edinburgh, he visited a man so ill with typhus fever that no one else would go near him. His kindness touched the sick man's heart, and made him willing to receive the truth. This fearlessness characterised him in every point of duty. He was a firm and determined total abstainer, long before total abstinence was much spoken of, and was not afraid to denounce the drinking customs of the country wherever he went, as well as from his own pulpit. When he first went to Collace he gave great offence by refusing to drink the whisky which was always offered to him when visiting, and the young minister was pronounced to be 'awfu' proud.' However, when it was understood that he would take milk or cream instead, it became an invariable custom to

give it to him. One old woman, as she gave him a glass of milk, said, 'It's rale nice, sir, it's the sap o' Macbeth's Castle!' Before he had been long in Collace the one public-house in the parish was closed through his efforts, along with Mr Nairne's influence; and it has never been reopened. In Finnieston district more than one poor drunkard was brought out of bondage into the liberty of Christ through his personal instrumentality. An earnest and consistent member of the church dates the beginning of his changed life to one Saturday evening, when Dr. Bonar found him near the door of the Mission-hall, and, drawing his arm within his own, led him upstairs into the Gospel Temperance Meeting. That night the man signed the pledge, and became soon after a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

At a meeting of the 'Mizpah Band' in Glasgow, formed chiefly of those who had been reclaimed from drunkenness, Mr. Moody turned to him after several had given their testimony and said, 'Now, Dr. Bonar, give us *your* testimony.' He at once rose and said, 'Mr. Moody, I have no testimony to give, for I was free-born!'

When giving reproof, he was as faithful and fearless in carrying out the Apostle's injunction: 'reprove, rebuke, exhort,' but in a way that seldom gave offence. He used to say, 'A man is never safe in rebuking another if it does not cost him something to have to do it.'

'Look at Christ's gentleness in His dealings with us. We never find a ruffle of irritation on His lips. When He wants to reprove the forwardness of His disciples, He does it by a little child. Was there ever a gentler reproof given to a backslider than that given to Peter: "Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest thou Me?*"'

'It is a test of our progress in sanctification if we are

willing to have our faults pointed out to us, without getting angry. Why should we take offence at being told we are not perfect?’

‘God tells us to love reproof. I don’t know any one who ever took rebuke better than Eli. “It is the Lord!” When Nathan said to David, “Thou art the man,” he did not flare up as Herod did. No. He said “I have sinned,” and went away to write the Fifty-first Psalm.’

An old lady in his congregation used always to sit in one particular part of her room, because when she lifted her eyes from her work she could see Dr. Bonar’s portrait on the wall. ‘His eyes always rebuke me,’ she said, ‘whether in his picture or in himself. These other ministers whom I used to be with, they just agreed with me in everything I said, but catch Dr. Bonar doing that!’

He was asked to visit an invalid lady whom he did not know, and found her suffering from nervous depression. After he had talked with her he said before leaving, ‘Now, you have far too little to do. I am going to give you something to find out for me,’ and left her some Bible exercises to work out. She grew quite interested in her new employment, and in a short time was nearly well. A mother told him how for twenty-four years she had prayed and made efforts for her son’s conversion, but he was still unsaved. Dr. Bonar said, ‘Speak less *to* him and speak more to God *about* him.’ The remark repeated to the young man impressed him much, and not long after he was brought to Christ.

He was told of a woman in the mission district who professed to have been converted. After he had been to see her, he said he did not think she was really changed, or her house would have been cleaner. He

was quite right, for the woman's profession turned out to be insincere.

A gentleman whom he knew to be very excitable told him that during his illness he had had a vision of angels, and had felt one of them touch him as he lay in bed. Dr. Bonar quietly remarked, 'Have you a cat in the house? Don't you think it may have been the cat?'

Sometimes he took playful ways of reproving or trying to put matters right when he thought it needful. The following letter to his brother-in-law, Mr. William Dickson, will explain itself:—

"Fields of Ephratah,"
Summer-days of A.D. 1872.

'MR. EDITOR,—I find in my peregrinations, that not a few, both ministers and people, who take a deep interest in the Sabbath school, are annually brought into straits and difficulties at the S.S. Breakfast. They complain that they neither can get a good supply for the body, nor hear comfortably (there being almost no room for sitting), so as to get their spirit refreshed. They suggest that a larger 'Upper Room' should somewhere be found. The Master's Upper Room seems to have been large and airy—at least held comfortably all who came. Excuse me troubling you with this note, but you are understood to be most willing to take any suggestion that may help on the cause, and promote the interests of the young.—Yours in the common faith and hope,

A FELLOW-LABOURER.'

He was at one time troubled by some of the people coming in late to church. As he was reading and commenting on the tenth chapter of Acts one afternoon, he came to the verse: 'Now therefore are we all here present before God.' He stopped and said, 'I think that is more than some of us could have said this morning!' Another time he said, 'A great many were late this morning—not like Mary Magdalene, *early* at the sepulchre.'

His candour and straightforwardness sometimes made

him appear unsympathetic, for he never tried to please any one at the expense of truth. 'There are some people who can stand anything but flattery. If no one ever praises you, you are all the better for it!' After the meeting in 1888 to celebrate his 'Jubilee,' an old Collace friend remarked to him that it had been a 'grand meeting.' He replied, 'Yes, but I think there was too much praise of man, and too little to God. I never thought I did more than draw the water and let the flock drink.'

The story with which he closed his address on that same evening was one which he often told in illustration of what humbles a minister, and delivers him from self-satisfaction.

A Grecian painter had executed a remarkable painting of a boy carrying on his head a basket of grapes. So exquisitely were the grapes painted, that when the picture was put up in the Forum for the admiration of the citizens, the birds pecked the grapes, thinking they were real. The friends of the painter were full of congratulations, but he did not seem at all satisfied. When they asked him why, he replied, 'I should have done a great deal more. I should have painted the boy so true to life that the birds would not have dared to come near!'

MANSE MEMORIES

‘ Paul is like a man climbing a mountain,—sometimes on an eminence and in the bright sunshine, sometimes down in a shady hollow, sometimes wrapped in mist and gloom, —but always singing !’—*A. A. B.*

CHAPTER VII

AT the beginning of his ministry Dr. Bonar said in one of his letters: 'This is a time that seems to require prayer more than preaching even, at least so I often feel. And persevering prayerfulness—day by day wrestling and pleading—is harder for the flesh than preaching.'

As years passed the 'main business of every day' to him was prayer, and latterly, when overwhelmed by work,—visits, letters, interruptions, engagements of every kind,—it was his rule to devote two hours every day, before going out, to prayer and meditation on God's Word. When the settlement of his colleague, Mr. M'Intyre, in 1891, had relieved him of some of his former duties, his Sabbath evenings were spent in prayer in his study. A card hung on one side of his mantelpiece on which were printed the words, '*Dimidium studii qui rite precatur habet*,'—'He who has truly prayed has completed the half of his study.' Early visitors to his study in India Street were familiar with the sight of his figure standing at his desk writing letters, as was his habit always after breakfast. In the afternoon he visited regularly from one o'clock till nearly five, and every evening was filled up with a meeting of some kind. Friday and Saturday were kept as days of preparation for Sabbath, and no visitor was admitted to his study on Saturday unless his errand were of great

importance. One who had much intercourse with him in work had occasion to call on a Friday afternoon when he was busy with his preparation for the pulpit. He appeared like one lost to himself in communion with God, and the visitor left, feeling overawed. Like John Bunyan in his dream, he had seen a man 'with his eyes lifted up to Heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth written upon his lips, and the world behind his back.'

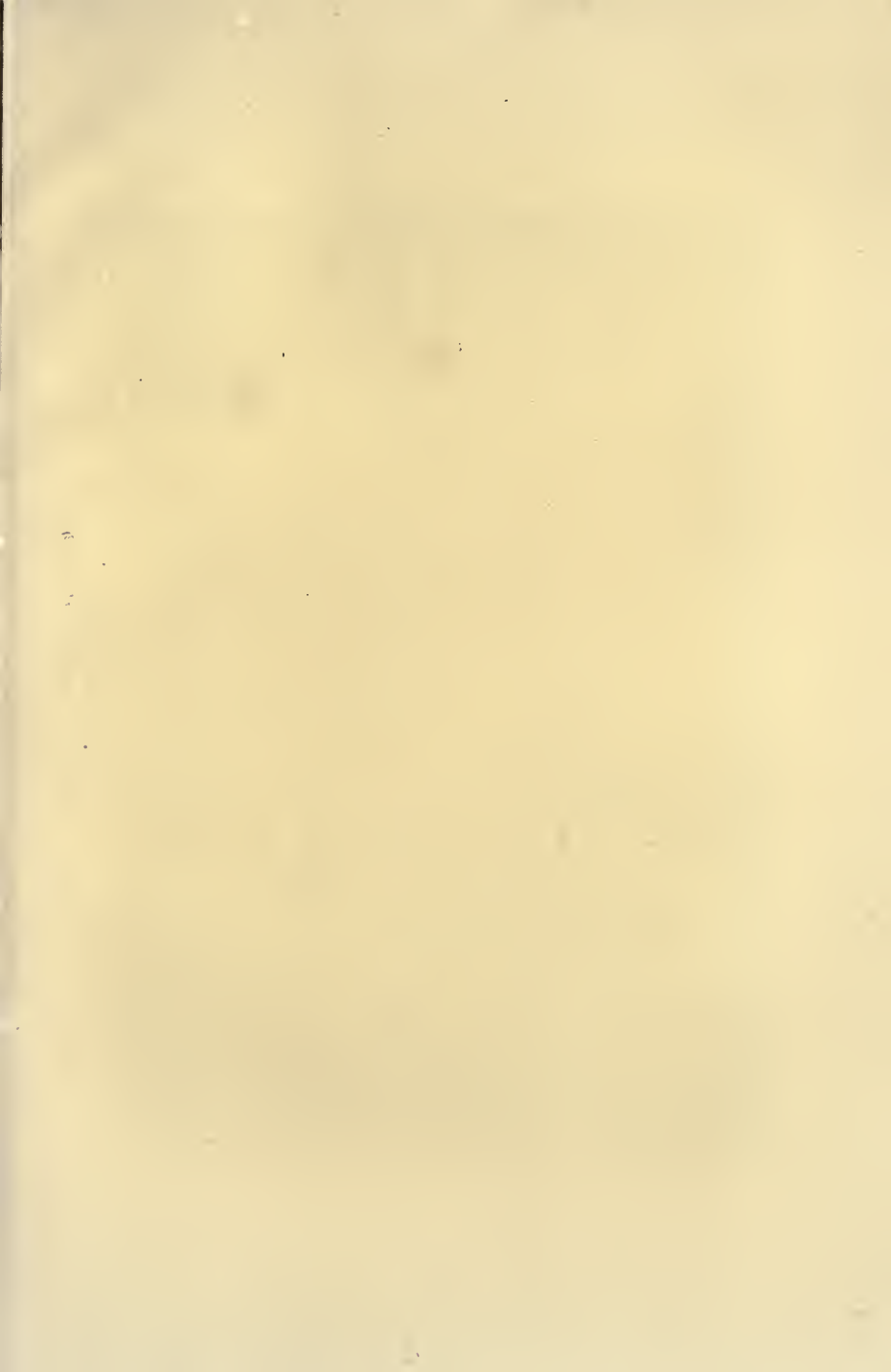
His study-hours during the week were constantly interrupted, and it was sometimes difficult to see how preparation for his many meetings and classes was ever accomplished. 'There were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat,' was sometimes literally true in his experience. Yet he never went to his own pulpit or to a meeting unprepared, and he spoke often of the necessity of first receiving a blessing ourselves from the subject to be spoken of, before giving out to others.

'Use for yourself first what the Lord teaches you, and if He spare you, use it for others.'

'When you have got a blessing, take time to let it sink into your own heart before you tell it out.'

It was a favourite thought of his that when a blessing is got from the Lord, part of it is to be given away. 'There is "*seed for the sower,*"' he used to say, 'as well as "*bread for the eater.*"' He spoke of Psalm xxiii. 5 : "*My cup runneth over.*" He filled it, and then poured in more! Stop! No, let somebody else get a share. He gave me an overflow for the sake of others.'

His splendid constitution, his vigour of body, added to his regular habits and his great calmness of mind, made possible for him what few other men could have attempted. Often he referred with thankfulness to the unbroken sleep he enjoyed at night. In his study he





DR. BONAR'S STUDY

(From a registered photo by F. Stuart, Limited)

was at home, and every corner of it spoke of himself, everything in perfect order—no book or paper ever out of its place. ‘Untidiness,’ he used to say, ‘is unchristian.’ His Bible always lay on the table, and his Hebrew Bible and little Greek Testament on a small table by the fireplace. Till his eyesight began to fail slightly, he used a very old Bible of his father’s which he valued much. On its blank pages are written shorthand notes of his conversations with his old minister, Dr. Jones, when he joined the Church in 1830, and other jottings from sermons of his which had impressed him. On another page he has written these lines in shorthand :—

‘Behold the book whose leaves display
 Jesus the Life, the Truth, the Way ;
 Read it with diligence and care,
 Search it, for thou shalt find Him there.’

In his study hung the text he was so fond of, and had had printed for himself: ‘*But Thou remainest.*’ A lady called to see him one day, in great sorrow and depression of mind. Nothing seemed to bring her any comfort. All at once, as they talked together, Dr. Bonar saw her face light up, and she said, ‘You don’t need to say anything more. I have got what I need ;’ and she pointed to the words of the text which had caught her eye: ‘*But Thou remainest.*’ He used to recall often a scene in his study, when a working-man came one evening to see him in great distress about his soul. During their conversation the light broke in upon him, and, striking his hand on his knee, the man exclaimed, ‘I never all my life expected to have joy like this!’

One of the treasures of his study was a piece of Samuel Rutherford’s pulpit, which always lay on the mantelpiece. Another much-prized relic was a panel of Lady Kenmure’s pew in Anwoth Church. His reverence

for everything connected with the saints of former times was well known, and was often a subject of playful raillery on the part of his friends.

When in America, in the summer of 1881, he visited Northampton, out of love for the memory of Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd, and wrote to his daughter at home :—

‘*Northfield, 23rd Aug. 1881.*

‘MY DEAR MARJORY,—I have been taking a quiet walk among shrubs and pines on the slope of a hill, and the little burn gave me opportunity to sit down and work away, making waterfalls, etc., as if in Arran or in Mull.

‘On Saturday last, Isabella and I, with Major Whittle, Emma Moody, and a nice old minister from Philadelphia, made out a visit to Northampton, the town of Jonathan Edwards. You know how much I desired to be there, and our visit was most interesting. But we missed you, for there were some views which would have afforded you grand work for your pencil. We sat under, and climbed so far up, the two old elm-trees planted in front of his house by Jonathan Edwards, and I can *sell* you, when I return, a piece of the bark! You will have to sketch from my rude materials Brainerd’s tomb, which we next visited, and some other grave-stones, full of interest. The old church, the scene of the great Revivals, was burnt many years ago.’

In his diary he wrote, in a different strain, his reflections and feelings in connection with this visit :—

‘I bless the Lord for this day with all its sacred memories, “Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?” Is not Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Father, Thou hast brought me at this time of my life across the sea, to stand at this spot, and there pray and call to mind “the days of the right hand of the Most High.” Surely Thou hast in store very much blessing for me and my people and my land! Come as near, come in the revelation of the same glorious holiness as to Thy servants then.’

And next day, Sabbath, August 21st, he writes :—

‘Much stirred up by yesterday’s visit to Northampton, and the train of thought and prayer it led to. . . . Lord, give me fully what is meant by “that Christ may dwell in your heart,” and by

“Christ liveth in me.” I preached on Isa. liii. 2, but did not feel [helped]. I fear that yesterday, having got a full cup, I did not set it down before the Lord on the mercy-seat with thanks and praise, and with the appeal, Eph. iii. 20-21.’

Many a journey he made to spots of historic interest, and he would go any distance to see the grave of a martyr, or the home of a saint of God. In 1860 he made a pilgrimage through Dumfriesshire and Kirkcudbrightshire along with Mr. James Crawford of Edinburgh, and wrote to Mrs. Bonar during their wanderings:—

‘*Kirkcudbright, 2nd August 1860.*—Of course we made a pilgrimage to the churchyard and its martyrs’ graves, accompanied by a very intelligent policeman who knows some Latin, and helped us to read the tombstones and search for the grave of Marion M’Naught.¹ We did not succeed in finding this grave, but we found the site of her house where Samuel Rutherford used to call. It is just coming down to make way for another, so I brought away a stone of it! That stone must have sent back the sound of the voices of both Samuel Rutherford and Marion M’Naught, as well as of Blair when his horse stopped at the door, and he found his two friends ready to give him a welcome.’

On this journey he wrote one of his amusing letters to his brother John, dated from Anwoth, and purporting to be from Samuel Rutherford:—

‘*3rd August 1860.*

‘SWEET AND WORTHY BROTHER,—You did well some years ago to visit the scenes of my former labours. Did you not agree with me in calling the swallows that build their nests at Anwoth Church, “blessed birds”? I see two of your friends have this summer come to tread in your steps—one of them is a younger brother of yours, the other writes after his name, Eccl. Scot. Lib. E.C. There was no such church in my day, but I always said that Scotland’s sky would clear again. And I do² declare that, if only they will go home more prayerful than they came, this visit to Anwoth will not have been in vain. But, perhaps, dearest and truly-honoured brother, you would like to know a little about

¹ One of Rutherford’s correspondents, the wife of the Provost of Kirkcudbright.

² Can, am able; frequently used in Rutherford’s *Letters*.

their journey. Let me tell you, therefore, that they came by way of Kirkcudbright. While there they sought out the house of Marion M'Naught. This generation (who are never long content with what their fathers did) are at this moment pulling that dwelling down; but your two friends have picked out of the crumbling lime a piece of stone (which no doubt they will send to you) which must have echoed back my loud burst of surprise and joy on that memorable night when Robert Blair, my fellow-prisoner and true servant to his master, came from Ireland straight to Marion M'Naught's dwelling. They have been away at her tomb also, which is marked by a flat stone near the spot where two martyrs lie waiting for the Day of Resurrection. I may tell you, besides, that they set out for Dundrennan Abbey, where that idol-loving Queen Mary took refuge for a night. Dear and trusty brother, I was not in the way of going aside to see even broken idols, and, if I mistake not, neither are you. Your friends did far better next day when they visited Borgue and sought out the old house of my friend the Laird of Robertson, Carleton also, and Knockbrenn, all men of God, men who would own no hireling for their pastor, and who lodged Christ when others would give Him no roof for His head. They have this afternoon been looking down on Cardoness, and Cally, and Rusco, and Ardwell, as well as walking up my "Walk." If they might only walk in my steps so far as I tried to be Caleb-like! I persuade myself that it is so far well for this generation that they built a monument to me, inasmuch as it was not to myself (if I do think and say this), but to the cause which I ever loved and defended. Your brother is reported to be about to preach in Anwoth on the coming Sabbath. This will be all well if only he preach Him who is worthy to be praised, and so worthy to be preached, and if he will cry up that Plant of Renown, in spite of unwilling hearts, that love to hear the news of a passing-away world.

'I should perhaps advise them to visit Wigtown, and to go homeward by Glenkens. O Earlston! Earlston! ye stood fast and well in the day of battle.

'But I have written too much. I hold my peace here. Remember my love to your wife, and say that she has the good wishes of one who signs himself,—Your unworthy brother,

S. R.'

He often amused himself by writing in this strain, and he and his brothers exchanged many such letters.

From Haworth, in Yorkshire, he wrote again to his brother John :—

*'Not far from Haworth,
15th July 1878.*

'DEAR AND HONOURED BROTHER,—Some years ago (was it not in 1867?) you kindly visited my church and resting-place, though I myself had gone away to the "mountain of myrrh" to spend a few days there with Wesley and Whitefield and John Berridge "till the day break." It seems that a brother of yours has called at Haworth on the same brotherly errand. He heard the clatter of the pattens which the people here use, old and young, and he saw the place in sunshine, when it looks pretty well. He could not fail to notice "The Black Bull" and "The White Lion," public-houses near my church, out of which (when the windows were nearer the ground than now) I often chased drinkers and loungers found there after service began, and you would have smiled to see the haste they made to escape by window or door. Your brother stood on my resting-place; you know it is marked by no inscription, but the slab that covers my bones is right in front of the Brontés' grand tablet on the wall. . . . The old house where I lived is the old piece of the present parsonage, and your brother reverently walked along the track in the churchyard by which I used to go down from the house that was my abode to the House of God. He went up to my pulpit, too, and how could I help wishing that he may yet see in the pews of his own church as many weeping eyes and bowed-down heads as I often saw all over these seats! But do you know that they are going to pull down this church and build a new and larger one? I am almost sorry—though what is a building but a platform erected in order to get the true stones hoisted up into their places? Your brother (is he quite free from that reverence for holy spots which Stephen, in Acts vii., shows to be no part of worship?) was overheard asking the schoolmaster if he knew where "the clerk's house" stood, in which I was once prostrated by an overwhelming discovery of divine grace and glory. But that house is long since removed; it was a mere room near the church for the clerk's use. He was asking, too, for the place where I began to know the Lord—Todmorden; the people often call it "Tommodden." It is ten or twelve miles from Haworth, as you know.

'But I daresay you are tired with this long epistle, as your brother was when he got back that night to Keighley. So I bid

you heartily farewell, not doubting to meet you some day in brighter sunshine than Haworth ever knew.—Your brother,
 ‘WILLIAM GRIMSHAW.’

Another letter of this kind he wrote on the occasion of his brother’s ‘Jubilee’ at Greenock in 1885 :—

‘*Paradise, the Third Heavens.*

‘DEAR AND HONOURED BROTHER,—I cannot be present in body at your jubilee next week, being detained a willing prisoner in the King’s Palace here ; but I send my loving salutations, and hope you are in good case, albeit ye be sometimes weched with your fourscore and two years. I know ye handle the pen of a ready writer, but, for all that, it may be weel for you to look into ye buik I send you, to wit, some old sermons of mine, which ye may preach when ye run dry. It seems you were ordained in 1835. Now, two hundred years before that (1635) there was a dial¹ or horologe set up in the garden of my Lady Kenmure by an ancestor of yours. Ye have seen it, and read on its face, “Joannes Bonar, fecit.”

‘Hoping to meet you in Immanuel’s Land when the great jubilee trumpet shall be blown,—Your very loving brother,

‘SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

‘Misspend not your short sandglass, which runneth very fast.’

During the sittings of the General Assembly in 1882, he spent a day in visiting Ormiston and other places of interest. He describes it thus to Mr. Manson :—

‘You will have been visited, I suppose, by some of my family in search of primroses and spring flowers. Meanwhile, their father has been doing duty (1) as a preacher of the Word at Lanark on Sabbath ; (2) as an ecclesiastic ; (3) as a lover of good men, such as John Knox and George Wishart, on (if not *in*) whose footsteps he was treading yesterday. For you must know that, while the brethren were battering the crumbling walls of the “Establishment,” I did yesterday go on pilgrimage. I set out with Mr. Glendinning, who knows all that region, to visit some localities of interest in Midlothian. We saw where Knox and

¹ When walking in the grounds of Kenmure Castle one day, Dr. John Bonar and a friend who was with him had their attention drawn to an old sun-dial in the garden. After carefully scraping away the moss which had gathered over it, they read the inscription, ‘Joannes Bonar fecit !’

Wishart took their last farewell of each other, and the large (the largest in Scotland) yew-tree under which Wishart preached. This was at Ormiston House. It was very interesting, also, to stand on high ground and look around. Yonder is Saltoun where Fletcher the statesman lived. . . . There, yonder, is Pencaitland, where, in old days, Calderwood was minister. . . . But—I must off to the Assembly.'

'Scotland will never know,' he said, 'till the Great Day, what it owes to its martyrs' prayers, when they lay for days and months hidden in the moors and caves. God put them there on purpose.'

In his friend, the Rev. J. H. Thomson of Hightae, he found a sympathetic and enthusiastic co-worker in the field of covenanting lore, and during fifteen years he kept up a constant correspondence with him on subjects relating to the Reformers and the Martyrs. When editing an edition of the *Scots Worthies* and when preparing both *Letters* and *Sermons of Samuel Rutherford* for the press, Mr. Thomson was his unfailing referee. Sometimes he addresses him as 'My dear Interpreter,' 'My dear Zaphnath-paaneah' (*see* margin, Gen. xli. 45), 'My dear Philo-Rhaetorfortis,' or 'Amice foederatorum.'

'Glean more and more in the fields of Bethlehem,' he writes, 'and, when you please, "let fall of purpose handfuls for me."'

'There is something about Alexander Peden's sermons that takes me more than almost any man of that time. I wish we had more of him.'

'Peace be with you. May the people of Hightae find that their minister comes in for a large share of the answer to the martyrs' prayer.'

At the close of a letter, in reference to the transcription of some sermons of Samuel Rutherford which Mr. Thomson had undertaken, Dr. Bonar says:—

'Should you not preach to your people what you find so

satisfying to your own soul in Samuel Rutherford?—Yours truly, dear Interpreter, who gives out to pilgrims things “rare” if not wonderful.’

At other times he signs himself, ‘Yours truly in Him who ever hears the cry, Rev. vi. 10’; ‘Yours truly in Him who cares for the dust of Zion more than any of us do.’

‘In July 1880,’ Mr. Thomson writes, ‘Dr. Bonar came to assist at the dispensation of the Lord’s Supper at Hightae. It was a visit much to be remembered. He was in full vigour of mind and body, and gave no less than five addresses, perhaps the best being his sermon to the children on Sabbath afternoon. On the Tuesday we started on a long-promised expedition to the Enterkin Pass. The morning was fair, but as we got near Elvanfoot drops of rain gave ominous warning of the showers that afterwards overtook us. At Elvanfoot we got the mail-gig for Leadhills. The driver at once recognised Dr. Bonar, and showed us no little kindness, walking with us across the moor after reaching Leadhills, until we came to the head of the pass, where the ground is about 700 feet above the level of the sea. The road down the pass no longer exists. It has been washed away, and in its place there remains only the loose shingle on the hillside that runs down to the ravine below, in which rushes along the Enterkin Burn. It was not easy to keep one’s footing on the loose pebbles, but Dr. Bonar went along with the agility and confidence of a born mountaineer until we came to the foot of the pass, where the prisoners were rescued from the soldiers by their Covenanting friends. Though the rain fell heavily as we came down the pass, his cheerfulness never flagged, and he discussed the possibilities of Defoe’s graphic account of the rescue with all the interest of one familiar with the story from his early days. . . . Dr. Bonar spoke much as he wrote. A genial humour ran through his conversation. He loved to express himself quaintly, but it was always as a Christian scholar whose chief study was the Bible, and one of whose leading aims was to tell about its treasures to others. His delight in the Reformers and Covenanters, and especially in Samuel Rutherford, arose very much from the conviction that their chief study and chief aims were like his own. Communion with the saints was, therefore, a leading characteristic of his life. It gave directness to his studies and a charm to his conversation.’

Dr. Bonar liked to trace a family connection with good Colonel Gardiner, and Mrs. Bonar claimed kindred with James Renwick the martyr. The Greyfriars' Churchyard in Edinburgh was a favourite haunt of his, and many a friend did he take to see the martyrs' grave and the stone where the Covenant was signed. He loved his native town, and was always glad when occasion led him back to Edinburgh. In one of his letters he tells of an amusing interview with a cabman soon after coming to Glasgow. When he had paid his fare, the man looked at him with a half-smile, and said, 'Sir, you micht gie me anither saxpence, for we 're baith Edinburgh men!'

The earliest recollection of his childhood was the firing of the Castle guns in 1815 to celebrate the victory of Waterloo. He often went to look at the old house in Paterson's Court, Broughton, where he was born on the 29th of May 1810, and where his early years were spent. His home was a bright and happy one, where family affection and healthy enjoyments went side by side with simple piety. To their early training all the family owed in great part their thorough knowledge of the Bible and of the Shorter Catechism, and the stores of paraphrases and hymns which they held in their memory. Andrew was the youngest boy, and was always quiet and studious. His first literary effort was a 'History of the Rabbits,' which he wrote when he was eleven years old. The gentleness and modesty which became so characteristic of the man were early apparent in the boy. On the day on which he gained the Dux Gold Medal of the High School in 1825 he came home as usual, and said nothing about it till his mother asked at the dinner-table, 'Well, Andrew, and who got the Gold Medal to-day?' when he quietly drew it out of his pocket. The death of his father in

1821 was the first event which left an impression on his mind, and he very often referred to it.

When his son was spending a summer session in Edinburgh, in 1872, he wrote to him :—

‘Do you ever look along at the spot where your father and grandfather, uncles, and aunts used to encamp? Only think, it is half a century now since the day when your grandfather was carried to his last resting-place in the Canongate Churchyard from Paterson’s Court.’

‘You congratulate me on my birthday being at hand. . . . To you and your sisters I send my hearty thanks and my prayer that if you be spared as long as I have been since first I drew breath near where you now are, in one of the rooms of that pillared house in Paterson’s Court, you all may have enjoyed as much as I have done of the “glorious Gospel of the blessed God,” through which we find communion with God restored.’

After a visit to Edinburgh and to the house in 24 Gayfield Square, which had been his home at another time, he writes to Mrs. Bonar :—

‘I saw the room we studied in so long, and *where I remember first of realising a found Saviour.*’

When the Queen came to Edinburgh on one occasion, he took his two youngest daughters with him to see her. As they were walking about, they met his old friend, Mr. Walker of Perth, and Dr. Bonar said to him, ‘You see I’ve brought my children in to see the Queen.’ ‘Very good,’ was Mr. Walker’s reply. ‘Yes,’ said Dr. Bonar, ‘we saw her, but we were not changed; but “when we see *Him* we shall be *like Him*.”’

The summer holidays were always spent with his family in the country or by the sea. He was much attached to the East Coast, associated as it was with his early recollections, but many of his summers were spent among the wilder and grander scenery of the West Highlands. One of his letters to Mr. Manson

from Mull, in the summer of 1882, records a visit to Iona to which he often looked back with great interest:—

'Graignure, 25th August 1880.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I returned from Iona last night, having spent five days in that region. Our Sabbath (the Communion) was a delightful day; outwardly all was still, calm, and bright sunshine, the sea smooth as if it had been of crystal, and as to the inward work we had the deepest attention and solemnity. While Mr. Blacklock conducted in Gaelic the forenoon opening services under the blue sky on the "field of the Druids" (the last of the Druids are said to be buried there), I took the services in the church. After the first Table, we who were English-speaking came out to the open air and gave place to the Gaelic worshippers who then sat down at the Table. We had with us a sample of "the Great Multitude from all nations," for there were with us a United Presbyterian minister (Robertson of Irvine), an Episcopalian minister from Norfolkshire, the Established Church minister of Glenurquhart, and an English Presbyterian from Liverpool, while Mr. Blacklock represented the country, and I the town. As we crossed and re-crossed the Sound to get to the Manse, those in the boat kept singing praise.

'By the bye, the wife of an old elder here paid me as great a compliment as was once paid to you in Rannoch. She said that my English was well understood by the Gaelic people, for "it was not grammatical!"¹ Tell me all you discover of Covenanting times—Carsphairn is redolent with such memories. . . . Janie is going to supplement my letter, so that I may close, subscribing my name.

I am A. A. B.
As you at once see;
Sojourning in Mull,
And trying to cull
Sermons from stones
And Culdee bones!

Another letter gives a glimpse of his employments in the Highlands:—

'On Sabbath I was sailing across the Sound of Mull to preach at Loch Aline. The sea was like the "sea of glass" in the Apoca-

¹ The old woman's exact words were, 'We understand you, for you have no grammar!'

lypse, so that you see if you had a snatch of "Paradise," I had a glimpse of the "New Earth." . . . We have a good deal of biography with us; some poetry, a little Latin, and German and French and Hebrew. Very miscellaneous, you may well suppose. All this is an appendix to the Book of Nature, which we came here to study.'

Besides reading and walking, his holiday occupations were varied by occasional hours of hoeing and weeding. Nettles and dandelions were mercilessly attacked, generally by his umbrella for want of a better weapon, and every paper on the pathway had to be cleared away. Some of his friends professed to let their gardens lie waste in expectation of his annual visits. He had a great horror of an untidy manse-garden, and used to remind the owner that 'æsthetics are next to ethics.' When visiting an old friend in Dumfriesshire he wrote home saying he was busy putting the garden in order, and added:—

'If you want a field of labour
You will find it anywhere!'

His favourite poets, Milton and Cowper, were generally his companions in the country. He delighted in sacred poetry, and read and often quoted Montgomery's *Hymns*, the Olney *Hymns*, and Hart's *Hymns*. Though he found it difficult to quote any of these correctly in the pulpit, he could repeat easily and fluently any of Dr. Watts' well-known hymns, which he had learned from his mother in his childhood. Sometimes on a Sabbath evening, when his day's work was over, he would read aloud or have his children read to him, passages from Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, or Rutherford's *Letters*, or Ambrose's *Looking unto Jesus*, or John Bunyan's story of the pilgrims crossing the river. Latin and English classics, etymology, and topography were his recreations. His reading was extremely careful and minute, and he had a knack of picking out what-

ever in a book was noteworthy, though he seemed to have only read it hurriedly. In taking up a volume out of his library one turns involuntarily to the blank leaf at the end to see what is marked there as specially interesting. His comments are written freely and are sometimes amusing. A book written many years ago by a Moderate minister has this note: 'Moderatism sometimes points out the moral lessons well, but oftener shows how to overlook the true sense.' At the end of his copy of Marshall *on Sanctification*, he has written: 'There is real endowment for holiness wherever justification has taken place, even if little felt. But the best endowment is not only the fact of justification but also the knowledge of that fact.' On a copy of Faber's *Hymns* which he gave to his daughter he wrote: 'On her birthday. With the apostle's caution, 1 John iv. 1.' He added the following note to a volume of sermons which he sent to his son: 'Poison; to be taken in small doses and to be used along with what Christiana got for her boy in the House Beautiful from Mr. Skill, a purge made *ex carne et sanguine Christi*.'

The Hebrew and Greek Testaments were his constant study, and he used to ask young ministers when they came to see him, 'Do you still keep up your Greek and Hebrew?' If they hesitated or said 'no,' he would say, 'Read one verse in Greek and Hebrew every day and you will be surprised how it will help you.' He is remembered in his student days as stirring others up to a proper study of Hebrew, and no other student of his time had an equal talent for languages. He was remarkable for his diligence and improvement of time, and for his indomitable energy. Nothing that he tried to master baffled him except singing, which he was never able to acquire. His great desire was to learn even one tune, that he might be able to help at a meeting or sing by a sick-bed, but he never succeeded.

Naturally shy and reserved, he was the life of any company where he felt at home, and he had the charm of perfect naturalness, and an entire want of self-consciousness. The continual sunshine in which he lived made him attractive to both old and young, and his humour, instead of decreasing, grew more intense as he grew older. One of his friends remarked of his home life that it was a new illustration of the truth that wisdom's ways 'are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' His letters to his children are brimming over with fun, intermingled with the most serious and loving words. As birthdays came round he always made reference to them at family worship. 'Bless the one of our number whose birthday this is. May this be a day for heavenly favours and heavenly gifts.' One of his daughters said one morning with a sigh, 'I am a quarter of a century old to-day.' Immediately he rejoined, 'You have reached half your jubilee!' On a card, which he sent as a birthday greeting to his youngest daughter, he wrote :—

'Better and wiser every day,
Till every hair on your head be gray !'

His family had presented him with a reading-lamp on his birthday, and he expressed his thanks in the following letter to his daughter, then in London :—

. . . 'Hoping to see you very soon, I write to-day merely to acknowledge your gift on my birthday—for I understand all of you joined in it. It was very kind and mindful in you all. I began a poem on the occasion, but the muse deserted me very soon. Here is the fragment, however :

'A son and daughters four of mine
Resolved together to combine
Their father to enlighten—
That so there might be nothing found
Within his study, all around,
To startle or affrighten.'

Good-bye,—Your affectionate father, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Many years ago when at Collace he sent to a friend of Mrs. Bonar's in Edinburgh before her wedding, the following

'HEADS OF MARRIAGE SERVICE

To be delivered when Miss W—— becomes Mrs. Y——

- I. Your past experience. *N. B.*—The wide field of unmarried life.
- II. Your prospects as they appear to cool and impartial and thoughtful friends.
- III. Your imaginary discovery of a complete continent of excellences in each other.
- IV. Your sober realisation of each other's faults, failures, follies, etc.
- V. The question—will you now proceed? Yes or No. Speak audibly and without faltering.'

His postcards were often a source of amusement to his friends. The following one was sent to Dr. Somerville as an apology for not being present at a meeting:—

'20 India Street, Saturday.

Ἀδελφέ μου ἀγαπητέ,

Necesse est me adire Greenock hodie, quia crastino die οἱ μαθηταὶ συνάγονται κλάσαι ἄρτον.

Saludad á todos hermanos. La gracia sea con todos vosotros.

ANDREW A BONAR. אַנְדְּרֵוּ אַ בּוֹנָר

From Northfield he wrote in 1881 to his youngest daughter:—

'MY DEAR MARY,—What a country this is! They give us curry and beefsteaks to breakfast, and potatoes and squash and doughnuts! At dinner we often get sokotash, a mixture of Indian corn and beans. A large bird (more than twice the size of our robin) comes morning by morning to the field before my window to get worms, and it is the American robin-redbreast. We have pine-trees instead of fir-trees.

'But I'll tell you two or three things I do not quite like, though everybody here is as kind as possible. One is, their roads—not kept in good repair either in town or country. Another is, the people do not bring Bibles with them to the church, nor do they

sing the Psalms. And still another—the Sabbath-school children in their churches do not learn a catechism-lesson. They are far behind us in all these things, so that I like our own land after all, and shall be glad to return. I hope to find you wonderfully improved, body, soul, and spirit.—Your affectionate father,

‘ANDREW A. BONAR.’

Another letter to his son is a playful criticism of his book, *Letters of Ricardo to Malthus*.

‘Glasgow, 25th November 1887.

‘MY DEAR JAMES,—It seems to me that you have edited the *Letters of Ricardo to Malthus* with great skill, and evidently with great care. I have no doubt that your book will be very interesting to all students of Political Economy, giving the private discussion (so to speak) of the great subject by two such men as Ricardo and Malthus. Cobbett’s bitterness (at p. 162, note) in criticising Malthus is the raciest part of the book. . . .

FOR MARY (MRS. BONAR)

‘Notice at p. 45, “Mrs. Ricardo, standing by me, has made me express myself in a more than usually bungling manner.”

‘*Inference*. Never stand near Dr. James when he is writing.

‘At p. 54, a certain lady, Mrs. Smith, asks Ricardo to procure for her some letter of Malthus. In reply he says, “Knowing that I had many which would not discredit you, I assented.”

‘*Query*. If any friend should ask me for such a specimen letter of Dr. James Bonar could I say, “Having many which would not discredit him”? I could send one letter of three sentences, another of two, I believe!

‘At p. 240, might not the editor when mentioning “Huish, near Chippenham,” have added in a parenthesis [“Chippenham! where the little church stands in which J. B. and M. M. were united in holy matrimony.”]

‘One great defect occurs at the very outset. You have not written my name on it. . . . I go to-morrow to open a new church at Scone, where Scotland’s kings used to be crowned. I think I must bid the congregation remember the “King of kings,” singing

“Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!”

—Your affectionate father,

A. A. B.

NEARING THE GOAL

'Who but a Christian through all life
That blessing may prolong?
Who, through the world's sad day of strife
Still chant his morning song?'

'Ever the richest, tenderest glow
Sets round the autumnal sun ;
But there sight fails : no heart may know
The bliss when life is done !'

KEBLE.

CHAPTER VIII

IT was not only to the saints of other days that his affection was drawn out, but his love for the brethren was shown in his deep and lasting attachment to those who enjoyed his closer friendship, and to others whom he knew little, but loved because they loved the Lord. He believed in the communion of saints, and one of his chief regrets at the abolition of the Fast-Days preparatory to the observance of the Lord's Supper, was the loss of the brotherly fellowship which was always enjoyed at these times. Speaking one day of hermits he described them as 'earthworms,' and said, 'a man can't meditate when he is always alone. He needs to have intercourse with others to stir him up to meditation.' 'When are we to meet?' he writes to a friend. 'Sometimes it seems to me to be true of *meetings* what Arnould said of *rest*: 'We shall *meet* in eternity. O day of glory! O day of our gathering together in Him!' 'Are you not saddened by Spurgeon's illness?' he writes to another friend. 'What can we say but Ezekiel xi. 13, and sing "God lives! bless'd be my Rock!" The friends of other days, and those whom he regarded as his own children in the faith, were very near his heart. His love for the Jews, begun so early in life, continued unabated to the end. Anything connected with them or their land was to him of peculiar interest. Next to the joyful hope of the King Himself on the throne was

the thought of a restored nation worshipping at His feet, and a land to which had been given back 'the beauty of Lebanon and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon.' Nothing was more gladdening to his heart than the news of one and another of the sons of Israel being brought into the fold of Christ. Writing to Dr. J. H. Wilson, regarding the baptism of a Jew which was to take place in the Barclay Church, Edinburgh, he says:—

'We shall try to remember you on Sabbath when you expect to baptize C—. A branch of the "old olive-tree" will be waving in your church in the person of these two sons of Abraham. May you find peculiar blessing on yourself and on your people!'

To another friend he writes:—

'I anticipate great pleasure from meeting with Mr. S. We must get good olive oil from him, he is a berry of the good olive-tree' (Rom. xi. 24).

An amusing interview took place between Mr. Rabinovitch and himself in a friend's house. Mr. Rabinovitch rose from his chair to offer it to Dr. Bonar as he came into the room. He tried to prevent him from rising and said, 'No, no, *to the Jew first!*' Mr. Rabinovitch replied, 'But thou shalt rise up before the face of the old man!'

Often in later years he refers in his letters to those who have passed away from the old circle of friends. 'You notice William Burns must have got over the river, and in at the gate of the Celestial City a month at least before John Milne. Well, he and Milne and Patrick Miller, and Robert M'Cheyne, and James Hamilton, have been talking over the past.'

'Did you notice Dr. Keith's death [1880]? in a good old age—eighty-nine—like the Patriarchs. He has gone on to "New Jerusalem," and soon probably the last of

the four who in 1839 travelled Palestine together, may make up to him. Oh, it will be glorious to stand within the gates of 'Jerusalem that cometh down from heaven,' and to see the King in His beauty in His own land—Immanuel's Land!

'I have been thinking that saints certainly remember those they left behind, and are certainly looking forward to the day of "our gathering together in Him"; but they do not miss us as we miss them.'

Christians of all denominations were his friends, and many who differed widely from him in opinion loved him with a deep affection. He liked to remind believers of their duty to all saints, and the blessedness of united prayer and united effort.

'In holiness we must go on together, not alone. You will not get on by separating yourself to read and pray. It must be "along with them that call on the Lord." We are to climb Pisgah together, and from the top see the stretch of the land. But we are not to go alone.' 'God loves unity, and so He loves a united cry, a petition signed by more than one.' 'Christ liked to come to the feast when He was going to give blessing. He liked to come to the upper room when they were all assembled there.'

He was firm in adherence to his own principles, and those who did not know him well had no idea of the determined force of will that lay beneath his gentle kindness. Independent in word and action to the last degree, what others might think or say of him was to him of no consequence. Occasionally his determination was almost provoking, and yet, in the end, it had often to be admitted that he was right! The nickname of 'Old Obstinate,' which his friend Mr. Patrick Miller of Newcastle gave to him in early days, stuck to him to the last. "Who sweareth (engageth) to his own hurt

and changeth not," is sometimes a troublesome text to a man's conscience,' he wrote to a friend who in vain had begged him to change his plans. Another time he wrote:—

'I could not be away another Sabbath for a long time. It not only interrupts the begun chain of ordinary lecture, etc., but it disturbs (1) my Young Men's Class ; (2) My visits to the Sabbath-school (which I could not even last Sabbath commence) ; (3) My evening prayer-meeting ; (4) My own equanimity !'

A Presbyterian to the backbone¹ and a loyal Free Churchman, his sympathies, in latter years especially, went out far beyond his own church. He loved the gatherings together of God's people, and in the Conferences at Mildmay, at Perth, in his own city, and in many other places, his presence and his words were an inspiration.

On one occasion, when addressing the Mildmay Conference, he spoke of the Old Testament saints as being not inferior givers to the saints of the New Testament. He referred to Moses being commanded by God during the erection of the Tabernacle to stop the people from giving more, and quaintly threw in the remark, 'I don't find it necessary to do this when I go to the country to preach for a collection at the opening of a new church !' 'There is a chapter,' he said, 'one of the longest in the Bible, that I don't believe any one here has read all through. It is the seventh of Numbers. It tells that one of the princes of Israel wished to give a gift to God, and asked Moses if he might. Moses did not want to answer of his own accord, and so he asked God. God said, "Let him give it. He will like to do it, and you will lay it out on a table"—just as brides do with their wedding gifts to show how their friends love them.

¹ While his son was at Oxford he wrote to him : 'How do you get on with the Thirty-Nine Articles? They are good and sound—all except that about bishops,' etc.

The prince gave a silver bowl filled with the finest of the wheat, and a golden spoon. The next day another prince came with the same request, and brought the same gift, and all the princes of the twelve tribes did the same. David, at his death, bequeathed to the Lord's service more gold than is contained in the Bank of England,¹ besides what he had given during his lifetime. In the New Testament we read of one Joseph or Joses, surnamed Barnabas, who sold his estate in Cyprus and gave the price of it to the Lord. On one occasion Paul and he were on a missionary tour in Cyprus, and one afternoon Barnabas proposed that they should take a walk together, and said, "If you like to come with me I will show you the estate that I sold and gave to the Lord." So they went together, and when Paul saw it he said, "Barnabas, what a beautiful place this is! It must have cost you many a pang before you sold it. Do you never grudge having done it?" "Never," said Barnabas, "the Lord has made all up to me, and more. Men never call me Joses now; it is always 'Barnabas, the son of consolation.'"

In giving an address at the Perth Conference upon 'Faith' he supposed some of the later disciples saying to each other, 'Come, let us go to the apostle John and ask him to tell us about his conversion. He is an old man now, and old men like to give reminiscences of their youth.' So they went to John, and found him at home. When he understood the object of their visit he said, 'Come in and sit down, and I will be delighted to tell you all about it,' and beginning with that night when for the first time he leaned his head on the bosom of his Master, he went on to tell how some of them

¹ Mr. Balfour-Melville, who has kindly supplied these notes, remembers that a banker sitting beside him at the time added up the sum as recorded and found this was correct.

had had their consciences awakened because of sin, and John the Baptist's preaching had deepened that feeling, but did not relieve it, till one day he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' 'Then,' he said, 'two of us went to Him, and He was so gracious to us, and dealt with us so tenderly, that that night we gave ourselves to Him.' Then he told them of all that he had seen of Jesus till the close of His life, and of all his own experience since 'But,' said he, 'I have continued a sinner to the end, for when I was in Patmos, and was shown the great things that were shortly to come to pass, like a sinner I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. I forgot he was but a servant,—a fellow-servant,—and that I must worship only God.'

From all parts of the world letters came to him asking for prayer, for counsel, for direction, and his opinion was regarded as final by many in all sections of the Church of God. Of the blessing received through his books he had grateful testimonies from time to time. Not long after the publication of the *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews*, a lady in England wrote telling him that it had been the means of the conversion of an infidel. Two of his smaller books—*The Gospel pointing to the Person of Christ*, a book for inquirers, and the *Brook Besor*, written for invalids—were very greatly blessed. A copy of another of his little books, *What gives Assurance*, was given by a gentleman to one who through serious illness had fallen into depression of mind. When visiting her husband, after the good woman's death, he told him that a great change had come to his wife after reading that book. 'She was just another woman, and she kept the precious little book in the "brods o' her Bible," and only parted once with it to a neighbour on

condition that it should be returned.' She passed away in peace, repeating to herself shortly before the end,

'Safe in the arms of Jesus,
'Safe on His gentle breast !'

He had a singular gift of letter-writing. His letters were generally very short, but in almost every one—even in those about the most ordinary subjects—there is a word or a thought which makes them valuable. For example, he writes to one and another of his friends :—

'When you come to see us, come to help us by prayer, as well as to drink water out of our well.'

'Come and spend a day or two here. We might perhaps be mutually refreshed. Remember Emmaus.'

'Pray for blessing, for it is like the dew which Gideon prayed for. It falls where it is sought.'

'Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. Keep under the light that beams from Jacob's ladder, and you will always have a Bethel-fear.'

'Dwell in the Tabernacle under the Shadow of the Almighty, and not a drop of wrath shall fall on a hair of your head. Walk, too, in the light of the cloud of glory over the mercy-seat. It is New Jerusalem glory.'

'Let us be like Jacob's sons ; go often to Joseph—our Joseph. The corn of the Nile that overflows yearly is the best, and is the like to the corn of our God, proceeding as it does from His overflowing and everflowing love.'

'Behold the fowls of the air ! how merrily they sing, not troubled about next day's food or clothing. Be as they. Sing to your God and Father merrily to-day, and let the morrow take thought for itself.'

'What was the last nugget of gold of Ophir you found in reading the Word ? Do you not often say with one of your old friends, the Fathers,

" Adoro plenitudinem Scripturarum."

'What of the gold-diggings ?' he writes again ; 'Any recent discovery in the knowledge of Him who counsels

us to buy "gold tried in the fire"? Does not this mean such things as these, viz.

'Buy of me your ransom-money.

'Buy of me your golden harp.

'Buy of me the golden streets of the New Jerusalem.

'Buy back Paradise, for "the gold of that land is good."'

'I was greatly refreshed yesterday by two words from the mouth of the Lord in the verse, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee," etc. (Isa. liv. 7). The words are חֶסֶד עוֹלָם "the mercy of an eternity!" What is this that is coming to us, brother? *The mercy of a whole eternity!*'

'Notice Zech. ix. 13: "I have filled the bow with Ephraim." When He uses you, He just makes you an arrow—fills His bow with you.'

'Follow the Shepherd, and remember, if you are following Him you will be sure to get a good mouthful of pasture every now and then. Our Shepherd would not lead us where nothing is to be found.'

'The "fragments" in the baskets, would not they keep for many days?'

One letter closes with the request, 'Sometimes think on us and ask something for us, for we are needy.' And another, 'This week is our Communion. *N.B.*—Remember in prayer a congregation in Glasgow needing rain from heaven.' Inside the envelope of a note addressed to one of his people is written: 'With the prayer, Eph. iii. 14-20, and the request, 1 Thess. v. 25. *N.B.*—Eph. vi. 18.' With a small subscription sent to a friend he wrote:—

'From an old disciple who remembers what the Master's blessing can do (John vi. 11). A barley loaf and a small fish from Scotland.'

'Prayer for saints and for those who "minister the gospel" is the oil which keeps bright all the weapons we use,—sword, shield,' etc.

'Study the fifteen prayers of Paul,' he wrote to one of his people, 'six in First and Second Thessalonians,

two in Ephesians, two in Philippians, two in Colossians, two in Romans, one in Hebrews.

‘Pray them too, and pray them often, and pray for me also.’

His letters help to explain how he was able to go on giving out to others from day to day so continually. His hand was always on the key of the storehouse of all grace, and his God was ever supplying all his need:—

‘As to Saturday I have great, because conscientious, difficulties, because of my own soul which cannot stand three successive weeks of giving out, in Perth, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Kelso. Ah, brother, I am only longing to be so full that out of me shall flow rivers, ποταμοί—whole Niles or Rhines or Jordans—of living water. Happy day! and “yet a little while.”’

‘Vessels are not fountains. Vessels need to be filled as well as to give out to others.’

‘Here is something to remember, Isa. xxvii. 3: “I will water it every moment.” When Alexander Somerville and I were in the Botanic Gardens we asked the superintendent about that passage. It is spoken of vines, and yet A. S. had in vain inquired in the East about it, for they all said that they did not water their vines. . . . “Well,” the man said to me after a little thought, “I’ll tell you what it may be. Notice the little tendrils of the vine. They have generally a drop at the end. This is to be accounted for by the fact that the vine has the power of condensing the vapour in the atmosphere around it, and so it keeps itself supplied with moisture.” Is this not very instructive? God’s vines are furnished with the capacity of drawing in moisture from around even when no shower falls (no sermon, no special ordinance), invisible as is the process to human eyes.’¹

¹ This verse, ‘I will water it every moment,’ he called ‘the Old Testament Eighth of Romans.’

The solemn sense of responsibility which he felt as a minister of the gospel is shown in his copy of Bridges' *Christian Ministry*, which he has marked and annotated till it has become almost a new book, in many ways descriptive of his own ministry. Nothing, however interesting, was allowed to interfere with the one great object of his life. In an address which he gave to the Finnieston Young Men's Literary Association in 1883 he told how some time before he had begun the study of Hebrew synonyms with the intention of perhaps writing a small book on the subject. He had made some progress in it, but stopped because he found it was interfering with his one great work. Even ordinary reading was not allowed to take up much of his time. If told of a very interesting book he would say, 'Lay it aside and I will read it in the holidays.' He watched himself with almost painful carefulness, and stirred others up to the same prayerful vigilance. One of his solemn sayings in regard to ministers was, 'The sins of teachers are the teachers of sins,' and he often quoted a remark about the Old Testament saints, 'Beware of the bad things of good men.'

'Let us stir one another up in the pursuit of holiness—fellowship with God. Samson's strength was only *indicated* by his long hair. It had a secret spring. Our success would not be our strength, nor would our enlarged preaching and diligent visiting; yet these will begin to grow if we have access to the hidden source.'

'I am more than ever convinced that unholiness lies at the root of our little success. "*Holy* men of God spake to the fathers." It must be holy men still that speak with power. The only good thing I feel at present is the Word, and God there.'

'Write soon and tell me anything fitted to stir the

soul in sleepy days. . . . Do you ever feel that when there are no symptoms of converting work going on among your people, your own soul gets ungirt for work? I often find this, and I feel it at present. Even the wise virgins slumber.'

'Did you ever feel in preaching as if you were a blunt arrow? I felt so yesterday until about evening, when the Archer seemed to sharpen the point.'

Though unsparing of his own strength, he was always considerate of others. 'When your foot swells,' he used to say, 'the Lord does not want you to travel.'

During his summer holidays in 1890, he wrote to his Biblewoman, Miss Walker, cautioning her against overworking herself in his absence:—

'Aros Cottage, Salen, Isle of Mull.

'To the DEACONESS WALKER,
who labours much in the Lord, greeting.

'Grace and peace be multiplied to you, day by day. A very old friend who lived in the land of Midian once gave a most needful and wise advise to a worker who was doing his best to shorten his valuable life. The worker's name was Moses, and the friend was Jethro. The people came to Moses "to inquire of God," and he was never done listening to them. "They stood by him from morning to evening." But wise and gracious Jethro saw it, and said, "*The thing that thou doest is not good,*" and showed Moses how to "*make it easier for himself*": "so shalt thou be able to endure, and this people shall go to their place in peace," instead of letting him kill himself on their account! Is not that a good lesson for your study, that your mind may be perfectly at ease in taking a *long holiday*?

'The Pastor of the congregation sends this message to the Deaconess, thanking her for her blessed work in the past, but hoping that there is to be an hundredfold more to give thanks for in days coming.

'Meanwhile, pray for all the congregation and all the souls in the Mission District "without ceasing." And so, with the words

of another old friend whom "the Spirit clothed" (1 Chron. xii. 18), this letter closes: "Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." Amen.

'Twenty-third day of the seventh month, 1890.'

'See that your last days are your best days,' were his words to believers, 'not like David, of some of whose descendants it was said in praise, "they walked in the *first* ways of their father David."' He seemed to have a solemn fear in his latter years lest he should "lose the things he had wrought," and not receive a full reward.

'We are not to indulge for a moment the belief: "Oh, I must count on a season of languor in my Christian life." Where did you find that in the Bible? "Like the palm-tree flourishing," etc. Ask any gardener and he will tell you it is a sad indication of any plant to stop growing.'

'Our root is in Christ, and in the "love that passeth knowledge." We will grow up and flourish if our roots are in such a soil. If spared to old age, our fruit will be abundant. In our younger days a great deal is *blossom*, but as we grow older it is *fruit*. It does not make such an appearance, but it is more enduring.'

To others his earnestness and eager longing for the salvation of souls seemed to increase with his years. It was noticeable at the time of his 'Jubilee' (1888) how he exerted himself in every possible way, as if feeling that his days of work for the Master might soon be over.

'Plenty of work here now, and winter has come, but His yoke is "easy." Did you ever notice Christ says it is *χρηστός*, as if alluding to *Χριστός*.'

'It is constant work, but it is "vineyard" work, and work for the Master, who bore the burden and heat of the day.'

'We are alive, and many whom we started with have reached the goal. "In death there is no remembrance

of Thee." Let us give thanks for life and work, even for care and weariness. "This is the fruit of my labour" — *τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου.*'

'The night cometh, but thereafter the morning! the Resurrection-morning, when we shall know the results of present labour, and when we shall see Him as He is. . . It is a solemn thing to look back on so many years as I have had, and to look a little onward and see the Eternal Shore.'

'Oh, the memories of the past!' he wrote to an old friend. 'It needs the "Man that is the hiding-place" to keep them!'

Even when on his holidays, his people and his work occupied most of his thoughts. 'I am beginning to think of home and work in Finnieston,' he wrote to a lady in his congregation from his holiday retreat. 'I have been long away, but only I can work for you all at a distance in more ways than one.' From his summer quarters in Anwoth, he wrote one of his quaint and beautiful letters to two other members of his flock:—

'HONOURED SISTERS,—I am fain to reply to a question stated to me by a friend of yours and mine, who is here on a short sojourn. The question you have put is anent one passage of God's word, to wit, that in Matt. xviii. 10 where it is written, "Their angels do always behold the face of your Father." Ye say that a godly Professor of Divinity thinks that this teaches us "that angels, because of their charge over these little ones, have errands into the presence of their Father, and so have got a liberty to deal familiarly with Him (so to speak) which they would not have had but for the sake of the little ones." This is a blessed truth, I doubt not; howbeit there is yet more honey to be found dropping from that wood of the Tree of Life, if only Jonathan's rod were dipt in the comb a second time. If we be spared to speak face to face, it will be pleasanter than to write about it with ink and paper, as the beloved John said on a like occasion to the "Elect Lady," as ye may read (2 John 12).

'But will you let me say yet more, for it is good that we as

travellers to the same country stir up one another to quicken our pace. I know ye are not taking your Inn for your home, but are minding your inheritance in New Jerusalem. Ye need not marvel if every day some cross, less or more, be your portion. Till ye be in heaven, it will be but foul weather, one shower and then another. But if there were twenty crosses for this year written down for you in God's book of providence, they will soon be past; ye will soon be at the nineteenth, and then there is but one more, and after that nothing! for then ye shall lay your head on His bosom, and His own soft hand shall dry your face and wipe away your tears. Is this not true, worthy ladies, that it is a king's life to live upon the love of Christ? I said this long ago to a worthy friend now in glory, and I think ye will say it was well spoken.

'My old mansion here, from which I used to go forth to my "walk" among the shady trees, has long since been taken down, and even so we also ourselves shall be ere long. But like the Sisters of Bethany, whom Jesus loved, your hearts' desire is to Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, who is coming soon to give us our house which is from heaven, which shall be eternal. He cannot come too soon.

'The minister of Christ who used to preach the word to your souls, and whom ye failed not to encourage many ways, intends to return home from his sojourn in these parts. In the end of this week he goes back with his household to the place of his ministry on the banks of the Clyde, though not so near your dwelling as formerly. You will not forget him, as he will not forget you. Pray for him, as I once said to Gordon of Garloch here, that in his work he may be "fraughted and full of Christ."

'Yours in His lovely and longed-for Jesus.'

Earthly honour had little attraction for him. The degree of Doctor of Divinity, conferred on him in 1873, gratified him as a token of regard from his own University of Edinburgh. To be asked to occupy the highest position in the Free Church as Moderator of her Assembly was a real cross to him, and made him write to Mr. Manson: 'It is a terrible dilemma I am placed in; for letters come to me insisting that my responsibility will be something more than ordinary if I refuse—and yet I think, in accepting, the responsibility is no

way less. Alas! how far down our Church has come when it asks such as me to take this office!

His ambition was to 'know Christ,' and this one aim simplified his whole life. His obedience in the smallest details was very striking. It was not so much that he did not do wrong, but that he seemed always to do the things that pleased God. Those who lived with him cannot recall a single unworthy action in his life. Step by step he walked with God, doing everything as in His sight. 'You are not very holy if you are not very kind,' he used to say, and this spirit of love characterised his own actions. 'I have settled all—glad to be able to send out a cluster of grapes to moisten the parched lips of my brother,' he writes when sending some books to Mr. Milne in India. A favour shown to himself he regarded as shown to Christ in one of His members. For some friends who had given him the present of a Bible, he wrote in acknowledgment of their kindness:—

'AN INCIDENT, NEITHER CANONICAL NOR APOCRYPHAL,
BUT TRUE.

'There were two sisters, related spiritually to Martha and Mary of Bethany, "whom Jesus loved," and who loved Jesus.

'Many years after the Master had gone away, and when many were beginning to talk about His coming back soon, these two sisters thought in their hearts that, meanwhile (since the Master was not here), they would like to show kindness to one of His disciples for His sake. They sent therefore sixty-six clusters of choice grapes, bound together in one.

'The disciple wondered, thanked them in his heart, prayed for rich returns of blessing on Martha and Mary, and sent back this request:

'My dear sisters, will you help me to press the grapes into the cup which I shall try to hand to you from week to week, when we meet to taste the New Wine of the Kingdom?' Eph. iii. 14-21.

To another member of his church he wrote a very

characteristic note of thanks for a present received from her :—

‘ Decr. 15th, 1885.

‘ A grateful Pastor, whose great-grandfather had charge of the Sheep in Fetlar and Yell, Shetland Isles, sends thanks to the Sheep who has so kindly presented him with Shetland wool, so soft and warm !

‘ Great Shepherd of the Sheep, bless this member of Thy flock with a new blessing and a fuller !’

Burdened as he must have been with the care of others, his calmness and freedom from worry were very remarkable, as well as his happy and ever-thankful spirit. ‘ We should be always wearing the garment of praise, not just waving a palm-branch now and then.’

‘ Thanksgiving is the very air of heaven.’

‘ There is one ear that listens to every note of praise from every one of His people. Never say, “ I need not praise Him. He will not miss *me* out of the choir.” “ Bless the Lord, O *my* soul.”’

‘ Why should we be afraid to rejoice, when God is not afraid to trust us with joy ?’

‘ Jacob said, “ I shall go down to the grave with sorrow.” What a mistake ! He went down singing !’

‘ “ All joy and peace in believing.” “ *All* joy,” complete joy, that will fill every crevice of your vacant heart. “ *All* peace,” that will not allow room for a single fear.’

‘ The oil of joy calms down the waves of trouble.’

‘ God’s people,’ he said, ‘ sometimes take fits of sea-sickness in sailing to Immanuel’s Land. They give way to hard thoughts of God.’ He asked some friends on whom he was calling how they were getting on. They said, ‘ Not very well ; we are not getting the rich food for our souls we used to get. We were just saying we are getting husks now.’ ‘ Oh, I see,’ was his reply.

‘You’ve been having a grumble-meeting! Did you ever notice when we grumble to one another we grow discontented and bitter, and that is grieving to the Holy Spirit? But, when we go and tell the Lord, it has a very different effect. We get tenderness and sympathy.’

Speaking one day of the conversion of the Philippian jailer, he said, ‘Oh, brethren, I see it now! They had spread the Gospel over the whole city by their *prayers* and *praises*, and they thought it was to be by their *preaching!*’

‘A gloomy believer,’ he said, ‘is surely an anomaly in Christ’s kingdom’; and gloominess was the last thing to be associated with him. An indescribable sweetness and mellowness characterised his old age, and robbed it of all sadness. Left alone, the last of a family of eleven brothers and sisters, his old friends nearly all gone from him, his joy in Christ triumphed over every sorrow.

‘Garments fresh, and feet unwearied,
Told how God had brought him through.’

‘This season,’ he wrote in October 1882, ‘has been sending me back to eighteen years ago—a never-to-be-forgotten time (his wife’s death). I thought then that life could never again be lightsome, but I find that the more of Christ we enjoy, the more we are able to bear.’

‘When we have truly found Christ, we can go through the world alone.’

‘If you are a child of God, there is nothing in the world you cannot do without, and have a heaven in the want of it.’

When the last of his brothers was taken away, and he alone was left behind, he stood beside his grave—the only mourner with a smile on his face. As the earth was heaped on the coffin he turned to a friend beside him and said, ‘I know that he shall rise again!’ More

than once, referring to his age he said, 'I don't feel that I am an old man, but I know I must be, for Barzillai was fourscore years old, and the Bible says he was "a *very aged man!*"' His friend Major Whittle asked him one day if he had found it harder to be a Christian as an old man than as a young man. Dr. Bonar turned his sunny face towards him and said, 'Oh, I don't think anything about growing old. I just keep on, doing each day's work by itself, and looking to the Lord for daily grace. I don't feel old. I feel just as young as I ever did.'

His last summer holiday, in 1892, was spent at Brae-field, Portpatrick, and the pleasant walks and rambles there will ever be a sunny memory to his friends. He preached in the Free Church during his stay, and took a great interest in the open-air meetings begun on Sabbath afternoons by his son-in-law, Mr. Oatts. On the last Sabbath of August he conducted the meeting himself, and as he was walking home a stranger came up to him and asked if he might speak to him. He said he had been for thirty-seven years in America, and was home for a holiday, had read all his books, but had never expected to see himself. When returning to Glasgow a few days later Dr. Bonar stopped at Stranraer and visited an aged friend, Mrs. Cunningham, at North-west Castle. 'When I met him at the railway station,' writes her son, the Rev. J. G. Cunningham, 'he told me that he must call for his old friend the Rev. George Sherwood, and he carried out his purpose, playfully disregarding the remonstrances of his family against the additional fatigue. I accompanied him, and was struck with the swift pace which he easily maintained. On our way I was accosted by an ostler belonging to one of the hotels, who asked me with respectful interest to tell him the name of the old minister who was with me, "for," said he, "I saw him at

the Port, preaching in the open air, and I was glad to hear him." Dr. Bonar shook hands warmly with his grateful hearer, to whom that sermon had given a real and unlooked-for pleasure. The interview between my dear mother and Dr. Bonar was truly affecting. They knew well that it was their last meeting on earth; and they spoke with calm and grateful hearts of the "goodness and mercy" which had followed them for more than fourscore years of pilgrimage, and of their hope of welcome at no distant date into "the house of the Lord for ever." Within a few months both of the venerable pilgrims met again "in that better country into which no enemy ever entered, and from which no friend ever went away."

The failure of his strength was very gradual, and not very perceptible except to those around him. His handwriting grew less firm, and his memory began to fail him in little things. One day, not very long before his death, a gentleman met him in Howard Street, and found that he was quite confused as to where he was. He kindly put him on the right way, and as they parted Dr. Bonar thanked him and said, 'I've just been thinking that I have been like Peter when the angel took him out of prison. Poor man, he did not know where he was!'

On the 31st of October 1892, writing to a friend about the sudden death of Mr. Inglis of Dundee, he says: 'What a surprise to find himself all at once among those who "do immediately pass into glory." . . . May we be "found of Him in peace," like our brother, when our evening comes.'

The post had sounded his horn at his chamber-door, and from the Celestial City had come the message: 'Thy Master has need of thee, and in a very little time thou must behold His face in brightness.' His last days

were spent in the same unceasing ministry for others that had been the joy of his life, and, as he lay on his dying bed, it was to his work that his thoughts were ever turning.

After only two days of illness, he passed away on Friday, the 30th of December 1892.

‘When I think of dying,’ he once said, ‘I think of it something in this way. I fancy myself going home from a meeting some night, and I feel not very well. I get worse, then I become unconscious, and then I know nothing more until I am in the presence of a Throne. There are seats around the Throne, and I am pointed to one which is vacant. I am told that it is for me. Then I see a Hand, and when I look at it I see it is a pierced Hand, and it holds a crown over my head! But, oh! the weight of glory is so great I cannot bear it, and so I lift it off, and cast it at the foot of the Throne, saying, “*Thou* art worthy; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood!”’

FAITH AND DOCTRINE

‘ Then said Greatheart to Mr. Valiant-for-truth, “ Thou hast worthily behaved thyself. Let me see thy sword.” So he showed it to him. When he had taken it in his hand and looked thereon a while, he said, “ Ha ! it is a right Jerusalem blade.”

‘ *Val.* “ It is so. Let a man have one of these blades, with a hand to wield it, and skill to use it, and he may venture upon an angel with it. He need not fear its holding, if he can but tell how to lay on. Its edges will never blunt. It will cut flesh and bones, and soul, and spirit, and all.”—*John Bunyan.*

CHAPTER IX

‘LORD, never let any one occupy this pulpit who does not preach Christ and Him crucified,’ was Dr. Bonar’s prayer one day in his own church ; and his oft-repeated desire for himself was that he might never to the day of his death preach to his people, or be with them in any of their meetings, without saying something about what gives peace to the sinner. Once, after preaching in St. Peter’s, Dundee, upon the text, ‘Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty,’ Mr. M’Cheyne said to him as they walked home together, ‘Brother, I enjoyed your sermon ; to me it was sweet. You and I and many, I trust, in our congregations shall see the King in His beauty. But, my brother, you forgot there might be many listening to you to-night, who, unless they are changed by the grace of God, shall never see Him in His beauty.’

Whether as the effect of this kindly reproof or not, certain it is that Dr. Bonar never afterwards preached a sermon in which he did not commend Christ to the unsaved, and rarely, if ever, closed without urging on his hearers the immediate acceptance of the Saviour. ‘A sinner,’ he often repeated, ‘so long as he is unpardoned, has a right to only one thing in the universe—only one—and that is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.’

The atoning sacrifice of the Son of God formed the

central point of all his preaching. The Cross was 'the breaking of God's alabaster-box, the fragrance of which has filled heaven and earth.' This little world was 'the altar of the universe on which lay the Almighty Sacrifice. The Incarnation was but the scaffolding for the Atonement. It is the Cross that shows us the love of God at a white heat. The earliest form of worship was the lamb slain: Behold Abel's altar! The latest form of worship is the Lamb slain who is now on the throne of the universe.' Round the Cross he gathered the whole Word of God, and all the dim foreshadowings of type and prophecy met in Him who died on Calvary. The infinite fulness of this Sacrifice—'a whole Christ between the humblest sinner and the smallest drop of God's wrath'—God's only-begotten Son, 'the half of His own joy given up for a time for us'—was what he rejoiced to proclaim. To many his preaching of Jesus Christ as the living personal Saviour was a revelation and the beginning of a new life. This Saviour and His atoning work stands between the coming sinner and every dark and difficult doctrine. Longings for pardon, for rest, for peace are met by the simple acceptance of this Saviour, whose blood speaks peace to the conscience and whose love brings rest to the heart.¹ So powerful is this sprinkled blood that it can carry a sinner into the holiest of all to hold communion at the Mercy-seat with a reconciled God and Father. 'One touch of this cleansing blood seals the soul for service.' Its voice—like the sound of the waves on the shore—is ever speaking peace in a believer's ear, 'sometimes loudly, sometimes less clearly, but always speaking.' 'If a believer can do without the blood he is a backslider.' 'At the Bush Moses was forbidden to draw

¹ He used sometimes to quote, with warm approval, the saying of a devoted Methodist minister, '*Live in the Sacrifice! Live in the Sacrifice.*'

nigh, but afterwards on the Mount he went up into the very presence of God. What made the difference? At the Bush *there was no sacrifice.*¹

Once when asked by Mr. Moody to tell the young ministers gathered at Northfield the secret of a consecrated life, his simple answer was, 'I can only say to my young brethren that for forty years there has not been a day that I have not had access to the Mercy-seat.'

When saying good-bye to some friends in whose house he had been staying, one of them said to him, 'Dr. Bonar, you are like the palm-tree flourishing in the courts of the Lord.' He turned round, and, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, he said eagerly, 'And if we are planted in the House of the Lord, then you know where our roots will be? *Under the altar.*'

The Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ occupied him at all times. When holding Him up before any who were seeking salvation, he used to say :

'Salvation is not fleeing to the shadow of the great Rock, but it is fleeing to the Man who is a Hiding-place, and laying our head on His bosom.'

'Many want salvation, but they do not want the Saviour.'

'The work of Christ is the open door for the sinner, but Christ Himself stands behind it waiting to welcome him.'

An invalid lady in the country sent him a message that she had not enough of joy. He sent back the answer, 'Tell Mrs. C. it is not more *joy* she needs, but more of *Christ.*'

A Christian Jew who had brought another to church with him met Dr. Bonar as he came out, and told him

¹ When reading at family worship the narrative of God's rebuke and Israel's repentance in Judges ii. 1-5, he said before closing the book : 'Sorrow can never put away sin, sacrifice alone can do that ; so they not only wept at Bochim, but "they sacrificed there unto the Lord."

about the young man's difficulties. 'He won't receive Christ.' 'Ah,' said Dr. Bonar, 'that's because you don't know Him. All who know Him receive Him.'

'Draughts of the water of life are just fresh views of Christ. The promises are streams coming down from Christ's heart.'

'Peace is the mantle dropped by Christ.' 'The invitation, "Come unto Me," is like the waving of the fringe of His robe as He moves along by the shores of the Sea of Galilee.' Christ's life of obedience was 'a walk from Bethlehem to Calvary without a stumble.' His righteousness was 'the robe in which He walked through our world every day, and which, when He had finished His walk,—as Elijah left his mantle to Elisha,—He left for us to wear.' To get a deeper sense of sin is to look at the price paid for our pardon.'

'If ever there was anything that, more terribly than hell itself, showed the sinfulness of sin, it was the Saviour's agony in the Garden.'

'When we count the pieces of the Ransom-money, may we see what a terrible evil sin is.'

'It is not a sight of our sinful heart that humbles us, it is a sight of Jesus Christ: I am undone, *because mine eyes have seen the King.*'

'If deep sorrow and remorse could blot out sin, hell would be a great Calvary.' 'There is nothing Satan fears so much as the blood of Christ.' 'Purity of heart (Psalm xxvi. 6) depends upon the place we are giving in our consciences to the blood of Christ.'

'Power over habits of sin may be gained by confessing sin.' 'He breaks the power of cancelled sin.' We can also say, 'He breaks the power of sin confessed.' 'No man ever honestly confesses before God the sin he has done till that sin is taken away. It is a full pardon that makes a man guileless.'

Of one who dwelt very much upon sin, without, as he thought, dwelling sufficiently on the power of the blood to cleanse, he said, 'I think his gospel is the miry clay.'

'We are called "more than conquerors" not at the end of our course, but while it is going on.'

'You need not be afraid of too much grace. Great grace never makes a man proud. A little grace is very apt to make a man be puffed up.'

'Sin is not simply going against our conscience; it is going against the law, though conscience keep silence.'

Some one told him that for six months she had not consciously committed any sin. 'And are you not very proud of it?' said Dr. Bonar. 'Yes,' she replied, 'I am!'

'Faith grows upon the soil of felt sin.' 'Great faith is simple faith. If you are seeking great faith, remember the simpler it is the greater it will be.'

'There was a defect in the faith of many who came to Christ to be healed. But it was not the strength of their faith Christ looked to, but the reality of it. They got the cure, though the hand that touched Him trembled.'

"My" is the handle of faith.'

He made frequent use of four lines of a hymn written by his brother:—

'Upon a life I did not live,
Upon a death I did not die;
Another's life, another's death,
I stake my whole eternity.'

'When I write a hymn,' he says in a letter to one of his children, 'I think it will begin

"Looking always to Jesus."

'I am not sure of the way some people sing "There is life for a look." It must be a *steady* look.'

To one seeking full assurance he wrote:—

'Just as the bitten Israelites were healed every time they felt the

bite of the fiery serpents, simply by looking to the Brazen Serpent, so we, every time we feel our soul dark, or sad, or unbelieving, are directed to fix our thoughts *at once* on Christ, the Lamb of God and the Priest. "Look unto Me and be saved" (Isa. xlv. 22). "They looked unto Him and were lightened" (Psalm xxxiv. 5). "Therefore I will look to the Lord" (Micah vii. 7). "Run the race looking (not at your own feet, or thinking of your own running but) *unto Jesus*" (Heb. xii. 2). Compare this with God looking on us, and on what we look to. "The bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, and remember the Covenant" (Gen. ix. 16). "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Exod. xii. 13). *We* look on the blood of Atonement, and God looks on *us* well pleased when we are so employed. Do you sometimes sit down and sing to yourself such a hymn as—

"Walk in the light, so shalt thou know," etc.
"I heard the voice of Jesus say," etc.

'Doubts and fears are not marks of God's children. They are remnants of the old nature—specks upon the eye of faith. You should give them no quarter.'

'If you say it is good to have doubts, you are just saying, "I will not take all that God offers." Faith takes a whole Christ for itself: "My Lord and my God."

One who had not assurance he described as believing in Christ, but not believing what He says. 'Faith dwells at Jerusalem. Full assurance goes into the palace and sees the King's face.' 'It is the privilege and the duty of believers (looking at the blood) not to have a fear or a doubt. You can't honour God more, you can't please the Holy Spirit more, or Christ more, than by putting unbounded confidence in the blood.'

'Would it have been right,' he asked, 'for the prodigal to sit at the table dropping tears into his cup, saying, "I can't be glad," when the Father said "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad?"'

'John did not rise from the Table because there was a doubt about himself and his steadfastness. He leaned all the harder [*ἀνέπεσεν*] on his Master's bosom.'

His adherence to the old truths never wavered, nor his simple unquestioning faith in the Word of God as his guide. Some of his last sermons were preached upon subjects in the Epistle of Jude, which many shrink from as unpleasant and unpopular. Sin and its punishment—eternal banishment from God's presence—were part of the 'whole counsel of God' which he must declare. 'To fall into the hands of the living God—to be crushed between the millstones of omnipotence.' 'Jesus spoke these terrible words about hell in the eighteenth of Matthew, with a little child in his arms.' 'No one preached more about hell than Christ did. You remember His thrilling narrative of the rich man and Lazarus; as if He would pursue the sinner with a flaming sword until he entered the city of refuge. But "they will not believe"—although Lazarus was the preacher, and his text, "Not a drop of water to cool the tongue."'

'I think He will weep over the lost as He did over Jerusalem. It will be something to be said for ever in heaven, "Jesus wept as He said, Depart, ye cursed." But then it was absolutely necessary to say it.'

'I think that the shower of fire and brimstone was wet with the tears of God as it fell; for God has "no pleasure in the death of him that dieth."'

A lady whom he was asked to visit during an illness said to him, 'I've been trying for some days with all my might to believe in annihilation; but I can't.' 'I can tell you something better,' said Dr. Bonar. 'If you believe in Christ your *sin* will be annihilated.'

Divine sovereignty was a subject he often referred to in his preaching, but never as an impassable barrier between God and a sinner.

'You will never get light by looking into darkness. Paul does not plunge into the depths and drown him-

self. He stands on the shore and adores: "O the depths!" etc. (Romans xi. 33).

"Strong meat" is not what are called the "deep doctrines" of Scripture. "Strong meat" is really what you had last Sabbath at the Communion-table—"the finest of the wheat."

'Doctrine and hearing of the Word abound,' he wrote after a visit to the North, 'though the doctrine is not what we in the South reckon to be the very truth, for sovereignty is thrust in at all points as if to overawe the sinner, and make him draw back from touching even the hem of the garment. They say that they do it to empty and humble the sinner. Oh for showers of the Spirit! for, when the Spirit comes, all things take their proper place.'

'Take care,' he used to say, 'that you never mix anything with the "finest of the wheat."' Referring to the doctrine of election he said, 'If God were to reveal your election to you, you would believe in yourself instead of in Christ.' At another time, speaking of the same subject, he made the striking remark, 'We have often found that Satan takes the substantial food, which God has provided for His own children, to poison sinners with.' One of his quaint sayings, in stirring believers up to more watchfulness, was: 'If Satan was dangerous when Paul wrote his epistles, how much more dangerous must he be now, for he has got so much more experience?'

Some one remarked in his hearing that she did not like doctrine; it was not practical. At once he replied, 'Doctrine *is* practical, for it is that that stirs up the heart.'

The work of the Holy Spirit was a special feature of his preaching, and the love of that Spirit as revealed in His written Word. 'Every line in this inspired Bible is wet with the dew of the Spirit's love.'

“The sword of the Spirit”—the sword which the Spirit uses. The sword is made up of various parts: the long blade, the handle, etc. And so the Scriptures have many parts, but the Gospel is the sharp point by which it pierces the soul.’

The Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, was the food by which his soul was nourished, and the weapon by which he fought his battles and gained his victories. So readily did a scriptural phrase or a scriptural illustration drop from his lips, that it almost seemed as if he thought in scriptural language. As he was walking home from church one evening, his daughter offered to carry his umbrella for him. He declined to give it to her, and said to a friend who was with them, ‘We always like to have something in our hand when we are walking. I have noticed that. I wonder if we shall have the same feeling hereafter, for, do you notice, they carry “palms in their hands”?’

On the morning of the last day of his life, a friend called just as he was having a poultice administered. He looked up brightly, saying, ‘I am just like Hezekiah: I am getting on a plaster!’

A meeting of special interest had been held from which one of his daughters had been unavoidably absent. As soon as he returned from it, he said to her, thinking of her disappointment, ‘Remember there were two angels absent from the Ascension!’

A friend once referred at a meeting to his originality in finding subjects for sermons and addresses, and said, ‘I don’t know where Dr. Bonar gets all his texts.’ Dr. Bonar lifted his Bible and quietly held it out to him.

His prayer one morning was, ‘Make Thy Word a candle to reveal sin, and a leaf from the Tree of Life to heal.’ In public reading of the Scriptures, no portion was ever passed over because of its difficulty or ob-

scurity, but every word and phrase were explained with care and minuteness. An exposition of the first eight chapters of 1 Chronicles¹ was given with the preface: 'This is God calling the roll of mankind;' and what at first had seemed a record of unmeaning and forgotten names, became a history of men and women, with hopes, and fears, and aspirations like those of a present time.

As he read the fifth chapter of Genesis, with its melancholy refrain,—'and he died, and he died,'—he came to the twenty-fourth verse, 'Enoch walked with God: and was not; for God took him.' He stopped and said, 'A triumphal arch amid the tombs!'

Another remark of his on the same subject was: 'Enoch walked with God, and one day he took a very long walk, for he never came back again!'

When describing a scriptural incident he sometimes gave full play to his imagination, and, with a graphic touch here and there, brought the whole scene vividly before the eye, as for example, when he described the poor woman of 'the wives of the sons of the prophets' (2 Kings iv.) following Elisha's instructions, and sending her sons to borrow empty vessels from her neighbours. 'Reuben, you go up the street, and Samuel, you go down the street, and ask all the neighbours for the loan of empty vessels.' 'But what will they say to us, mother?' 'They will say nothing, but give you the dishes!'

Sometimes his quaint use of a scriptural illustration had a happy effect in restoring harmony or carrying a point. A well-known instance of this was his reference to the students in his closing address as Moderator of the Free Church Assembly in 1878. 'We need not be very much surprised,' he said, 'that those young

¹ He contributed 'Readings in 1 Chronicles' to the *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, from 1857 to 1861.

“sons of the prophets” are rather prone to question the positive conclusions of older men. This was the tendency of the “sons of the prophets” even in the days of Elisha. There were schools, if not colleges, at Bethel and at Jericho : and you may remember how the youthful disciples there, not satisfied in regard to Elijah’s translation, insisted that fifty of the most gifted of their number should go and search hill and valley for themselves. Again and again did the prophet assure them that it would prove only a waste of time and labour ; and when at length he yielded, and they went forth with all the confidence of youth, how did it end ? They came back to report that the old prophet was right after all. No doubt he smiled with mild satisfaction as he reminded them, “Did I not say unto you, Go not !”

A friend one day asked him what he thought about the young man mentioned in Mark xiv. 51. ‘I have a fable about him,’ he said. ‘He heard the singing in the Upper Room—the Lord was leading it—He raised the tune, and then the fishermen joined in it so heartily that the young man stopped to listen. Then he watched them as they went out, and followed them over the brook Kedron, and was lying among the olives to see what would happen when the band of soldiers came.’¹

Some friends were talking with him about the fact that a stranger is very often used for the conversion of one whose parents and friends have prayed and watched over him. Dr. Bonar said, ‘Now, give me a scriptural illustration of that.’ No one did, so he said, ‘Timothy, “*my own son in the faith.*” The child of Eunice and Lois ! I daresay Eunice was greatly

¹ ‘Bonar’s fables’ were what some of his friends called his speculations on Bible incidents. Mr. Moody used to say, ‘Now, I want to hear some more fables !’

disappointed that it was not she, after all, that was used. It was an itinerant evangelist!’

Speaking of Eutychus (Acts xx. 9) he said, ‘It’s not fair of Dr. Watts to make Eutychus a warning to sleepy hearers. He’s a warning to beadles to ventilate the church properly!’

As authority for beginning public worship with the singing of a psalm, he quoted Elisha’s example in 2 Kings iii., when he asked for a minstrel to play, and the camp was calmed and solemnised.

To a friend he remarked about 1 Cor. xvi. 12: ‘What a comfort that verse is! People sometimes write so pressingly: “You must come, it is an opportunity of usefulness.” Paul says Apollos would not come, and he is not blamed for it.’

‘Did you ever notice, in Acts xvi. 6, 7, how the Holy Ghost guides the heralds of salvation to their proper sphere? On two occasions the Holy Spirit hindered Paul from going to places he wished to visit—Asia and Bithynia. He was (so to speak) candidate for these two places, but the seven churches of Asia were reserved for John’s ministry, and Bithynia (1 Pet. i. 1) for Peter’s. Paul must go away to Macedonia.’

‘Why did Thomas not go to the meeting that night with the other disciples? I think he said, “What is the use of going? *The Master* won’t be there!”’

Upon 1 Sam. iii. 4 he remarked, ‘I think God spoke in Eli’s voice so as not to frighten Samuel.’ Peter he described (Matt. xvi. 22) as ‘the New Testament Uzzah trying to hold up the Ark.’

His commentary on Dan. vi. 18, 19, was ‘Never put your name to a paper you have not read!’

A favourite fancy of his was, that the star in the East was the old Pillar-cloud.

He used to say that he thought the beggar at

the Beautiful Gate of the Temple had been a careless and unbelieving man, or he might have been healed long before; for we read, in Matt. xxi. 14, 'that on a certain day the blind and the lame came to Christ in the Temple and "He healed them."'

'It is a very striking thing that there is not an instance of any one in the New Testament bringing a gift to Christ when he came to be healed. Yet in the Old Testament we see this was a common custom.'

'Paul had to escape in a basket! the man God wrought such wonderful things by, had to escape in a most commonplace way. I daresay some people would like that Elijah had been fed by eagles rather than by ravens; but that is not God's way. He delivers believers in a common way.'

'Where did the ravens get the flesh they carried to Elijah? I think they picked it off Baal's altars!'

He liked to talk about angels and their work for us, and used to say he had not one guardian angel but hundreds.

'Why did the angel tell Peter in the prison to rise up "quickly"? Because he knew that, if he did not rise at once, he would go to sleep again! Even angels never lose time. They have plenty of work to do for the Lord.'

'Angels will never be kings. They will always be servants.'

'It is a good thing angels were not sent to preach to us. I would go far to hear an angel preach, but I don't think I would get much good from his sermon. I would come away thinking of his beautiful words and his persuasive tongue, but perhaps saying, "It is all very well for that angel to talk about the miry clay, but he does not know how stiff it is! He never was in it."'

“The tongue of angels” is the only bit of his experience in the Third Heavens that Paul gives us. He seems to have heard angels speak, or perhaps sing. Paul was a man of extraordinary grace to be contented to be so long upon earth after being in the Third Heavens, and not to pine to be back. He heard “unspeakable words” there. I think he must have heard the Saviour’s voice speaking to His redeemed ones.’

‘Reading the Gospels,’ he said, ‘is like walking in Galilee. There is nothing I enjoy more.’

He talked of the men and women of the Bible as of his familiar friends, and could not bear a suggestion of the Old Testament saints being on a lower platform than those of later times.

‘We shall sit down *with* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom—not *above* them—for they hoped in God while still in the shadows.’

‘Elijah had such fellowship with God that he could say, “The Lord before whom I stand.” Gabriel could not say more than that when he came down in after-days.’

‘Did you ever notice that when the Jews said that Stephen blasphémed Moses, the Lord put upon him the same glory that He put upon Moses, and his face shone?’

In reference to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he said, ‘There was the same well of water in the soul of the Old Testament saint as in the New Testament saint, but the water in that well never rose very high except in a few cases. We may say the well was just half-full in Old Testament times. But when Christ had finished His work, when “Jesus was glorified,” then the rivers poured out of the well, because the waters poured in so abundantly. There never were two ways of saving souls. Always by union to Christ through the indwelling of the Spirit.’

'God fed His church on crumbs at first,' he used to say: 'Enoch lived on two crumbs of the bread of life, for all revealed Scripture then was "the seed of the woman," etc., and "Behold, the Lord cometh!" etc. But what a life he led on these two crumbs! And Noah in the Ark with no more. How that man stood out against a whole world! O brethren, how the crumbs of the Bread of Life feed!' 'Caleb lived very much on one promise for forty years.'

When visiting his people he used to ask, 'Do you read regularly through the sixty-six books of the Bible, and not trust to little text-books?' 'Have you got a letter from the King to-day?' was a favourite question, when he wanted to introduce a conversation on that morning's portion of the Scripture.

Some friends who were studying the Book of Ezekiel told him they did not understand it very well. He said, 'I am glad you are reading Ezekiel's book before you meet him. What would he say if you met him in heaven and told him you had never read his book?'¹

Often he used to say, 'Notice the *little* things in the Bible.' One morning, at the weekly meeting in his study, when the Bible-woman and missionary met with him for prayer, Miss Walker gave as her text for the day, 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be ye steadfast, unmoveable,' etc., 'forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' 'Stop!' said Dr. Bonar, 'is it "*shall be*" in your Bible? Look again. "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour *is* not in vain in the Lord."'

He strongly insisted that a text must not be taken

¹ He more than once took this way of impressing on others the importance of reading the Old Testament, and the impossibility of understanding the New Testament without the Old.

out of its connection to suit our purposes. 'Once,' he said, 'I was visiting a young man dying of consumption, and one day I found both his wife and himself much brighter than before. They said they had got a text which had encouraged them greatly. It was, "I shall not die but live," etc. They had no right to the text, and the young man died soon after.'

The whole Bible was to him bright with the promise of the Lord's Return, and this expectation gave joy and hopefulness to his whole life. Sorrow and bereavement made him think of the glorious time when 'death shall have become resurrection;' pain and suffering reminded him of the 'new heavens and the new earth' yet to come. 'You will soon be a king. Why not think of your kingdom?' he writes to a friend. 'Are you content with the Lord's gracious letter to you when you might rather be wearying for Himself? I know that "this same Jesus" is as precious to you as to any of us, but when will you be a "man of Galilee," gazing up into heaven?' To another friend he writes: 'Are you loving Christ's appearing and His kingdom? If not, He hath somewhat against thee.'

'Many people nowadays,' he said, 'miss out the first part of the verse: "the grace of God which bringeth salvation," and go on to talk of the next part: "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," etc. You say "that's dreadful!" Yes, but I know some Christians who miss out the last clause altogether: "looking for that blessed hope!"'

'Some Christians make a great mistake. They think that because Christ said it was expedient that He should go away, therefore it is expedient that He should *stay* away! He went away to present His finished work to the Father, but He must come back again.'

'I find the thought of Christ's Coming,' he said, 'very helpful in keeping me awake. Those who are waiting for His appearing will get a special blessing. Perhaps they will get nearer His Person. I sometimes hope it will be so, and that He will beckon me nearer to Him if I am waiting for Him; just as at a meeting, you often see one beckoned to come up to the platform nearer the speakers.'

At a meeting in Philadelphia in 1881, to bid him farewell, the chairman—the late George Stewart—closed his address by saying that 'the Lord, the Righteous Judge, would give to His dear servant a crown of righteousness at the great day.' He sat down, and, on rising to reply, Dr. Bonar said, "*And not to me only, but to all them also that love His appearing.*"

As his ministry drew near its close, he often said to his people, 'I may not live to see Him return, but I expect some of you listening to me will.' And to a friend he wrote: 'Christ's Coming is nearer and nearer. "When He cometh (we may say in another sense than the woman of Samaria, and yet like her) *He will tell us all things.*"' His Prophetic Lectures, delivered once a month on Sabbath evenings, from 1879 to 1883, will long be remembered. He had great enjoyment in them himself, and his voice, which even then was often feeble, seemed to regain its power as it proclaimed, through the crowded church, the Coming of the King of Glory. He very seldom spoke of his own death, though his diary shows how often it was in his thoughts.

When referring at his weekly prayer-meeting to the death of Dr. Somerville, who that morning had passed away, he spoke of what is called 'preparation for death,' and of 'dying grace.' 'I doubt,' he said, 'if there is such a thing, more than just the grace we need to live

every day. Comparatively few of God's people have triumphant deaths. You are not triumphant when you fall asleep, and that's what death is,—falling asleep. We should be living so that we could be ready any day to go. If you were to go to call on some Christian friend, and the servant were to tell you at the door, "Oh, he's gone!" Would you feel you almost *envy* him? Are you living so that the only difference in your life really that death would make—if you were told "an hour later and you will be gone"—would be to make you say, "Well, my fellowship with the Lord will be *closer* then, but I've had fellowship with Him all day." When Elijah was told he was to be taken up, he went on doing his ordinary work, visiting the schools of the prophets. The only difference in his action was, that he wanted Elisha to leave him, that he might spare him the pain of the separation. But he did not spend the day in prayer or in any special *preparation*, as we call it. What we need for death is just what we need every day: the Saviour Himself with us.'

'We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. What more do we need in going into His presence?'

"The *dead in Christ* shall rise first." A beautiful expression. It always reminds me of a mother with her dead infant lying on her bosom. Christ has His dead lying on His bosom, waiting for the resurrection.'

'The man who sees Christ in life is sure to see Him in the valley of the shadow of death.'

One who had always had a fear of death told him on her dying bed, that she had completely lost it by fixing her thoughts on that passage, 'I have the keys of hell and of death.' She thought, 'If Jesus has the keys of death, then the first face I shall see will be His!'

‘Rest—glory—Christ. I think these three words,’ he said, ‘tell all that we know of the intermediate state. The Holy Spirit always hastens us on, to the resurrection.’

‘The intermediate state is Heaven’s Upper Room, where the Master is, and where He will say unutterable things.’

‘Elijah would get a welcome when he went up, but what work he got, we can’t tell. We do not know what work disembodied spirits get to do. Down here we are just at school, and in the lowest class too. But we shall have our grand work afterwards.’

He sometimes used a familiar illustration to describe the intermediate state after death. ‘There are the two classes: the ungodly and the godly. A man who has committed a crime is arrested and put in prison. Although judgment has not been passed upon him, he is securely locked up, and deprived of all his liberties. The terrible thought, that he must appear before the Judge and hear His final sentence, is always before him. The state of the godly, on the other hand, may be illustrated thus. A rich friend invites you to dine with him. On the appointed day you go to his house, and are shown into the drawing-room, where the guests are received by the host. The time until all the invited guests have arrived is passed in meeting friends, and in the presence and society of the host. When all have assembled, a bell sounds, and the whole company pass into the dining-hall where the feast is spread. So it will be at the great Supper of the Lamb.’

‘Live for the Lord to-day, and look for His Coming to-morrow’ was a rule he impressed on others, and carried out in his own life. The love of Christ constrained him to service beyond that of most men, and made that service a delight. Preaching was a necessity of his

life. He never grew tired of it, and sometimes, indeed, found it difficult to get as much as he wanted. When one of his elders remonstrated with him for preaching too often during his holidays, he replied :—

‘Tis joy, not duty,
To speak His beauty !’

‘I long,’ he says at another time, ‘to speak to the troubled soul about Jesus the Peace-maker, saying to the waves and storm “Be still.”’ In a letter to the Rev. D. M. M’Intyre, June 19th, 1891, he writes, ‘I am not, and never was, a great or popular preacher. I have been only an earnest expounder of God’s Word, longing to save sinners and edify the saved.’ A friend remembers when a boy, hearing him preach in Regent Square, London, in the year 1850, and the deep impression made on his mind by the sermon—‘The joys of the Man of Sorrows’ (Acts ii. 26). A few weeks after he again heard him preach at Rait in Perthshire, and was struck with the fact that his sermon was not less able, and his delivery not less earnest in speaking to the quiet country audience than when addressing the ‘great congregation’ in Regent Square. If he spent a Sabbath in the country without preaching, he felt more tired at the close of the day than if he had preached three times. At Collace, Mrs. Bonar refers to his having preached nine times in one week ; and he himself writes in refusing an invitation to preach in Perth :—

‘I see you thought you would bait your hook well to catch me by offering a triple service.’

‘I go to Glasgow to Alexander Somerville on Monday, and to James Hamilton, London, immediately after, so you see I have some elements of the wandering Jew in my constitution. O that I were as wandering Paul and Barnabas ! They were Christ’s true “knights-errant,” *i.e.* servants (*knechte*), who went forth whithersoever He would.’

On one occasion he went to Blairgowrie to assist the Rev. Malcolm White at his Communion services. He arrived at six o'clock on Saturday evening, and hurriedly took some refreshment, so as to get to the top of Hatton Hill before dusk. From there he saw the beautiful view over the strath, but his chief object was to visit the birthplace of Donald Cargill, the martyr. Though it was late before he and Mr. White reached home, he showed little sign of weariness, and asked what his work was to be next day. When told, he said, 'I would not have left home had I known you had so little for me to do!' and a children's service had to be added to what most men would have considered quite sufficient work for one day.

In July 1890 he closes a letter to his son with these words: 'Why am I spared so long in health is a question I often ask. One thing I know—it must be that I may preach and commend Christ and Him crucified wherever and whenever it is in my power.'

In great loving-kindness God spared him the bitterness of being laid aside from his beloved work. Though feeble, voice and hand were still busy in the Master's service, when, at that Master's bidding, he left his work below for the ministry of the Upper Sanctuary, where still 'His servants serve Him.'



THE VALUE OF A THOUGHT

'It is a real sense of sin that will explain to us the richest figures in the Bible.'—*A. A. B.*

CHAPTER X

[THE notes which form this chapter are taken, with additions and explanations, from a little book in which Dr. Bonar had jotted down a brief account of the origin of his model of the Tabernacle. It was one of the methods of preaching the Gospel which he made use of during the course of his ministry—a method which he loved, and which, as these notes tell, was greatly blessed in many places throughout Scotland.]

HISTORY OF A MODEL OF THE TABERNACLE, 1879

The value of a 'thought' may be very great. Everybody knows this. It may be the seed of a great harvest. But it is not the thought merely in itself, but the thought carried out and used.

It is like what in the mechanical department has been found to be the value of a small piece of metal, if turned to use by a little skill and application. A late writer shows that 'a farthing's worth of iron may be converted into an ounce of steel, by labour worth $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. That, again, might be converted by labour into 2250 yards of spring wire, worth £13, 4s. od. By putting it through yet another process, that wire might be made into 7650 spring balances, worth 2/6d each, which, in the aggregate, could give £960 odds.'

Starting with this illustration from mechanics, let me now show how in practical spiritual work a simple

thought became the means of a great amount of blessing to souls. It is now thirty-three years at least since I first used this model. About the year 1845, while in Collace, having read all I could find on the Tabernacle, and examined all the pictures and drawings that generally illustrate such books, I went one day to the workshop of a plain good man (an Old Light elder in the village of Sachar) and told him my idea of the possibility of making out of common wood a model of the Tabernacle. He was a turner and joiner. The good man was interested, and, at my suggestion, a board about 3 feet long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ broad was got ready—the oblong shape of the Tabernacle. Then he prepared sixty wooden pillars, and set them in their place to form the enclosure. Next, boring the pillars at the top, a cord was drawn through, and a rude contrivance was thus formed for suspending linen curtains.

The first altar was boards of wood shaped into a square, and the boards covered with brass-filings. So also the laver. And then the forty boards of the Holy and Most Holy Place were got ready and covered with gold-leaf.

At this juncture, a kind friend in Perth, hearing of my attempt, sent me a large ram's skin dyed red, to form one of the four coverings. Next, a 'wise-hearted' lady gave me a shawl of the Angola goat's hair to form the goat's-hair covering. The other two I supplied after a time with linen, on which were stripes of purple, blue, and scarlet, and a piece of badger-skin formed the outer covering.

It was not, however, till I had been in London, and had there seen a much more substantial model, that I found means of providing the furniture of the Sanctuary: Candlestick, Shew-bread, Incense-altar, and the Ark of the Covenant.

In about a year thereafter my wooden pillars were exchanged for metal, etc. In short, I got in London a model so far ready-made, but I was led to alter some of the articles. That model cost above £3, nothing very attractive or beautiful in the appearance.

I remember the first evening when I exhibited the model in our church in Kinrossie to about one hundred people. The sun was near his setting, and his light was pouring in at one window. I lifted up the red ram's-skin covering, and asked, 'What does this remind you of?' A solemn silence first, and then a whisper: 'Blood, blood!'

Gradually, I got familiar with the whole subject, and in my own mind had special doctrines connected with all the different parts, *e.g.* the Door, with its royal colours, blue, purple, scarlet, was the Gospel call by divine authority (our God and King), 'Come freely'—no bar, no bolt. The Altar, justification; the Laver, sanctification; the Fine Linen, righteousness.

I soon discovered that I could vary the lecture, and sometimes abridge—sometimes enlarge—according to the audience. Young and old alike, I discovered, were drawn by it. On bidding a young person tell her mother to come, the little girl replied, 'May I come myself?' 'How often have you seen it already?' 'Only five times!'

I discovered that I myself never felt it stale. There was endless variety in that setting forth of Salvation, alike, too, in occasional drawing-room gatherings or in cottages.

When I came to Glasgow I got the case made for carrying the Courts, and the box for the Holy and Most Holy Places.

I had visits from some well-known people who wanted to see the model, among others, Mr. Soltau,

who wrote a book on the Tabernacle. Canon Savage came on purpose to spend an hour going over the model.

It has been shown in about one hundred places, and about two hundred times.

My cousin, an Irvingite, insisted that silver was the type of love. 'How do you find that?' 'It was so common in Solomon's days, nothing accounted of!'

Many confused Solomon's Temple with the Tabernacle. They are quite distinct. The Tabernacle showed God's way of grace; the Temple showed the kingdom of glory.

Many good hints I have got from others. J. M. said about *brass*: 'Brass will crack and not stand great heat.' 'But the Hebrew is properly *copper*.' 'Ah, that will do; that stands any heat.' Another said: 'Copper, not brass, is the right word for the material for the altar.' 'Why?' 'Brass is a mixed metal, and there was to be no mixture in the things of God; no linen and woollen.'

A minister of the Free Church, now gone, was first awakened to interest in spiritual things by seeing the model exhibited in Cathcart Free Church.

About the year 1862 I had shown the model in the hall of Free St. Enoch's. At the close, Mr. Nichol, colleague to Dr. Henderson, rose and said he would like to tell a story connected with the model. When he was a student at home in Dundee, he heard I was to show it one day (a holiday of some kind) in the school-house of Tealing, where Mr. Mellis was minister. Among those who flocked in was a boy—a schoolboy. He had recently played the truant for a week. He had got a shilling from his father to buy a new book, had spent it, and kept away from school, but came home every day at the regular time, pretending all was right. He was

miserable under this system of deceit. In this state he came into the schoolroom, and when hearing of the Altar and its blood, and the Laver purifying, saw how he could be forgiven, found rest, went home, and confessed all.

At Bishopbriggs an elder said, 'It was the *Blood* that was the best of it.' A little girl, telling all about the model, dwelt on the *Blood*,—'And the *Blood* was shown every day, every day!'

In Moray Free Church, Edinburgh, a young man reminded me that I had shown the model in a meeting in Carrick Street, and said, 'That was the night J. F. was brought in.'

Dr. Robert Burns of Toronto saw it in 1850, and said at the close, 'It is true, "faith cometh by hearing," but, friends, may we not say also to-night, faith cometh by *seeing*, for we have *seen* the Gospel?'

Dr. Bannerman remarked, 'I noticed you sometimes said, "This suggests such a truth." That's the right way to put it, for, while we have authority for some things as meant to be types, there are others we cannot say more than that "they suggest this."'

Mr. Pinkerton of Kilwinning remarked, after seeing the model, 'I never heard a better sermon.'

A lady met me, and said, 'Thanks for the sermon last Tuesday, the sermon you did not preach.' 'What was it?' 'I came into the church, and *the sight* of the furniture of the Tabernacle was a great sermon to me—the best sermon I ever heard—a flood of light.'

Mr. John Smith, our missionary, was conscious to himself of a new hold of truth from the day he saw the model, and always took delight afterwards in seeing it again and again.

M. W. got more sure rest to his soul the night he first saw the Tabernacle.

The wife of a minister in the country, and her niece, had been awakened, and came to call. She sat for an hour asking questions about the truth suggested by the model which providentially was on my study-table. I had been showing it to a student.

The account of the High Priest's dress on the Day of Atonement,—all white linen,—while he carried in the charger of blood, was blessed to a young woman, who never till then entertained the thought of every day looking at the blood again, and going to God.

Mr. L., at Alloa (1888), asked me what I thought about this: 'If the Most Holy Place was shut all the year till the Day of Atonement, the dust would be thick, and the air anything but fresh. Would the *Glory* hinder the dust falling? and would it not give constant freshness to the room?'

A minister's wife said it was on occasion of a lecture at Dundee on the Tabernacle, that she first felt the holiness of God, and a strong wish to speak to some one about her soul.

Mrs. S. (Balbeggie, near Collace) never so felt the holiness of God's presence as in looking in when the light was put into the Holy of Holies, and we were asked to think of going alone into God's presence there.

The *Gate*—no bar, and so easily opened. Many spoke of that. Young people saw at once how young Samuel could 'open the gate of the House of the Lord.'

In the *Court* the pillars had a 'fillet' each, as well as a 'hook,' made of Ransom-money. Dr. Lorimer stopped me when showing it at the Shelter in Glasgow, and asked the girls to notice, 'Even the ornaments of God's people must be in connection with *ransom*,'—not to please ourselves.

The *Altar* with its daily lamb. One came to me and said, 'I've been thinking if it took fifteen hundred

years to set out a picture of the Lamb of God, O what is He Himself!' The Altar was carried by the *staves*. God taught the priests to be very reverent. The *four horns* are the emblem of power. The blood on the horns was to show the power there was in the blood. A worthy elder in Perth used to speak of his conversion as 'the day when I first knew the power of the blood.'

The *Laver*, filled with pure water to the brim. Water represents the Spirit. The Spirit will stay wherever the blood is. First the *Altar*, then the *Laver*. The *Altar* says, 'the blood of Jesus delivers from the guilt of sin.' The *Laver* says, 'the Spirit of Jesus delivers from the power of sin.'

A friend asked, 'Where did they get the water for the *Laver* the first time? From the stream that flowed from the Smitten Rock!' The Holy Spirit from a Smitten Christ!

The *Badger-skin* and the *Goat-hair* coverings. In the R.V. 'badger-skin' is 'seal-skin,' and in the margin, 'porpoise-skin.' One said about these, 'I used to be content with the Badger-skin (mere shelter), but now I'm under the Goat's-hair—delighting in the beauty put upon the justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed.' Mr. T. B., from Holland, was particularly interested in the *four coverings*. 'That's my spiritual history. I first learned Christ as a covert from the storm, then His blood as a Substitute—the *Ram-skin*; then His righteousness on me—the *Goat's-hair*; and then the royal dress—*blue, purple, and scarlet*; our being made kings to God.'

The *Candlestick* with its shaft of gold and branches: Christ and His people. The branches of equal length, proved by the Arch of Titus. God's people all alike before Him.

The *Shew-bread*. Few know why it is called 'shew-bread.' It is 'presence-bread,'—bread handed out to us

from God's own table. Curious to find most vague ideas, and those who have them very unwilling to let them be known. Thus about the *Shew-bread*, just as about the size and shape of the *Ark*. A Jew pointed out to me that I should have had the staves of the *Ark* in another position, protruding through the curtain a little, to show that the *Ark was always there*. We spoke of the twelve loaves, should they be piled one on the other, or laid along like tents pitched? He held the former way. 'But the Hebrew does not require that.' 'No.' 'Why then?' 'Our Rabbis say so.' 'But there is an objection to that, very strong. I was showing this model in a cottage, and put the question to a row of shrewd old women, whether the loaves should be piled up, or put the other way? At once one of them said, 'Not piled one on another.' 'Why?' 'They would mould before the end of the week.' 'What do you say to the old woman's difficulty?' 'Oh,' replied the Jew, 'she is a wise woman. She is so far right, but our Rabbis get over that by telling us that silver forks were put between each loaf, so that there was a current of air!' 'Then you are as bad as the Papists, you add to the written Word?' He had no reply but 'Our Rabbis think they have authority for it.'

The *Incense-altar*. A type, not of prayer, but of what makes prayer acceptable (Rev. viii.). Christ is the Angel-messenger. His fragrant incense, the merit of His blood, on the four horns. Put on this altar your praises, your prayers, all your cups of cold water.

The *Veil*, a door, a curtain-door. God's way out to us, and our way in to God. Christ, the Door, after being rent. When He died the *Veil* was rent 'from top to bottom,'—God's work, not man's.

The *Cherubim*, a whole history in itself. The word,

'carved form'=symbolic form. A type of the redeemed. (1) They stand on the *Ark*, and their feet on the blood. They cannot be angels. No angel needs the blood. (2) They are united to the *Mercy-seat*. No angel is so. Their eye is partly on the blood, and partly on each other.

The copy of the Two Tables in the *Ark*. The *Cherubim* stand on *righteousness*, for the blood vindicates the broken law. The Two Tables=Christ's obedience. The *Cherubim* at the gate of Eden say, 'You, Adam and Eve, may get in again.' Grace at the very moment of their expulsion.

The *Shittim-wood boards* fixed in the ransom-money by two tenons. A firm hold (*q.d.*), both hands.

The *Corner-boards*, like the Corner-stone, on which one may stumble, but meant for far other ends. Perhaps not overlapping, but one of them projecting.

The *Rings*; (Exod. xxvi. 24) a difficulty. 'They shall be doubled beneath (coupled together), and doubled at the head of it (coupled together above, מִמֶּנּוּ) into the one ring. It shall be alike for both of them. They shall be thus for the two corners;' or rather, I think, 'they shall be twins תְּמִים below. Its top shall be twins fitting in to the one ring.' 'Its top' is the board in two leaves.

The forty-eight *Boards*. If forty-nine, that would have been seven times seven, a complete number. But the Church is not complete without its Head; He makes it forty-nine, seven times seven.

The *Pillar-Cloud* over all, day and night. At any hour might the Priest or Levite have light enough to go to any part of the courts, and the *Pillar-Cloud* would seem to point down to yon *Altar*!

Such are some of the results of a 'thought,' but it was

carried out, not left unused. Besides, to take one subject like this and master all the details is (1) Good discipline to the mind. (2) It gives one's-self confidence in teaching and applying. (3) It makes others trust you and receive your teaching more readily.

And once more,—if the 'thought' has been for the glory of God, and not merely a pleasant exercise of mind, then it comes under the blessing: 'Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart' (2 Chron. vi. 8).

THE WALK WITH GOD AS SHOWN IN THE TABERNACLE OF WITNESS

'Christ, the True Tabernacle' (Heb. viii. 2)

(Suggested as a Programme for the Perth Conference)

I. THE COURTS

- (1) *Christ, the Door of access to all we need in going to God.*
Christ, the Door (Veil) into the Holy Place.
Christ, the Door (Veil) into the Holiest of all.
- (2) *The Altar.*—The forgiveness we need found here.
In Atonement (Lev. xvii.) and
Reconciliation (Eph. ii.).
Proclaimed (Acts xiii.) and
Experienced (1 John ii.).
- (3) *The Laver.*—The purifying of the heart (Acts xv. 9).
Daily washing (John xiii.).
By the Spirit and the Word (Eph. v. 26).
'Clean Hands.' 'Holy Hands.'

II. THE HOLY PLACE

- (1) *The Shew-bread.*—Life in Christ (John vi. 35). Bread of God.
The Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 24).
Partakers of the Lord's Supper (John vi.).

- (2) *The Candlestick*.—Light in Christ.
Christ and we spoken of as 'light' (John viii. 12 ;
Matt. v. 14).
Given in the Gospel (2 Cor. iv. 4-6).
Our walk in it (1 John i. 7).
- (3) *The Golden Altar*.—*Worship in Christ*.
Christ the Intercessor (Heb. vii.).
Prayer sent through Him (Rev. viii.).
Praise and thanks through Him (Heb. xiii. 15).

III. THE HOLY OF HOLIES

Holiness and Glory within the Veil

- (1) *The Ark*.—Christ in His Person (Col. ii. 3).
In His doing the Father's will. 'The Law within
His heart.' The Two Tables (Ps. xl.).
In His propitiatory suffering unto death.
The blood sprinkled there (Rom. iii. 25).
- (2) *The Cherubim on the Ark, and united to it*.
Union to Christ as well as rest in His Person,
obedience, and blood.
- (3) *The Cherubim with their faces toward each other*.
Brotherly love and fellowship (1 John i. 7).
- (4) *The Cloud of Glory between the Cherubim*.
God in full communion with His redeemed, and
they with Him, and God dwelling with them
(Rev. xxi. 3).
- (5) *Paradise thus more than restored*; the flaming sword
sheathed; the Cherubim in Eden; the Tree of Life
reached.
- (6) *Pot of Manna and Aaron's Rod*.
Reminiscences of ancient days—of God's ways with
us in the past—'Days of Earth in Heaven!'

LETTERS

CHAPTER XI

TO REV. A. N. SOMERVILLE, GLASGOW

Monday, Dec. 11th, 1837.

MY DEAR ALIC,—You now know the beginning of a full ministry in the Gospel of Christ. Has it, then, solemnised you deeply? Have you felt as the young priest—some young son of Aaron—would feel on the day when first the anointing oil that ordained him to his office was poured on his head, and himself permitted for the first time to go in at the door of the Holy Place, and walk by the side of the Golden Candlestick and touch the shew-bread and tread the floor of the place where God was peculiarly present? Anything like this in you? Or anything like Christ's spirit after His heavenly baptism? Perhaps, rather, you have been like Christ after His baptism in regard to temptation. Has Satan already assailed you? Has he three times tempted you? Has he puffed you up with a high idea of self or made you doubt the love of God your Father, or asked you to court the honour of the world? I cannot conjecture your state of soul—but I trust that at least it is ever 'looking *unto* Jesus' and '*into* Jesus.'

All went well at Kelso. I felt as if God melted my soul to perfect softness, when I saw the hands of the Presbytery laid on the head of my brother [Horatius]. The feeling was that of joy and praise at the honour,

and a sort of awe. . . . You will be saying 'What! this long, long letter, and not a word about the Jews!' Well then, dear Alic, I must tell you what I seriously consider to be another answer of prayer. . . . Last week a foreign Jew, who has been long in Britain, found his way from Dublin through Glasgow (*N.B.*—He did not stay in a city where the lately ordained minister was for taking to himself and his fellows all the glorious things written by the prophets regarding 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem') till he reached Edinburgh. . . . He is very poor, speaks almost nothing but German, is very simple, and has almost come to believe in Christ. . . . He is very interesting. Last Sabbath I had the satisfaction of preaching in Rose Street¹ to him and another Jew on Rev. xiv. 1. Now, Alic, is there not something from God in all this? Is it not Christ saying to me that I am right in peculiarly loving Israel? My meeting in Rose Street last night was very full, and there were about thirty men . . . two careless Roman Catholics among them. So that you see I am a happy man, honoured of God to preach to some followers of Antichrist, and to some of His ancient people. Indeed I have been very happy of late in my soul. Remember to observe our concerted times of prayer, and count it absolutely necessary to be often alone, like Jacob at Jabbok, until you can call your study 'Peniel; for I have seen God face to face.'—לַפְנֵי יְהוָה. Pray for wisdom for me, that I may speak to sinners and to saints *in season*. . . . Yours truly, dear Alic, in the flesh and in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

¹ Part of his mission-district in connection with St. George's Church, Edinburgh.

TO REV. JOHN PURVES, JEDBURGH, DURING THE VISIT
OF THE DEPUTATION TO THE HOLY LANDJERUSALEM, *June 17th*, 1839.

MY DEAR JOHN,—I scarcely know how to write when sending you a letter from Jerusalem and Mount Zion. Our present residence is actually on the hill of Zion, and our windows look directly on the Mount of Olives. I feel like a man who has got before him more than he can use ; or, as you have often felt, when you have got some full passage of the Bible, wherein you see there is tenfold more to be found than you are able to explain. To be in this land, especially to be in Jerusalem, is really to have the Word of God open before you in another form. And it is deep joy to be in the midst of the hills and valleys where the Lord's voice so often spoke to man, and to be in the city where Immanuel's mighty work was done. We had some expectations, in our setting out, that we might see in passing Rome and Athens, and the Pyramids of Egypt,—indeed we actually were within about half a day's journey of them all,—but God led us past these, as if He meant to make us know by experience Ps. lxxxvii. 4, 5 : 'I will mention Rahab and Babylon—but of *Zion* it shall be said.' As you might expect, the interest of this land is beyond anything in the world to a believer. It was remarkable that the first night we entered it we heard the singing of birds on every side, and soon after the turtle-dove,—so that really Bunyan's description of Beulah (remember that is the true name of Israel's land, Isa. lxii. 4) seemed realised, 'We entered the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant. Their way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season ; yea, here they heard the song

of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear on the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. Here, too, they heard voices out of the city, loud voices saying, "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh." We saw at once that in the Song of Songs, written for the Church of Israel, chap. ii. 11, 12, the imagery was taken from their own land. However, it was only a spot here and there that brought such descriptions to our mind. In most places the land is desolate, though it is splendid in its very desolation. We entered Palestine on May 29th, and on the fourth day found ourselves passing through the Valley of Sorek, and yet not a vine to be seen. I remembered immediately Hosea ii. 12: 'I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees,' etc. And rejoiced also in the promise (ver. 15) that, after the time she has been in Achor, the vineyards shall be restored. . . . But I must hasten to tell you of Jerusalem. On drawing near I felt very serious. The first look we got happened to be from the Jaffa side where very little is seen—so that I felt that day nothing peculiar except the site of 'the mountains that stand round Jerusalem.' That moment the faithfulness of God appeared a vivid reality. . . . We spent ten days in it and its neighbourhood, and every day the scenes seemed fresh to me. The Mount of Olives is, perhaps, the place of deepest interest. . . . We often visited Gethsemane at its foot. . . . We could easily see how it would be a place where the disciples often came to meet Jesus (John xviii. 2, *συνήχθη*, place of rendezvous), and then, when all had come, they together went over the hill to Bethany. . . . I did as you asked me—one morning I went alone to it, and prayed for you specially and your people. Dear John, return my prayer—pour yours out for me, for my soul is dry. . . . Last Sabbath we enjoyed a great privilege ;

I am sure you would have rejoiced to have been with us—we partook of the Lord's Supper together in the little church formed here by the English missionaries. . . . I had the very great privilege of opening my lips to speak of Immanuel, in the city where He died, and is to reign. I took John xiv. 2, 3. It was a day of peculiar refreshment and joy. . . . But I must leave off at present; for I have to write letters to some others from Jerusalem. . . . Ask for us more faith, love, zeal. . . . I wonder from time to time at the hand of God in bringing me to the 'Promised Land.' I hope it is a type and pledge that He will one day so carry me to *Inmanuel Himself*. The one is as free grace as the other. When you pray for me, particularly mention the case of my people at Collace, for often my soul is sad when I think of them.—Believe me, my dear John, yours truly in the flesh and in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

I prayed for your people more than once while at Jerusalem, and often, too, at different stages of our way. They came into my mind sometimes in connection with you, sometimes in connection with the Sabbath evening sermons I used to give on the Land. I don't think that I ever in these discourses overstated the reality. Remember me to the saints among you. . . . Tell H. B. and the other Sabbath-school teachers that I do not forget them even 'in the land of Jordan and the Hermonites.' If ever they got one cup of cold water from me to their souls, I have a claim on their prayers. I often think of your prayer-meetings. Is there any sign of the Spirit poured out?

TO REV. A. N. SOMERVILLE, GLASGOW

COLLACE, *Wednesday, Jan. 19th, 1842.*

MY DEAR ALIC,—‘A friend loveth at all times’; but I find that hours of peril make us know our love to one another more than other times. We were alarmed by hearing of your sickness, and I write to get some account of you. Have you been in ‘the valley of the shadow of death’? Was it dark? Did the ‘staff’ support you? Could you sing in its gloom, ‘I am persuaded that neither death nor life,’ etc.? I hear you are better now, you are to be spared a little longer for our sakes and your own. Robert M’Cheyne is staying with me at present, and we joined heartily in prayer for you on Saturday evening especially. Write us and say what are the ‘peaceable fruits of righteousness’ that ‘afterwards’ appear. What views of your Master did you obtain? what views of your own heart? Are you more weary than ever of your own righteousness—of self, which is truly a Hydra—of your fellowmen and corruption? Are you not ‘looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Day of God’? You and I shall then stand in our Redeemer’s beauty, . . . and all our brethren alike beautiful—all fair—no spot—without blemish—without wrinkle—white and clean—in fine linen—in garments of needlework—*like Jesus*. Will you know me in that day? Will you know *yourself*?

Remember me to Mrs. Somerville, though we be strangers in the flesh. Bid her remember ‘the elect lady.’—Believe me, dear Alic, yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. JAMES MUDIE, MONTROSE

COLLACE, *May 31st*, 1844.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—. . . I did not observe that there were five Sabbaths in June. I suppose therefore that our Communion will be the last day of June. Now this would leave me the interval of one Sabbath to come to Dr. Brewster. . . . But I find that to be absent that Sabbath would not be possible without risking some evil consequences. And indeed I am afraid that already too much moving about has so shaken this vessel that the living water does not come up to the brim or flow over on others. My soul gets weary. O to be as those above who seem to grow holier and stronger by every act they do in their heavenly service! 'His servants serve Him,' and all the while they 'see His face,' and His 'name' becomes brighter on their foreheads. They get more and more of the look and air of true children of such a Father.

Come to us this Communion again. Perhaps you would impart some spiritual gift, and perhaps you would obtain some. My brother from Kelso is to be with me.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Mudie. Remember me to the 'holy brethren,' the Lord's children among you. Is your servant girl¹ walking in the truth?—Believe me, dear brother, yours in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

¹ A servant who was one day carrying Dr. Bonar's bag for him to the coach or train. He spoke some words to her about her soul, which were the means of her conversion.

TO REV. JAMES MANSON

COLLACE, *August 30, 1844.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am longing to hear of you. Are you better? and where are you? It is a sore trial to be laid aside, but it must be very sanctifying. It seems to be peculiarly a *minister's furnace*. Remember the Baptist. He preached in full health amid the breezes of the hills of Judea, and then at the waters of Ænon; and as he preached he cried, 'He must increase, but *I must decrease!*' Well, he was soon laid up in the dungeon of Machaerus, and saw Herod's gay company riding out and in to the palace—while he could only mourn, 'Lord! art Thou He that should come?' Your own history resembles this—you ministered in the hilly country, and then by the waters of Ænon; and now you are learning John's lesson of trial. But perhaps you have more work yet—prepare for it by the deepening holiness of your soul. Tell me what you are learning in this school.

Write me if you can, and believe me, dear brother,
yours in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. A. N. SOMERVILLE, GLASGOW

COLLACE, *Sept. 23, 1844.*

MY DEAR A.,—Your letter teased me—for it is not in my power to come to your Communion. I am engaged to Edinburgh—all the diets. David Brown had previously written me to come to him, and I thought, 'Now if I could have done this, I might at least be with A. S. at a Communion!' But it is ordered otherwise.

We have got different spots of the vineyard to labour in, and the Husbandman who hired us knows best how to use us. Was it to keep us from being ambitious like the disciples, that He said of the labourers: 'They received every man *a penny*?' We are apt to seek to be great in the kingdom of heaven. I find it often difficult to be content to be 'the last of all and servant of all,' to stand ever on the low step of free grace, without one quality or personal property to make a difference between me and the brand plucked from the burning at the last hour. We must exalt Christ so high as to get out of sight of ourselves in looking up to Him. We must be like the company in Rev. iv., so occupied in setting Him on high as to forget altogether that we have any separate existence from Him.

The Lord make your vestry to be to you 'The secret place of the Most High.' I have been laid up in the house for a fortnight by a sprained foot, which I got in falling from my horse when it started at something on the road. I find this trial useful. 'All the paths of the Lord' are '*mercy*' as well as '*truth*.'

Go on, brother, through the valley of Baca. Zion will soon be in view! 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.'—Believe me, dear A., yours in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS BROTHER, MR. WILLIAM BONAR, LONDON

COLLACE, *Tuesday Morning.*

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Here is a neat plan of Jerusalem and the country round, to which I have added a few names. By means of it you may 'walk about Zion and tell the towers thereof,' just as you do at Morningside to the towers of Edinburgh Castle. As

you come up from Bethlehem and go in at the 'Zion-gate,' you may sing one of your hymns:—

'Pilgrim burden'd with thy sin,
Come thy way to Zion-gate,' etc.

Notice where I have put up a cross. I think it was thereabouts that Calvary stood—not at all where they now show the Holy Sepulchre. Notice also Scopus. It was the camp of Titus when he first of all came to besiege the city.

Now, dear William, wander up and down and round about Jerusalem. It is fine fresh air. Climb the Mount of Olives and visit Bethany on the other side. Drink in all the truths they will suggest. 'Jesus Christ *the same* . . . to-day.'

There are two mistakes in the plan. The Mount of Olives is made too low a great deal at the one extremity, and there ought to be not a smooth plain but a deep valley between Aceldama and the hill of Zion. The deep valley was Gehenna—the valley of the son of Hinnom. May you meet the King as you wander in these holy spots. May you meet the Man of Sorrows in Gethsemane, and may you be met by Melchizedec—the true Melchizedec—in the King's dale, the valley of Jehoshaphat. See, also, to get a drink at the Pool of Siloam, and eat a little of the ears of barley that grow on Mount Zion, at the spot marked No. 27, where we plucked some six years ago.

The above is my prescription for an invalid—Jerusalem air, Siloam water, Zion barley; and you may add Gethsemane olives. They will do you no harm.—Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

P.S.—When you are done with Jerusalem, journey on to Collace. You know Collace-hill is very like the hill of Samaria.

TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH

KELSO, *April 28th, 1846.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Do not forget Monday next. In spite of Satan and the flesh keep it from morning to evening. In spite of the temptation, 'O this must be done,' or 'that sick person must be seen,' or 'that caller on business must be listened to for a moment, only a moment!'—in spite of all, keep the day.

Ask the Holy Ghost to teach us afresh—to teach us the Bible, and how to preach its contents and not our thoughts. O what need of prayer! The land lies dead. Jesus is little loved even by His own. Who are the mighty men that will break through the host of the Philistines to bring Him one cup of water? O brother, let us lie low. Let us seek the 'mourning as for an only son.'

I have to-day to write sixteen letters, and then to go to Jedburgh, so I must close. Remember me who am on this occasion your remembrancer.—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH

COLLACE, *Friday Evening.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—. . . I was trying to stand beside Paul last Sabbath and hear him cry, 'O wretched man,' etc. His abhorrence of his remainder of sin arose from his unclouded assurance that his God so loved him—and how intense was his abhorrence! What a cry at the sight of remaining selfishness—at the discovery that he, a pardoned soul, should still be self-willed, slow to believe. God is heaping on me His favour and making

me bask in His sweetest beams and yet I am self-pleasing, self-seeking, etc., '*O wretched man!*' Never despond, dear brother, and never tell your people that you despond, so long as He who gave your commission abideth the same. O blessed certainty! my God loves me with all His heart, and has sent me to show others the way to the same bliss. And, blessed hope, 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be,' etc.—Yours in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO THE REV. JAMES MANSON

KELSO, *April 30th*, 1846.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I was appointed to furnish you with the annexed list of brethren in which is your own name, understanding that you were willing to join us in keeping one day every month as peculiarly set apart for fasting and prayer. Monday next is the day we mean to begin, and the first Monday of every month thereafter. Your turn to give notice will not be for a year yet. Surely we need much to pray—and to sigh and cry for the land. How little fulness in our messages! How little of the love that is as a most vehement flame! How seldom we feel commissioned by God at the time! How rare the felt and evident presence of the Holy Ghost! Few are saved—our hearers float down the stream to the lake of fire, and we sit on the banks writing sermons and speaking words, instead of really rushing to their rescue, declaring the whole mind of God opened out at Calvary. O brother, let us go and put ourselves on Monday under the Holy Spirit's teaching anew—to be taught *the Word*—and how to preach *the contents of the Word*, not our thoughts upon it. One spark of lightning is worth a thousand of tame candle-

flames—so, one sentence given us by the Holy Ghost is worth volumes of any other.

Join us, then, on Monday. May He Himself give us His power to wrestle.—Yours truly in the Lord,
ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. A. N. SOMERVILLE, GLASGOW

COLLACE, *Sept. 18th, 1846.*

MY DEAR A.,—Here is a fragment supposed to have been transmitted by the 'Anticipative telegraph.'

St. Vincent Street, Glasgow

Breakfast-table spread. Mrs. Somerville waiting for Mr. S., who enters at last, still rather dull.

Mr. S. 'Any letters this morning? I have been thinking of my Communion arrangements.'

Mrs. S. 'There is one there marked "Perth." Perhaps it may be from some friend whom you asked to come to your Communion.'

Mr. S. 'Oh, I know the handwriting. It is from Collace no doubt.' (Reads very gravely.)

Mrs. S. 'Well, is it a promise of help?'

Mr. S. 'O no, no—as provoking as ever. That man will never look near us. Well, well, good Mr. Cumming will do more than supply his place.'

(*Cætera desunt.*)

The truth is, dear Alic, I am engaged already to the Edinburgh Fast Day and Sabbath, but if you will feel it at all of use I shall at once do this. I could come on Monday morning, I believe, by the train in time to preach forenoon and evening . . . I have just returned

from ten days' preaching in the Mearns, round about Montrose. . . . I preached about fourteen times during these ten days ; one of the times was a morning lecture on the Jews and the Second Advent. However, with the exception of this last, and, of course, occasional statements of the coming Day of God, the ten days were spent in evangelising. 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' I saw in two places a good deal of impression . . .

Finally, dear brother, I do not always feed among the lilies. I know my Shepherd always feeds there and that He feeds me, but He often gives me 'bitter herbs' for food. Sin and sinners—God dishonoured by us and by others—will never be otherwise than bitter herbs. But let us eat the Paschal Lamb all the more. . . . Believe me, dear A., yours in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. WILLIAM DICKSON, EDINBURGH

COLLACE, Oct. 6th, 1846.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have this moment got a refreshing word, which being a piece of the Bread of Life I may share with you. It is Ruth i. 21 : 'The *Almighty* hath afflicted me.' The word 'Almighty' is John Bunyan's word 'Shaddai,' the 'All-sufficient One.' Now, see, Naomi feels smitten down by His right hand and upheld by His left, for she says, 'I am afflicted, left destitute, by One who is Himself sufficient to make up for all.' You hear the sweet sound of the stream of comfort that is flowing through her afflicted soul in that word, 'All-sufficient One!' 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee,' etc.

Do you not observe that the Lord is remarkably gracious and wise in His consolations to you, inasmuch

as He is at present so peculiarly impressing your young people? It was thus He comforted me very specially at Mr. M'Cheyne's death. He gave me that year five or six souls, I believe, all about the season when that stroke came. And thus it is He seems to say: 'It is things spiritual that are to supply the place of things seen and temporal.' Even your increased duties in the way of business have this meaning. They lift off your mind from many things in your affliction that otherwise would have been ever recurring to you, and they seem to say, 'You must have more grace now to stand against the wear of business—you must test the fulness of the Lord not only for comfort but for holiness.'

It will hold up my hands a little on the Saturday to know that you and some of your flock have prayed for me. But often do I find God teaching me that it is only when He Himself pleases that any utterance is given. . . . Believe me, yours truly,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. A. N. SOMERVILLE, GLASGOW

COLLACE, *Nov. 23rd, 1846.*

MY DEAR ALIC,—I have nothing worth to send you about Paul. You have no doubt anticipated almost all I could offer from a somewhat hasty glance. In my usual reading I have come to 1 Corinthians, and there have been led to notice one interesting feature in Paul. Though the greatest and wisest—best stored of all—he never seems to like to stand alone. It is always Paul and Timothy—Paul and Barnabas—Paul and Apollos—Paul and Titus—Paul and Sosthenes, etc. Now this is not from want of firmness, needing the sympathy

of others to decide him, but from deep wisdom. He sees that this is God's way of keeping the workers humble. He does not employ one only at a building, but several, and so no one can say 'the success is owing to me.' It may be your fellow-labourer that is the secret of the blessing—perhaps he is more prayerful than you, more single-minded. Hence, says Paul in 1 Cor. iii., 'He that planteth and he that watereth are one,' that is, it is one and the same work, and has the same wages. None is to say, 'Planting is far more important and difficult than watering.' These departments of labour form but one work in God's view, and each labourer is alike rewarded for success. We are God's *συνεργοί*, *i.e.* we are set by God to be one another's fellow-labourers. It is not 'we are labourers along with God.' No, but we belong to the corps of labourers who build God's temple and get our penny at night. Thus we are kept from despising one another. Hence, blessing comes down best when not the minister only, but elders, teachers, visitors, are all alike active and full of prayer and faith. No room here to say, 'It is I that bring down the shower.' Our Lord meant this also in John iv.: 'He that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.' There is somewhat of the same principle in 'two or three agreeing together.'

This is a hasty note, but, among other ends, it will show that I retain a lively remembrance of the happy evening I spent with you in Glasgow.

Peace be to your house, and *mercy* and peace to you its head, responsible for so many souls.—Yours truly,
dear brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. WILLIAM DICKSON, EDINBURGH

COLLACE, *Friday, Jan. 1847.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I wrote you a hurried note yesterday from Perth, but on reading yours to me again I cannot resist writing more fully to-day. Our Master may use a word to refresh you. You speak of times when soul and body are so wearied that 'you cannot read the Word or pray with life,' when you come in in the evenings. Well, I can tell you something worse than this in a minister's experience. There was a time when he used to be thus worn out by working in spiritual duties so that all relish for the truth was ready to die. I have gone to classes and come home to family worship in this miserable frame. But now I perceive that there was a great deal of legalism in this state. I used to feel as if I were punished by our Father for not keeping my soul in a better frame, and this idea made me careless of trying to get immediate refreshment in the Word and by prayer, for the secret suspicion of the Lord's fatherly displeasure made this look hopeless. Then the Lord taught me also to remember Psalm i. 2, and, by keeping one word of His own on my spirit all day, I have often since been kept from withering. Just a few days ago I had to ride after breakfast six miles off to visit, and scarcely got home in time to have ten minutes for dinner, when the hour of a teachers' meeting struck, and to this I had to go, and then from that to another. But that morning I had got this word, Hosea iii. 1: 'The love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods,' etc., and this grain of grace, this particle of the fine wheat, this love to the ungrateful, so continually recurred to my soul that that day was a happy day amid its bustle. I

daresay you will say, 'This is just my experience, too, but you do not know how business engrosses mind and memory.' True, brother, and all I meant by telling you what is familiar to your own experience is just to keep you in mind of the way in which your trials may be borne. Keep a grape of Eshcol beside you, and moisten your parched palate with it when you can; and, if you cannot get time for this, then surely your Heavenly Father can refresh you without it. You have been working for Him all day. Go home singing of His love to you that needed not your efforts to draw it forth, nor any service directly done to His name. I shall pray for this for you, and expect to hear that often at mid-day you are walking among the trees of life, by the side of the river from the throne of God and the Lamb. Do you try to praise often, when all other things seem dull to you? . . . Do you ever remember my poor flock when you are getting near the High Priest? . . . 'Peace be to you and love with faith.'—Yours affectionately,
 dear friend, ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. JAMES MUDIE, MONTROSE

COLLACE, *Jan. 20th*, 1847.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is unkind in me not to have written sooner. It is not because I forget you or Ferryden,¹ which is your diocese in some measure. . . . Salute that precious flock in my name. Say to Miss P——, 'His way is in the sea and His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known. Yet He leads His people as a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.' Read the whole psalm—the seventy-seventh

¹ Dr. Bonar twice visited Ferryden, near Montrose, during the remarkable revivals there.

—and take courage. Say to those that have rested on the Lord Jesus, ‘Run the race looking unto Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of your faith.’ Say to those still groping in darkness, ‘The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God’ (2 Thess. iii. 5). The Holy Spirit show you the harbour for sin-tossed souls, viz., the open love of the Father which He holds out to you in His Beloved Son. Say to those still unsaved, ‘O generation of vipers (see Acts xxviii. 3, 4, venomously hating God), flee from the wrath to come’ (Luke iii. 7). Will our greatly honoured and revered and beloved friend, Dr. Brewster, let me send these messages? It is only Timothy’s message to Paul’s sheep.

Now, brother, for yourself. One word only, Acts xx. 35, Paul’s words in closing his address. ‘It is more blessed,’ said our Master, ‘to give than to receive.’ And then *they prayed*. Is not this as if he had said, ‘Our Master delights to give; it is His blessedness to give; come, then, let us kneel and ask Him for some gift.’

So be it with you. Kindest regards to Mrs. Mudie ‘till the Daybreak.’—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. A. N. SOMERVILLE, GLASGOW

COLLACE, Oct. 1st, 1847.

MY DEAR A.,—Did you ever read this extract from a sermon recently delivered, or supposed to be recently delivered, to a congregation in Glasgow? ‘Paul, my friends, was a pattern of kindness to his brethren. If he touched at Tyre away he went to see his brethren there. But more than this; Paul was most generous in his kindness; he spent not only one, but seven days with

these disciples. Alas, it is not so in our cold days! My brethren pass through the very town where they know a brother dwells, and go not up to salute him. I can speak from experience.' . . . (*Cætera desunt.*) (Course of sermons on Paul's life and ministry.)

Note by a reader.—'We submit that Paul is rather too highly applauded here. It was because the ship was to remain seven days at Tyre that Paul stayed so long. Indeed, how else could a minister have seven days to spare! And besides, at Ephesus, Acts xx. 16, "he determined to *sail by* Ephesus (*παραπλευσαι*)," and to invite his brethren in the ministry to meet him elsewhere. Just as if the Pastor—the evangelistic, as well as evangelical Pastor—of Anderston were to be at the Bridge of Earn, and on his way to Glasgow to pass through Perth. He is near Collace, but he determines to "sail by,"—"for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the Day of Pentecost." Such things have occurred in other times. 'From Glasgow he writes to Collace' and invites the elder of that church.'

My well-beloved brother, I am real sorry that there are five, instead of four, Sabbaths in October this year, and you see the reason of my sorrow. Edinburgh Communion is on the 31st and so I cannot get to you on Saturday. . . . In going to Ireland I had arranged to see you in Glasgow, but found out that you and your family were alike out of town. And in returning I . . . had to pass on that same day to Edinburgh on account of some necessary arrangements. It was not my forgetfulness of you . . .

Perhaps now you will come in to Edinburgh Communion and we may meet there; at Miletus, if not at Ephesus. . . .—Yours affectionately, dear A.,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. WILLIAM DICKSON, EDINBURGH

COLLACE, *Dec. 14th, 1847.*

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Thanks for your note announcing your safe arrival . . . You did not say how you found all at home—you took that for granted. But, remember, this is one of the little things that friends like to hear. Was it not one of the domestic sympathies that Paul cherished? I was led lately to notice that though writing the all-important Epistle to the Romans, so solemn and so searching, and all under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost who was still filling the room with His presence, yet Paul was led to ask (see chap. xvi.) ‘Any message to Rome? I am just closing my letter.’ Timothy said, ‘Send my kind regards.’ Jason and Lucius and Sosipater, all three said, ‘And send ours too.’ Just at that moment Gaius came in. ‘Any word, Gaius, to Rome?’ ‘O yes, remember me to them all.’ A knock came to the door, and the soldier that kept guard introduced ‘The chamberlain of the city—Erastus.’ Paul says, ‘Well, I am just sending off a letter to our friends in Rome, Erastus; shall I send your salutation?’ ‘By all means, give them my kind love.’ . . .

Salute all at your house (I must not forget my own lesson). Write soon.—Yours affectionately, dear William,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. WILLIAM DICKSON, EDINBURGH

COLLACE, *May 16th, 1848.*

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Isabella's note would tell you that it seemed best not to come in this week . . . and when I saw that the forenoon meetings for prayer were

to be only for a single hour each day I felt far less regret—although, it is true, one hour might make Jericho fall, were faith in its mountain-removing exercise. . . . I got your Ayrshire paper. Did you notice one thing in it about the ‘Singing Valley’? It is a valley in America covered over with loose fragments of broken stones and shingle, and when a morning breeze passes over it you may hear most melodious sounds issuing from all parts of it. Think of this as an emblem. A broken spirit’s debris or loose fragments may send forth sweet melody when the Spirit breathes over the valley. This soul of loose, broken thoughts and feelings, shattered joys, shivered hopes, smooth-worn cares, becomes an Æolian harp in the Spirit’s hand. Have you never felt this? Perhaps others have heard the melody from this extraordinary ‘Singing Valley’ when you did not know. Every traveller wonders at that phenomenon in America, but even angels wonder at a pilgrim’s songs—at the sweet sounds that issue from New Jerusalem broken stones. . . .—Your affectionate brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. A. N. SOMERVILLE, GLASGOW

COLLACE, *June 30th*, 1848.

MY DEAR ALIC,—My Communion has filled up my time and made me delay writing to you. You have had a Patmos-time instead of the Upper Room, but both have their place and use, and you are dealt with as a son. Do not be like the Baptist in prison who began to grow impatient and to wonder at his Master’s letting him lie in fetters, unused. ‘Surely my voice could have still made the Desert ring with the cry, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord!” Surely my time for preaching was very brief. Surely it would be better doing something

among crowds of souls than to be here!' One of his disciples ventures to soothe him by suggesting, 'Perhaps the Master has not heard of this violent act of Herod's.' 'No, no,' says John, 'that will not explain it—He knows well. But I cannot understand His delay.' Another disciple suggests, 'Did not you say that He must increase and you decrease?' 'O yes, but I might still have been allowed to be His herald and proclaim Him to others.' The result is that he sends off two disciples with a message scarcely respectful enough, 'Art Thou indeed the Coming One?' After a few days the two return. 'Well, what did He say?' 'He said, "Blessed is he, who-soever is not offended in Me."' While they still talk over all that Jesus had done and said, lo! one of Christ's twelve, or one of the seventy, arrives, and tells him the Master had spoken most kindly, lovingly, applaudingly of His suffering servant. And so John reposes on his hard cold prison floor, thinking on *his Master's love to him, though he cannot see through His ways*. That very night perhaps, when a calm had succeeded to the storm, he is sent for to Paradise, and is not at all offended at being carried thither by the sword of Herod, rather than by a fiery chariot.

What an episode! But, dear A., do take care of yourself. Samuel Miller told me of you pretty fully a few days ago. May your new abode not be so 'haunted' as Newton said his old study at Olney was, viz., by legions of evil thoughts. I hope to begin my Berwickshire itinerating the last week of July, or first of August. . . . Thanks for your few hints. The remembrance of Daniel Cormick will, I trust, quicken me to work while it is called to-day, but more and more I see how wretchedly indolent and self-pleasing my soul is in the Lord's work. . . . Believe me, my dear A., yours affectionately,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. WILLIAM DICKSON, EDINBURGH

NEWCASTLE, *Saturday*, 1850.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I am not the author of these lines on the Jews. Alas! my harp has never been taken down from the willows,¹ though I expect it to be when ‘the tongue of the dumb shall sing.’ I cannot state who is the author. Ask my sister, if you can see her, to look in some of her books . . . May the King give you ‘the pen of the ready writer’ to write in His praise. As for dear Hewitson, ‘We sorrow not as those who have no hope.’ The Lord will bring him to us again when He brings us Christ again. ‘Therefore, comfort one another with these words.’ But who will fill up the gap?—Your affectionate brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH

COLLACE, *Augst. 16th*, 1852.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I trust your little boy is to be spared, and that the Lord is only teaching you that he is a gift in the hands of the Preserver of men. ‘He careth for you’ must be in your thoughts continually under your long-continued anxieties. ‘He careth for you!’ and these repeated threatenings of separation are proofs of His care. ‘He careth for you,’ and so He will not let you alone without uncertainty being in your cup of comfort, since that ingredient is needful to its efficacy. But ‘He careth for you,’ brother, in every way, and so for your little boy as part of you, and as acknowledged such in the hour of his baptism. . . .

¹ The only verses of poetry he ever wrote appeared in articles on the Twelve Tribes, which he contributed to *The Scattered Nation* in 1866.

How ingenious is Satan in devising schemes for withdrawing us from prayer, and from steadily setting forth Christ the Lord as the life of our every duty, and every sermon. Pray for me, brother, that I may daily, at least, touch the hem of His garment, for, 'as many as touched Him were made whole.'—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

When will you keep yourself disengaged to have time to pray with us? . . . Can you afford to want *united* prayer?

TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH

COLLACE, *F. C. Manse* [1852].

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Our post passes only once a day, and I have thoughtlessly let the time slip on, so that I fear this may not reach you before Sabbath. I have been enabled to pray for you more than once with some freedom since I heard of your stroke, which is perhaps the best of all ways of offering you help and bringing you comfort. It may draw forth for you the sympathy of the Lord Jesus. Twice to-day has this verse met me in opening the Word for personal reading, 'He hath done all things well.' Nothing has happened to you accidentally. *He* has done it all, as truly as we can say of Him in creation, 'Without Him was not any thing made that was made.' He has done this thing—He has called home your little boy, 'Come up hither!' Has He not done *well* in doing this? Your blood-sprinkled heart owns that He has done well, in spite of nature, and you could write, I know, unhesitatingly on his tomb, '*He hath done all things well.*' Dear brother, may you get your will sunk in His—may you find your loss supplied by the full Presence of Him who has given

you *Himself* as your portion. May you grow sick of His love, which is better than the life of a thousand beloveds. May you feel powerfully drawn now by three such cords as are fixed round your heart by three departed ones towards the Resurrection-morning, when you shall see them arise in health, power, incorruption, beauty, glorious likeness to the Lord. You are at present walking through one of earth's valleys that are dark with the shadow of death, but you can sing in its gloom, 'Thou art with me, I am not alone.' Lean your weary head as well as your heavy-laden conscience on the Mercy-seat, on the Person of the Giver of rest, as you have taught others to do. The blood, and the Lord who shed that blood, cannot fail to bring intense relief, for this is the channel down which love flows without impediment, in full current on its way to you, a sinner and a sorrowful man, holy love, the love of the Holy One for you, brother! The stream seems to murmur as it flows your way, 'I know thy sorrows.' 'In Me ye shall have peace.'

Hoping to see you very soon, and still remembering you.—Believe me, yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH

'Sub-pastor Pastoris boni'

COLLACE, *Thursday Evening.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your kind note grieved me. I did not think you were sunk at present into any depression. Come, fellow-pilgrim, remember how it is written, 'Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees.' How will you hold up others? After all, you are the strongest, if you really are feeling quite

weak and self-emptied. Are you not, on Scripture principles? And your brother at Collace is certainly anything but strong when he is in too equable a mood. . . .

Your sermon to us was felt much by all the people—or, rather, your three sermons. We were all refreshed. The Lord seemed to speak by you.—In haste, dear brother, yours in the Lord,
ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I heard you setting off this morning at an untimely hour, and I trust the Lord made you a 'Barnabas.' But, brother, do remember the following passage: preach on it next Sabbath, and *practise* it, Exodus xviii. 18. . . . Now, may the God of hospitable Abraham be the God that remembers to you all your kindness to travellers and strangers who come under the shadow of your roof.

Remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Moody-Stuart whom I love in the truth.—Yours affectionately in the Lord,
ANDREW A. BONAR.

Moses was very 'meek'; hence Exodus xviii. 24.
N.B.—This also would make a good sermon!

THREE LETTERS TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH, ON HIS
RECEIVING A CALL TO GO ABROAD

I

COLLACE, *Jan. 10th*, 1853. *Monday Evening.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It may be that my affection for you, and the sort of melancholy that is suggested to my mind by the idea of Perth without you,—it may be

that these considerations are influencing my judgment as unconsciously as your loneliness may have influenced yours. Be this as it may, you want me to state to you how the matter now looks to me. Well, then, my impressions continue to be these: (1) All plans originating in a time of despondency are to be suspected, *prima facie*. There is so little of faith in low spirits. I find that at the time when the Spirit separated Paul and Barnabas for a mission, they were vigorous and full of work—'ministering and fasting'—publicly and privately, full of energetic service. And, on the other hand, when Elijah in low spirits goes to the Desert and then to Horeb, *he is sent back again*, so that we soon find him sitting on Carmel once more. (2) Your thoughts about Calcutta did not seem to me to amount to a call made upon you by the Spirit. Of course I may be quite mistaken, I merely say what I feel, so far as knowledge guides me. You were not bent towards Calcutta, were you, by any great and preponderating sense of the claims of that field over all others? Was not your feeling rather one of merely decided admission that the scheme was important beyond doubt? In other words, you thought you felt uprooted, and you saw you might as well be planted down in Calcutta as anywhere else, perhaps giving its claims a preference in the circumstances?

Still, was there a drawing—is there at this moment a drawing such as you might from its peculiar strength and tenacity interpret to be the result of *the Spirit calling you with a Macedonian cry*?

The brethren with whom I met to-day prayed for you, asking 'counsel' that you might not mistake, and 'might,' that you may execute what you see to be the Lord's will. Perhaps, on the whole, they were more ready than I to admit the probability that our Master

may have made use of your very loneliness for shutting your eye on the home field, and opening it on the vast fields of India, for no one felt otherwise than that Calcutta, and all connected with it, is of very peculiar and very vast importance, and that were you there, you might be a most suitable instrument for the work there. Dear brother, you are prayed for. May the Lord get all the glory in the end.—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

Whatever be the result I can say of you as Paul could, Phil. i. 7: ἔχω ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς. 'I have you in my heart,' and will feel if you go that I am more a pilgrim than before, waiting for our 'gathering together in Him.'

II

COLLACE, *Wednesday*.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—'Be strong, yea, be strong.' Touch the hem of His garment now again, and draw out virtue for this present trial of thy spirit, O man of God. Will you let me know how things look to you now? You are often remembered, and the God who so graciously sat in the Cloudy Pillar, unasked and uninvited, to guide His Israel then, will, beyond doubt, guide His own (and guide His Moses and Aaron) when daily besought to do so.

Have you tokens of the Master's presence? What has He given you of sympathy and of His peace? Dear brother, dearer always the oftener the idea of separation comes in, may you find that Christ 'has need of you,' whatever be the place and scene of labour. Is the whole matter to come on next Wednesday at the Presbytery?—Believe me, ever yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

III

COLLACE, *April 6th*, 1853.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Is this the last note I am to address to you at Perth? You do not know how lonely I sometimes imagine myself likely to feel when you are gone. Perth will seem like what Dundee has long been to me—somehow an empty hall. Once this region was a very pleasant one, in the days of Hamilton, Manson, Miller, Cormick, Cumming, William Burns, and, above all, Robert M'Cheyne. You and Macdonald are the only palm-trees still remaining. And as for Robert Macdonald, he is in a manner out from among us this good while past. And you, brother, are now on the eve of departure, leaving one solitary member of that once happy brotherhood behind. I think I shall be more of a pilgrim than I ever was—a Gershom. If the Master enables me to sing 'All my springs are in Thee,' the pilgrimage will be a peaceful one nevertheless, and will end in the Kingdom, and 'our gathering together in Him.'

Here is a journeying text for you, I Thess. iii. 11: 'Now God Himself, even our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, direct your way!' What a Pillar-Cloud to lead you to the City of Palaces, and then onward to the '*City of the Great King*.'—Believe me, dear brother, your affectionate brother in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS SISTER-IN-LAW, MRS. GRANT, ON THE DEATH
OF HER HUSBAND, THE REV. WM. GRANT OF CAVERS.

COLLACE, *Oct. 18th*, 1853.

MY DEAR JEANIE,—'The heart knoweth its own bitterness.' You have felt this and have experienced

how powerless are words, however well-meant and kind, to relieve such affliction as yours. It is only the Lord that can so speak to the heart as to comfort. Do you know (look at the margin) that such expressions as 'Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem' are 'speak *to the heart* of Jerusalem,' and who can do this but the Lord? One thing you will feel tempted to—not perhaps to think hard thoughts of the Lord, but to think so often of the trial as to overlook in part the design of it as to your personal feelings toward Jesus *as a Saviour*. When the Lord makes your portion of earth assume so wintry an aspect, it is in order to make you see the eternal summer sunshine in the heavenly places in Christ. Have you felt it profitable to go, not as a sorrowful one, not as one needing the Widow's Judge, but as a sinful one, a corrupt one, one whom God needs to try, one whose sin exposes her to chastisement, to go thus to the blood and righteousness of Jesus? Clothe yourself in His obedience, rest yourself on His satisfying death. There was no fault, no defect, in His obedience under suffering. That, then, is your covering, imputed to you, and under that robe look up to Him and ask Him to visit you with the consolations *He* felt as man when His reputed father Joseph died, when His much-loved friend the Baptist was removed—when He thought on bereaved Martha and Mary.—Believe me, dear Jeanie, your affectionate brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MRS. MILNE, PERTH, ON THE DEATH OF
HER FATHER.

COLLACE, *F. C. Manse*, Dec. 13th, 1855.

MY DEAR MRS. MILNE,—I write because it might be some variety to you in your sojourn at Hastings,

something like a visit. We felt for you in your be-
reavement, for a father is altogether peculiar, so peculiar
that you know the Lord represents our nearest access
to Himself by saying it is our being able to call Him
'Abba, Father;' ay, to 'cry' thus to Him, to speak it
loudly, firmly, not faintly, not fearfully—to 'cry' in
the ear of angels, 'Jehovah is my Father,' to 'cry' in
the ear of the Lord Himself, 'Thou art Abba!' Dear
friend, this is left to you, this supplying of an earthly
father's place by more frequent 'crying' to the Father
above. And as you do so, lo! there is one at His
right hand who smiles on you and calls you 'Sister!'
It is your Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus; for He says
that 'whoever does the will of His Father is to Him
"sister."' And then the silent but most mighty Com-
forter, the Spirit of grace, He breathes on you while the
Father smiles, and while Jesus owns you. What life He
breathes, what thoughts, what *hopes* too! One of the
hopes He breathes is 'Come, Lord Jesus,' the hope of
the day of meeting in the presence of the Lord, all the
friends that He has removed from time to time. I was
much struck to-day by a simple thought, viz. 'our joys
are only *beginning*.' Yes, the joys we have tasted
are mere foretastes. Have you noticed in Eph. ii.
'that in the *ages to come* He might show the exceeding
riches of His grace in His kindness toward us.' All we
get here is but an earnest and no more. And then, as
truly as our joys are only beginning, so *our sorrows are
ending*. They will soon be over: our last tear shed,
our last sigh heaved, the last wrinkle on our brow
smoothed away by the hand that places on our head
the Crown of Glory! 'Come, Lord Jesus!' . . . Will
you sometimes pray for us?—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MRS. MANSON

GLASGOW, 17th March 1858.

MY DEAR MRS. MANSON,—Thanks for writing me, for in truth I was meditating to write you (*i.e.* your husband and you = one), but could not make out whereabouts you were at this time. I am glad you are to be near Crieff; we may see you now and then. But I will be afraid to say much to Mr. Manson about ministerial work, lest thereby I sadden him,—only he is one who can say, ‘It is the Lord,’ and so be as content to sit still as to labour—

‘They also serve who only stand and wait.’

Indeed this is by far the most self-denying work, and so may be found the most glorifying to God. I cannot but hope, too, that the Master has some work for Mr. Manson. Tell him that Wycliffe, when forbidden by the bishop to preach for a season, set the more eagerly to his translation, and remind him that Southwood may become a Wartburg, and he a Luther!

As for yourself, no doubt your change of life, the very removal of former cares, and the kind of vacation-state you are in, will cause your soul at times to feel as if under a cloudy sky. But you well know to judge of God’s love only by His Unspeakable Gift,—a gift irrevocably given, and given to *you*,—never by frames and states and feelings and your own thoughts. When Mr. Manson came back to you on the day of the eclipse, did he report that the sun was changed? No, he reported that his light had been intercepted for a few minutes, and that never were men more fully alive to the inexhaustible and unchangeable lustre of that globe of light, than when for a moment deprived of its actual presence.

Your husband is somewhat lazy, he has not written

me this long time. I think I will make that an excuse for saying no more at present, so good-bye for this time. Pray for us.—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. JOHN MILNE

GLASGOW, *8th Oct.* 1858.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Are we never to hear anything of you? You wrote oftener in India than you do now. Were your letters then the luxuriant growth of Eastern soil? And has the north nipped the vegetation of your pen? Brother, this will not do,—‘iron sharpens iron,’—you must let us hear how it fares with you.

I was greatly struck with the news of the death of David Sandeman. How soon at rest! We would have thought that that strong-built frame would have stood many shocks of disease, and that his Master would have kept His servant for many years of labour. His single-mindedness, and zeal, and love to the Lord Jesus often struck me with a sort of impression approaching to undesigned upbraiding, that is, I felt rebuked by his warmer devotedness. And so happy always in his Lord. ‘Rejoice evermore’ was on his face wherever you met him. Do you know that he was much blessed at Hillhead, near this place? The people talk of him and Mr. Allan as men of God who carried on a great work here. And is it not remarkable that these two died within six weeks of each other? . . . Why are we spared?

Are not the showers of the Spirit in America indications of the Lord hastening the gathering in of sheaves before the winter? We may expect the like in Scotland ‘ere the great and notable day of the Lord come.’ . . . Yours in the Lord Jesus,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO A FRIEND IN BLAIRGOWRIE

GLASGOW, 2nd Sept. 1859.

DEAR FOLLOWER OF THE LAMB,—‘He that believeth shall not make haste.’ Go on quietly resting in the grace of Jesus, for His grace is like a full well which you may draw from and yet no way exhaust. Sit beside this well, and when your soul is sad because of sin *in* you, drink of this free love again. Sit beside this well, and when your soul is sad because of sin *around* you, drink of this well again. Yes, sit there always, and when the coldness of backsliding ones grieves you, drink of this well of free love again! Is it not a cure for every evil? Does it not also put hope and expectation into your soul? Sit there and pray on. Sit there and praise!

Pray for us here. We have some drops from heaven on our pasture.—Yours in the Lord Jesus,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. JAMES MUDIE, MONTROSE

GLASGOW, 18th Nov. 1859.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter was most interesting and gladdening, you see in it a proof of the great principle to which Psalm lxxiv. 2 refers: ‘Lift up thy feet to—this Mount Zion in which Thou hast dwelt.’ The Lord will yet pour a greater Pentecost shower on Israel’s Land and people, even because He gave the first shower,—and so you are finding that He returns to Ferryden where He formerly wrought. But how remarkable is this work among you! The cases of persons struck may be meant there, as elsewhere, to draw attention, and bring together the careless. In

itself, don't you think, the case of one struck down amounts to no more than awakening or deep conviction? It is not conversion in itself. We will pray for you, and perhaps you will let us hear again how the work progresses. It is not in my power to leave my post here at present.

The Lord is gathering in His elect quickly. Tell men, dear brother, that Jesus of Nazareth passes by, and it is now or never with thousands! How Dr. Brewster would rejoice to witness his old sphere of labour drenched in these heavy showers! I think I hear and see him as he stood at the Communion Table, the last time I was with him, saying 'Come and see!' . . . Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS SISTER-IN-LAW, MRS. WILLIAM BONAR,
LONDON

GIRVAN, 16th Aug. 1862.

MY DEAR JESSIE, . . . It is so still to-day, the sea like glass, and somehow everything seems to fall in suitably with our present feelings. We have bidden dear Christian our last farewell. It is so strange to try to realise that we shall no longer see her among us, or get one of her letters telling whatever she thought would interest us. I feel as if a large reservoir of sympathy were now gone, there were so many little things in which very few are interested at all, that she was sure to care for and to make it her delight to manage. York Place can never be the same again, for the home feeling that was about it lay very much in the heart of sympathy that was there. Many thanks to you, Jessie, for all your unwearied attention and invaluable services. What a remarkable providence

that you and William should have been able thus to be present, and take such part in all those last scenes! Dear Christian now knows that 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit' was 'in the sight of God of great price.' To-morrow she will be spending a happier Sabbath than we can enjoy here. She will be able to tell us when we next meet her, what undiscovered riches are in Jesus, how glorious He is, how lovely, what a fountain of life! . . . Christian was ten years with me in Collace, and I am certain she never once all that time spoke to me one unkind word or did one selfish act. I wish that in this my life were like hers. So to live in such a world needs great grace. But the day approaches when we 'shall see Him,' and be made 'like Him.' . . .—Your affectionate brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. J. H. WILSON, EDINBURGH

GLASGOW, 14th Jan. 1863.

MY DEAR MR. WILSON,—I have been hearing tidings of your state of health that are not very pleasant. Will you, if convenient, drop me a few lines letting me know? For you know Paul, had he been in our day, would have sent Tychicus 'to let us know' his affairs and how he was 'doing.' I have often been led to muse on the number of sick labourers mentioned in the Epistles, — Epaphroditus, Timothy, Trophimus, Gaius, — all of them unhealed, though companions of men who healed others, and though able probably themselves to work miracles. There must be much blessing conveyed in this way not only to the afflicted one himself, but to his flock. What sermons will they thus be made to hear! 'Cease ye from man.' 'God liveth.'

'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Be of good cheer, brother, the Master has laid His own hand on you. He has done it too at the best time, no doubt. O for grace to live for such a Master and for none else!

When you get access and are remembering your friends, will you think on me and ask some gift? If you are to get a time of honour by being sent up the hill as one of the 'Aaron and Hur' company, think of some of us who pray little, and with little faith.—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH

GLASGOW, 27th Feby. 1864.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your little epistle a few days since was very pleasant,—like a gentle shower in the heat of summer,—telling the thoughts of your brotherly heart as well as the wanderings of your feet. . . . We get occasionally at present some tokens of the Master's favour, though we often pray, 'When the poor and needy . . . their tongue *faileth for thirst.*' In so dry a land nothing but heavy, heavy showers will take thirst away.

We lost the other day Mr. William Munsie, a true Caleb, one that always brought up a good report of the Land. How many of late are gone to the 'mountain of myrrh.' James Crawford was no ordinary loss. John Bonar, too, is a great blank in our circle. Everything bids us 'hasten unto the coming of the Day of God.'

'The foundation of God standeth sure.' The Word is as sweet as ever, is it not, and Christ still the chief among ten thousand? Have you still a place for me in your Saturday evening prayer for brethren? Re-

member this is our rule. 'So much the more as ye see the day approaching.'

Give my kindest brotherly love to Mrs. Milne.—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. ROBERT YOUNG, EDINBURGH,
AFTER MRS. BONAR'S DEATH

GLASGOW, 17th Oct. 1864.

MY DEAR MR. YOUNG,—This has been an awfully sudden and solemn stroke. All went well till the afternoon of Friday—nothing indeed to startle us till about six o'clock, and in three hours all was over. . . . During the three hours she was at last only half-conscious—no pain at all—but rapid breathing and restlessness. Not long before she passed away I said, 'I know you are leaning on Jesus.' She tried gently to speak, but in vain, and soon the breathing became lower and lower, till she sank, we believe, into the arms of Him who loved her more than any of us ever did, for He gave Himself for her. It is bewildering still—so sudden. . . . O how stunning the thought from time to time, 'Isabella gone!' What an awful blank! for there could not be a happier home than she made mine to be. But the Lord has said, 'Them that sleep in Jesus He will bring with Him.' O that the day were come! . . . I know how Mrs. Young will feel. It is the quenching of a long and happy friendship till it be relighted up in Glory. You will both pray for me and mine. We need it—for it would be bitterer still were we to suffer all this in vain.

Will you ask that the children may know (and I also) what that means, 'When . . . *mother* leaves me the

Lord will take me up,'—becoming Himself mother in every way, and Himself taking her place to do and to be all.—Yours truly, my dear Mr. Young,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS BROTHER, THE REV. DR. JOHN J. BONAR,
GREENOCK

GLASGOW, 28th Oct. 1864.

MY DEAR JOHN,—I cannot tell how helpful you have been to me during this season. No one could have given more sympathy, no one could have done more to cheer than you have done. I look upon it all as an intimation sent from the Elder Brother, through you, of the sympathy of His heart, for He must have put it into yours. You will surely share in the blessing which I believe this bitter trial has been sent to usher in. But still it is sore. On Wednesday I took up Deut. i. 19-26 and was led to notice that, while at verses 6-7, the Lord took no notice of the intervening wilderness between Horeb and Canaan, Moses speaks of it, and speaks of it as 'a great and terrible wilderness.' This is our estimate of things, we feel them to the quick. But God's estimate is different, for He sees the results and He sees the comparative littleness of all this, exactly as Paul is led to say, 'our light affliction,' and also, 'but for a moment.' Oh, if we saw the kingdom close at hand in all its glorious wealth of all things, we too would ever say 'light affliction,' that is the forerunner of such a 'weight of glory.' And, if we could look at time also in God's way, a few years would seem but for a moment. . . .—Your affectionate brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS SISTER-IN-LAW, MRS. HORATIUS BONAR, KELSO

GLASGOW, 28th Oct. 1864.

MY DEAR JANE,—Perhaps you and Horace will excuse me for not writing sooner. It requires something to raise me before I can at present take up the pen. The bewilderment is passing away—all appears too real now, but the loneliness, when will that pass away? I know 'He doth not willingly afflict,'—I have felt that—for, though the Lord saw that He must send the stroke, He has not failed, when it was over, to relieve the wound by many means. I am sure many have prayed for me. I have got many most helpful letters of sympathy, all which are sufficient to assure me that the Elder Brother's heart feels for me in infinite love.

Tell Horace I have tried to glean something in his fields, *The Night of Weeping*. But oh! Jane, when I look back on the sixteen years of happy, happy home-life, and when I take up some letter or paper or anything else that recalls past days of peace and most helpful affection, all I can say is, that the Lord who so filled my cup, and then in a moment dashed it to the ground, must be dealing in fatherly love, and must be doing even this in the depths of His compassion for me. 'It is the Lord.'

Let us live with all our might for the Lord. My dear Isabella could not bid me farewell—was it meant as if to intimate 'no need of farewell, the time of separation is so short.' Do not forget my motherless children. How she cared for them! I never knew one who was more led to tell the Lord all *little* cares and difficulties, and more habitually made conscience of *little* things in the family. Mrs. Grant and her

daughter have been most useful and kind to us. . . . We are looking forward to the baptism [of the motherless baby] on Sabbath eight days.—Your affectionate brother,
 ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MRS. WILLIAM BONAR, LONDON

GLASGOW, 28th Oct. 1864.

MY DEAR JESSIE,—You will excuse me writing at any length, and yet I wish to send a few lines to thank you and William. No doubt you have prayed for me and mine, as well as thought on us and sympathised. For some days I was like one half-dreaming, now all is sadly real. Who can tell the strange want in my home, and the cloud that at times casts its dark shadow over me when something brings up my loss and forces me to remember that the sixteen years of our happy, happy home life are over! I know 'it is the Lord,' and I know that 'I shall yet praise Him.'

I preached on Sabbath on Psalm xcvi. 11, trying to show the Lord's way of bringing light and gladness out of darkness and sorrow, first in the atoning work of the Head of the Church; second, in the sanctifying work He carries on in His members. It is such times as these that make a minister feel that he must handle solid truth, preaching to himself all the while. . . . My meditation at my prayer-meeting was on Deut. i. 6-8, and then 19-26. God is saying to me 'You have dwelt at this mountain long enough,' and then He is also saying, 'Arise, journey onwards to the Promised Kingdom.' Driven out of a rest here that was ready to ensnare the soul and make it self-indulgent, He cries, 'Be done with this for ever, and go on to a better.' And I was struck with noticing that He makes so little account of the wilderness that lies between. He puts the rest out

of which He shakes us, side by side with the rest of the Kingdom. Who can tell how soon that Kingdom may be reached!

Give William my kindest love.—Your affectionate brother,
ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. JAMES MANSON, CROSSFORD

GLASGOW, 16th Dec. 1864.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I should have replied at once to your very kind letter, but often just now there seems a strange indolence to creep over me, disinclining me for exertion and suggesting postponement for a time. . . . My hands are full of work, which is good for me, for at home the blank does at times appear indescribably sad. But the Lord is not far off. He does at times pour over me the 'oil of gladness' from His own person and presence. . . . I hope your throat is really better. You must be moderate in your work though not in your creed. I am quite set on a visit to that private chapel of yours.¹ May it be in a high sense 'the Porter's Lodge,' the Lodge of Him to whom 'the Porter openeth,'—and may the Divine Porter who welcomed the returning Shepherd that laid down His life for the sheep be ever there, ready to welcome returning sheep.

We are all well. 'He stayeth His rough wind in the day of His east wind.'—Yours truly in the Lord Jesus,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

¹ Mr. Manson had fitted up his green-house as a meeting-place, and services were held in it till a church was built in 1873.

TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH

GLASGOW, 7th Feby. 1865.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Thanks for to-day's token of remembrance. . . . Your brief stay with us was very cheering and useful. Many of your words are lingering in many memories and hearts.

Our house is not what it was—at least to me—but the Lord is the same. O that I may be able to use Him as the true and only Lethe, in drinking of which I shall forget what I have lost. Brother, pray still for me, and sister Barbara, pray too. Not a day has closed since 14th October during which my heart has not felt its sore want. But I hear Him reminding me, 'Behold, I come quickly!'

Now I must run away to my class. 'Weeping must not hinder sowing,' said Matthew Henry.—Yours truly
in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH

GLASGOW, 20th Oct. 1866.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I read your letter last night with a kind of awe, as being the writing of one who had been almost within the veil. You have seen and felt what others of us are strangers to. But do you know one thing, I have of late noticed that there may be a good reason alleged for even desiring to die! What is it? It is this. If (as *you* once thought *you* might) a brother outstrip us ('pre-vent') in getting to the sepulchre, he shall also outstrip us ('pre-vent,' 1 Thess. iv. 15, *φθάνω*) in rising again from the dead. For 'the dead in Christ *shall rise first*'; they first shall hear His

voice, or at any rate they shall be the first to put on the resurrection-body. Is it not so? Yet, after all, 'the twinkling of an eye' may make all the difference, and 'then we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord' shall be caught up *along* with them. You see they do get a sort of pre-eminence, as if to make up for their having been called away ere the Lord arrived.

I do give thanks with you and with Mrs. Milne, and with many everywhere for the Lord's mercy to you. This is our Communion week. Is it yours also? I think it is. Then let us get all the more the help of your sympathies and prayers. 'Joshua redivivus' must not fight Amalek at present, but lie still and pray for the fighters. . . .—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS DAUGHTER ISABELLA, WHEN AT SCHOOL
IN EDINBURGH

Tuesday, 2nd April 1867.

MY DEAR ISABELLA,—. . . This is a week of many interruptions of course, people calling about the Communion, etc. . . . No news here. The stream of life glides on, and we are on its banks. It will take many turns and windings, and then, some day, what a view bursts upon us! Eternity! Dr. Livingstone's death seems to us strange—so like a mere accident—to die in such a way! But this is often God's way of ordering and bringing about great events, while He Himself is there, so that not a hair of the head falls to the ground without Him. I hope little N. is better. Poor Miss M. and her sister must be suffering much anxiety. Few things are so trying as anxiety from day to day, and that is the reason why Christ the Sin-bearer is also the Burden-bearer. He is thus a full Saviour.

I finished this afternoon my Ladies' Class for the season. Our subject was 'Peace,' and all said about it, and about the way God gives it. . . . Good-bye.—Your affectionate father,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, MR. DAVID DICKSON,
EDINBURGH

ABERNYTE, *Saturday, 3rd August 1867.*

MY DEAR DAVID,—Your note was another cloud in our sky. I thought you had got better accounts of your dear boy. But if the Lord is indeed threatening to let him continue with you only for a short time, be assured that all the while 'He doth not willingly afflict.' There must be some real and special blessing on its way to Charlotte and you, and what if this illness be, after all, rather to quicken you both in prayer. Remember '*He made as though He would go farther,*' all in order to draw out the desire and get expression of their importunate earnestness from the disciples.

I will try to keep you much in mind, asking for Jamie, whether spared longer or shorter time, the faith of a boy of his own age of whom I heard here. The boy calmly spoke of his Saviour and pointed upwards. 'My place is ready.' And then as his father held his hand, 'Father, you must let my hand go, and take hold of Christ's instead.'

Dear Charlotte, 'He knoweth our frame.'—Your affectionate brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. DR. HORATIUS BONAR, EDINBURGH

DURNESS, SUTHERLANDSHIRE, *11th August 1869.*

MY DEAR HORACE,—I am often thinking on you and Jane, and the past ways of our God. 'Even so, Father.' May we not apply Christ's words—'Thou takest away the gift which we would have kept, and givest other gifts. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.' Last night you were brought up to my thoughts by hearing a lady, at the house where we have spent an evening, telling of — sinking very much as we saw Kitty sink.¹ Many such things are with Him; but the mists shall one day rise (as so often we see in the scenery here) and reveal the whole plan in its grace and wisdom.

Our journeyings² have been interesting in many ways. The scenery is all new and peculiar—rocks, lochs, and streams everywhere, as well as high mountains. . . . Last night . . . we came on to this place. It is just twelve miles from Cape Wrath. Our meetings hitherto have all been at mid-day. There are capital congregations of people, but the life is very low in both ministers and people. . . .

I have not read a newspaper for ten days.—Your affectionate brother,
ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS SISTER-IN-LAW, MRS. HORATIUS BONAR

GLASGOW, *22nd June 1870.*

MY DEAR JANE,—I can quite sympathise with your sadness when the flowers in the garden recall Kitty and

¹ Dr. Horatius Bonar's second daughter, Christian, who died of consumption on the 17th of July 1869.

² Dr. Bonar was one of a deputation from the Free Church Assembly to the congregations in Sutherlandshire.

her cheerful, happy ways. The very beauty and bloom help to deepen the melancholy feeling which weighs down the soul as you remember the absent one whose presence was sunshine, and for whom the garden seemed to blossom. But it is written, 'Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us—glory, *while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are unseen.*' May I not adopt the language of John, and say, 'I heard a voice from heaven saying, there is present rest for the aching heart in beholding the Lamb slain, and holding fellowship with Him.' . . . Kindest love to all.—Your affectionate brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

WRITTEN FOR ONE IN SPIRITUAL DESPAIR

GLASGOW, 9th Oct. 1872.

MY DEAR MISS M.,— . . . I read with great interest your own letter about your friend who seems so near despair, and this morning your sister has given me more particulars from your friend's letter to you. It is a case that reminds me of the Saviour's words, 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.' It is a case that may well draw out all the sympathies and continued prayers of believing friends in her behalf. Evidently there is something to be laid down to the state of her health, and it might be well for her to remember that Satan, the accuser, does take advantage of such circumstances. Satan has, no doubt, had something to do with her confusion of mind and the bitter things she writes against herself. I wonder if she would admit that *in all despair on this side the grave there is rank pride*? The sinner is refusing to be treated as an *absolute* sinner, one full of selfishness, hard-heartedness, meanness, self-deception (a 'living lie,' as she herself

writes, in God's view), a sinner who has never repented aright or felt anything aright. This is the sinner who furnishes Christ with His opportunity of manifesting grace. *Pride of conscience* is as subtle as pride of reason; it says, 'I cannot, I will not, no, I will not, I never will, admit and believe that Christ's grace will go so far as to welcome me, who am an absolute mass of guilt and rotten corruption.' This thought and feeling of the awakened conscience is pride, rank pride.

To say 'I have spent hours struggling with despair,' and 'I am weak and worn with *the agony of conflict*,' indicates the very opposite state of mind from what is found in a *receiver of grace*. 'Come to Me all that labour'—struggle, in agony of conflict. Submit, only submit, to be done struggling. We must receive the kingdom of God as a little child receives what is held out to him, or as a little child allows one to put his arms round him and lift him up.

Once more; your friend says 'I *feel* I have never been a child of God;' but she forgets that we may be God's children when we do not *feel* that we are. 'We are children of God *by faith in Christ Jesus*;' 'As many as *receive Him* to them He gives privilege to become sons of God.' Luther, with his eye on this truth, repelled Satan's question: 'Martin Luther, do you this day *feel* that you are a child of God?' 'No, Satan, I do not *feel* that I am, but yet I *know* that I am.'

O that your friend may, by the Spirit of truth, be enabled to cease from every effort and every struggle, *submitting to the Righteousness of God*. Will she not let the Sun of Righteousness shine on her? Will she proudly shut her despairing eyes and not look upon the blood that cleanses from all sin, and the forgiving love of Him whose message to her is, 'Come to me; *I will give you rest*.'

Excuse me for writing somewhat hurriedly. May your own soul be blest with 'grace for grace,' day by day, out of His fulness.—Yours truly in the Lord Jesus,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS SON JAMES, WHILE STUDYING AT LEIPZIG

GLASGOW, 14th Feby. 1873.

MY DEAR JAMES,—I have this week been lighting upon some passages in the poets that seemed to me to illustrate, or, rather, to put in a good setting, some truths that are usually stated in Bible language. Reading a little of Carey's 'Dante' (which is not always free from obscurity), I found these lines that seemed to me to describe well the first indistinct discovery of Christ's grace to a soul :

' Call to remembrance, reader, if thou e'er
Hast on a mountain-top been ta'en by cloud,
Through which thou saw'st no better than the mole
Doth through opacous membrane ; then whene'er
The watery vapours dense began to melt
Into thin air, how faintly the sun's sphere
Seemed wading through them. So thy nimble thought
May image how at first I re-beheld
The sun.'

And here is Byron's way of putting 'the end of such mirth is sadness'—

' Joy's recollection is no longer joy' ;

and then he adds, in his own tone of sadness—

' But sorrow's memories are sorrows still.'

Well, these are scraps of a literary kind in return for your interesting account of Stirling's book and your conversation with Kahnis. . . . Now, I must away to my studies for Sabbath. When you are reading a letter from home, or when your mind has been interested in

the book before you, you have felt what Dante says when he checked his eager listening and proceeded onward in his survey—

‘I drew the sponge yet thirsty from the wave.’

. . . Every blessing be yours for time and eternity.’—
Your affectionate father, ANDREW A. BONAR.

‘Vespera jam venit ; nobiscum, Christe, maneto,
Extingui lucem nec patiare tuam.’—(*Old Latin Hymn.*)

TO MISS ANNE WHITTIT, NEWPORT

GLASGOW, 19th March 1873.

DEAR MISS ANNE,—Many thanks for your narrative of the Lord's doings. I was so interested that I just told all over at my prayer-meeting, with a few remarks as I went along. You see the Master has not cast you aside. You are not treated as even Jonathan (holy, humble Jonathan) was treated ; for after he had been used to take the garrison and rout an army—‘one chasing a thousand’—you remember he was put in the background (the safest place! for spiritual pride does not flourish so well in the shade), and you hear of no other great exploit done by him. Nay, he had so far lost his first faith that he could not face Goliath, though once he faced a host.

Be thankful, then, that the Master is using you still. Go on, from strength to strength. It will not be long before ‘He shines out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,’ and those who have won souls shall stand very near Him.

Hillhead is quiet. Believers still believe, and seek to be of use to others. . . . Pray for us in Finnieston. There are only now among us two families of the

Hillhead people . . . so that I do not see or hear so much as I used to do of your old vineyard.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Sandeman, whose heart will be enlarged at the work in Perth,—Yours in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

P.S.—Write again whenever you have such good news to tell. What is the name of the lane where the old woman stays? and what is her name? The Bible tells us the name of the street where Ananias found Saul of Tarsus.

TO A SCHOOLBOY IN LONDON

GLASGOW, 20 INDIA STREET, 21st October 1873.

MY DEAR WALTER,—I wonder how your soul prospers? You know we can go on busily with work, and all the more busily, when enjoying the sunshine round us—it makes all so cheerful. It is even thus with us in our souls when realising the presence of God in Christ, when we know that He is ‘beholding us with a pleasant countenance’ (Ps. xi. 7, the metre version), whether we are sitting in the house, or walking by the way, or studying a lesson, or writing a letter.

‘Continue ye in My love’ (John xv. 9); ‘Keep yourselves in the love of God’ (Jude 21). And if you say ‘How am I to keep myself in His love?’ the answer is, by keeping near the Cross, never suffering anything to intercept the view of that glorious, gracious, infinitely great manifestation of God’s holy love to sinners. And again, it is said in John xv. 10, ‘If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love.’ The Holy Spirit will assuredly keep you in that sunshine if you are in the path of duty, though you may not be directly meditating on divine things. When you are giving diligence to get

on in study, and are very busy writing exercises or the like, this is 'keeping His commandments' if done as part of duty, and so you go on from hour to hour of your work with a light and happy heart, 'continuing in His love.' 'May the God of peace give you peace always by all means.' *διὰ παντὸς ἐν παντὶ τρόπῳ* (2 Thess. iii. 16).—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS NIECE AT SCHOOL IN KELSO

GLASGOW, 14th December 1874.

MY DEAR NIECE EMILY,—It was very good in you to write me so nice a letter. It was well written every way, and makes me think you are already greatly the better of being away from home, breathing your native air. Your great-grandfather never saw Kelso, but I am sure he would have rejoiced to see his descendant, who is so like him in form and feature, walking by the banks of the Tweed and Teviot, and storing her mind with solid learning and precious truth. I enclose a little book (not so big as a *Christian Treasury*, nor so attractive as *Hymns of Faith and Hope*, but) containing a brief history of this year's awakening. Perhaps it will interest you. 'The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all that have pleasure in them.' Dear Emily, every day look to Calvary, and to the Right Hand of the Throne, to see there the Lord Jesus 'crowned with glory and honour.' Every time our soul 'touches' Him, there comes virtue out of Him, to heal and strengthen. Your cousins here are all well and send their love to you. . . .—Your affectionate uncle,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO A FRIEND IN BLAIRGOWRIE

GLASGOW, 1st January 1875.

DEAR FRIEND,—Thanks for your letter—it is always acceptable, and I try in return to pray for you as you desire. Is not this a word that we may use as Israel did: ‘He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing’ (Deut. ii. 7). All this is true, and oh, what a comfort is here, ‘*He knoweth!*’ for it tells us that He will see to our safety and will order all for our good. And soon now the wilderness will be over. ‘*Thine eyes* (yes, *your eyes*) shall see the King in His beauty,’ and that is the very heart of heaven.

I think Christ grows more and more precious every day—His person, His obedience, His blood, all, all in Him. O to know His heart of love, and to be able to love Him as He has loved us; I mean, to love Him with all our heart, as He loves us with all *His* heart.

. . . Let this be our watchword this year, ‘Grow in grace!’

‘The Lord is at hand!’

Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MISS ANNE WHITTIT, NEWPORT

GLASGOW, 21st November 1878.

DEAR MISS ANNE,—No fear of any one robbing you of spiritual food so long as you do not steal from poor Israel, and bring down to the Kingdom of grace what belongs to the Kingdom of glory.

Many thanks for the 'green and tender grass' you send a handful of! The Lord's own bosom ('the bosom of the Father,' Christ's own place, not the beloved disciple's place, but the beloved Master's place) is in very truth His 'tender mercies,' and the 'tender grass' of the green pastures.

Do you know I have been thinking that the Lord *makes our earth His heaven!* For is it not written, '*My delights were with the sons of men*'?

What a pleasant interesting case that is which you relate. Go on, sowing and reaping, working and praying, and *praising*. . . . Pray for us here. Our new church is to be opened *D.V.*, on 1st December, just twenty-two years since the old one was opened. How many things have passed since then! Your Jordanhill friends began a prayer-meeting that very day, and it has gone on to this hour! Hallelujah.—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

May 'Elmbank' be at all times to you '*Elim-bank*.'

TO REV. DR. MACDONALD, NORTH LEITH

GLASGOW, 9th December 1878.

MY DEAR ROBERT,—*From Day to Day* is a book of most pleasant and profitable reading. It is 365 meditations—as many as Samuel Rutherford's *Letters*—as many as Enoch's years of earthly pilgrimage and walking with God. There is a clearness and pointedness in your style of writing that at once attracts the reader, and, dipping his rod in the honey, he finds his eyes enlightened.

Had I attempted such a book my aim would have been to forge a chain of 365 links—every day a doctrine that naturally followed the one before! But I fear my idea is Utopian.

Many thanks—and may you get thanks of the best kind in the prayers of those who are receivers of blessing by your pages.—Your brother in the faith and patience of the Lord Jesus,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MRS. THOM, ABERFELDY

GLASGOW, *March 1st*, 1879.

DEAR MRS. THOM,—I was glad to hear from you. You seem to thrive on Highland air and Highland services. . . . Pray for us here, seek power from on high to minister and people. I read the other day that two American professors have lately shown how the power that is in the Niagara Fall may be transmitted along a copper cable half an inch thick, to the distance of 500 miles. We know how to get greater power than Niagara power from above. Do we think sufficiently on this? For read Paul's prayer, Eph. i.: 'that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened . . . ye may know the *exceeding greatness* of His power,' etc. Here is another exercise for you. Find out eleven ways in which 'justification' is spoken of, *e.g.* the act of the Father,—then of Christ,—'by grace,' etc. Study Esther and Job in connection. The former is the mystery of providence in public affairs, the latter, in believers' personal affairs. Take each chapter of Proverbs after the ninth, and set yourself to find an instance that illustrates each successive verse, *e.g.* 'a wise son maketh a glad father;' Solomon himself, etc. In the twelve minor prophets note the special mission or burden of each, *e.g.* Hosea, the prophet of the backslider; Joel (the earliest book of written prophecies), the announcer of the full gift of the Spirit in the midst of judgments abroad.

The cold has been intense here and long continued. Our new church is very comfortable, but my voice is not what it should be, even in the new church. The Holy Spirit seems sometimes to breathe among us very blessedly. . . . Again asking to be remembered—Believe me always, yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. MALCOLM WHITE, BLAIRGOWRIE

STRACHUR, *28th August 1879.*

MY DEAR MR. WHITE,—One word to assure Mrs. White and yourself that you are not forgotten in your sorrow. ‘The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.’ When the Lord Jesus returns, He will bring with Him the little ones who fell asleep in Him, and how changed they will be! When my little boy died I remember Dr. Somerville read at the funeral some passages about Joseph taken from his sorrowing parents, and contrasted with that time of sadness the after-joy and wondrous delight when his father saw Joseph in all his glory! Even so, when your little boy returns with Christ at His coming, how grand and glorious he will be! what knowledge! what holy beauty!

May the Comforter fill your heart with His presence, enabling you both to say to Him, ‘Even so, Father!’—Yours truly in Him,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS NEPHEW, MR. LEWIS GRANT, KIRKCALDY

GLASGOW, *16th January 1880.*

MY DEAR LEWIS,—Your note has just come with its burden of heavy tidings. I had written an hour ago to Uncle William, whose letter expressed anxious alarm,

but we were not prepared for your announcement, for Willie's note of yesterday was rather encouraging and hopeful.

You know, and we all know, that as to your beloved mother, Christ was all her confidence. She rested in Him, and has now entered into a deeper rest with Him. But how fragrant will her memory ever be! Her most unselfish care for all of us, her innumerable kindnesses, as well as her prayers and sympathy—all will be missed, and felt to be missing, by all her many friends.

'I was dumb, because *Thou* didst it.'

With kindest love to all with you—all alike under the dark cloud, but yet able to look beyond it.—Your affectionate uncle,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS SON JAMES

GLASGOW, 22nd Feb. 1881.

MY DEAR JAMES,—I have perused with considerable care your *Parson Malthus*, and I like it much. Your style is striking in its epigrammatic brevity. There is at times a want of clearness perhaps, arising from your condensing too much, and at other times from your evidently trusting to your reader's previous knowledge of the subject. On the whole, it seems to me likely to help you on in the judgment of those who can appreciate the subject. I found it interesting as well as able. You will be much gratified by the notice of it in *The Mail*. . . . We are all well. To-night I have my annual tea-meeting of my Bible classes.—Your affectionate father,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

P.S.—What do you mean by 'having a Herodotean fear of *νέμεσις*'? This is a heathenish fear. Faith in Him who giveth without upbraiding knows nothing of it,

EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO REV. DR. J. H. WILSON
ON THE DEATH OF HIS AUNT

Janry. 1882.

. . . You will be saying 'The post has come from the Celestial City,' and the contents of the letter are just such as Christiana found in hers. 'Hail! good woman, I bring thee tidings that the Master calls for thee to stand in His presence in clothes of immortality!' And do you remember that while part of the household wept, Mr. Greatheart and Mr. Valiant-for-Truth played upon the well-tuned cymbal and harp for joy that she had gone to be with the King? In process of time (if the Lord delay His coming to us) the post will sound his horn at our chamber door, saying, 'I am come to tell thee that thy Master hath need of thee, and that, in a very little time, thou must behold His face in brightness!'

Meanwhile, let us 'occupy.'—With kindest regards and sympathy, believe me, yours truly in Him who doeth all things well,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. DR. MACDONALD, NORTH LEITH

GLASGOW, *16th May* 1882.

MODERATOR,—I understand that to-morrow is your birthday. Well, in turning over some papers, I lighted on a few scraps of Robert M'Cheyne's, and one is entitled a 'Birthday Ode' to his father. I venture, my dear Moderator-Elect, to apply to you the two lines with which the fragment concludes:—

'We pray that, as oft as thy birthday appears,
Thy purified joys may increase with thy years.'

I hope to see and hear you on Thursday, if the Lord

will.¹ Take this text, brother, 'Only be strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law. Turn not from it to the right hand nor to the left, for then thou shalt prosper and have good success.'—Your fellow-soldier,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MISS CLARKE, EDINBURGH

CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL, 18th August 1882.

DEAR MISS C.,—It was very kind in you to let me know of your sister's illness. She is safe in any case in 'the everlasting arms.' During all her time of trial and pain, the same Holy Spirit who upheld and comforted Christ our Head, even on the Cross and its agonies, will assuredly uphold and comfort one of His members. Nor will He forget *you*. I don't know whether or not Mary was called to watch at Bethany over a suffering and dying sister ('Martha, whom Jesus loved'), but I am sure that the Saviour looked down from His Father's right hand on them both, with the same love and sympathy which He showed when their brother was sick.

I would like to see you both, but I am at present away with my family in this far-off island, and I do not think I can be in Edinburgh for a long time to come.

Meanwhile, praying for the presence of the Lord with you continually (remember—'I will water it every moment, I will keep it night and day')—Believe me, yours truly in Him who 'knows our frame.'

ANDREW A. BONAR.

¹ The opening of the Free Church General Assembly, of which Dr. Macdonald was that year to be Moderator.

TO MISS M. JOHNSTONE, HELENSBURGH

GLASGOW, 9th April 1883.

MY DEAR MISS MARY,—Amidst our Communion services yesterday, we did not fail to remember ‘a former member of the congregation now lingering in the valley of the shadow of death.’ Nor did we forget yourself, watching by the sick while we were in the Sanctuary and at the Table. When reading at the beginning of the services Psalm xxii., our attention was drawn to verse 15th, as well as 14th, *the utter weakness* of Christ on the Cross. ‘My strength is dried up like a potsherd,’ not even the faint appearance of moisture left. But even then see what He has! In verse 19th, He claims Jehovah as *His strength!* ‘O my strength, haste Thee to help Me.’ Will you tell your dear sister how well Jesus can sympathise with her in her feeling of absolute and utter weakness; but tell her also, how He at the same time whispers, ‘Claim as I did, and cry as I did, Jehovah, My strength!’

One word, more especially for yourself, from Job xxiii. 10: ‘He knoweth the way that I take.’ He who so often tells in Rev. ii. and iii., ‘I know thy works,’ is saying to you as really, ‘I know the way I am leading you. I have made no mistake, nor has my loving-kindness failed. When I have tried thee, thou shalt come forth as gold.’—Your affectionate pastor,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MRS. THOM, ABERFELDY

GLASGOW, 12th May 1883.

DEAR MRS. THOM,—There is no second baptism in the Acts of the Apostles. There is a second, and a

third, and a fourth, and as many as you like *filling* with the Holy Ghost. From time to time the Lord is pleased to give more and more out of Christ's fulness. The mistake which some people make about a second baptism is this. They do not notice that the thing promised was a far fuller gift of the Spirit than in Old Testament times, as soon as Christ was ascended to the Father with His completed sacrifice. Whoever acknowledged this completed work of Christ was warranted at once to ask and expect the fuller gift of the Spirit. Until disciples acknowledged this completed work they got only the Old Testament measure of the Spirit. Hence in Acts xix. 1-6, the question to the twelve disciples, 'Have you received the promised full gift of the Holy Spirit?' The answer was, 'We know by John's teaching that such a thing is to be, but as yet we have not heard that any of that shower has fallen.'

Upon this they were instructed in the whole truth about Christ and His finished work, and were baptized (as a sign of this) in the way Christ appointed. And then there followed the gift of the full shower on their souls. Is this satisfactory? Pray for us.—Yours in Him,
 ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO THE MISSES CHURCH, GLASGOW

GLASGOW, 16th Jan. 1884.

MY DEAR SISTERS,—An old minister, whom you have had some knowledge of, wrote to his friend a salutation that I offer to you—'Grace, mercy, and peace shall be with you.' He did not say, '*May* grace, mercy, and peace be with you,' but he said, 'Grace *shall* be with you (see margin), mercy and peace.' He was sure of it; for he knew that the trees whose roots are in the

waters cannot but be kept fresh and green. Have you been finding much of late in the 'Law of the Lord'? You know that the Word is called 'the Oracles of God,' and this is just the description of the utterances of God from the Holy of Holies. Read your Bibles, then, with the same reverence as filled the soul of the High Priest when he went into the very presence of the Holy One of Israel. You were studying the interviews of Paul with his Master, and you made out six, taking in the angel's visit to him as representing Christ. I made out a seventh visit—at the time of his trial and approach of his end, from 2 Tim. iv. 17: 'The Lord stood by me and strengthened me.' Now, as the angel (Acts xxvii. 23) really stood by Paul in his cabin, so was not this a real standing-by in personal presence? The Lord Jesus came into his prison-cell, and just as the other angel in Gethsemane 'strengthened' the Master, probably by a message from the Father, so did Christ do to His servant there.

Are you learning some peculiar lessons at Bourne-mouth? Tell me some of them, for 'to communicate to him that teacheth' is a duty of every hearer (Gal. vi. 6).

It often seems strange never to see your faces—nor hear your voices—never to be calling at your well-known house!

Sometimes pray for us, and that will be equivalent to a kind call from you, for speaking to the Lord *about* friends is as kind an act as speaking directly *to* friends.—Believe me, ever yours truly in Him who loved the sisters at Bethany,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. DR. A. N. SOMERVILLE, ON HIS RETURN HOME
FROM SOUTH AFRICA

CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL,
6th August 1883.

MY DEAR 'ALIC,' friend and brother,—We are all glad that you are safe home. Old Virgil would perhaps have sung of you as a man like Æneas :—

'Multum ille et terris jactatus et alto.'

wondering what could have impelled

'Insignem pietate virum tot adire labores,'

and might have thought of adding an 'Alexandrian' to his 'Æneid,' as Homer appended an 'Odyssey' to his 'Iliad.' But speaking unromantically, and as members of the family of God, we do give thanks for you. We followed your wanderings with great interest, and often asked for you the 'covering' of the Pillar-Cloud, as well as its 'leading.' . . . No doubt you met with old hearers and members, and were gladdened in finding them standing fast in the Lord. Now and then we got notices of your work, and sometimes the subjects you took in preaching Christ and His glorious gospel. You will find a few changes among us since you left. . . .

I am here with my family for holidays. A little quiet rest is delightful, and yet work among souls is still better. The other day I was glad to find Romaine saying of his busy days in London, 'I have been preaching Christ's salvation many years in the midst of a crowd, living all the time in a great hurry, and yet I can say I gain every year some fresh knowledge of myself and of my Incarnate God—and find it good indeed to

be a poor preacher of His grace.' With kindest congratulations to Mrs. Somerville, I am as of old time,—
Your affectionate friend, ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO A SERVANT IN HIS CONGREGATION

CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL,
6th August 1884.

DEAR MARGARET,—I was greatly surprised on receiving your letter. But I suppose you were yourself taken altogether unawares. This comfort, however, you have, sure and full, viz., that E. has only gone to 'the mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense' for a season, and then shall come back with Christ in immortal health, soul and body. You can think of her every day as 'with Christ' in the Paradise above, enjoying blessedness to which we here are strangers, and you may be sure that the Lord intends for you some peculiar blessing by this sore bereavement. What a word that is in Heb. xii. 10: affliction sent not only that we may get some profit by it, but 'that we may be partakers of His holiness.'

I shall try to remember your afflicted parents as well as yourself. When you return to town will you let me know, that I may call?—Believe me, your affectionate pastor,
ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. J. H. THOMSON, HIGHTAE

*While engaged in transcribing 'Quaint Sermons of
Samuel Rutherford.'*

CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL,
Augst. 16th, 1884.

MAN OF ZEBULON, who 'handlest the pen of the

writer,' and follower of Ezra and his band, who not only read in the law of God distinctly, but who also 'gave the sense, and *caused them to understand the reading,*' peace be with you.

I suppose you are illustrating to yourself the wisdom as well as kindness of the precept: 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' Aren't you getting mouthfuls of such food as gives you strength to go on with your labour—many a refreshing thought, many a view of the King's treasures?

I have written to-day (being still in the country and somewhat at leisure) the enclosed pages, to form a brief 'Preface' to Samuel Rutherford's *Sermons*. Will you kindly read it over, and tell me if it meets your approbation?—Yours truly, dear brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR,
Φίλο-Rhaetorfortis.

TO HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, MRS. JAMES BONAR,
HAMPSTEAD

GLASGOW, 29th Decr. 1884.

MY DEAR MARY,—

'Along the river of time we glide,
The swiftly flowing resistless tide!'

Only think! the year is nearly done, and I have lived seventy-four years in this world, and must be getting near the edge of the wilderness. But the prospect on before is very bright—the sadness is all in looking back. The more we know of Christ here, the more of heaven we enjoy here.

May you and James have many a year of peace and usefulness! May 1885 be the best and happiest you have known. . . .

Was it you or James that designed the post-card case? At any rate let me thank you for it: (1) Inasmuch as it is very useful. (2) It may be regarded as a hint from James that I need not write him any letter longer than a post-card. (3) It is so characteristic of his epistles, brief, though no doubt pithy!

We are all well. Some of us will be writing to James and to you, before the New Year comes in, or to wish you all blessing when it does arrive.—Meanwhile, dear Mary, believe me, your affectionate father,
ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO HIS BROTHER, REV. DR. HORATIUS BONAR,
EDINBURGH

GLASGOW, Decr. 31, 1884.

MY DEAR HORACE,—Last night your parcel came. All felt that it was very kind of you to remember us amidst your trials,¹ and when we began family worship, the passage in course was (2 Cor. i. 4): ‘Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble.’ I thought of you as the latest instance of the kind; and then I looked a little way back and saw each of us four brothers, drinking, each of us in turn, the same cup of sorrow, and made to drink at the same time of the same cup of blessing, so as to be able to say, ‘*Our consolation aboundeth by Christ.*’

I suppose Caroline is somewhat better. We have not heard for a few days. Remember me to her if you are seeing her, and tell her she is not to faint, ‘If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small’—thou art not leaning on Almighty strength.

Give my kindest love to Mary and Lily and Emily,

¹ Mrs. Horatius Bonar died on the 3rd of December 1884.

and all the young people ; and to Horace Ninian,¹ who must be ready to go with his King to any Flodden Field.—Your affectionate brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, RUTHERGLEN

20 INDIA STREET, 1st Decr. 1885.

MY DEAR MR. ARMSTRONG,—It was very kind in Mrs. Armstrong to write to me, letting me know that you are making some progress. I wonder what your meditations have been. Did you ever see the little book I enclose²—the observations of one (I remember him in my college days in Edinburgh) who thought himself drawing nearer and nearer Eternity, like one in a boat gliding down the river to the sea? Perhaps *you* will have some ‘thoughts’ to give us. You may have got some fresh and suggestive views of the ministry—‘thoughts by a minister laid aside for some months.’ You no doubt get special visits of the Master, for He says, ‘In the time of trouble I will hide him *in My pavilion, in the secret of My Tabernacle* (far, far in!) will I hide him.’

With kindest thanks to Mrs. Armstrong and brotherly sympathy for you, dear Trophimus,—Believe me, yours
in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. DR. MACDONALD, NORTH LEITH

GLASGOW, 18th Jany. 1886.

MY DEAR ‘ROBERT MACDONALD,’—Only think how old you and I must be ! (1) You were ordained in Blair-

¹ An ancestor, Sir Ninian Bonar, is said to have been one of those who fell on Flodden Field.

² *Thoughts in Prospect of Death*, by Rev. D. Rintoul.

gowrie before I was a minister at Collace, and I was there eighteen years, and have been in this city twenty-nine years. (2) This being so, it must be forty-seven years at least since you and I began to interchange ministerial services! How old we are now! Well, remember the Eastern saying, 'The palm-tree bears the finest dates when it is a hundred years old,' and as you are on the way to that goal (though not quite in sight of it yet), we here in Glasgow, who are expecting you in the end of the week, are, of course, warranted to look for the 'finest dates' that were ever shaken from the Blairgowrie-and-North Leith Palm-tree. . . .

Paul wrote to Philemon (verse 22nd): 'Prepare me a lodging.' Let me anticipate any such request by saying your prophet's chamber shall be ready for you (with a good fire in this cold, cold weather) whenever you come on Saturday. . . .—Ever yours, dear brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. DUNCAN STEWART, HAWICK

GLASGOW, 13th Feb. 1886.

MY DEAR MR. STEWART,—Your 'Lectures'¹ have reached me this week and last—both of them very fresh and most interesting. It has been to you a labour of love, and of 'brotherly love;' for these true witnesses for Christ's Crown and Covenant, though sleeping in the dust for a time, still live, and are ready to meet us who love their Lord on the Day of His appearing. They will be among those who were 'beheaded for the witness of Jesus,' and we who sympathise with them shall be among 'those who did not worship the Beast

¹ On the Covenanters, which Mr. Stewart had been delivering in Hawick.

nor receive *his mark*, either on forehead or hand. We shall reign together! . . .—Yours truly, dear brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. WM. ARMSTRONG, RUTHERGLEN

GLASGOW, 1886.

MY DEAR MR. ARMSTRONG,—It is very kind in you to write me. At our last prayer-meeting (it was in my house), we all remembered you and offered special prayer for you. But you must not be at all cast down (*Mrs. Armstrong*; 'Easy to say this, but he is not laid aside yet himself!'). You are like Samuel Rutherford feeling so keenly his 'dumb Sabbaths,' and yet these days became vocal with strains of heavenly poetry, as he got time to muse upon the love of Him who had loved His servant 'out of the pit of corruption' (see Isa. xxxviii. 17; margin, Hebrew). Who knoweth but you have been drawn aside in order to bring down showers by your strong cries and intercession for the Land, the Church, your Congregation, your Brethren, etc. Do you know I almost envied you when I read your letter, for often I get scarcely an hour free from interruption through the week, and it seems so desirable to have every day many hours for meditation and prayer.

Kindest sympathy as well as kindest regards to Mrs. Armstrong. Sing Psalm xlii. 11 and xliii. 5, and when praying for the brethren remember me also—Yours truly, dear brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO THE MISSES LEIPER, CROSSFORD

GLASGOW, 17th Feb. 1886.

DEAR SISTERS 'in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ'!

Do you not hear the Master saying, as He points downwards to our earth and to your dwelling, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth! but I am going to awaken him out of his sleep.' Your brother shall rise again, and that day is coming nearer and nearer. Very likely you may be ready to say in your mourning, 'Lord, if Thou hadst only shown us this or that, we might have been better prepared for the stroke!' Martha and Mary had each of them, her 'If Thou'—but Jesus quietly put that 'if' aside, and turned their thoughts to their Lord's gracious purpose in it all. 'Said I not unto thee that, if thou wilt *believe* (for I do not ask thee to *feel* at present that nothing could be better than what has happened, but simply to *believe* it is so), thou shalt see the glory of God?'

What a glorious morning will the Resurrection be! Not a tear, not a regret, nothing but joy and praise and thanksgiving as we meet one risen friend after another, restored to us in everlasting health and holy beauty, with our Elder Brother in the midst smiling on us with infinite affection as He reminds us, '*Said I not unto thee that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?*'—Yours truly, with deepest sympathy,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MISS MACPHUN, ZENANA MISSION, BENARES, INDIA

GLASGOW, *Sept. 1st*, 1888.

MY DEAR MISS MACPHUN,—We are to 'rejoice with those that do rejoice,' as well as to sympathise with those that weep, and so I wish to-day to join with you in praises and thanks. You have been getting much to gladden you, even in that one case you so kindly send me the details of. Yours is the joy of Luke xv. 7, something peculiarly heavenly in it; and it cannot fail

to help you in your work, for 'the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

We are always glad to hear of you and from you. Your Zenana work interests us all. The other evening (it was a Wednesday prayer-meeting) it was proposed to have special prayer for all who had gone out from among us to labour among the heathen and the Jews, and you were not forgotten in these prayers. Our Sabbath-school has been blessed since the beginning of the year in several ways, specially in the case of the older lads in the classes, some of them among the roughest and least likely. The Lord likes to remind us that 'His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear,' and that the Cross has not lost its power for salvation. Do you not more and more find that the Holy Spirit uses nothing so much as the truth concerning the atoning blood for drawing souls? He said long ago, 'If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me,' and we at home here, as well as you abroad, are ourselves blessed every time we look to the Brazen Serpent, and are made from time to time to rejoice in seeing the Holy Spirit fixing the eye of the awakened sinner on this great sight!

I daresay I need not say 'Pray for us,' for I am sure you do. Nor need you wonder that we are covetous of prayer on our behalf, for was not Paul insatiable in this respect? always in his Epistles telling his friends how he prayed for them and how he expected them to 'continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving,' adding now and then, 'withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ.'

My daughters are all well, and join with me in sending kindest regards.—Yours truly in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. AND MRS. JAMES BONAR, HAMPSTEAD

GLASGOW, 29th May 1889.

Very many thanks to my son and daughter for their congratulations to me on my birthday! And let me say specially to Mary that the sweet fragrance of both words and flowers is filling my study to-day, and from time to time sending my thoughts away to Hampstead. My prayers also go up for both of you from time to time, perhaps oftener than you think. At breakfast this morning I was reminding the company . . . that when Moses entered on his eightieth year he was only beginning his best work. May it be so with your affectionate father,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. JAMES MANSON, CROSSFORD

GLASGOW, 23rd Sept. 1889.

MY DEAR VENERABLE FRIEND,—I have just come from the funeral of Dr. Somerville, our old and true-hearted friend. He was laid in the grave at the Western Necropolis, a little beyond Maryhill. Have you many memories of him? He was greatly blessed in his ministry, and for fifty-two years went on preaching the 'blood and the obedience of Christ' without once turning aside. It is difficult to believe that he is gone from among us. But we shall all soon meet together, for the 'coming of the Lord draweth nigh.'

I have Major Whittle in my church this week holding meetings. He is a most Scriptural and effective evangelist. Do you know that, on Sabbath last, I began the fifty-first year of my ministry! Were you with me on my Ordination-day, or where were you?

Dr. Candlish introduced me. O how many sins of commission and omission! I feel often ashamed when I read over my sermons of early date—so little in them—and so very little to remember in regard to their being useful. Do you ever *groan* at such retrospects? I do rejoice that it is written, 'Your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more!'

Pray for us and for our evangelistic meetings this week.—Yours affectionately, in much weakness, infirmity, stupidity,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

P.S.—Your grapes were excellent. I wonder if Eshcol-clusters were better? Scarcely! . . .

TO HIS NIECE, MRS. R. M. BALLANTYNE,
HARROW-ON-THE-HILL.

GLASGOW, 18th April 1890.

MY DEAR JANE,—I shall try to do as you request. I have a list of names—sons of godly parents—who are still 'far off,' for whom I pray from time to time that they may be 'brought nigh by the blood of Christ,' led by the Holy Spirit. I shall put ——'s name into the number.

Pray for me and mine. Tell our great High Priest how 'poor and needy' we are, and ask Him to 'think upon us.'

With kindest regards to Robert,—Your affectionate
uncle,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. DR. J. H. WILSON, EDINBURGH

GLASGOW, 14th Febr'y. 1891.

MY DEAR DR. WILSON,—I thought you might perhaps give an old minister who needs a colleague rest from

extra work! But I cannot refuse to be with you; it is always a pleasant time, for 'iron sharpeneth iron.' And then I make reprisals on you, as in time past. . . . Is not the 'joy in heaven' communicated by the Shepherd to the 'friends and neighbours'—that is, Christ the Shepherd is rejoicing, and invites angels and redeemed ones to share with Him.

When you are addressing the students and professors at Aberdeen do you not think the subject of personal visitation should be pressed on them? How much professors could do if they had the heart for face-to-face dealing with the students, and what a lesson it would be to their students for after-years! I am persuaded that if our young ministers gave themselves more really to this kind of work—dealing with the individuals of their people in visitation, and doing this from year to year, it would have two results: (1) It would cure some of them of their vague intellectual preaching, and bring them back to the simple gospel; (2) It would go far to keep up the liveliness of spiritual life in their elders and Christian people.

But this is Saturday! so good-bye.—Peace be with you and yours, dear brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MRS. MUDIE, MONTROSE

GLASGOW, 5th June 1891.

MY DEAR MRS. MUDIE,—I was altogether taken by surprise when the news came, 'Mr. Mudie is gone!'—gone to the 'mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense *till the Daybreak.*' You do not know how many of Christ's friends here and elsewhere will miss him. All of us felt, when we were privileged to have his visits, that we had among us a man of God, full of

faith and of the Holy Ghost,—full of brotherly love also in no ordinary degree, and bright in spirit with the hope of soon meeting his Lord. But, dear sister, shall not you and yours lift up your heads and ‘rejoice with them that do rejoice’; rejoice with him who to-day sings before the Throne :

‘His presence fills each heart with joy.’

And then the Day of our Gathering together in Christ, how near it may be! Samuel Rutherford would have reminded you as he reminded a dying friend: ‘Ye will not sleep long in the dust before the Daybreak. It is a far shorter piece of the night to you than to Abraham and Moses.’ Nor will the Comforter forget to bring you many a message from our sympathising High Priest who spoke that word at the grave of Lazarus, ‘If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God’ in this bereavement. We will pray for you all, that your consolation may abound.

Meanwhile, believe me your companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Christ,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. ANDREW INGLIS, DUNDEE

GLASGOW, 9th July 1891.

MY DEAR MR. INGLIS,—I have just been at Greenock, hearing the particulars of my brother John’s last hours. He died really like one falling asleep ‘in a good old age.’ But you, dear brother, are mourning over a beloved daughter called away in her prime, and in the midst of her usefulness. ‘His ways are in the sea, and His paths in the great waters.’ We have tried to remember you and Mrs. Inglis, and I am sure the Lord

Jesus has as much sympathy for you both as He had for Martha and Mary, and is saying to you as truly as to them, 'If you will believe (that is, "if you will only trust My word for it") you shall see the glory of God in this sore trial.' Resurrection is coming soon, and He who is the Resurrection is coming, and 'will tell us all things.'

With true sympathy with all your house and bereaved ones.—Yours in tribulation, as well as in the faith of the Gospel,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. D. M. M'INTYRE, COLLEGE PARK, ON HIS
ACCEPTANCE OF THE CALL TO FINNIESTON

GLASGOW, 24th June 1891.

MY DEAR MR. M'INTYRE,—I am very very thankful for your decision, and not I only, but very many here. If you knew all, I think you would recognise the Lord's answer to continued prayer in the whole matter.

I have passed through the pain of bidding farewell to an attached and prayerful flock, but it may be a step higher in sanctification. I heard also in my own case of three distinct cases of blessing to unsaved ones that were brought out clearly after I had left them. The Lord Himself was the Shepherd who gathered in the wanderers, when their under-shepherd was away, and I am not sure but that the presence of the under-shepherd might have been a hindrance.

Let us go on praying for each other, dear brother and fellow-soldier, and believe me, yours truly in Him who sends no one on warfare at his own charges,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO MR. ROBERT NOBLE, CLAPHAM

GLASGOW, 14th Dec. 1891.

MY DEAR MR. NOBLE,—You sympathise with us, I know, though far off, and so I write to tell you of another stroke on our congregation. Last week George Jackson,¹ who to the last was always with us in spirit, if not in presence, was laid in the grave; but we did not think that another bereavement was near. William Ralston died² on Saturday evening! Influenza and erysipelas combined carried him off after only four or five days' illness. What a useful life he lived! what a calm rest he now enjoys! what a bright crown awaits him in the day of Christ! I feel as I suppose John the Apostle felt in his old age—all his fellow-disciples gone before him. But I have no visions in my old age,—only I pray much (O you, brother, must help me in this) for what Paul calls the 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation (it is "apocalypse") in the knowledge of Christ.'

Remember me and mine. We are in health as a family, but on every side sickness is to be met with among our congregation. . . . Your brother in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Christ,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. ANDREW INGLIS, DUNDEE, ON THE
DEATH OF MRS. INGLIS

GLASGOW, 16th Dec. 1891.

MY DEAR MR. INGLIS,—'He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve *the children of men*'—how much more unwill-

¹ An elder in Finnieston Church for many years.

² Also one of Dr. Bonar's elders, and well known in connection with his work in the Bethany Hall.

ing He must be to afflict *His own children*. He must be purposing some special blessing to you by this stroke. Meanwhile, look within the veil (Rev. vii.) and 'rejoice with them that do rejoice,' while at the same time you look forward and sing :

'The time draws near when from the clouds
Christ shall with shouts descend.'

'A few short years of evil past,
We reach the happy shore
Where death-divided friends at last
Shall meet, to part no more.'

You will find that you are prayed for by very many at this time, and all these prayers cannot fail to bring you and yours what otherwise you could not have gained.—Yours, my dear brother, in true sympathy, for I 'know the heart of a stranger, seeing I have been a stranger in the land of Egypt,'

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. DR. ANDREW, GLASGOW

20 INDIA STREET, GLASGOW,
23rd January 1892.

MY DEAR FELLOW-PILGRIM,—Very many thanks for your *Visit to Palestine*. It is a capital book for the young, and reading your narrative is just like taking a walk with you and hearing you all the time calling our attention to sights and scenes. . . . We must have a talk about all these things. I am not at all pleased at your expressing doubt as to 'Lazarus' Tomb!' I went down into it, and thought it so grand to stand on Resurrection ground. And now you are robbing me of that delight. 'Thy Land, O Immanuel!' No wonder we feel it to be sacred. Again sending you my warmest thanks,

believe me, your brother and companion in tribulation,
and in the kingdom and patience of Christ,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO REV. DR. BANNERMAN, PERTH

GLASGOW, 6th Dec. 1892.

MY DEAR DR. BANNERMAN,—I return the old letter.¹ It has, you may believe, a peculiar interest to me, and the writer's estimate of the 'wisdom' of the Deputies to the Holy Land is not far from the truth. There was very little of the 'wisdom of the serpent' among us—very little indeed; but I believe we were on that very account made more prayerful, and it was prayer that filled our sails and brought us into the haven.

Thanks for your programme of evening services. I know Mason's *Songs of Praise and Penitential Cries*. All his pieces have in them the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Bannerman and to Miss Omond, who may 'rejoice with them that do rejoice'—her father's joy!²—Yours truly, dear brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

TO A FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY³

MY DEAR SIR,—I have been too long in replying to your welcome letter. Do you think letters ever passed between the families of Moses and Jethro? Would not Moses or his son Gershom write occasionally to their

¹ An old letter, which Dr. Bannerman had sent him to read, describing the Deputation appointed to visit the Holy Land in 1839.

² Alluding to the death of the Rev. Dr. Omond, Monzie.

³ An old friend whom Dr. Bonar surnamed 'Jeremiah,' on account of his desponding moods.

friends in Midian, and tell of the wilderness journey? Suppose the following letter from Gershom to his grandfather Jethro:—

‘Peace be to thee from Jehovah, God of heaven and earth! Wonder not if I am like a heath in the desert such as we see daily here, or like one of the sun-burnt and time-worn rocks that occasionally meet our view.

‘Alas, grandfather, I am a stranger in a strange land, and my heart often wanders back to the fields where you taught me to worship Jehovah among the flocks of sheep, at the well at which you used to tell, my father first met my mother. I hope you are not forgetting us, who are often up and often down, sometimes getting a day’s rest at such a well as Elim, sometimes moving over arid sand. My father is much tried by the people, but I think every day’s provocation makes him meeker than ever, though he does not himself see it, and often sighs for deliverance. Our health is, on the whole, good; we have a good deal to try it, heat by day, frost by night, hot winds, flinty soil, and such other annoyances. But our foot swells not, and, wonderful to tell, our raiment is not exhausted! our shoes not worn out! our manna still at our tent-door every morning, and our guardian Pillar-Cloud above us! Help us to praise, and join us in praying that we may soon see that goodly mountain and Lebanon!’

Jethro replies: ‘My son, the messenger who travelled by the way of the Amalekites arrived here and brought us tidings of you all.

‘But, my son, do ye often enough rejoice in the Lord alone, and forget the desert? Do you not remember your father’s remarkable words about the sacrifice, how he told us of the glimpse he got of its meaning? He saw Jehovah Himself preparing to die! I have never

been able to get this thought for a moment out of my mind. Herein indeed is love! Since then Midian has been to me far less than it was, for from Midian I am now looking to the bosom of Jehovah. Do the same; my son, and the desert will daily be forgotten. And you know how He is very near you in yonder Pillar-Cloud, and His face smiles on you at yonder ark and mercy-seat, from the highest Glory! There was a dark parable too; which your father spoke, about Jehovah gathering us all together at last in some glorious city, when Shiloh shall be there too! I often try to comfort myself with these thoughts. But my heart longs for more light and truth!

Dear brother, pilgrims have been always pilgrims, and the desert always has been the desert, but Christ is always Christ, 'the same yesterday' when John lay on His bosom, and 'to-day' when you and I may do the same, 'and for ever,' when at His coming we shall know and feel all the bliss of being one with Him!

SERMONS AND ADDRESSES, ETC.



CHAPTER XII

ANGEL WORKERS: AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT A WORKERS' MEETING

WHAT I write is not a vision, nor a dream; it is an allegory of its kind. You will follow me into another region, to a spot where angels are gathered together in quiet, happy converse. They are all 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation' (Heb. i. 14); but they are creatures, and so they need intervals of rest. They, as well as we, find 'iron sharpeneth iron.' Let me tell you my visit to one of these meetings, held under the shadow of that Throne whereon sitteth the 'Angel of the Covenant,' who cared for Hagar, visited Abraham, wrestled with Jacob, spoke in the Burning Bush. On the right hand of that Throne, just where one arm of the emerald Rainbow dipt downwards, a group of these ministering spirits were met to speak of the past, and prepare for coming work. I got entrance into their circle, and they received me with great respect and glowing kindness, not for anything in myself, but for my work's sake and my Master's, I being on earth an 'Angel' of a Church of Christ, serving the same Lord whom they so loved and served.

Seated among them, I was allowed to listen and learn. Only a few spoke. It would have been most

interesting to have heard anything from the two compassionate Angels who, in hurrying Lot and his family out of Sodom, taught us to 'pull men out of the fire.' But nothing fell from their lips, nor from any of the Mahanaim host (Gen. xxxii. 2), who could have told of Jacob's timely comforts; nor from the Angel who delivered Daniel from the lions; nor yet from the affable Angel with whom the Prophet Zechariah became so familiar. The notes I give, however, are a few recollections of what passed, and these bearing on things that concern us here below, in our sphere of service.

I

The first who spoke was the irresistible Angel who, on the night of the Passover, was sent forth to destroy the firstborn of Egypt (Heb. xi. 28). He referred to that service as something very terrible, almost too terrible; but he was upheld by the discovery he got of the glory of divine justice taking vengeance on sin. Glorious justice! how bright it shone forth in every stroke of his sword. Nor less was he revived when his eye from time to time turned to the blood-sprinkled lintels and door-posts of Israel, where grace was seen saving its thousands at the cost of divinely precious atonement, set forth in the blood of the Paschal Lamb. 'Angel of the Church of Finnieston (said he to me), tell your flock—never fail to tell and tell again—the justice of God, and, at the same time, the power of the blood which God has provided. Tell both unceasingly, that *the justice* may send souls to *the blood*, and our God be glorified in the highest, when "a thousand fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand," but the sword comes not nigh to those whose lintels and door-posts are sprinkled.'

II

He sat down. And there rose up one like him in aspect, every way as majestic and mighty, yet very solemn and calm. It was the angel who smote the host of Sennacherib, an hundred and eighty-five thousand in one night, using the drawn sword that once threatened death to Jerusalem (1 Chron. xxi. 16). He pictured the scene of exuberant and boisterous mirth in the Assyrian tents; their boastful exultation, as they fancied themselves already in the Temple; and then how the revelry died away, and sleep stole over them. How easy it was for him to go forth on his work! He needed only to flash his sword, and the heart of every sleeper was still for ever. 'But (said he) most dreadful was that scene of death, needing all the relief afforded by the blessed sight of believing Jerusalem at rest in the everlasting arms. As I passed Hezekiah's palace, how unutterably sweet it was to hear low-breathed words of calm confidence in our Jehovah! How peaceful were the dwellings of Jerusalem! O Angel of the Church of Finnieston, when you return, tell your flock what simple faith in our Jehovah wins. Tell anxious ones to look upon the blood of the mercy-seat, as did that king and his people, and use continually the appeal of simple faith.'

III

When he had finished, another rose who prefaced what he was about to say by looking to me (as they all did, in their brotherly, familiar kindness) and stating who he was. 'I am the Angel who was sent to stop the false prophet Balaam on his way to curse Israel. It seemed a very small matter, scarcely requiring an Angel to be despatched from heaven to earth; but I joyfully

went forth when my Lord called. And soon it appeared that had that man gone on to pronounce his withering curse, Israel would have had no courage to fight ; Israel would not have entered the land ; the promise to the seed of Abraham would have failed ; Messiah would not have come ; your world would have been unredeemed ! Go and tell your flock the importance of a small service. Tell *parents* and *teachers* that to arrest evil, in the case of even one soul, may turn out to have been an inestimable blessing to the whole world.'

IV

And now one rose who seemed the very ideal of angelic grace and kindness—the Angel who did that service, in the wilderness of Beersheba, to Elijah under the juniper-tree. He extolled the grace of his Lord and ours in delicately and tenderly reproving, while upholding, the desponding man of God. He rejoiced to relate how grace shone forth that day, when the peevishness of Elijah was twice requited by most seasonable refreshment, sent by Him who would take no notice of His servant's infirmity in praying for death ; for his God meant to take him up ere long to be Enoch's companion, without tasting death. When he had finished his brief story, his eye fell on me ; and to me this message was intrusted. 'Angel of the Church of Finnieston, bid any who *work for the Lord, but who have become desponding*, and have thought of working no more, because success seems to be so inadequate, bid them remember that day of which I speak. And see that thou thyself dost not lose temper with them ; whereas thou shouldst rather carry to them, as I did to the prophet, the food and the water that will revive even a peevish worker's heart.'

V

I saw next a mighty Angel prepare to speak, one whose name I soon learnt. But I should remark that for the most part I *could not catch the names of almost any*. They did not seem to care to be known individually by any one but their Lord. What a lesson (I thought) to some workers among us, who, unless they be spoken of, and their names made prominent, will not persevere in what they undertake. I saw there is no such sinful sensitiveness, no such ambition in that holy heaven!

It was *Gabriel* who stood up now. With clear, full voice, that often quivered with joyous emotion, he told of his privilege in being the messenger sent to Daniel, 'the man greatly beloved,' to make known the time of the appearing of the Saviour, who was to finish transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in Everlasting Righteousness. With that eloquence that is peculiar (1 Cor. xiii. 1) to an angelic tongue, and to one who is high among them, 'standing before God,' he went on to describe his second visit to earth on the same errand, when sent to the Temple of Jerusalem to announce the birth of Messiah's forerunner. But oh, how he was moved when next he related his mission to Nazareth, in which he announced to Mary that she was the mother of the Word made flesh! He did not, however, dwell upon his own feelings; the subject seemed too great even for him. 'But (said he ere he closed), Angel of the Church of Finnieston, we desire to look into your blessings, amid all our joys. O tell your *Elders*, and all among your flock who try to proclaim the love of God in sending His Son, that to us their privilege seems the highest that a creature can enjoy! To have such news to proclaim! It passes knowledge!'

VI

Scarcely had he ended, when the subject was taken up by that favoured Angel who brought the tidings to the shepherds at Bethlehem, 'To you is born a Saviour, Christ, the Lord,' while the glory of the Lord shone round about. 'Perhaps (he began) I may say my privilege was greater than Gabriel's, for I am the only one of our number who ever preached the Gospel! Oh, it is sweet to sound the silver trumpet! When I was done with my brief message, how happy I thought the shepherds in being permitted to go everywhere and tell it all to their friends and neighbours. O Angel of a Church on earth, bid *all your flock* who know the 'Wonderful, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace,' go among their friends and neighbours as these shepherds gladly did. Nor forget to carry a word to those in your congregation who *lead the song*, and to all in the flock (for surely *they all join in the song*, every one?), regarding the praise they offer. The multitude of the heavenly host, [who joined me on that night almost ere I was done with my message, have often since declared that never did they find themselves so lifted up and blessed, as in singing to Him who sent His Son, and singing with their eye on Him who had come down to obey and suffer and die for sinners.'

He was about to close, when once more his eye fell on me, and he added, 'O son of man, you may have in your flock some who have your world's goods, which they might dedicate to their Lord and Saviour's use. A few days after that memorable night, when carrying a message to Joseph, who was still at Bethlehem (Matt. ii. 19), I saw the wise men who had been worshipping at the feet of Christ the Lord, and who had gladly

offered gifts, because their hearts were melted and moved and won at the sight of Incarnate Love. Use that argument, O man of God, whenever you would thaw the icy heart of any one among your flock who gives little to Him who gave all for him. Tell your *Deacons* to use it, if they would open hearts; and let them enjoin their *Collectors* to employ this argument, which prevails when all others fail.'

VII

A pause followed. I half expected to hear something from those Angels who 'came and ministered' to the Lord after the forty days' temptation, I hoped in my own mind that, in that case, I should have been able to tell at least the joy of our heavenly brethren not only in taking charge over us 'lest we dash our foot against a stone,' but also in witnessing our success in times of temptation, when we overcome Satan 'by the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony.' But it seemed as if they were afraid lest we should look to them for the ministry of refreshment in hours of trial, rather than to the Holy Ghost, whose it is to anoint the overcomers 'with the oil of gladness.' As I was thus musing, one rose in whose utterance was an indescribable solemnity. He told of what work he had done on earth. This was the Angel who had strengthened the Lord Jesus in His agony in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 43). 'O Angel of yonder Church on earth (said he), say to your *Communicants*—If they had been there! if they had seen one of the great drops of blood that fell on the cold ground! or one tear on that holy countenance, so marred and worn more than any man's! or had heard one groan, as He cried, "Abba, Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me!" they would surely come to

the Communion-table with awful reverence and wonder, their tears dropt into the cup of blessing, and the broken bread wet with the weeping of grateful love. Redemption money, what a price! Redeeming love, unfathomable! O Redeemer of men! for ever be honour and glory and blessing and thanksgiving to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb!

VIII

By this time the fervour of the angelic assembly was gloriously intense. Everything about our Redeemer was evidently as interesting to them as to me. And forthwith the theme was continued; for the next speaker was the Angel who rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre (Matt. xxviii. 2). 'I was bidden that morning put on the brightest robe in heaven, white as the snow, and my countenance was made to shine like the lightning, on which no man could gaze. I was to be employed in some very great work that day. Soon I learnt that what was required of me was to go down to your world, and, in Joseph's garden, roll away a stone from the door of the sepulchre of your Lord and ours. Was this a work worthy of an Angel's powers, and of one so arrayed in glory? Angel of yonder Church on earth, tell your people that to do the least service to the Lord of Glory is an inconceivable privilege and joy. Let it be known to your *Church-Officer*, let it be known to those who "*keep a door*" in God's house, as well as all who carry a *cup of cold water* to the sick, or *sew garments* for the poor, that no moment in my past life in heaven was to me half so sweet as was that time I sat on the rolled-away stone. I was rewarded by seeing Him come forth, breaking the bands of death; a sight so glorious that no words could describe it to men.

My task was very simple: the day before two men had rolled that stone to its place, and yet this was my reward! O the joy of working for the Lord of glory! O the bliss of being permitted to serve Him in the commonest and easiest duty!

IX

I had no more than time to note down this message, when two, who had been sitting at my side, rose as if they would like to speak. They were clothed in white raiment, and were very joyous. They seemed to me the 'Peter and John' of their company. Whether or not they were the same who were seen in the sepulchre of Christ, sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain, I did not learn, though somehow I understood this to be the case. Both of these made as though they would have spoken; but one gave place to the other, and, as he did so, whispered to me, 'Have not your feet stood on the Mount of Olives?' 'Yes,' I said, 'and though it is now more than thirty years ago, I never can forget that hill and its olive-trees.' 'And you were at Bethany, and you will remember well the slope down the hill that leads toward that favoured spot? It was there I and my brother Angel stood on the day he is about to speak of.' Upon this I turned to listen; and that other Angel told how, on the day of the Ascension, just when the wondrous procession was moving toward the Throne, and the glorified humanity of the Lord Jesus was beginning to light up heaven with transcendent brightness—just when the interest and rapture of the heavenly hosts had risen to a height beyond what was ever known before—a sign was made to himself and his brother Angel to leave the hosts and turn down to

earth, to the Mount of Olives, that there they might deliver a brief message to eleven disciples, sorrowing because their Master had been taken from their head, at the moment when they had begun to hope that the kingdom He had taught them to look for was about to appear. 'We were (he added) for a moment startled; we almost fancied that this duty, even if very urgent, might, at any rate, have been devolved on one only, and so two need not have missed being present at that scene which can never occur again in the history of the universe, when the hosts of Angels and the redeemed around the throne witnessed the Father's welcome to His Beloved Son returning from redemption finished. O to have heard, "Sit down at My right hand!" But tell it on earth, O man of God, that forthwith we remembered His holy will! our rising regret had gone, and we went forth, our soul overflowing with delight, and with new and rarest joy. If any of your flock be at times tempted to think hardly of their all-wise God when He *detains them from the Sanctuary and the Communion-table*, let them know there is a joy quite peculiar and most satisfying given to those who work for God in self-denying service, or who can acquiesce in His ways. Forget not also to remind all *mourners* that the tender sympathy of your Lord and ours is such that, amid His own glory (glory above measure glorious!), and in the rapturous hour of welcome to the right hand, He would comfort His sorrowing ones, and point them to the day when He shall return to wipe away all tears. And not less plainly, also, did we see that day, the Holy Ghost, the promised Comforter, in the greatness of His love, anticipate the day of Pentecost, by letting fall some drops of the oil of gladness upon the bereaved disciples.'

X

Excepting Gabriel (as I noticed before), no one of the assembly seemed to be marked out from each other by names. All were ready to serve unnoticed by their fellows. It was no wonder, therefore, that no name was given when the Angel who had been directed to go to Samaria, and send Philip away from that city to the road which led to Gaza (Acts viii. 26), said a few things about that mission. 'I learnt again that day the deep lesson of Jehovah's sovereignty. Sometime before, one of our number, when he was sent to set free the twelve Apostles (Acts v. 19), was bidden tell them to "Go and preach all the words of this life," but was not allowed himself to proclaim these words. And so it was in my own case now. I was not commissioned to give one ray of light to the Ethiopian eunuch in his sadness, but was simply bidden draw Philip away to a desert road, to meet one man, at a time when his hands were full of work in a crowded city. After delivering my message I lingered near. The Spirit directed him to go up to the chariot, and explain to the Ethiopian inquirer the words about the Lamb led to the slaughter. O man of God, when you or any of your flock *are dealing with an anxious soul*, remember that day. All was still on the dusty road to Gaza; all was solemn and calm in the tone of Philip; there was deep earnestness, but no boisterous energy. He set forth the simple and clear truth about the Son of God who had come to be the sin-bearer. As he was telling the story of God-man led as a lamb to the slaughter, "the Just suffering for the unjust," it pleased the Holy Spirit to touch the heart of the Ethiopian; the scales fell from his eyes. He was

filled with joy—and I hastened up to my place in heaven, to share the joy which fills the heavenly courts when one sinner repenteth.’

XI

I now wondered in myself what might be the next word from the lips of these Angel workers. It was from the Angel who had been despatched to Jerusalem to open the prison and set Peter free. Reference was made to Cornelius at Cæsarea (Acts x. 3), but I cannot be sure that he was the same who carried the answer of prayer to that Gentile centurion. However that may be, referring to both Cornelius and Peter, he did not fail, for my sake, to dwell upon the power of prayer, and the honour put upon it. ‘Let the *Lord’s remembrancers* know what we have been sent to do because they prayed. One man at Cæsarea prayed and was heard. At Jerusalem, a little band united in the cry (Acts xii. 5, 7, 13); and let the youngest be often reminded that that little maid Rhoda’s believing expectation was of no small importance in winning the answer.’ Had time permitted he would have gone on; and would probably have told about his being sent to complete the answer to the prayer, by cutting off proud Herod in the noonday of his pride.

XII

There was evidently an understanding among the gathered Angels that their hour of conference was near a close. But they were all desirous, in the exuberance of their brotherly love, that I should listen to Michael the Archangel, the leader of their host, whose very name is his banner, and declares his burning zeal for his Lord: for his name signifies, ‘Who is like God?’

On rising to close the meeting, he made allusion to events in his past errands to our world, such as his contending with the Devil for the body of Moses, the man of God; but, instead of dwelling on any of these, took up another theme. His Lord and ours had made known to him a great work in prospect, which was ever present to his thoughts, viz., not only that he was to stand up for Israel in the Latter Day (Daniel xii. 1), but that he should be sent to our world, to sound the Last Trumpet at the Coming of Christ (1 Thess. iv. 16). 'What a day (said he) that will be! O man of God, think often and much about it as I do, and lead others to think on it much. You will forget all toil and weariness and care and trial on that day! The workers among you, the sowers who went out weeping, bearing precious seed, shall then have their day of reaping, and their bosom filled with sheaves. The trumpet shall sound and the Son of God shall speak (John v. 25), and the dead in Christ shall rise, and the living saints be changed, a multitude whom no man can number, in resurrection-glory, and strength, and beauty, bearing the image of the heavenly! There are many mansions in New Jerusalem; and my brother Angel here, who once led the beloved John through New Jerusalem, declares that such is the glory of the place that he scarcely wondered when the bewildered disciple fell twice at his feet as if he would worship him. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man what your God has prepared for those that wait for Him." The city He has prepared for them is worthy of the God of grace and of glory. Angel of yonder Church on earth, hasten on to that day, and call on all your flock to hasten unto it, looking for the City, whose builder and maker is God, and for the Bright Morning Star. We are

to be with Him when He comes down to you that day; we are to gather His elect from the four winds, and then stand round you, beholding the glory and the rapturous joy, and joining in your Songs of Jubilee. Peace, peace be with you till that hour when we shall meet again. The time is not revealed; "of that day and hour knoweth no man, neither the Angels in heaven." We understand, indeed, that now it is very near; but it shall come as a thief. Meanwhile, my beloved brother, be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

EPAPHRAS

'Always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God' (Col. iv. 12).

EPAPHRAS was a citizen of Colosse. Hence his deep interest in the Colossians. The Lord does not ask His people to give up their patriotism when they turn to Him. Epaphras had a particular desire that the Colossians should be blessed, because he was one of them. From the words in Col. i. 7 it would appear that Epaphras was their minister, one for whom Paul had great love. He calls him his 'dear fellow-servant.' From Philemon we find that he was a prisoner at this time along with Paul in Rome. Paul speaks of him as a 'servant of Christ.' If you know the meaning of the words you know what an honour they imply, and at the same time great responsibility. Let us dwell on this remarkable feature of Epaphras' character, his prayerfulness. He was a prisoner in Rome. Many of God's saints have done their best work in prison.

Epaphras wrote nothing ; it is not said that he had any visions in that prison ; but his work was *prayer*, 'labouring fervently.' And notice it is in the plural, 'in prayers,' and 'always.'

I. *Epaphras' labours in prayer.*—Being a servant of Christ, he was one who was very much *with* Christ. He went to Him to get commissions, and then returned to tell Him how he had executed them. He was not like Paul who wrote letters never-to-be-forgotten, but he had another talent, that of prayer, and he turned it to good account. He was just as useful, perhaps, in his own place as Paul. He 'laboured fervently' in prayers. The words are like those used about Christ in Gethsemane : 'being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly.' He *agonised* in prayer. His were Gethsemane prayers. He made his prison-cell fragrant with the sweet incense of prayer. Is he not a man to be envied? He is certainly a man to be imitated. He did this 'always.' Every day he was to be found praying for his beloved people at Colosse. He had great faith in prayer. He knew the fulness of Christ's heart as well as the abundance of the treasure laid up in Him, so he was not afraid to ask much. He knew there was great danger of his people standing still, and not growing in grace. Real prayer, earnest prayer, is hard work. There are so many interruptions ; so many excuses for not persevering suggest themselves to the mind. A believing man is more ready at *work* than at prayer. Satan has a special ill-will at praying people. Some one has said that Satan's orders are, 'fight not with small or great, but only with the praying people.' If we are to persevere in prayer, it must be prayer *in the Spirit*, with the atmosphere of the Spirit all round us. Epaphras would never say his prison was a tiresome place. He would say he had plenty of work to do there. Be

like him, labouring for God in prayer. If you can't work, if you can't speak, you can pray. But work hard at it like Epaphras, and you will be an immense benefactor to others.

'Of all thy gifts we ask but one,
Give us the constant power to pray.
Indulge us, Lord, in this request,
Thou canst not then deny the rest.'

Lengthen your brief prayers. Take more time, and in this way bring down showers upon your own soul, and upon all around you.

II. *The main theme of Epaphras' request.*—We would have thought it would be for a revival, for the conversion of many souls at Colosse. No, it was for believers he prayed with most intense earnestness, and always, day after day. This was an indirect way of reaching the unsaved, for if believers get more of God's grace, they will go forth to others. It is more difficult to find Epaphrases than to find workers. The coldness and inconsistencies of believers are an immense hindrance to the conversion of souls. On the other hand, if believers are full of the Spirit, full of love to souls, the world sees they have got something that earth cannot give, and when they show by their joy in Christ that they are satisfied, the world would like to get at their secret. There are far more people made to think by seeing the joy of believers, and their satisfaction in Christ, than by any word that they speak. Epaphras would ask all this for the Colossians, 'that they might be perfect and complete in all the will of God,'—in all that God wanted them to do, that the seal of the Spirit might be very distinct and legible in them. There was once a great deal of murmuring among the Gentile converts in Jerusalem. God showed them how to remedy the evil, and the murmuring was stopped (Acts vi. 1-7);

and we read that 'the Word of God increased, the number of the disciples multiplied, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.' That was one result of doing the will of God. After Paul's conversion there was a lull in persecution, and 'walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, the churches were multiplied.' Besides this result to the unsaved, it is so glorifying to God when believers are lively and vigorous. Seek to labour fervently in this work of prayer. I have met with many who have come to tell me they were going to give up part of their work because they had not time for it, but I never remember in the course of my ministry meeting with any one who wanted to give up some part of his work because he was going to take the time for prayer. If any one did do this, the part of work he had left would soon be filled up. If you are not 'always labouring fervently in prayers' you will be dwarfed Christians. Would you not, for your own sake, be 'perfect and complete in all the will of God'?

THE BRETHREN OF OUR LORD

(JOHN vii. 5)

WE know the names of four of our Lord's brethren, James, Simon, Joses, Juda (Mark vi. 3). There seems to have been a large family. The idea (originating with popery) is held by some that these were only relatives, not brethren in the strict sense of the word. But the word used, and the connection show that the family relationship is meant to be implied. In this family Christ was brought up. He was the eldest. They cared very little for Him, and treated Him with very little respect. It

is a startling statement, but I think we can trace this through all the days of Christ's ministry. When they said to Him (John vii. 3), 'Depart hence, and go into Judæa,' they were taunting Him. What a burden of grief must have come to Christ from this quarter! No sympathy at home! Excepting Mary His mother (for Joseph seems to have died very early) He had none to sympathise with Him in His home. How well, therefore, can He feel for any who are similarly situated! Then, again, what prayers this must have drawn from Him. You who have unconverted friends at home, do you pray as Jesus did?

These brethren must have done great injury to Christ's cause. 'They know Him well at home, and they do not believe His claims!' What responsibility they took upon themselves, what awful guilt was theirs! If there be any one of a family wherein there are godly ones living for Christ, and you will not acknowledge them, we say to you, What guilt is yours!

But we have evidence which there seems no reason whatever to doubt, that after Christ's resurrection a change took place. The James mentioned in Acts xv. 13, and the Jude who wrote the Epistle, were the brothers of our Lord. When the one hundred and twenty disciples were met in the upper room, see, yonder comes in Mary, the mother of our Lord, and who are these with her? James and Jude, Simon and Joses, for it is said, 'Mary, *with His brethren.*' It seems, therefore, that all Christ's brethren and sisters were changed after His resurrection. We point out this to members of a family where there are unsaved ones. The Lord has often kept the head of a family, or members of a family, praying, and the answer did not come till after their death. Seek so to live that your life will speak after you are gone. The Holy Ghost can turn the most unlikely hearts. These

brethren stood out Christ's prayers, His miracles, His sermons, His words ; all were in vain. One would have said, 'There is no hope of such men.' But there was ; and two of them became most eminent saints. Some stand out long praying-for. What a start James and Jude took ! 'Many that are first shall be last, and the last first.'

But do not let unsaved ones delay. It is not likely that you will be changed on your death-bed ; if you are changed, it will be in your lifetime, that you may afterwards live for Christ. Turn to Him now.

SINGING BEFORE SUFFERING

'When they had sung an hymn' (Matt. xxvi. 30)

'NEVER man spake like this man,' and possibly the same might be true of Christ's singing, 'never man sang like this man.' Did angels listen then as did the prisoners to the singing of Paul and Silas at Philippi? What fragrant associations has that upper room, and this also is among them. Christ sang, and the disciples joined. They were, most of them, fishermen, and fishermen are remarkable for their hearty singing. O to have heard the discourses ! O to have heard that prayer (John xvii.) ! And O to have heard that hymn ! The singing would be heard outside, and perhaps the young man (Mark xiv. 51) who followed them to the Garden of Gethsemane may have crept near to listen. Would not you ?

I. *Christ sang.*—His singing showed the reality of His humanity. Aristotle said of his god Jupiter, that no one ever heard of his singing ; it would be beneath him. But Jesus sang, and showed He was truly one of us. We like a hymn—specially in affliction (Acts xvi. 25 ; Ps. xlii. 8 ; Job xxxv. 10). Martyrs have sung

going to the stake, and there is a tradition that the three youths in the fiery furnace sang aloud. A hymn is more unselfish than a prayer; it expresses gratitude and love. Hence, heaven is peculiarly the place of song, for all is unselfish there. Christ is on the eve of the most terrible conflict ever witnessed,—to-night and to-morrow the Garden and the Cross! He summons to His help every aid. His eye is on the Father's glory. He bathes Himself in it and is refreshed for conflict.

II. *What he sang.*—All writers agree that it was Psalm cxviii. For two thousand years the Jews have concluded the Passover by singing this Psalm. If you glance over it you will see how appropriatè it is, and it came in course at the Passover. What shall *we* sing? The Master took what came in course. So let us do. At any rate, the Lord will tell you as occasion calls for. Appropriate '*His song shall be with me,*' as well as '*My prayer*' (Ps. xlii. 8).

III. *When He sang.*—After the solemn Passover service and the Supper, and just before the scenes of the Garden, with Calvary in view. We are not told in the Gospels of Christ singing until now—perhaps because His doing so in these circumstances was so peculiar and so fitted to instruct us. His last note was a cheerful note, though He knew what was in the future. Much more should ours be so. Let us try unselfishly, like Jesus, to keep our friends from sorrow as long as we can. In the face of difficulties, sing to the Lord. If you have a dread of what is coming, sing, instead of brooding over it. If you are like the Master—singing before He went to the Garden—you will be enabled to go fearlessly forward.

IV. *When He shall sing again, and what.*—When all sorrow and conflict are over—(Ps. xxii. 23, lxix. 30, and cxviii. 21). It will be the day of the Song of Moses and

the Lamb. When He comes again Christ will lead that great multitude of the redeemed whom no man can number, in the song of praise. He will sing over completed redemption at the sea of glass, as did Moses at the Red Sea.

After they had sung this hymn they seem all to have been so elated, in such spirits, so full of joy, that the Master had to put in a word of warning. 'All ye shall be offended because of Me this night.' But, so like the Master, He added, 'But I will not forsake you. I will go before you into Galilee.' But the silly sheep who were to be scattered did not believe Him. Do not blame Peter too much, for they *all* joined in saying, 'Though I should die with Thee,' etc. Christ did not contradict them. He knew the corruption of their heart; He knew what would happen. When they said this they were full of feeling. Let us not lay too much stress on feeling and emotion when we come to the Lord's Table. Put stress upon this, that the Shepherd's heart will never change toward you. 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.'

THE NAPKIN ABOUT CHRIST'S HEAD

'The napkin that was about His head' (John xx. 7)

WHY 'wrapped together in a place by itself'? Because Jesus wished to show that He arose calmly: no haste; no hurry, not as if in flight from the tomb, but in solemn triumph and at leisure. So He wishes His people to be calm. 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' Yes, and see! He folded the napkin neatly and laid it by.

But far more. That napkin had been put there by Joseph and Nicodemus. Christ very likely was as

beautiful as Moses, but His face had been marred by suffering. After His death the beauty all returned, and that was why they did not cover His face with a napkin, as John xi. 44. Seeing the bleeding wounds caused by the crown of thorns, they carefully and tenderly drew the napkin round His brow. When Jesus awoke on the third day He noticed this act of kindness, and folded up the napkin and laid it in a place by itself, as indeed precious to Him, because it told the tenderness of their care for Him. They will hear more about this napkin when He returns.

Thus He cares for the smallest acts of kindness we do *for* Him and *to* Him; how much more for what we do under difficulties and in suffering, and not least, for our efforts to win souls.

JONATHAN AND HIS ARMOUR-BEARER

(I SAMUEL xiv.)

I WOULD like to have known the name of the Armour-bearer, but we are not told his name. There are a great many cases of useful persons whose names are hid. Sometimes God puts honour upon them before the church; sometimes He says, 'never mind, you are remembered before the Lord.' We shall hear the Armour-bearer's name read out at the Great Day.

God seems to like to work by *two*. Run over in your own mind instances of this: Moses and Aaron, Saul and Jonathan, Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Timothy, Paul and Silas, etc. The seventy were sent forth two and two. It shows how well God knows, and how well God recognises our human feeling. Somehow no one likes to work quite alone. (Almost the only exception to this that I have known was William Burns.) There is a great deal even in seeing

the countenance of another. We might almost say that Christ Himself felt this. John, leaning on His bosom, seems to show His yearning for close companionship. To him Christ could whisper as he lay in His bosom. I think it is almost unnatural for one to wish to stand alone.

Then one helps another. Jonathan must have believed that the Armour-bearer's faith was as strong as his own, or he would not have asked him to go with him. How his faith would strengthen Jonathan's! It is no fault in a labourer to wish for sympathy, indeed it is a great means of grace. I do not think that the man who works alone has the promise of so much blessing as two working together. Moses' Song says, 'How should one chase a thousand and *two* put *ten thousand* to flight?' That is the divine measure. And God gave us this not only in a song but in a history. Samson took the jaw-bone and with it slew a thousand of the Philistines. Jonathan and his Armour-bearer first took the garrison, and then discomfited and put to flight the whole host, ten thousand at least! God has not written that without intending His Church in our day to learn from it. So, we say, one believer taking hold of God's name may do mightily, but two taking hold will do ten times more. Did not Christ say, 'If two of you shall agree as touching anything,' etc. I think we may safely say that that is one of the chief reasons why Christ sends His disciples two and two.

If human feeling requires this, and divine promise falls in with it, human frailty also requires it. It helps to give a blow to our selfishness. We need not think to isolate ourselves, though if *He* has isolated us that is another thing. If you found God using yourself alone, in spite of great grace there would be great danger of pride springing up in your heart. There are

few conversions brought about by the instrumentality of one only. There are generally several links in the chain. The sower and the reaper go together. Peter in dealing with the lame man says, not 'Look on *me*,' but 'Look on *us*.' John was there, and John was helping perhaps with his prayers as much as Peter in his more active work. It promotes brotherly love and does a great deal to prevent spiritual pride. So it is with a minister and his people. The minister is blessed, and he finds out that a band of his people have been specially praying.

CHRIST'S SILENCE (1)

'A time to keep silence and a time to speak' (Eccles. iii. 7)

WE can draw a great deal of instruction from Christ's silence.

'Let Christ's word and *silence* too
Dwell in thy heart,'

a Moravian hymn says. Silence as to things we would like to know about Christ is a different thing from Christ Himself keeping silence. Do we ever in the four Gospels find Christ calling any man Lord? Never. He carried about with Him the constant consciousness of His divinity. Isaac is the type of the silent Christ. Let us notice two instances of Christ's silence.

I. *His silence at Nazareth for thirty years.*—There was no noise made about His coming into the world. He slipped into it we may say, until a choir of angels made it known. A few weeks after we hear the tramp of Herod's horsemen, and we see the babe fleeing into Egypt. Then we hear nothing of Him (with one exception) for thirty years. This Plant of renown grew up silently before the Lord, and spread out His

branches to be suffused with divine fragrance. He did all for God only, and this is true service for child or man. He broke the silence once that He might tell us what He was engaged in. 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' Christ never refers to these thirty years. Why did He keep silence? To teach us the real nature of obedience. Is it not doing everything under God's eye and for Him, not drawing the attention of others to what *we* are, and to what *we* are doing? He was teaching us to be content with the Father's approval, that the way to please the Lord is by our obedience. Is God's approval enough for you though all men should ignore you or even despise you? Christ lived for thirty years with the two tables of the law unbroken. Learn to take in much of Christ's obedience into your thoughts. It claims for us merit, and we have by it a claim to the favour of God. There is a lesson here for afflicted ones. What if they are giving the best obedience by their quiet suffering? They are doing the hardest thing that any one can be sent to do. These thirty years ended at Christ's baptism, when the heavens were opened and the voice said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'—the Father's seal to His thirty years' obedience.

II. *His silence at the marriage in Cana.*—He says nothing to the guests, as we would have expected Him to do. Sitting in the midst of them the first of His miracles is done in silence. He spoke by His presence. A good man's presence in a company may be a great blessing, if his presence is also the presence of the Master. As Christ sat there He silently changed the water into wine.

'God spake once when He all things made,
But saved us when He nothing said.'

We may apply these words to this miracle. What a

ray of divinity there was in it! He can *think* and it is done, as well as *speak* and it is done. There is no noise in the sunrise in the morning, but there is a burst of light! Christ was teaching the secret of power. It is the presence of the Lord that is the secret of power. It is that we need in order to have blessing. In providence He likes to work in silence. There is no voice in the affliction, but there is in the very silence of it. It is the Lord's way to make us *think* upon divine things when He means to give us blessing. 'He has made His wonderful works to be *thought upon*.' He works in this way still in convincing of sin and righteousness. Real conviction comes when the soul is quietly alone with God. No one in the church knows what you are feeling, but the Lord is working in the might of His divinity. We are to stand under the cross and look at the Crucified One. 'Behold Me! Behold Me!' A striking picture makes us silent while looking at it, but what after-thoughts it may rouse in us! So looking quietly on the Lord Jesus the water may be changed into wine, the hard heart will be melted!

CHRIST'S SILENCE (2)

'Have I not held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?'

(Isa. lvii. 11)

IT is, as we would say, an old custom of God's to keep silence when we would have expected Him to speak. Of old God's silence was meant to lead men to fear. We need not wonder that when Christ came He acted in the same way.

I. *Christ's silence in receiving sinners.*—The woman who washed His feet with her tears was a great sinner,

a notorious sinner, so much so that Simon wondered He could let her touch Him. Christ did not speak about her sins. He allowed her in silence to come and weep at His feet. There was no 'casting up' of her old sins, no upbraiding. Without His speaking a word she knew she was forgiven. All this woman's sins—and they were many—He dropped into the deep, and welcomed her to Himself. Does He not do this to us? The fountain opened for sin washes sin away, but there is no voice in the waters. In silence the waters wash the soul. Christ 'held His peace,' and the woman 'feared' Him. Had He upbraided her, her heart might have been broken by sorrow, but would she have been drawn to Him? His silent gentleness drew her with the cords of love. Look at the woman we read of in the eighth of John. When Christ had heard what her accusers said He turned away, and stooping down, began to write on the ground as if to give a silent rebuke to them. When He lifted Himself up and looked at them, He did not say one upbraiding word to the woman, but a searching word to those round her. When He looked up the second time her accusers had all disappeared. Then He said to the woman, 'I do not pronounce condemnation on thee, but pardon. Go, and sin no more.' He did not rebuke her. He was there as the Sin-bearer, and in the very act of saying 'Go, and sin no more,' He was casting her sins into the depths of the sea, and giving her the power to sin no more. It was not because her sin was small. It was because it was such that He turned away His eyes from her, that He hastened to cast it into the depths of the sea. He took it on Himself, and so put it out of sight of God and man. It is so with Him still. You may take your sin to Him at once, and He will not reproach you. He will not upbraid you. He will 'in no wise cast

you out.' Some of you may think that God does not notice your sin. Do you not know that God is silent that He may give you time for repentance? There will be a day when He will 'speak out,' as there has been a time when He has kept silence.

II. *Christ's silence in dealing with His disciples.*—He did not hasten to speak. It is one thing that can be said of Christ, though it cannot be said of all His disciples, He was not censorious. How He kept silence is remarkable. How often His disciples did inconsistent, stupid things through ignorance, and the worst that Christ said to them was, 'O ye of little faith.' Sometimes He did not speak at all, but only by a sigh showed that He was vexed.

We don't do much good by speaking too much about the faults of others. If we could learn Christ's solemn way of speaking *a little*, we would be much more likely to reach our end. He never talked to others about the faults of His disciples, and, when others tried to find fault with them, He was very quick to defend them. When they were blamed for plucking the ears of corn, He interposed and gave a defence for them. When they were blamed for not fasting, He gave good reasons why they should not. When 'they all forsook Him and fled' He was not offended in them. We never read of His upbraiding them. When Peter denied Him did He utter a word of reproach? He only gave Him a look that was silent, but how it touched Peter's soul! When He said to Him by the Sea of Galilee three times 'Lovest thou Me?' there was evidently an allusion to his thrice-repeated denial. Doubtless Peter longed to have Him speak of it, that he might have the opportunity of confessing his sin and being forgiven. But Christ never said more about it than that. When He speaks about His disciples in the seventeenth of John,

you would think these men were faultless! He says they have kept His word, they have believed on Him, they are not of the world, even as *He* is not. He never speaks of their failures, He just speaks of their faith. O believer, what a Saviour you have! How He will hide all your sins, and speak only of your faith to the Father. It is not that He does not see wherein you fail, but it is just His exceeding loving-kindness. The very height of this is seen in His dealings with the beloved John. Never man had a sorer heart than John when he came back and stood at the Cross for some hours before his Master died. John, who used to lay his head on Christ's bosom, had forsaken Him and fled! But Christ has not a word of rebuke for him. He looks upon him, and before the end comes He says to him, 'There is My mother; she is your mother now. Take her home with you. I forgive you, I can trust you, John.' Such is grace. If it were not that we know all this, I don't know how we could take our places in glory before the throne. Our worst sin will be completely gone, and no holy angel will be more welcome than we will be!

CHRIST'S SILENCE (3)

(MATT. xi. 1-11)

JOHN the Baptist lay in prison unnoticed, and we may say uncared for, for nearly a year. How mysterious! No wonder he sent to ask the Master if there was any explanation of this. 'Art Thou He that should come? Is *this* like the Messiah?' Christ's answer to the disciples of John was, 'Tell your master what I am doing, and have been doing. The blind see, the lame

walk, the lepers are cleansed.' With this message they were dismissed, only that the Master said as they left, 'Tell John not to be stumbled at My dealings with him. Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.' Infer from other things, not from circumstances, how you stand toward the Lord, and how He stands toward you. Learn the heart of the Lord by what He has done for you. Think of Him who gave Himself for us, and trust *Him*. Never distrust the Father, never distrust the Son, but confide in their wisdom and loving-kindness. Wait till you see the end of all affliction. Learn to read your title to the family of God by what God has *said*, not by a special message to yourself. It would be so satisfactory to us if we could get an individual message from the Lord; but He does not do this. He did not do it to John the Baptist. Notice particularly:

I. *The circumstances of John's death.*—The one incident we hear of in John's imprisonment is the message sent by his disciples. It is curious that at the very time John was in prison, Christ sent out His twelve disciples to preach. He left His Forerunner in prison and sent out the twelve! 'Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.' There John lies in prison,—the man who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, but no chariot of fire carried him upward without tasting death. No, he sank in loneliness into the grave. Yet there had not arisen 'a greater prophet than John the Baptist.' Who is the man who is greater than others? The man who has most of Christ in his heart. This is God's test. What place has Christ in your heart? That will determine how you stand before God. You may be neglected, you may pass through the world, and the world may not take much notice of you, and God's people may not. God may give you the treatment He gave to the Baptist.

Instead of letting him think he deserved any honour at the hand of the Lord, the Lord was emptying him of self and putting him on the level of other sinners. It was just as He did with Moses. The man who wrought such wonders might have been tempted to think he stood upon a higher footing than the people of Israel. So when he sinned, God made him feel it was the sin of a highly-favoured man; it was more than an ordinary sin. So he was self-emptied. God may use a man to do great things, but that does not give him any merit. It gives him responsibility.

II. *Christ's silence regarding John's death.*—'The disciples went and told Jesus.' He said nothing, He made no mourning. They mourned thirty days for Aaron, but when the greatest of the prophets died there was no mourning. There was always meaning in Christ's silence, as there was at Bethany. It was not that He felt little, but because His heart was full. 'Come ye yourselves apart into the desert-place,' He says, 'and let us talk over it, and think over it.' But He said nothing more. He did not send any threatening message to Herod. He left him without a word. He gave him up. It is not a man's death that is so important in Christ's eyes. It is his life and his resurrection. John in his prison heard the sound of mirth and revelry above him in the palace, when suddenly he is ushered into the presence of his Lord, and hears the songs of the redeemed above! The head that was so mocked is now crowned with glory. Whatever may happen to you in another year, will you be able so to trust the love of the Lord? Though you should be in abject poverty, or in bodily pain, still you will be able to say with Paul, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.'

III. *Christ's thoughts of John.*—John's death is like Abel's, silent, lonely, unheeded. Yet Jesus calls him 'righteous Abel.' It is like Antipas in Pergamos, condemned, put to death; and God says, 'My faithful martyr.' He says of John, 'He was a burning and a shining light.' He says, 'It was not for nothing you went out—not to see the reeds by the Jordan—no, you sought a man worth seeing. You saw a real prophet, the greatest of them all.' The prophet prophesied of by Malachi! And remember you may be greater than he in the coming kingdom of glory; you in heaven may be greater than he on earth.'

He says of John's influence, 'From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,' etc. (Matt. xi. 12), such was the earnestness he awakened, such vehement desire. And his shall be the honour (Dan. xii. 3).

He says of the peculiar fulness of his preaching (Matt. xi. 13 and Luke xvi. 16), all others only foretold what was coming. He stood and pointed out the reality come. He preached the King and the Gospel of the kingdom. He says, in a word, that he was truly an Elias. In him the prophecy of Malachi iv. 5 had got a first fulfilment. How Christ's heart toward John is seen in these words! Ah, is not this the way He will speak of each faithful one at His coming? 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!'

THE PINS OF THE TABERNACLE

(EXODUS xxvii. 19; xxxviii. 31; xxxix. 40)

These verses teach us a great deal.

I. *God's notice of little things.*—He takes time to speak

about them, and bids Moses write about them. He says as much about the 'pins' in these passages as He does about the work of creation.

II. *God's notice of those who carried the pins* (Num. iii. 36, 37).—The pins and the cords were under the charge of the sons of Merari, and God looked on those who carried the pins—the very smallest things connected with His work. They marched through the desert—they got the same gleams from the Pillar-Cloud as those who carried the Ark or the Candlestick. It is just like our God to attend to the small things very carefully: the wing of a fly, a blade of grass. It is characteristic of His greatness that He can attend to the small things as well as to the great—while He is listening to the praises of eternity He can be thinking on those who are carrying the pins of the tabernacle. Does not this appear in what Christ says, 'Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father'? 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.' What comfort there is in this! Are you ever afraid to tell God your small things, as if they were not worth while His attending to? But your great things are not any more worth attending to. This should lead us to lay our care upon Him, to trust Him better.

III. This teaches us *to be contented with our lot*.—The sons of Merari might say, 'Why do our brethren the Kohathites carry the Ark?' *Because God said it*; that is all. He that serves most is the greatest in the kingdom. He who carries the pins may get the greatest reward. You may think you are in a very small sphere. God says, 'Here is your sphere, here stand.' The poorest Israelite, serving God in his dwelling, might get as much of the divine favour as did Daniel, who was governor over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces. Do not say, 'I want to get out of the rut into

another place.' If you get out of the rut of carrying pins when God put you there, you will not be blessed. Are we in the camp with God? That is the great thing. Come to the altar and lay your hand on the sacrifice, and thus claim a sinner's access to a holy God. Then God will give you your place, and, whether it be large or small, He will shine on you with the brightness of His face for ever and ever!

THE MAN WHO LENT CHRIST THE UPPER ROOM

(MATT. xxvi. 17-19)

THE disciples did not go to look for a room till they had consulted with their Lord. Never do anything without asking counsel of your Master. But why did they need to do this? It was Christ's way to wait till He was asked, and you know it is His way still. 'I will for this *be inquired of*.' Do you not feel a sort of envy of those who were permitted to do anything for Christ? Do you not envy Peter who lent^d Christ his boat? And do you not envy this man who was able to lend Him his upper room? There are many things we can lend Christ now though He is not with us.

Here comes to light a secret friend, as if to counter-balance the secret foe, Judas. This man loved Christ, for the name 'Master' (*διδάσκαλος*) works on him like a talisman. Notice—

I. *This man's reverence for ordinances.*—He had got ready a fine, large airy room to lend to worshippers who came up at this Feast. He had set couches ready for the guests—'furnished'—for they were not as those in old time coming out of bondage, staff in hand. They are

sons in freedom. The Lord chose the room for its airiness and comfort, for He never wants us needlessly to do penance. It was large—for He knew what was to be transacted in that upper room another day.

II. *This man's love for Christ.*—There was no more needed than to say, 'The Master saith.' Scribes and Pharisees would not speak of Him thus, but friends did. A hint was enough—as when John whispered to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' You may say there is no express command for certain things. But do you need an express command? Is a hint not enough?

III. *The honour put on the man.*—Did not Peter get a reward in the draught of fishes for lending his boat? and the boy who lent his basket? This room is to be known for ever as a 'Peniel'—a 'Bethel'—'Jehovah Shammah'—greater than the temple. If men proudly say, 'Queen Mary stayed here a night'—what would this man ever after say? 'Here He, the King of Glory, washed His disciples' feet. Here He ate the Passover, and instituted the Supper. Here he said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." That upper room is fragrant with the myrrh and aloes and cassia of Christ's words of grace. But more; He came back to that upper room, and breathed the Holy Ghost on His disciples. This man was no doubt one of the hundred and twenty disciples who afterwards waited in that upper room in prayer. Are you like him? Will you say of your heart, 'Be lifted up and let the King of Glory come in'? He will sit down there and make that heart of yours memorable. He will wash you in His blood from every stain. He will fill you with His own Spirit. He will discourse over again to you these words of His. He will keep the Supper with you!

THE THREE ANANIASSES

(ACTS xxiii. ; v. ; ix.)

IT is sometimes useful to put in juxtaposition separate facts and characters. The three Crosses—how instructive! the three Marys, the three Centurions. Here we have the three Ananiases. Their name means 'Jehovah is gracious.' Their parents thought it a lucky name, and all professed to rejoice in what it expresses. Many make this a pillow. Let us not be deceived by names or profession, for even devoutness is not faith, and profession is not principle.

I. *Ananias, the enemy of the Cross.*—He was the son of Nebadæas and succeeded Joseph, who succeeded Annas and Caiaphas. You find him with the Bible in his hands from his birth, as a Levite and a priest. He had to do with the highest forms of religion, with its rites day by day at the altar. Once a year he would be in the Holy of Holies, and see the mercy-seat, and gaze on the blood,—yea, *sprinkle* it. Every holy thing in word and ordinance was familiar to him. And yet he was a 'whited wall,'—only externally comely, all formalism and externalism. He hated vital religion and grew wroth at every manifestation of it. His bosom friends were Roman governors and such as Tertullus (xxiv. 1). The world, even the same pleasures that heathenism relished, was still in his heart. Josephus tells that before the last siege of the city, he hid in an aqueduct and was dragged out to die. Even so shall he try to hide under the rocks or cry, '*Mercy, O Lord!*' according to his name, but shall not find it.

In our community there are many such as Ananias,

persons brought up with the Bible in their hand, familiar with ordinances, with the routine of the prayer-book, or family worship, or worship in church. Nay, they go to the Lord's Table, lifting up solemn hands, gazing on the blood on the mercy-seat, and saying 'We take it.' Yet their bosom friends are men like Felix or Tertullus, they are at home with them in pleasure and trifling gaieties. They instinctively shrink from true vital godliness and the men who have it, bid them 'hold their peace'—smite them on the mouth. They never knew the new birth. Union to Christ is to them cant or nonsense. And so they die! But on the day of Christ, lo! they are dragged from the covert of the rocks and hills.

II. *Ananias the apparent believer.*—He was a hollow-hearted man, yet he seemed sound. It was a revival time when the tide was high. He joined the true believers at a time when faith was strong in them, when they were accustomed to live each day looking into glory and were on the wing above earth. Feeling a secret conviction that they were right, he threw in his lot with them, separated himself from former friends, took the godly as his companions, praised and admired the Apostle, and became quite zealous. But he was not really born again, the Spirit was not in him, as soon appeared. For either from a wish to be less obscure, or from partial conviction that self-denial was right, he sold part and pretended to give all. And so we see he had never quietly rested on Christ and been content with His Nazareth obscurity of obedience. He died an awful death. His name availed not, there was no 'grace' for him. He sank down—what an awful surprise!—from the very midst of the believers.

There are some such among us still. They have a secret conviction that it is safe and right to be

believers, so they imitate others, attend meetings, separate themselves from the world. You may detect in yourselves a likeness to Ananias. Perhaps, when you find yourself overlooked you wish to be known or else to go back. Or when a missionary cause is pleaded you give a little, and say to conscience, 'It is all I can afford.' Perhaps you are half-conscious that it is the example of others that carries you along. Are you willing to detect yourself? Ask yourself, 'Why am I not willing to do as Jesus did at Nazareth, though unnoticed? Why am I complacent at any good thing I say or do? Are not these to a real saint as natural as streams to a spring? Am I independent of money and comforts, of name and praise for my heaven, finding it in Jesus?' The Spirit has found you out, for He never knew a time when He opened the door of your heart. Your conscience may be *quiet* by your profession. O look on sin as you see it in the Law and in the Cross, not as *you* feel it. You cannot lie to the Holy Ghost in vain!

III. *Ananias, the true disciple.*—One of God's happy servants. You see his life in chap. xxii. 12, 'of good report;' he 'observed the law;' he was ready to obey (chap. ix. 10-17). He learned to be a disciple first at the Cross when the voice said 'Ananias, come to Me,' and ever since he has obeyed it. Hear Christ speaking to His sheep by name 'Ananias!' and notice his brotherly love—'Brother Saul.'

Have you private intercourse with Christ, and are you sent on His errands? Happy Ananias! He carried rest to Paul, who thereafter carried Christ to to many thousands; and whether, as tradition says, he died a martyr at Damascus, or on his bed, his end was peace. He answered to his name. He knew God was 'gracious.'

At the Great Day yonder is Ananias in his robes of Priesthood, with the breastplate on which are the names of every tribe, but no room for the name of Jesus! Nay, his robes kept off the blood of Jesus. Then, there is the other Ananias. He saw that High Priest's heart was empty, but he himself never found what filled his whole soul. He fled from Sodom only to be a Lot's wife! But you, O holy Ananias, come! Paul is getting his crown, 'but not to me only'—to him who bade the scales fall from his eyes. Yes, says Jesus, to that quiet saint with whom I spoke, and who spoke with me—to Paul with his ten talents, to you with your five. 'Enter into the joy of thy Lord.'

The first Ananias looked neither into himself to see the hell there, nor on Jesus, to see the door of heaven, or heaven itself, there. The second gave only a glance at both, and saw neither fully. But the third looked till he saw himself lost, and wrath his portion; and then upward, till he read, 'I have found a ransom' in the hand of the Father who pointed him to Jesus!

FIRST-FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION

'The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose' (Matt. xxvii. 50-53)

THIS is a passage about which very little has been written. Commentators seem to pass it by as something very mysterious. But if the Holy Spirit be with us we will find that there is a lesson for us in this part of the Word. 'The rocks rent.' Wherever we read of this taking place we know it is the presence of the Lord. This explains Jonathan's wonderful victory—'there was trembling . . . and the earth quaked' (1 Sam. xiv. 15). At Philippi the earth shook (Acts xvi. 26)

—the Lord was present. ‘The saints which slept arose.’ When death is spoken of as sleep, it is generally in reference to God’s people. Daniel speaks of those that ‘sleep in the dust’ (xii. 2). Then we have it in John xi. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 6, 51; Acts vii. 60. It is as if the Lord did not wish us to think of death as anything sad or disagreeable. He wants us to think of it as a sleep or rest,—a blessed sleep without even dreams. Let us learn from this the connection between the graves opening and the Veil rending.

The Veil separated between the Holy and Most Holy Places. It was a doorway or gateway representing Christ. ‘I am the Door.’ And when the Lord put down His hand and rent it from top to bottom He opened the way for us to go in. He can come out, and we can go in. In this connection we shall see some special meaning in the graves opening. It was the death of Christ that opened them. Your body is redeemed by Christ’s death as well as your soul, and it must come out of the grave.

‘After His resurrection.’ The graves were opened at His death, but the saints did not come out of their graves till Christ’s resurrection. It is like when Christ breathed on the disciples and said, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost,’ but they did not actually receive the Spirit until Pentecost. ‘Many bodies,’—not merely one or two. I think it means a great company. What is the meaning of this? The graves stood open till the third day, and passers-by would be amazed to see the stones rolled away. You begin to see now this was a testimony to Christ in more ways than one. These are all saints, and they are coming out of their graves to honour the Holy One. Perhaps the reason Christ did this was to show a sample of His power. These saints were the first-fruits of the resurrection, and when He

went up they would be His body-guard, nearer Him than the angels.

If you ask, why does only Matthew mention this? The answer is, the Holy Ghost gave one part to one and another to another. To Luke He gave the part of the record that showed He was the Saviour of the Gentiles; to Mark, that which showed by little things that He was the Messiah; to John, that which showed His divinity. Matthew shows prophecy fulfilled in Christ. Dan. xii. 2 says, 'many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.' Matthew says, 'many of the saints which slept arose.' Christ did what Daniel says will be done for all the saints. He took some of them and raised them up. In effect He was saying, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

These saints were likely those who had lately died, for they 'went into the holy city and appeared to many.' If they had been saints of an older time they would not have been known. Perhaps old Simeon was one of them and Anna and Zacharias. When Christ appeared after His resurrection He conversed as well as appeared. These saints appeared and conversed with many. At first they would cause alarm, but that would soon be dissipated. It is not likely they spoke of the other world. Very likely they appeared as witnesses for Christ.

From all this let us learn the connection between Christ's resurrection and ours. Christ's love to His own is so great that He will not lose even the dust of His people. He will fashion it all into beauty and comeliness. Where there was weakness He will put power, and where there was corruption He will put incorruption.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE SON OF THE
WIDOW OF SAREPTA

(1 KINGS xvii.)

'To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living' (Rom. xiv. 9).

There never was a resurrection in the world or in the Church of Christ before this one. Yet it is a resurrection in very quiet circumstances. The Lord does not make a work about His wonders, for what are wonders to Him? Sarepta was a town of Syro-Phœnicia. I have sometimes thought that the Syro-Phœnician woman belonged to this place. I should not wonder but that the Lord had gone out of the coasts of Israel in order to see it. I remember it, forty years ago. It was a place of villas for the people of Tyre. On this account the woman would spread the news all the better among the Gentiles there. But let us keep to the story of the widow. Christ refers to it, showing He had read it carefully, as setting forth the sovereignty of God. Let us look at

I. *This incident as bearing on the widow.*—She must have had some acquaintance with the Hebrew truth and the Hebrew prophets, for when Elijah appeared to her in the name of his God she was not at all surprised, but put faith in the God of Israel. First her faith was tried, then it was rewarded. 'Her barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail.' Would *you* risk anything in faith for the Lord? Are you conscious that you often do things simply because you believe they are God's will? Did you ever do so without being rewarded? It is not like the Lord to forget those who do anything for Him.

One day this woman's son sickened and died. Could there be a greater affliction to a widowed mother? Is this the reward of faith? No doubt she hazarded a great deal in taking in a Hebrew prophet into her house, and is this the way the Lord rewards her? No doubt Elijah prayed for her son; yet he died. It is remarkable how it affected her. 'Thou hast brought my sin to remembrance.' How affliction brings sin to remembrance! It is one of the Lord's ways of convincing of sin in the case of His own people. If you let the Spirit of the Lord work in you it will always have this effect, and a most blessed effect it is. The Lord wanted to humble the woman. Perhaps she was getting a little proud of her barrel of meal. Ay, and perhaps she was beginning to feel that she deserved it, for taking the prophet into her house. The Lord drives all this out of her. But still, is it kind to do this to a believing woman? 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith, in that ye ministered to the saints' (Heb. vi. 10). Now she has ministered to the saints. Well, God has rewarded her, and this is His way of preparing a greater reward—a kindness such as had never been granted to a saint since the Flood, before or after. You see the Lord empties before He fills. When you are overtaken by some bitter grief, say, 'Now I know the way of the Lord. He is preparing something better for me.' It ended in the widow's son being given back to her from the grave. 'Now I know,' she says, 'that thou art a man of God.' Did she not know that before? Yes, but have you not noticed that there are times when the truth we know is lighted up as with a flame? I referred to walking forty years ago on the shore at Sarepta. I well remember how Mr. M'Cheyne and I used to say to one another, as we walked in other parts of Palestine with our Bibles in our hands, 'We believed the Bible before, but now we

believe it more than ever.' Some of you have felt this after a time of affliction.

II. *This incident as bearing on Elijah.*—I think Elijah was a little stumbled at first. He seems not to have known what to say. 'Give me thy son.' He goes up to his upper room, and there he is, alone with the dead child. You see what he is about. He speaks to the Lord for him, not to his mother. Three times he cried. It often puts me in mind of our Lord's words, 'Ask, seek, knock.' 'Asking' is when we pray, but 'seeking' is more earnest still, and 'knocking' is more and more in earnest. Elijah had never heard of a resurrection before, but he does not hesitate to ask this of the Lord. You see we may ask Him to do greater things than He has ever done yet. Don't confine yourself to the same things over and over again. I think Elijah took a hint from former things done for him. There was heaven, sealed and opened again,—there was the barrel of meal not spent. 'Lord, Lord, do greater things!' What a simple resurrection, done so quickly, done in a private house, done in an upper room. I don't know that men would hear of it till long afterwards. The heathen would not believe the woman's story. The Lord likes to do great things, if we would not make a great noise about them. Let them tell their own story. I think the Lord was preparing Elijah for greater things still. We may in this respect compare him to David slaying the lion and the bear by faith. When we are dealing with the Lord we always act on this principle, 'greater still, greater still.' Here is the man who was never to die used by God to bring life to one who was dead. God let him look into the cavern of death, and see how He could bring back from death. And the Lord was teaching His servant in his retirement what He could do for a dead nation. When the Lord gives you any

remarkable visit in your retirement He means you to use it. We need a great awakening. God does not want us to be content with what we have got. Have you cried to the Lord for the quickening of souls as earnestly as Elijah cried for the quickening of life in that dead lad? If we were intensely in earnest we would see reviving.

JETHRO

(EXOD. xviii.)

I. *Jethro's name.*—His personal name was Reuel or Raguel, 'God's Shepherd.' His father must have been a good man, not an idolater. Jethro is his official title, meaning 'his highness,' or 'his excellency.' So this man was at once a priest of God and a man of high standing. He was a godly Gentile in the heart of a very wicked people, the Midianites. They were a vile, licentious nation, but Reuel kept himself unspotted from them, and in some quiet corner ruled his people, serving God.

II. *Jethro's office.*—Priest and prince. The word means both. As a priest he would present sacrifice. It is he who proposes to Moses to offer sacrifice. This is the very heart and essence of all true worship. The atoning sacrifice is the essence of all true religion. You have no true religion if it did not begin at the altar.

III. *Jethro's personal character.*—See him living a holy life in the midst of that licentious people. We have a pleasant picture of his quiet, happy family life. They were a united family, and a busy family. As, one evening, they tell their father the story of the day's work

and what had happened to them, Jethro shows the kindness of his heart by sending for the stranger they had met with to his house. He finds—not a wandering idolater, but Moses, the man of God. For forty years Moses goes in and out with him, till one day he comes in with an awful solemnity over him, and his face lighted up with a divine lustre. Then he tells the story of the Burning Bush. Jethro sees at once that Moses must go, and they take a solemn farewell. You know all the great events that happened afterwards, till at last Moses and Jethro meet at the foot of Mount Horeb. What a meeting it would be, as they talked of all that God had done for His people!

IV. *The memorable offering that followed the meeting* (verse 12).—Round this altar are gathered Moses and Aaron and the elders of Israel, and they sit down to ‘eat bread.’ They had no bread but manna, and Jethro would taste it for the first time. It was a blessed meeting of communion with one another, and with God, the priest and king in the midst. Is this not a picture of our Priest and King at the Table when He spreads bread for us? But it is ‘broken’ bread.

V. *Jethro’s memorable advice to Moses* (verses 17-23).—Notice his wisdom, tempering Moses’ zeal. At the same time notice his compassion. Is it not like our High Priest? ‘He knoweth our frame.’ Moses listens and weighs the matter, and makes the change Jethro advises. Our High Priest does not want one man to do everything. He sent His disciples out two and two. He knew human nature well, and He knew its tendency to self-sufficiency. Then He wanted them to share the work. It is never the duty of any one of God’s people to be overburdened or worried,—as if the work could not be done without *you*! Could it not? Has God no other resources? Has He no other arrows in His

quiver? God fills our hand with work, but He does not overburden us. When we are overburdened it is time to stop.

The last we hear of Jethro is in the 27th verse, when Moses 'lets him depart,' as if unwillingly, to his own land. His son Hobab (Num. x. 29), though unwilling at first, seems to have gone with Moses afterwards, for we find some of his descendants mentioned in Judges i. 16. Just as during our Lord's lifetime His brethren did not believe in Him, but afterwards we find them among His followers.

We say to you to-day, 'Come with us and we will do thee good.' Ours is not an oasis in the wilderness, but a land of corn and wine. Our Priest and King—in Him it is we find our portion, a heaven here on earth.

'KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD'

(I PETER i. 5)

ARE there any believers here who are afraid that they will some day bring disgrace on their profession? Let them study these words. 'Kept' is the whole history of a believer's life. It tells us we are very weak, for we need to be kept; but, at the same time, it is a most comforting word, for it tells us we are worth keeping. God counts us a treasure worth keeping. It has wonderful power to give energy to believers. Rightly viewed, it bears on the interests of holiness in a wonderful manner. There may be ups and downs in the degrees of our faith and of our love, but we cannot be lost, for we are 'kept by the power of God.' The word throws emphasis on the mighty power that grasps us and keeps us; it is 'garrisoned by the power of God.' It is God's

own power that encompasses us. None shall pluck us out of His hand.

‘What from Christ the soul can sever,
Bound by everlasting bands?
Once in Him, in Him for ever,
Thus the eternal covenant stands.
None can pluck us from the Strength of Israel’s hands.’

I. We are kept *by the power of God.*

We are in the arms of omniscience and omnipotence, for it is literally ‘kept in the power of God.’ We are lying upon that power, and we need it all. The power of the devil is tremendous, the power of the world is tremendous. Its current often carries us away. No wonder if we sometimes say, ‘I shall one day perish.’ We are ‘kept by the power of God.’ If you want to know the workings of that power, read Eph. i. 19-23. What a defence! better than ten legions of angels; and yet we have that too. But Jude says, ‘Keep yourselves.’ We are to keep ourselves, but how? ‘By faith.’ God keeps us by making us keep ourselves ‘by faith.’

II. We are kept *by faith.*

God’s part is to put forth His power; our part is to put forth faith. God enables us to have faith, and He keeps it in us continually, and not all the power of hell can pluck that faith out of our heart. It never decays. We get power continually from God to go on believing from day to day. Our faith will not vanish. It may grow weaker, but it will not disappear. If we give way to unbelief we are letting go our hold of the chain that fastens us to the omnipotent arm. Faith implies that our eye is daily looking to the Cross of Christ—not looking to our feet, not looking about at what might terrify us, but ‘looking unto Jesus.’ We think of the blood shed to put away our sin, every day. We think of the righteousness He gives us, every day. We think

of the new and living way opened to us by Christ, every day. Faith is always looking, not only to the work of Christ, but to His Person. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' He lives to keep His vine and water it every moment. All the way along we may say

'There is life for a look at the Crucified One'—

new life, every day. We are on the battlefield still, but we may sing

'God is our refuge and our strength.'

When sickness comes we may feel ready to fail, but He will keep us. When death comes we may not be able to think at all, but it does not matter. He will keep us. Preparation for death is almost an imagination. A believer does not prepare for death at all. Christ does it for him. The believer prepares for *life*. Beware only of slipping back. If you begin to think about yourself, about your frame of mind, about your cares, you may slip; but you will not fall. He who restored Peter will restore you. The fishermen in Brittany have a prayer they use when their boats are going out: 'O our God, keep us, for our boat is very small, and the ocean is very wide.' We shall be 'kept' till the salvation is revealed, and that may be at any moment. It is all ready—like a statue all complete, only waiting to be unveiled. God will keep us till then for our inheritance. He will not have an unlet house in New Jerusalem, no mansion where the grass grows before the door. Each mansion is reserved for some one. *Our* inheritance is 'reserved in heaven for *us*.'

THE TRIAL OF FAITH

(I PETER i. 6, 7)

THE prevailing state of our mind should be great joy—'Wherein ye greatly rejoice.' Have you got at

the Gospel at all if you have not great joy, if it does not every day make you glad? Our joy comes from a great Fountain—Christ Himself. Are you a disciple? Then can you bear to live below this standard? In spite of this joy you may be ‘in heaviness through manifold trials.’ Indeed, it is your great joy that enables you to bear them. What is the trial of faith? It is the outward pressure of circumstances, the waves dashing upon you as you stand on the Rock of Ages. Christ was tried. He was the crystal vessel, full of the purest water, and Satan was allowed to shake it to see if there was any mud in it, and there was not. The trial of faith came to Abraham in a strange way, threatening to bereave him of his beloved son. Abraham stood the test, and went on step by step till God said, ‘Now I know that thou fearest Me,’ etc., and the trial ended in ‘praise, and honour, and glory.’ The ‘trial of faith’ may come in disappointment in those we trusted in; it may come directly from the devil; it may come from the state of the church; it may come from persecutions, bonds, imprisonments. It is quite natural to feel these trials. Down in the trough of the wave, then up again on the crest; that was Paul’s experience. Then it is only ‘for a season.’

I. *God’s deep interest in the trial of faith.*—He says it is much more important than the goldsmith’s trial of his gold. It is said that the goldsmith waits till he sees his face reflected in the gold, then he knows it is ready to be taken out. If we had seen with what intense interest the Father watched His beloved Son when He was ‘tried’ on the mount of temptation and on Mount Calvary! So with the members of His body. It is said, ‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,’ and the word is literally ‘death-pangs’—what they may be suffering at the time of their

death. The Lord watches them with intense interest. You have multiplied trials; are you murmuring? Do you say 'It is very hard'? Would you say that to God? He is standing by and saying, 'See how faith sustains this disciple of mine!' Catch His eye, and you will be able to bear the 'trial.'

II. *The result of this process.*—'Unto praise and honour and glory,' etc. This means to *our* praise, to *our* honour, to *our* glory. It will be to God's praise and honour and glory, for we will see that all His ways are excellent. An old Puritan says, 'A stick in the water looks crooked. Take it out, and it is quite straight.' So it will be when we look at God's dealings with us. When we see all, we will say of our bitterest sorrows that it would have been unkind in God not to have sent them. But it will be to our praise and honour and glory too. Angels will serve us all the more willingly because we never permitted a doubt or surmise of God's love to enter our mind. We shall have the greater glory, the more we have borne the trial of our faith. We are to be rewarded, not only for work done, but for burdens borne, and I am not sure but that the brightest rewards will be for those who have borne burdens without murmuring. Are you not often saying, 'Oh, that that day would arrive, when God will reveal His Son Jesus Christ!' On that day He will take the lily that has been growing so long among thorns and lift it up to the glory and wonder of all the universe, and the fragrance of that lily will draw forth ineffable praises from all the hosts of heaven. Is it not worth while being 'tested' 'for a season'?

‘INDWELLING SIN’

(REV. xxii. 8, 9)

‘I, JOHN’—I, who was just a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee, called to follow Christ—‘*I* saw all these great things.’ Then we may see great things yet, as John did! It is interesting how many traits of John’s character we find in this wonderful Book of Revelation. He tells us that when he saw his Master after so many years, he fell at His feet as dead, as much with delight as with fear. Then he tells us he ‘wept much’ when no one was found worthy to open the book; and how honestly he tells things about himself that are not to his credit. It is a great proof of grace when a man can do this—not only say he is a sinner, but tell things he did that were wrong. Our text tells us of the second time that John did this. The angel peremptorily commands him to rise: ‘Why worship the servant when the Master is here?’ From this incident let us learn the doctrine of indwelling sin in a believer’s heart.

I. *Indwelling sin as a doctrine.*—A believer is entirely free from guilt. God cannot point to a spot of sin on a soul that has believed on Jesus. The believer is also free from the dominion of sin; but he is not free from the existence of sin in the heart. Never till we see Christ as He is shall we be free from the presence of sin.

‘One look of Jesus as He is
Will strike all sin for ever dead.’

‘If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves.’ If we say the root of sin is out of us we deceive ourselves. In Rom. vii. 21 Paul says, ‘I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.’ ‘Law’ means a powerful tendency, like a law. There are always remains

of the old nature, and in the old nature there is always deceit. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.' We are only on the way to complete deliverance.

II. *Indwelling sin illustrated by our text.*—John was now about ninety years old. For seventy years he had walked close with God. We should have thought that indwelling sin was dead in him. But indwelling sin is often benumbed, but not dead. Paul had no sooner come down from Paradise and the third heavens than God says, 'It will be needful to send him a messenger of Satan, lest he be exalted above measure.' God did not say, 'I will strike his sin dead,' but 'I will keep it down.' There was indwelling sin still in Paul's heart. This disciple John, who had got on so far in the divine life, tells us that when he had been allowed to listen to and see, all that is recorded, and had heard the invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, he fell at the angel's feet to worship him. Soon after this, John was walking through the New Jerusalem and saw its wondrous walls, its gates of pearl, the redeemed in their robes of white. Would you not have thought that his indwelling sin would be withered up now? 'When I heard these things, I fell down at the feet of the angel,' etc. He had forgotten for a time the glory of the Master, wondering at the glory of the servant. We need to watch to the very end. Satan knows there is tinder in your heart, and he tries to throw in a spark. The beloved John is not perfect yet, though he has been through New Jerusalem.

III. *Why does God leave a root of sin in our heart.*—He does not take away the existence of sin, but He does take away its dominion. It is like Psalm cx. 2: 'Rule . . . in the midst of thine enemies.' The consequences of indwelling sin being left in us are—(1) To keep us from leaning on our personal holiness. We

cannot point to one day of perfect obedience, to one work of perfect holiness. Till the last moment we have to stand upon the blood; (2) To make us press onward to the day of Christ. 'When He shall appear, we shall be like Him.'

IV. *How we are to deal in the meantime with this indwelling sin.*—Sin in a believer is as really sin as in any other. I do not know that indwelling sin waxes weaker and weaker. But here is what we are to do. We are to think of *the indwelling Spirit*; for as surely as we have indwelling sin we have the indwelling Spirit. Then we have help always at hand. It is like Christ in the ship. We think often we must meet trouble or temptation alone, forgetting the indwelling Spirit. He is not asleep, He is there in the ship, but He waits till we come to Him, and, as it were, awake Him. It is thus we get the victory over indwelling sin. Another way is to *feed faith*. 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of His testimony.' Nothing startles the devil like holding up the blood. He flees from it. Give every now and then a look to Christ, and if you look to Him He will look to you. Be of good cheer, believer! In spite of indwelling sin we shall not be shut out of heaven, and at length He will present us 'without fault before the throne of God!'

'BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL!'

(PSALM ciii. 1-5)

IN this psalm we find the Psalmist standing at the golden altar with his harp in his hand, recounting all his mercies. This psalm teaches us adoration. Adoration is not thanksgiving; it is *silent wonder*. I once saw a striking instance of this in a sick one, who said

to me, 'I got such a sight of the Lord Jesus—His wonderful Person—His finished work—that at last I was obliged to stop giving thanks, and just look, look, look!' Adoration is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, and it is very sanctifying when He gives us such moments of nearness to Himself. Looking on Him at such times we cannot say, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul!' we can only gaze and wonder. Praise is a little lower down Pisgah. Adoration is higher, nearer the upper sky. It is more than apostolic, it is angelic; for the angels say, 'Glory to Him who sitteth upon the throne.' It is the feeling of a soul under God's afflicting hand, to whom God has given great sanctification. 'Blessed be the name of the Lord. He gives, and He takes away.' That is adoration.

This psalm is a call to praise 'His holy name.' His 'doings' come after. His holy name is the fountain-head; His doings, the streams from Lebanon. We are called to praise Him because

I. *He forgiveth all our iniquities.*—Our first true acquaintance with God is when He pardons us. Manasseh—that awful sinner—that man who leaned over hell—who spoke with the devil, and would not speak with God—that man was brought to know the Lord, and when He had forgiven him, 'then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God.' What we need is a God who can take away our sins. 'All thine iniquities.' He does not leave a single sin resting on the conscience; the blood that cleanseth one sin cleanseth all. For our sins are linked together, one great awful chain round our soul, and God takes hold of the first link, and so casts the whole chain 'into the depths of the sea.' We need not wonder that the Psalmist puts this first, 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.' Looking up to-day to the Lord Jesus are we not saying, 'In whom we have

redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace'?

II. *He healeth all our diseases.*—This may refer to bodily as well as to spiritual healing. I like to think in connection with this of the palsied man brought by his four friends to Jesus, and Jesus looking on him, and saying, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' Then a few minutes after, 'Rise, take up thy bed and walk.' When God takes away our sin He does not forget our bodily trouble. He may not heal us completely, but He takes the sting out of the disease. He has given us a pillow for our aching head in giving us pardon, and He whispers in our ear, 'This chastisement is that you may be partaker of My holiness.' This is the fire that is to melt away the dross. After pardon He gives healing of the soul's diseases. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you.' It is in the repeated use of the forgiving blood, day by day, that we mortify our corruptions, just as it is by the blood that we quench the fiery darts of the devil. When they touch the blood they are quenched. As it is 'all thine iniquities,' so it is 'all thy diseases.' There is not a corruption over which He will not give you victory.

III. *He redeemeth our life from destruction.*—We are 'kept by the mighty power of God.' We every day escape dangers that we are not aware of. Is it not a beautiful touch in Jeremiah ii. 6, where God says to Israel, that He took care of him when he was going through the wilderness, 'a land of deserts and of pits.' Israel was skirting the margin of these pits as the Pillar-Cloud led him along—a picture of how we are led. How we shall praise Him yet for all His deliverances! If we but saw the snares Satan lays for us spiritually, how we would adore the Lord who enables us to escape them all! How often the devil tries to make us un-

watchful, or gives us false peace, but God is watching over us, and He redeems our spiritual life from these spiritual injuries.

IV. *He crowneth us with loving-kindness.*—Providential supplies all the way as we journey on, putting a crown of tender mercies and loving-kindness round our head. We are wearing it, and perhaps do not know that we are. Look at the comforts of your lot. Think of the spiritual mercies of your life. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul!' Is He not satisfying your mouth with good things? When you were going to become a backslider He restored your soul. He fulfilled His promise that 'they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength,' and the earth looked very small as you ascended on eagles' wings. 'Forget not all His benefits.' There is a great deal of unbelief implied in forgetting. Faith has a good memory, unbelief forgets. Let us ask the Lord to give us better memories for all His benefits, that we may fix our minds on His grace, in spite of all that may happen to us. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits!'

ONESIPHORUS: THE NEW TESTAMENT EBEDMELECH

(2 TIM. i. 16-18 and iv. 19)

PAUL had a heart that felt everything keenly. It is from his pen that 'Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep' comes. It is he who wrote in Phil. i. 8: 'the bowels of Christ Jesus.' Many times he speaks in this way, 'desiring greatly to see thee.' No wonder, then, that he so felt the kindness of Onesiphorus, and has recorded it all. This name means

'one who brings profit,' not unlike 'Onesimus,' perhaps given by his parents with the hope, 'may he prove a helper to many!' He lived at Ephesus, but business took him away at times from his family to Rome. Perhaps he was converted during the revival at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 1-20). He was

I. *A helper of Paul, though not a preacher.*—He did not leave his profession after his conversion, but he and his 'household' confessed Christ in their place. He 'refreshed' Paul often, by kind deeds and words, and brotherly intercourse, and prayed with him. He cheered him when he felt (as he sometimes did), like 2 Cor. ii. 13, 'no rest in his spirit,' etc. He paid him little attentions, sent some of his family to run messages for him, or to take him little comforts. Also he 'ministered' to him—the very office of the women in Luke viii. 3—giving him of his substance. All this is recorded because of Heb. vi. 10.

II. *A visitor of Paul in prison.*—'He was not ashamed of my chain.' Now that passage, in Matt. xxv. 36-43, tells of times of trial and temptation to friends to shun the risk of helping the prisoners. But this man won the prize which Christ speaks of. Simon of Cyrene *may* have done what he did willingly, but at any rate Onesiphorus did, for 'he sought me out diligently, and was not ashamed of my chain.' Paul had been thrust into a Roman prison-cell among many scores of criminals, himself branded as the worst because he was a 'Christian,' one of those whom the Emperor had stigmatised as burners of Rome! Yet this faithful friend lets it be known that he is Paul's friend, finds his way into his cell—sits down and converses with him—bears reproach for him. By this sympathy so practical he proclaims, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.' Our deeds tell where our heart is; and is it not deeds

rather than words that Christ judges by in Matt. xxv. 36, 43?

III. *Paul's prayer for him and his.*—Paul does not narrate the story in his usual style, but in a curiously abrupt way bursts into a fervent prayer for Onesiphorus. 'The Lord have mercy on his household, may he himself find mercy in that day.' Does this contain much? Yes, everything. If once the barrier to the outflow of mercy be removed, 'everything good and heavenly may come in. 'Have mercy on me' has a very wide meaning in the Psalms. But specially observe it is 'in that day'—the day of Christ, the day of recompenses, just as in Jude 21 'mercy unto eternal life' is at Christ's appearing to bring the full store of blessing.

This is a case like Ebedmelech's in Jer. xxxviii. Remember how the Lord took notice of that Ethiopian having shown himself not ashamed of God's servant (chap. xxxix. 16, 17, 18).

In the fact that Paul specifies the 'household' we may read that they were very dear to Onesiphorus, and were possibly left at home without him at the time Timothy was to carry the message (iv. 19), and tell of this prayer. Parents, see how the Lord feels for your children!

Now let us look back and glean a few lessons.

1. *See how one saint may help another.*—Even one who has no gift of utterance may help a great Apostle. Brotherly love expressed in any form has wonderful effects—a look, a word, a prayer, a taking part by sympathy and acknowledgment.

2. *Learn not to wait till others come forward.*—Work yourself and let others follow. On this occasion 'no man stood by' Paul, but all the more was the noble conduct of Onesiphorus felt. So in common work for Christ. 'I go a fishing' (John xxi. 3). This is your

part; and let others seeing you, follow. 'We also go with you.'

3. *Do much for saints.*—'Refresh' them, 'minister to' them, 'do good unto all men (Gal. vi. 10), especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' Remember the Master's words (Matt. x. 40, 42).

Think of 'that day' spoken of here and elsewhere,—so present always to Paul's mind that he does not specify it. Has your faith led you to love that day? Are you of those who love His appearing? Do you do all as under the light of that day? 'That day' begins eternity, and our day of grace now decides our state 'in that day.' Will you 'find mercy in that day'? Have you already 'in this your day' found mercy at the mercy-seat through the blood of atonement?

'ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS'

(EPH. i. 3)

THERE are many wonderful things in this epistle. Sometimes we are told to look up to the 'heavenly places;' sometimes to look back, past eternity; and again we are told to look far forward, into the 'ages to come.' Men used to come to Ephesus to see the great temple of Diana. If we read this epistle to Ephesus, the Holy Spirit opening our eyes, we will see things more wonderful. We will not have read many verses till we have to stand still and wonder. Let us see in this verse

I. *Christ in the heavenly places.*—This is another name for the right hand of God. Christ's work is all done, and so the Father has said, 'Sit down' in the place of

glory and honour. His reward is begun. The Father has poured upon Him the oil of joy above His fellows. 'Thou hast made Him most blessed for ever.'

II. *The Father gives to Christ all manner of blessing.*—The blessings first come to Christ, and from Him they come to us. We get them 'in Christ.' 'The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand.' We must go to Christ for everything. 'All things are delivered unto *Me*.' The devil claims the world, but he is a usurper. Christ says, 'All things are delivered unto *Me* by My Father.' 'He has received gifts for men.' There is a great supply of gifts, but they are all *in Christ*.

III. *The Father gives all manner of blessing to Christ's people.*—'Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings,' etc. Has every believer got them? We look round, and we see some very poor believers of whom we hope there is grace in them. Can we say of them that they have been blessed with all spiritual blessings? The Israelites got a grant from God of the whole land, even as far as to the Euphrates. But they did not take possession of it all as they were warranted to do. God has given us a grant of all these blessings, but He does not say we have taken advantage of them all. Believers are often contented with just the main things, but they don't go on to all. How many stand still and say, 'we have got a great deal of joy.' Very good, but you must go on to more. You have got the thirtyfold, but you might go on to the sixty and a hundredfold. You are warranted to expect a very great deal. All that Christ has we have a grant of, and we may go and knock and say, 'I have come for all spiritual blessings,' and the Lord will say, 'You have done well to come. I wondered *when* you would come for them.' When you find in reading the Bible any blessing Christ has to

give, put your finger on it and say, 'That is a gift for men, a gift for *me*. I may go and ask for it.' How many things have we left unsought?

IV. *The nature of these blessings.*—They are 'spiritual blessings.' God has not blessed us with strength so that we are never to be weak,—with health, so that we are never to be sick,—with riches, so that we are never to know poverty. Not at all. He hath blessed us with spiritual blessings. We begin with forgiveness. We must have guilt taken away before we can handle any of these other blessings. Then we get the blessing of adoption. We get into the Father's presence and we stand there in love, He loving us, and we loving Him. We have a seat in heavenly places waiting for us, but even now it is ours by right and privilege. Whatever grace we read about, that belongs to us as believers. Have you spoken about it to your Father? Whatever the Spirit can give, you may ask for. Listen to Paul's words in the eighth of Romans, 'Who is he that condemneth?' Look at the robe I have got by going for it! Who will condemn me? 'Nay, I am "more than conqueror!"' He is waving his palm as well as wearing his white robe. Can you say this? You say 'I contrive to keep the enemy back.' But you should be 'more than conqueror.' I don't wonder that Peter says we ought to have more grace than we have. 'Add to your faith,' etc. Why do we not get it? Suppose one of Jacob's sons had come back from Egypt with only a small sackful of corn, and his father says to him, 'Is that all you have got?' 'Yes, all.' 'Had he no more to give? Did he grudge it?' 'No, but that was all I asked for.' Another of Jacob's sons comes with full sacks of corn. He needs six asses to carry them. 'How did you get them all?' 'Just as my brother here got his little sackful. *I asked for them.*' A good old Puritan says, 'Each tribe got

only one blessing, but every believer may get *every spiritual blessing*.'

V. *Every blessing comes out of Christ to us*.—We come and have fellowship with Christ, and while we are holding fellowship with Him, He is dropping grace for grace into our heart. Have you not often come away from fellowship with Him finding that every grace was enlivened? It is a very humbling subject this. Why have we not taken possession of the whole land when we have a grant of it? How few of these spiritual blessings we really have! To think that God is so liberal and generous, and we have often such hard thoughts about Him, as if He were not dealing kindly with us! Do we prize these blessings much? The subject is very encouraging too. If we do in earnest desire to have these blessings they are all in 'Christ.' 'Our life is hid (deposited) with Christ in God,' and if we would go and knock at the treasury door we would get what is waiting for us. Prayer and communion will lead us to appropriate these spiritual blessings.

LEANING ON THE BELOVED

'Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?' (Song viii. 5)

LEANING on the Beloved is faith—faith which looks out to Christ, as distinguished from feeling, which looks in to self. Faith has regard to what the Lord has done and spoken, both in respect of justification and sanctification.

I. There are many cases in which we have no express promise to plead, and yet faith has room for work.

The Syro-Phœnician woman had no such promise, neither had the centurion, and they were both Gentiles,

and their requests were for temporal blessings. Yet in both cases Christ was delighted with their confidence in Him. These were the only cases in which He said He had found great faith, and He gave them all they wanted. The Syro-Phœnician woman had heard about Christ and His ways, the kindness and compassion He showed to multitudes. What He did for others He could do for her daughter, and she determined to apply to Him. All apparent repulse could not shake her out of *faith in Himself*. 'Truth, Lord, yet'—. The centurion felt utterly unworthy, and had very low thoughts of himself, but he had most lofty thoughts of Christ's *Person*, and true thoughts of His *heart*. 'Speak the word only.' Faith believes no ill of God, but all good of Him. It leans on His graciousness, even when it cannot point to His faithfulness and say, 'Do as Thou hast *said*.'

II. The Lord is delighted with faith manifested in this form. 'Do this for me, for Thou art gracious,' rather than 'because Thou art faithful.' David showed this faith in God when he preferred to fall into the hands of God rather than into those of men. Such confidence in Him gives Christ joy. Shall we not gratify Him by confiding in Him, whether we have a promise or no?

III. The Lord owned the faith of these two by doing what He had not *promised* to do, after trying their faith.

Similar cases are ever occurring amongst ourselves. You are praying for a friend in sickness or trouble. You can't go to Him saying He has *promised* to remove these, and it may not be for His glory that they should be removed. Perhaps you look at the verse, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in faith, believing, ye shall receive,' and yet you can't put your foot on a *promise* for the blessing asked, and so you can't ask *believing* that you

have it. But yet faith has its sphere here. It looks at God's graciousness—just what Abraham did on Mount Moriah. He offered up Isaac, believing that the Lord who had given him would raise him up again, though he knew not how. God has not bound Himself to give you what you ask, but your prayer will be heard, and He will have respect to your faith in Him.

So with prayer for the conversion of friends, either for an individual, a family, or a community. He does in hundreds of cases what we ask because He has respect to our faith in Him. But, nevertheless, all who are prayed for are not saved. Were it so, what would be the result? If it were certain that all prayed for by Christian friends would be saved, the unsaved would put their trust in these prayers. Ambrose's assurance to Monica, the mother of Augustine, 'The child of so many prayers cannot be lost,' was only strong feeling. Absalom was such a one, and yet, 'O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee!' Unconverted one, repent and believe the Gospel, or prayers for you will be in vain.

Hold up to God, in pleading for others, the atoning sacrifice, and point to Pentecost in your pleadings for the souls of men, and, at the same time, testify to them of these—pleading with God for them, and pleading with them for God.

Believer, have you ever taken your stand on a promise and got *all the blessing contained in it*?

PAUL'S FIFTEEN DAYS' VISIT TO PETER

(GALATIANS i. 18)

FOR three years after his conversion Paul was out of sight in Arabia. The Lord sent him there, as He sent

Moses to Midian, to be trained for after work. It was an education-time. He would, no doubt, visit Sinai (*see* iv. 25), and on the top of that hill get new thoughts about the Law. He would visit Elijah's cave, and think of the 'still, small voice' that was to work greater things than fire, or wind, or earthquake. No doubt, too, he received there teaching in the Gospel and the ordinances, for (1 Cor. xi. 23) 'I received from the Lord,' *παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου*. We see plainly the Lord looking forward to evils that would arise in His Church as to the Supper, and, therefore, re-instituting that ordinance with careful simplicity. 'This do,' and no more—no appendage—no preface. Was it in Elijah's cave? and there did Paul hear Jesus say, 'as often as ye eat this bread . . . ye do shew the Lord's death, till He come.'

But we are hastening to Jerusalem after these three years. When it was noised abroad among the disciples, 'Paul has come!' how great would be the interest. He goes to the upper room and worships, perhaps preaches, and then goes home with Peter. 'To see Peter' (*ἱστορήσαι Κηφᾶν*, v. 18) is to make acquaintance and ascertain by inquiry. What an interesting sight it must have been—Paul listening to Peter, and Peter listening to Paul. We may learn from this incident

I. *A disciple's brotherly love to other disciples*.—Paul goes to his own company. He does not care to visit Gamaliel, his old teacher, or any of his fellow-students. He seeks fellowship, and so goes to Peter, to talk over the past, and to learn more specially about the simple Gospel-message. They spent fifteen days together; on one of these James (not the Apostle) called; they heard each other preach; and Paul found, as he tells us in this epistle, that they entirely agreed in all their views of the truth—salvation without works or ceremonies—

salvation by the Son of God, and His one offering and sacrifice—and more than ever they resolved to preach 'none other name.' They go out to walk together. What would Paul's feelings be as they came to where Stephen was stoned! O to have heard him speak of God's sovereign grace! 'The grace of our God was exceeding abundant.' 'I, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious.' 'That in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern,' etc. Peter would point out the spot where he 'went out and wept bitterly.' How much there was there to humble him—that God should so use him who said, 'I know not the Man.' Such visits and reviews are most helpful and humbling. There might be in the history of each of God's people a Book of Deuteronomy, going over again the wilderness journey.

II. *A disciple's love to the Master.*—Why does he go to Peter and not to John? The Master had said to Peter, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren,' and Paul went to get some of the strength. Then Christ had said again, 'I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' God gave to Paul and Barnabas, too, the keys to 'open the door of faith to the Gentiles' (Acts xiv. 27). See these two upon the house-top, in the moonlight, turning toward Gethsemane, and Peter tells Paul of the 'strong crying and tears.' See them next day go forth. 'Here is where Jesus raised Lazarus!' and 'Here is where He wept over the city. And now, this is Calvary, the Great Altar!' How long they linger there! and I would like to know what they said there to one another. Paul would ask Peter about Christ: 'What was His look? Is it true He never smiled? What were your feelings when you and John looked into the sepulchre?' And Peter would take him to the spot where Christ ascended after saying, 'Go ye into all the

world.' Then he would ask Paul to tell him what he saw of Christ on the day he was converted near Damascus. How their hearts would burn! Anything about the Master is fuel to a disciple's love.

III. *A disciple's humility.*—Paul was a cleverer man, and far more of a scholar than Peter. He had very much he could tell, but he wished to learn, for what is a disciple if not one who so learns? Paul had been to Sinai, but he had been further than Sinai—he had been to the Third Heavens. Still, he can learn from fellow-disciples. If you are a true disciple, you are always learning. Every disciple you meet with has something for you if you could only get it. One disciple is the *eye*; he sees a great deal into the truth. Another is the *hand*; he does a great deal for God. Another is the *foot*, quick to run messages for the Master. But the eye has no right to say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.' We are wrong if we are not trying to draw out of others what God has given them. Try this; it knits us to one another. Paul says, when he is coming to see the Roman Christians, his desire is to get something from them, 'That I may with you be refreshed' (Rom. xv. 32); 'Comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me' (Rom. i. 12). So Peter says also, 'Like precious faith with us' (2 Pet. i. 1). Never think you can be of no use to another disciple. God does not give everything to one. Aquila and Priscilla could do a great deal even for Apollos.

IV. *A disciple's anxiety to know exactly the will of God.*—For the context in Galatians lets us know that it was mainly in order to this that he came to see Peter—to be sure he was not misrepresenting the Gospel. He tells us that 'he added nothing' on that point (chap. ii. 6), nor did friends who came to his house;

and so he went away, more than ever rejoicing to proclaim the glad tidings to Jew and Gentile. For fifteen days these two good men thus talked and searched the Scriptures together. How they would pray before separating—perhaps going together up the Bethany road, and parting at the farewell spot where Christ ascended! Let us ask the same Saviour to send us the same blessing—looking up to the Right Hand and asking ‘gifts for men!’

NICODEMUS

(JOHN iii. 1-21 ; vii. 50 ; xix. 39)

WE have three scenes given us in the life of Nicodemus. The *first* is his interview with Christ. How he was awakened we do not know. It is of no consequence when and how it is done, if it is the beginning of the great change. You say, ‘I cannot go one step towards Christ till I am born again and feel it.’ That is a great mistake, for although the Bible says you must be born again, it nowhere says that you must *feel* that you are born again.

But Jesus further said, ‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.’ It is by looking to Christ that new life comes in. ‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Did you ever think that these wondrous words, the most magnificent the world has ever heard, were all spoken to one man, in a quiet room? If we were asked to whom was Christ likely to say them, we should conjecture that He would gather together all the angels to teach them another

new song. But they were not spoken to angels! Or we might conjecture such an assembly as that at Mizpah, or in the Temple at Jerusalem when it was full, and then before the many thousands of Israel He would say—‘Hear, O Israel, God so loved the world!’ But no, brethren, He sat in a quiet room in the village of Bethany, in the chamber that Martha and Mary had fitted up for His use, and there, alone with Nicodemus, He spoke these never-to-be-forgotten words, which have been more used than any others in the Bible. He did not grudge to say His best things to the poor hungry soul beside Him. He did not grudge to lift His golden vessel filled with living water to the lips of this Pharisee. Is it not good news for you and me? Take them all to yourself; empty if you can that vessel into your own soul. You are welcome to all it contains.

The words sank into the soul of Nicodemus as he went away. I can suppose with what solemn feelings he bade the Master farewell, and walked over the shoulder of the Mount of Olives in the calm still moonlight, thinking deeply on all he had heard.

In the *second scene* we can see Nicodemus going about his ordinary business, for a man does not need to leave his work to follow Christ. He must take Christ with him; and religion does not make a man selfish. It rather makes him want to give away all he can.

I can imagine Nicodemus next day, observing Christ walking with His disciples, going forward and saying to John, ‘I was with your Master last night.’

‘I thought so,’ said John. ‘We heard some rumour of it at Bethany this morning.’

‘I heard him say strange things. Does He ever say such things to any one else? Did you ever hear Him say that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son?’

At once John treasured up the words, and when he was writing his Gospel the Holy Ghost said to him, 'Take care, John, that you do not forget these words.' See how joy flows from one heart to another. Nicodemus having received the love of God was the means of communicating it to others.

It was the great day of the feast. The Sanhedrim or Seventy Elders, seeing the crowds and Jesus speaking to them, ordered officers to go and fetch Him into their presence. Nicodemus was present but did not interfere. He thought it would be another famous opportunity of hearing Him. By and by the door opened—the officers entered with awe-struck faces, but without Christ, exclaiming, 'Never man spake like this Man.'

'Are ye also deceived? Have any of the Rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him?' And they went on to curse the crowd who listened and the One who taught. Then Nicodemus could not be silent any longer. He burned to speak for the Master he loved. Rising up calmly he said, 'Does our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?' And as he looked around fearlessly, prepared to defend Christ, he was met with a storm of sneers and contempt. 'Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet!' Thus, like men in a passion, they made a blunder historically.

I have a strong conviction that this was the hour of the conversion of Joseph of Arimathea. I can suppose Joseph touching Nicodemus and saying, 'I would like to speak with you about this Jesus of Nazareth. Come home with me and tell me more about Him.' And so I would say that it is a good thing sometimes to be laughed at. Young followers of the Lamb—take encouragement from this, and remember that a little touch of persecution will do you no harm.

In the *third scene* we find Nicodemus at the Cross. He came out of his hiding-place. He could not bear that his Master should hang on a Cross. When Jesus was condemned Nicodemus was not present in the Council. He was journeying, perhaps. But see how he has been growing. Compare his first coming to Christ with this his last. *Then* full of fear, *now* bold and courageous. I am not sure that Joseph did not call on him, on his coming back to Jerusalem, on the day of the Crucifixion, to say, 'I have a new tomb where I would fain bury our Master. Will you help me?' Nicodemus had evidently intended something of the kind, for he had brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

Look at the scene. As the two good men stood by the Cross, what would pass through the mind of Nicodemus? Would it not be this: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.'

How reverently and lovingly they two handle that body! What a funeral! only two mourners, but many spectators, for all the angels in heaven were looking on. It was the burial of the King of kings. Dr. Mason of New York was once at the funeral of a young man, and he thought the pall-bearers were going a little too fast. He went forward, and touching them softly, he said, 'Walk softly; you are carrying a temple of the Holy Ghost.' If that could be said of a follower of Christ, what of the blessed Master Himself?

Nicodemus is hazarding his life as well as his reputation. He is lavishing his wealth on Christ. Christ's dying love has filled his heart. He counts it an honour to roll the stone to the sepulchre-door, as the angel did to roll it back.

Learn like Nicodemus to confess a Christ that died.

Men preach the imitation of Christ, but it is the death of Christ that brings life to the soul. Woe to the sinner who tries to get to heaven by simply imitating Christ. We must die, be crucified with Christ, and then we shall rise with Him to life eternal.

CLOSING ADDRESS ON COMMUNION SABBATH
JANUARY 27, 1889

'When He is come, He will tell us all things' (John iv. 25)

YOU must have noticed some great and memorable sayings in the New Testament which were spoken unwittingly. 'This man receiveth sinners' (Luke xv. 2); 'It is expedient that one man should die for the people' (John xi. 50); 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save' (Matt. xxvii. 42); 'This is the King of the Jews' (Luke xxiii. 38). So here we have a saying of a Samaritan woman, and a very important saying. They expected a Prophet (Deut. xviii. 15); for they did not acknowledge these passages in Isaiah, etc., where Messiah is depicted as suffering and dying. We this day have been thinking of His office as Priest, and of His Sacrifice, and often we think of Him as King and Giver of gifts. But let us at present think of Him as Prophet, and take up the woman's true saying,—only let us apply it to His Second Coming to-day, and let us see how Christ will then 'execute His office as Prophet.'

He will come in glory; we shall be with Him in His Kingdom. New Jerusalem is described as at once a City and a Paradise. We shall have many walks with Him, for He 'shall dwell among them;' and then it is we shall find John xiii. 7 and xi. 40 fully fulfilled. He

will open out the meaning of providences that seemed dark, personal, and public. 'He will tell us all things' about Himself. It will be as when on the Transfiguration hill they 'talked with Him,' and as Moses when up in the Mount for forty days and forty nights.

Christ is the Prophet who 'by His Word and Spirit' reveals God's will. In that day we shall know the Word in all its meaning. He will open out to us its darkest places. He will explain to us Ezekiel's Temple, the genealogies of 1 Chron. etc., and show us the divine purpose in all. He will show us 'the mystery of God finished,' and as, in 2 Pet. i. 19, the 'Word of prophecy' was to be 'till the Daystar rise,' so now He Himself shall be our Bible.

O then, even because of this hope, hasten on to that day! He will clear up all difficulties about texts, doctrines, trying providences in our lot, and we shall say like Job (xlii. 3), 'I have opened my mouth without knowledge. I have uttered . . . things too wonderful for me.'

Hasten on, for even this Feast we keep to-day with elements of bread and wine only till the better come, namely *Himself*. So we study the Word and Ordinances and are changed thereby (2 Cor. iii. 18) only till He Himself come, when at once (1 John iii. 2) 'we shall be like Him.'

On that day shall Isa. xxix. 18 be accomplished: 'The deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity,' for the fulness of the Holy Ghost shall be in us from Him.

Hasten on, for then will (Rev. vii. 17) these 'fountains of living waters' be ours; discoveries of God's name and heart; verses like John iii. 16 shall be opened up to us. There is much in Rev. iii. 12 to excite expectation.

Hasten on. The day is near. Keep in mind the signs of the times: the ending of the twelve hundred and sixty days at hand, 'distress of nations with perplexity,' the three unclean spirits, the running to and fro of many, knowledge increased, the Gospel preached to all nations. The time of the end is near.

O workers,—elders, teachers, missionaries,—He will tell you the fruit of your labours then, though now you often say, 'I have laboured in vain.'

O sinner, quickly come to Him, whose death we have shown to-day. There is 'no salvation' otherwise. He will receive you, and your soul will be enlarged and taught by our Prophet in the 'ages to come.' If you do not, you will be degraded in the scale of being when your former friends are above angels; all because you would not take the key that opens the door, Christ Himself. 'If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.' Satan's great aim is to blind you to this till it is too late.

A SERMON TO CHILDREN

'There were also with Him other little ships' (Mark iv. 36)

SOME of the little things we do in our meetings with you are imitations of Christ's ways. When you are going away from a meeting we sometimes give you a tract; so Jesus in sending the people away gave each of them a blessing. It was evening, and He was kept late as He thus spoke a parting word into each ear. His disciples were a little impatient perhaps, for they saw a storm gathering, and they wanted to be over to the other side. At last He came, tired and wearied, and they took Him 'as He was' in the ship. He went to the end of the ship where there was a leathern pillow or seat not quite so hard as Jacob's pillow at Bethel, but still

only a bench covered with leather, and fell asleep—so soundly asleep that not even the storm awoke Him, nor the waves, nor the alarm and cries of His disciples. At last they went up to Him, as the mariners did to Jonah, and by their cries, and perhaps by their touch, awoke Him. Instantly He rose, looked around, calmly spoke, 'Peace, be still!' and spread His own calm over the sea. What wonder appeared on every face! 'What manner of man is this?' He said, 'You should not have wondered with One so great beside you. O ye of little faith!' And thus they glided into the harbour.

Now I have reserved a portion for you. It is this. 'And there were also with Him other little ships.' These 'little ships' remind us of you. They set sail with Jesus, and crossed the sea with Him to the Gadarene country. Notice some things about the people in these 'little ships,' for I am going to compare you to them.

I. *They needed Christ's care.*

II. *They liked Christ's company.*

III. *They got a share of the calm.*

(1) They had a voyage to take, it was late, and darkness was coming on. A storm was threatening,—probably there were mutterings of thunder far off,—the wind was rising, and the water was ruffled. They felt it would be good to have others near, and specially to have *Him* near who could do mighty things for them. Perhaps they heard Him say to His own crew, 'Let us go over to the other side,' and thought, 'Then we also can go, and be as safe as He.'

Young people, like these 'little ships,' you have a voyage to take to the other side. You may have many storms, but one thing I know, you need Christ. There is not a sin in you but will raise a storm soon. Every pang of conscience, every fear, every foreboding, is the

mutter of the thunder. What will you do? Young people's sins are very terrible. One wave of that storm will sink your vessel to the bottom. 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' Then this is a time of storms in the world. The last days are to have peculiar tempests, —'the sea and the waves roaring.' Only those will get safe to shore who have Jesus with them, and it is awfully perilous to be without Him. O the storms of the last days!

'When first the Saviour wakened me
And showed me why He died,
He pointed o'er life's narrow sea
And said, "To yonder side."

I am the Ark where Noah dwelt,
And heard the deluge roar—
No soul can perish that has felt
My rest—*To yonder shore.*'

(2) These people in the 'little ships' had been that day among His hearers. His words had been felt by them. They had heard the parable of the Sower, of the Mustard-seed, of the Hid Treasure (Matt. xiii.), and they had heard Him say, 'He that hath ears to hear let him hear'—proclaiming to all sinners their welcome. 'It is finished' is alike for you and for the older people, for the 'little ships' as well as for the greater. It is the same Jesus who saved Peter and John and Paul, who can save *you*. The same obedience to the Law, the same blood shed, form the righteousness of a young sinner and of an older sinner. Do you not like His company? Be like the little ships. Come and see. Who can bless you but Christ? Is there any so loving, so gracious, so kind? Was there ever company like His? Surely you like Him who said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.' Surely you like His company. Would you not like to hear Him say to *you*, '*With Me* in Paradise'?

(3) After the danger and fear and alarm,—tossed on the waters,—the waves beating on the ship so that ‘it was full’ (verse 37), Christ says, ‘Peace, be still,’ and there is a great calm. Now the ‘little ships’ share also in the wonder, ‘What manner of man is this!’

Dear children, come with Him, and you will share in the calm. It may be you have been troubled, alarmed, ay, and thought, ‘Surely He does not care whether or not we perish.’ But only try,—only be where He is saying ‘Peace, be still’ to others. Be at the Cross when He says to the dying thief, ‘To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.’ Be at His tomb, and hear the angel’s words, ‘Fear not, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified.’ Be with Him when He says, ‘Peace be unto you,’ and shows His hands and His side. You, too, shall share in it all, and you, too, shall wonderingly say, ‘What manner of man is this!’

And those of you who already know Him, when other storms come you will be able to sing Ps. xlv. : ‘God is our refuge and our strength.’ And if your corruptions and passions raise a storm remember these others verses of Mr. M’Cheyne’s :—

‘Peaceful and calm the tide of life
When first I sailed with Thee,
My sins forgiven, no inward strife,
My breast a glassy sea.

But soon the storm of passion raves,
My soul is tempest-toss’d ;
Corruptions rise like angry waves—
“ Help, Master, I am lost ! ”

“ Peace, peace, be still, thou raging breast,
My fulness is for thee,”
The Saviour speaks and all is rest,
Like the waves of Galilee.’

The more you know Christ, the more you will say, ‘What manner of man is this ! What manner of Saviour!’

O little ships, come and sail with Jesus! Get His care,
His company, and His calm!

WHAT GIVES ASSURANCE

[THIS was originally a sermon preached at Ferryden, during the awakening in the end of 1859. It was thought to be useful in disentangling the perplexities of some anxious souls; and this gave rise to the request for its publication.¹ It is very interesting to notice how, in such times of awakening, the spiritual instincts imparted to the new-born soul by the Holy Ghost seek out the truth. One day, in a fisherman's house, we found two females sitting together with the Assembly's *Shorter Catechism* in their hands. They were talking over the questions on 'Justification' and 'Adoption,' and were comparing these with some of the 'benefits which accompany or flow from them,' namely, '*assurance of God's love*, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' They were themselves happy in the calm assurance of the love of God; but a neighbour had somewhat perplexed them by insisting that they had no right to assurance until they could point to *sanctification* showing itself in their after-lives. On the other hand, those two souls could not see why they should wait till then; for if they had been 'justified,' and had a 'right to all the privileges of the sons of God,' they might at once have '*assurance of God's love*.' This incident falls in with the strain of the following discourse.]

MANY are the persons who have envied Isaiah, to whom personally the messenger from the throne said, 'Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged' (Isaiah vi. 7). They are ready to say, 'Oh, if we heard the same.' Many are the persons who have envied Daniel, to whom the Lord said, 'Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days' (Daniel xii. 13). Daniel was thus assured of the future; with him it was to be rest at death, and a lot, or portion (Josh. xv. 1; xvi. 1), in the inheritance of the saints on the morning of the resurrection of the just. And so also have such persons

¹ This address, as also that on 'Angel-Workers,' was published by Messrs. Chas. Glass and Co., Glasgow.

wished that their case were that of the man to whom, directly and personally, Jesus said, 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee' (Mark ii. 5); and that of the woman in Simon's house, whose ear heard the blessed declaration, 'Thy sins are forgiven' (Luke vii. 48); or even that of the thief, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise' (Luke xxiii. 43). These sinners were all of them personally certified of pardon and acceptance, and we are ready to think that it would be the height of happiness for ourselves to have, like them, a declaration of our personal forgiveness sounding in our ear.

Now, ere we have finished our subject, we may be able (if the Lord, the Spirit, lead us into the truth set forth in the Word) to see that, after all, *we* may be as sure and certain of our pardon and acceptance as any or all of these—as sure as Isaiah, Daniel, the palsied man, the woman-sinner, the dying thief, and, let us add, as sure of it as Paul was of Clement and other fellow-labourers having their names in the Book of Life (Phil. iv. 3). Nay, we may even discover that our certainty is in all respects higher than theirs was, being founded on something far better than one single announcement, which, in the lapse of time, might lose very much of its distinctness and of its power.

Oh, how blessed to be able to point heavenward and say, 'It is mine!'—to point to the throne and say, 'He is mine who sitteth there!'—to look back and find your name in the Book of Everlasting Love!—to look forward to the opening of the Book of Life, knowing that your name is in it!—to be able to anticipate resurrection, and to sing

' I know that safe with Him remains,
Protected by His power,
What I've committed to His trust,
Till the decisive hour.

Then will He own His servant's name
Before His Father's face,
And in the New Jerusalem
Appoint my soul a place.'

We begin by noticing that *Assurance is far oftener spoken of than sought for*. Many may be said, in a vague sense, to wish for it, who, after all, do not seek after it. Not a few of our communicants, men of knowledge and good attainment, men of high Christian profession, are rather disposed to evade the question, Are you sure of your salvation? They are content to go on in uncertainty. Some of these even spurn from them the idea of any one having *full Assurance*, branding the idea as *Presumption*. They quite mistake the meaning of *Presumption*, which is claiming what we have not been invited to, and are not warranted to take. They do not see that there can be no presumption in our taking whatever our God has invited us to accept; and that, on the other hand, if we decline taking what our God presents to us, we are assuming to ourselves a right to judge of the fitness and wisdom of His proceedings.

Such persons are not in right earnest about salvation and the favour of God. They take things easy. They admit that they may die to-day or to-morrow, and that they do not certainly know what is to become of them; and yet they are making no effort to ascertain. They admit that the favour of God is the soul's real portion, and that they, as yet, cannot speak of that being their enjoyment; and yet they coolly go on day after day without anxious inquiry regarding it.

There are others who, from a wrong religious training, go on in a sort of doubt and fear, cherishing the idea that these doubts and fears are salutary checks to pride, and that they are, on the whole, as safe with the *hope* that all is right, as they would be with the *certainty*.

We generally find that these persons are misled by confounding things that differ. They perhaps quote to you, 'Happy is the man that feareth always' (Prov. xxviii. 14), not perceiving that the *fear* there is the '*fear of the Lord*,' in which there is '*strong confidence*' (Prov. xiv. 26). Or, perhaps, they quote the unhappy experience of some godly men who died without speaking anything about assurance—not knowing that those godly men longed for certainty, and reckoned it so desirable that their very estimate of its preciousness made them jealous of admitting that they themselves might be partakers thereof.

But the truth is, in many cases, these persons do not care for the close fellowship of God into which Assurance leads the soul. They do not wish to bask in the beams of divine love. They wish merely to be safe at last. But if you would see how entirely different is the effect of a merely hoped-for impunity from that of certainty in regard to divine favour, read these two passages, Deut. xxix. 19 and 1 John iii. 3. In the former case the sinner says, 'I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst;' in the latter he says, 'Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.'¹

Once more, then, on this point let us ask attention to the fact that in the New Testament we have no encouragement given to doubts and uncertainties. The believers there are spoken of continually as having the

¹ Let it be observed that in the New Testament the grace of *hope* does not imply doubt, but signifies the *expectation of the things yet future*. Hence, the hope in 1 John iii. 3 was thus stated in verse 2, '*We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.*' Old writers used to quote a Latin saying, 'Hope, as used of earthly things, is a word for a good that is uncertain; hope, as used of heavenly things, is a word for good that is most sure.'

joy of knowing the Saviour as theirs. No doubt there were in those days some believers who were not fully assured; but these were not meant to be any rule to us, now that the Sun of Righteousness has risen so gloriously; and, accordingly, no notice is taken of their case. On the other hand, we are ever meeting with such words as these, spoken in the name of all disciples; 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God' (2 Cor. v. 1). 'We know that we have passed from death unto life. We know that we are of God' (1 John iii. 14 and v. 19). 'I know whom I have believed' (2 Tim. i. 12).¹

But it is time to speak of *what gives Assurance*. Of course, we understand that this blessing, like the other blessings of salvation, every one, is the free gift of a sovereign God. It is the 'God of hope' who gives it 'through the power of the Holy Ghost' (Romans xv. 13). But our present point of inquiry is, In what way does it please Him to give it to souls? All agree that Christ's person and work furnish the materials and

¹ The late Dr. Sievewright of Markinch, in a sermon upon Eph. i. 13, has remarked: 'In those primitive times an apostle could take for granted of a whole church that they all trusted. For, in writing to the Ephesians, does Paul make a *single allusion to their unbelief*? Or, does he employ a single exhortation in the way of persuasion to believe? Or, from beginning to end of his Epistle, does he hint at such a thing as prevailing distrust? No; in those days Christian men no more thought of refusing to trust in the Saviour than of denying the Word of Truth. But now, is it not a frequent case that a man shall go by a Christian name, and practise Christian duties, and receive Christian privileges, for years together, while he is so far from trusting in Christ with the confidence of faith, that he shall not only confess himself destitute of truth, but often express a fear lest full trust and confidence were an unwarranted and dangerous presumption? *How strange this would have sounded in the apostles' time, when to trust in Christ, and to trust fully and for all salvation, was the very first exercise* to which they called those who were awakened to seek in earnest for eternal life, and received the record of God concerning the way. The remarkable trust of the first Christians gave a perfection to their character we now seldom perceive.'

groundwork of a sinner's acceptance, peace, assurance. 'Peace' (says Isaiah xxxii. 17) 'is the fabric reared by righteousness; yea, the office of righteousness is to give quietness and assurance for ever.' But there is a difference of opinion and practice as to the way of using these ample materials. We begin with speaking of what we may call,

First, THE INDIRECT or LONG WAY.

Those who try this way set themselves to ascertain '*What am I?*' They seek to make sure that they have the marks and evidences of being new creatures in Christ, or at least the marks and evidences of having, beyond doubt, believed in Him. Divines have been wont to call this mode of Assurance '*the Assurance of sense*,' because in it the person points to sensible proofs of his new nature, and thinks he may some time or other be able to show such an experience of divine things as puts it beyond doubt that he has believed and has found Christ. It is quite wrong, however, to apply the scriptural term '*Assurance of hope*' to this experimental sort of certainty; for Scripture means the *assured belief and expectation of things yet future*, by that expression. We may call it, for clearness' sake, *Assurance got by seeing effects produced*. Divines often describe it as *Assurance derived from the reflex acts of the soul*.

(a) One form which this pursuit of Assurance in the *long or indirect* way takes, is this,—it leads the person to put much stress on his *own act of believing*. In this case the person being much concerned about his state towards God, and fearful of mistaking the matter, says to himself, 'I know that all assurance of salvation depends on my believing in Christ, and I think I believe; but what if I be deceiving myself as to my supposed believing?' Haunted by this thought, he sets himself to remedy the danger by trying to convince himself

that he has believed. And in order to make himself sure that he has faith, he resolves not to be satisfied till he sees the full fruits of faith. He puts such stress on his own act of believing, that he will not be content until he sees, by such effects as hypocrites could not imitate, that his was genuine faith.

Now, we say to such—*You are not taking the best way to have real fruit*; for you are seeking fruit and effect from a selfish motive; you are not seeking holiness as an end, and for its own sake, but in order to use it as an evidence in favour of your sincerity. This kind of fruit is not likely to be the best, nor the most satisfactory. We say again—*You are putting Assurance far off*. It can only be at some distant future day that you arrive at any certainty by your method; for such fruits as you seek cannot be visible very soon. But we say again—*You are by this method taking off your eye from Christ to a great degree*. For you try to believe, and then you look into yourself to see if you have believed. You look up to the Brazen Serpent, and then you take off your eye to examine your wound, and to see if the bites are really healing, that so you may be sure you have looked aright! Would a bitten Israelite have put such stress on his own poor act of looking? You are looking at Christ, and then looking away from Him to yourself. You are like a gardener who, after planting a tree or flower in rich soil, might be foolish enough to uncover the soil in order to see if the root had struck, and was really imbibing the moisture. Surely, better far to let the root alone, having once ascertained the richness of the soil, and allow the plant to spread out its leaves to the warmth of the sun. Keep looking on Christ, and the effects cannot fail to follow.

(b) Another form that this same indirect method

takes is somewhat similar. Those who adopt it do not expect Assurance at the outset, and say that it is presumption and pride in young believers to speak of being sure of their interest in Christ; for where is there time for them to have experience, or exhibit fruits? Such persons think that ripe, mature fruits of holiness alone entitle any one to say, 'I know that I am in Christ.' If we might so speak, they do not allow the newly engrafted branch (though really engrafted by the Heavenly Husbandman) to say, 'I am in the vine,'—no, they say, wait till you have borne fruit, and then when the clusters appear on your boughs, you may be entitled to say, 'I am in the vine.' But not till then.

It is a favourite argument with such that in 1 John iii. 14 the Apostle John says, '*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*' But this does not prove that this is *the only way* of knowing that we are passed from death unto life. It only shows that an aged and experienced saint like John thought it good sometimes to bring forward his own and his fellow-believers' brotherly love as a marked and unmistakable feature of their Christian character. It is very much as if he had said, 'We believers know each other, as having passed from death unto life, by the love that fills our hearts toward each other.' He is not speaking to the question, 'Is this the first, or is it the only trustworthy way by which you know your interest in Christ?' Surely, so far from that being the case, John would at once have said that he himself found rest in knowing *the love of Him who begat*, before he discerned in himself any love to those begotten of Him.

The truth is, this long and indirect way is properly the way by *which others ascertain your standing in Christ*. But there is another way for the person's self,

of which we are yet to speak. Also ; this way is good even for the person's self as confirmatory of the short and direct way, of which we are yet to speak. But still we say, if it were the only way, then farewell to gospel-joy, except in the very rarest cases. For, the more a soul grows in grace, the more that the believing man rests in Christ and drinks into His spirit, just the more dissatisfied does he become with all his fruits ; his holiness does not please him ; he finds defects in it ; he finds it mixed and impure ; and the longer he lives the life of faith, he gets more and more keen-sighted in detecting blemishes in his graces.¹ So that it is difficult indeed to say when a growing believer, ever jealous of himself, will accumulate such a heap of this gold, such an amount of really holy living, as will put beyond doubt, to his own mind, that he is a man between whom and Christ there exists the bond of union. If good works or holiness must be waited for ere faith can be known to be genuine, when are we to expect to attain to an amount or quality sufficiently satisfying ?

If this were the only way of Assurance, we could not wonder that many should speak of it as necessarily a very rare attainment, and even as all but impossible. This, however, is not the only way ; and we now turn from this way to the other, quoting as we turn to it, the statement of the old Puritan writer, Brooks : ' Many of God's dear people are so taken up with their own hearts, and duties, and graces, that Christ is little regarded by them, or minded ; and what is this but to

¹ John Newton, in his sermon ' Of the Assurance of Faith,' remarks : ' If inherent sanctification, or a considerable increase of it, be considered as the proper ground of Assurance, those who are most humble, sincere, and desirous of being conformed to the will of God, will be the most perplexed and discouraged in their search after it. For they, of all others, will be the least satisfied with themselves, and have the quickest sense of innumerable defilements.'

be more taken up with the streams than with the fountain? with the bracelets, and ear-rings, and gold-chains, than with the husband? with the nobles than with the king?'¹ And then he adds, 'Dear Christian, was it *Christ* or was it your graces, gracious evidences, gracious dispositions, gracious actings, that trod the wine-press of the Father's wrath?' And once more: 'These persons forget their grand work, which is *immediate* closing with Christ, *immediate* embracing of Christ, *immediate* relying, resting, staying upon Christ.'

Let us turn, then, to the *Second*, THE DIRECT or SHORT WAY.

They who take this way, set themselves to ascertain, '*Who and what Christ is.*' The Holy Spirit, we believe, delights very specially to use this way, because it turns the eye of the sinner so completely away from self to the Saviour.

What we call the *direct and short* way, is that in which we are enabled by the Spirit at once to look up to Christ, the Brazen Serpent, and to be satisfied in looking on Him. This simple, direct Assurance is got by what we discern in Christ Himself; not by what we discover about ourselves. It is got by what we believe about Christ; not by what we know about our own act of faith. We may (like 'Poor Joseph'²) know nothing about our own soul's actings in believing, and yet we may so know Him on whom we believe as

¹ Brooks' *Cabinet*, p. 393.

² Some friends who came to see him wondered on hearing him always dwell on this, and this only, '*Joseph is the chief of sinners, but Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*' They said, 'But what say you of your own heart, Joseph? Is there no token for good about it? Have you closed with Christ by acting faith upon Him?' His reply was, 'Joseph can act nothing. Joseph has nothing to say about himself but that he is chief of sinners; yet, since it is a faithful saying that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, why may not Joseph be saved?'

to find ourselves altogether at rest. In a word, this direct and immediate Assurance is found by my discovering that Christ, God-man, is the very Saviour for my needs and wants, my sins and corruptions; while all the time I may never be once troubled about the question, Am I sure that I believe, and that my act of faith possesses the right quality.

I find it when the Spirit is taking the things of Christ, and showing them to my soul; and I do not need to wait till He next shows me what is in me. *Let us explain the matter more fully.

I have Assurance that God accepts me *the moment I see the fulness and freeness of Christ's work*. My soul is enabled to see all the claims of justice satisfied at the cross; for there is complete obedience, there is the full penalty paid. At the cross there is room for any sinner, and the gospel invites me as a sinner among the rest to hear what the cross says. Does it not say to me, 'God-man has provided an infinitely perfect righteousness, and made it honourable for the holy God to embrace the Prodigal Son. Yonder, in the work of God-man, is a *rock* for the sinner's feet to stand upon—and this not a mere narrow point, hardly sufficient, but rather a wide continent, stretching out on every side.' Surely there is room for me there? I feel it is enough! Self is forgotten in presence of this marvellous scene. What could satisfy the conscience better! What could speak peace like this! This is faith rising into Assurance while simply continuing to behold its glorious object.

And now, if any one try to disturb me by this suggestion, 'How do you know that you are really believing what you recognise as so suited to your need?'—my reply is simply this, 'How do I know that I see the sun when I am in the act of gazing upon him in the splendour of his setting?' That glowing sky, and that

globe of mild but ineffable glory cannot be mistaken, if anything is sure to the human vision.

The believer's own consciousness¹ (quickened of course by the Spirit) is sufficient, in presence of the cross, to assure him that he a sinner, is most certainly welcome to the bosom of the Holy One, who, pointing to the 'It is finished,' cries, 'Return to me, for I have redeemed thee.' Just look at it again. Your soul hears that the Father is well pleased with the full atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. He condemns and rejects all your works, all your efforts, and your guilty person; but when his Son, our Substitute, appears, then His obedience and His suffering unto death are found most glorifying to the Holy One and His holy law. While you are pondering the Father's delighted rest in Christ, who thus wrought all for us, your soul is 'like the chariots of Amminadib;' in a moment, you feel your conscience has got rest, as if a voice from that atoning work had said, 'Peace, be still.' Your sins, placed in God's balance, were outweighed by Christ's infinite merit; and if so, your sins in your own balance are no less surely outweighed by the same weight of immense merit. What satisfies God, satisfies you.

Thus faith, as it gazes on its object, passes on to full Assurance. And if now, again, any one seek to disturb your calm rest by asking, 'Are you quite sure that you do really believe what is giving you such rest?'—what other reply could you give but this, 'As well ask me, when I am enjoying and revelling in the glories of the setting sun, Are you sure your eye really sees that sun which you so admire?'

¹ Samuel Rutherford, in a sermon on Luke viii. 22, says: 'When I believe in Christ, that instinct of the grace of God, stirred up by the Spirit of God, maketh me know that I know God, and that I believe, and so that I am in Christ, to my own certain apprehension.' He then adds, that 'this does not hinder other inferior evidences.'

I sit down and meditate on such a passage as John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The Spirit enables me to see in these words God testifying that no more is needed for my acceptance with God than what is found in Christ: and all that Christ has done becomes mine upon my believing in Him. Relying on God's testimony, I ask no questions, I wait for nothing in myself (such as love, sorrow, or other feeling), but I think on what is in Christ, as the ground of my peace. And when I so muse, the fire burns—my soul is at rest.¹ And if, now, any one disturbs, or threatens to disturb, my calm enjoyment of my Father's love by hinting, 'You should first, ere ever you venture to rest, be sure that you are really believing the things that are making you so glad;' my reply to such an unseasonable interruption might be somewhat in the style of a writer who uses the following illustration:—Suppose a nobleman condemned for high treason, and the day has come when he must die. But that morning a document is put into his hand; it is a pardon from the king, on no other terms than that he accept it. He reads; as he reads, his countenance is flushed, his eye glistens, and in a moment he is full of joy. What think you of any one arresting the current of his joy by the suggestion, 'Are you quite sure you are accepting the pardon? Is your act of acceptance complete and thorough?' No; the man is engrossed with the certainties presented to his thoughts, viz., what the king freely gives

¹ Halyburton (*Mem.* chap. ii. p. 3) says: 'A sweet and comfortable hope and persuasion of *my own salvation* was answerable to the clearness of the discovery of *the way of salvation*. The hope rose in strength, or grew weak, as the discoveries of the way of salvation were more or less clear and strong.'

to him; and these certainties convey their own impression to his soul—to wit, the certainty of his pardon.

Such is the *direct way of Assurance*. We called it a short and an immediate way. Is it not so? We said, too, at the beginning, that it might turn out that, after all, we had a way of knowing our pardon and acceptance, superior in many respects to that by which on one occasion it was conveyed to Isaiah, and on another to Daniel, and on another to the palsied man, and to the woman-sinner, and to the thief. We still adhere to our statement. For our way of knowing our acceptance, you see, is one that rests on *unalterable facts*, the significance of which cannot pass away or decay. If it decay from our souls for a time, we can revive it again by a renewed study of the facts that produced it at the first. Whereas the one utterance that assured Isaiah, Daniel, and those others mentioned, might in process of time be found to fade somewhat in its vividness; and then the individual might say to himself, 'Ah, what if I have over-estimated the meaning of the utterance! or what if I have forgot it in part? or what if my subsequent unworthiness have cancelled the promise?' In a dull, self-reproaching mood of mind, such a partial obliteration from the mind or memory of a single, solitary announcement is quite a possible occurrence; not to refer to other abatements, such as that the person in a case like Isaiah's might say to himself, 'What if it referred only to the past, but does not include what has happened since then?' But, on the other hand, our way of ascertaining now our pardon and acceptance rests on unchanging and unchangeable facts—facts for ever illustrious, facts for ever rich in meaning, facts for ever uttering the same loud, distinct, full testimony to the sinner's soul. Yes, we have an altar, and the voice

from that altar and its four horns may be heard distinctly from day to day as at first. Our altar is Christ; and this Christ died, rose again, went back to the Father, is interceding for us. These are the four horns of our altar! Let us take hold of any one of them, and lo! we see an accepted sacrifice before us, a sacrifice that speaks peace, that leads our conscience to rest, and makes our hearts leap for joy; for God is well pleased. We have God's Word reiterating in manifold ways a testimony to be believed; and so we find security against Satan's whispered suspicions.

And should any one object, 'Surely there have been many, very many good men and eminent men of God who did not take this *short and direct way*;' let us remind such as may stumble at this fact (for it is a fact) of an anecdote which good old Brooks¹ has recorded. A minister, who had great joy in Christ, said on his death-bed regarding his peace and quietness of soul, 'That he enjoyed these not from having a *greater measure of grace* than other Christians had, nor from any special immediate witness of the Spirit, but because he had more *clear understanding of the covenant of grace*.' O Spirit of truth, give all Thy servants this clear understanding of the *covenant of grace*!

Nor must we fail to notice that this immediate, direct way is that which specially honours God and His beloved Son, inasmuch as it magnifies free grace. Here is the Lord's free love manifesting itself as so exceedingly free that he will not ask the price of one moment's waiting or delay. Behold the cross, and at once be at rest! The excuses of the delaying sinner are swept away. Why wait, since all is ready? and where is there room for the plea that God's time for favour, and so great a favour as that of making you sure of acceptance,

¹ *Cabinet*, p. 115.

may not have come? God in Christ waits for you,¹ presenting and proffering to you an immediate welcome, immediate peace.

What say you then, *unassured soul*? Are you still content? Assurance may be got in beholding steadfastly the Lamb of God; and is there no sin in your refusing to behold Him steadfastly? Want of Assurance leaves you in the awful position of being, on your own showing, possibly still a child of Satan! And can you remain thus without alarm? And the world is passing away. You are dying men. Christ is coming quickly, coming as a thief in the night, coming in an hour that you think not; and you are not ready to meet

¹ It is a very common mistake to allege that God sometimes counsels us to *wait*. But, if *wait* be used in the sense of delay, or putting off immediate decision, we assert there is no passage in the Bible to countenance such an idea. Some quote Ps. xl. 1, 'I waited patiently for the Lord,' which is (see the margin), 'In waiting, I waited,' or 'I eagerly waited.' Now, not to insist on the fact that here the speaker is *Christ our surety*, we must remember that the Old Testament use of 'wait' has not in it anything of the idea of procrastination, or delay, or *contented waiting* in our sense of the term. It always means *eager looking*, as when a dog looks up to his master's table for the crumbs, or as when the people waited for the priest coming out of the Holy Place, or as in Job xxix. 23, the anxious, intensely anxious, looking out for rain in sultry weather. This is the meaning, Micah vii. 8, 'I will wait for the God of my salvation.' This is the meaning, Hab. ii. 3, 'Though it tarry, wait for it;' that is, if you do not see these things come to pass at once, if you do not see at once the Lord appear in His glory to overthrow His foes, yet look out for it anxiously! eagerly hasten on to that day. This is the way in which God's people '*wait*,' spoken of in Ps. cxxx. 6; Isa. xi. 31. And so Lament. iii. 26 is the case of the desolate soul in affliction, earnestly looking up and looking out for deliverance, though calm and resigned. Scriptural *waiting* is not in the least like that of the careless, easy-minded soul, that pretends it is unwilling to anticipate sovereign grace. And when God himself, in Isa. xxx. 18, is said to 'wait to be gracious,' the same idea of eager, earnest looking is implied. It is the intensely anxious waiting of the Prodigal's Father for the return of his son, for whose coming He is ever on the outlook. Most certainly, there is nothing in Scripture that countenances an unbelieving waiting for faith.

Him at His coming. There are not less than 80,000 of our fellow-men dying every day; 80,000 have died to-day, 80,000 more shall die to-morrow, and you may be one of that number whom the scythe of death shall cut down as grass—and yet you are content to have only a vague hope! Content to be without Assurance! You are like the unhappy philosopher who said, ‘I have lived uncertain, I die doubtful, I know not whither I am going.’ Are things to continue thus with you any longer? Do the visions of an eternal hell never rise up before you? Are you never struck with cold fear lest hell be waiting for you? Mirth is most unsuitable for you; laughter is out of season; peace cannot take up her abode under your roof, for you are all at sea about your eternal interests! Yes, you may be almost past all the joy that you are ever to find! Will you not now stand still, and once more examine Christ crucified, Christ’s finished work, to see if that cannot yield you the present and eternal peace which alone can satisfy the soul? We have sought to set all before you; and now we leave you, praying that the Holy Spirit may give efficacy to our words, knowing well that otherwise all is vain:

‘Let all the promises before him stand,
And set a Barnabas at his right hand,
These in themselves no comfort can afford;
’Tis Christ, and none but Christ, can speak the word.’

INVALID’S PAPER (I)

(Written for two friends in a time of great suffering)

WE are sorry to learn that both Martha and Mary are sick. The Great High Priest who is ‘touched with a feeling of our infirmities’ will no doubt be much with

them, but we know He wishes some of His friends to remember them in His name, and assure them that they are warranted to sing Ps. xli. 1-3. What in early days they sang at Bethany we do not know ; they would not, however, forget that ' the Son of God ' likes to walk not only amid the Golden Candlesticks in the temple, but ' in the furnace ' with His tried ones. We would scarcely advise our beloved friends to take up that verse of John Newton's at Olney :

' When the poor prisoner through a grate,
Sees others walk at large,
How does he mourn his lonely state,
And long for a discharge !'

At any rate, if Olney Hymns are to be thought upon, let this be the verse :

" Lord, why is this ?" I trembling cried,
Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death ?
" 'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
" I answer prayer for grace and faith."

RECENT GLEANINGS ROUND THE WELL OF MARAH

I. At a prayer-meeting the other day, one who was pleading for a sick friend said something like this : ' Lord, we need not name him, but *he whom Thou lovest is sick.*'

II. A minister was prayed for in our hearing, ' May he be like Epaphroditus who was sick nigh unto death, and was restored. May he cause Philippians joy by his recovery.' *N.B.*—The minister was Dr. Horatius Bonar, Edinburgh.

III. The brother of that minister prayed for his people that they might be led to ask for his recovery, because it is written, Heb. xiii. 19, ' I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.'

VERSES FOR THE SICK FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH

IN chap. xxv. 4, 5, notice 'the refuge'—the 'strength'—to the needy and the poor, helpless, empty one. 'The shadow,' etc.

In chap. xxv. 8 again, look forward! 'Death' and all sickness 'swallowed up' at the Lord's Coming.

Look again; 'The *Lord God* (Himself, not an angel) shall wipe away *all* tears.'

In chap. xxvii. 3, 'every moment!'

In chap. xxxiii. 24. The day is coming when we shall meet in the streets of New Jerusalem, and ask, 'How are you?' and the reply shall be, 'No more sick! better and better every hour! What delicious air here! What soft sunshine! What healing in every beam of it!'

In chap. xxxv. 10, 'All—sighing—flee away!'

In chap. xxxviii., a king sick—dark—gets into light—sings such a memorial song.

N.B.—The prayer in verse 14 is for your use.

Subject for a first sermon to the happy resurrection ones in Glory, Isa. lxx. 16: 'The former troubles are forgotten!'

Subject for present meditation when the sick one is able:—

Isa. viii. 6: 'The waters of Shiloah which flow softly.'
Remember Mr. M'Cheyne's hymn:—

'Beneath Moriah's rocky side
A gentle fountain springs,
Silent and soft its waters glide,
Like the peace the Spirit brings,' etc.

And Isa. xxxviii. 15: 'I shall walk softly all my years *on* (as on a carpet) my bitterness of spirit.' I shall solemnly recall the Lord's dealings with me.

REQUEST FOR PRAYER

ONE in health asks to be prayed for, that he may be able to use his health aright, and that the bustle of necessary duties may not hinder the falling of the heavenly dew which descends only when the wind is hushed.

INVALID'S PAPER (2)

WAS PAUL EVER SICK?

A CURIOUS question in itself; but the answer involves a principle. He was able to journey, labour, write, preach, endure fatigues and toils, suffer stripes, breathe prison air, feel pain from stoning, shipwreck, hunger, thirst; and yet the only hint of anything like disease or disorder in his biography is 'the thorn in the flesh.' But even that may not have been any physical trial, though some think it was weakness of sight or the like; it was far more probably trial of a mental and spiritual kind. What then? He was to glorify God by his unbroken health and strength; and you, sick friend, are his 'brother in the kingdom of Christ,' called to glorify God by your days and nights of weakness and infirmity. Sovereign grace! What if the sick be *apostles*, proclaiming the power of sustaining grace?

THE INVALID'S HILL

WHERE shall we find it? Is it Gilead? There was balm there; but there is not now either balm or physician. Is it the 'mountain of myrrh'? You cannot reach it in the meantime, though a day is coming when you shall walk there. But come away to the hill spoken

of (Matt. xv. 30, 31) near the Sea of Galilee. See! 'great multitudes' climb the hill, bringing with them their sick, 'the lame, the blind, the dumb, the maimed,' and many other such, 'and they cast them down at the feet of Jesus' and left them there! No more was needed, mercy looked on misery, Jehovah Rophi healed them! And then rose the thanksgiving song all over the hill. 'They glorified the God of Israel.' Was not their sickness for the glory of God?

THE INVALID'S OPEN-AIR MEETING

ONE Sabbath evening all Capernaum seemed stirred and moved. What an incessant stream of troubled and afflicted ones 'sick of divers diseases' (Mark i. 32-34), friends helping friends along, young and old, male and female, till 'all the city was gathered at the door' of the Physician's house. And then He, the Great Physician, came forth and walked among them, healing '*every one*' (Luke iv. 40) by laying on each these hands that were soon to be nailed to the Cross. As the sun cast its setting rays over the great assembly, and the evening breeze from the lake gently breathed on the happy healed ones, songs and the voice of praise and thanksgiving arose on every side, and the sick were glad now that they ever had been ill, for God was gaining glory from them. Brother, sister, shall it be thus with you when you join that great multitude gathered together in the street of the City of the Great King, where the inhabitant never says, 'I am sick,' but sings of sin pardoned and resurrection-health?

'At even, ere the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay!
O in what divers pains they met!
O with what joy they went away!

Once more 'tis eventide, and we,
 Oppress'd with various ills, draw near ;
 What if Thy form we cannot see,
 We know and feel that Thou art here.

Thy touch has still its ancient power ;
 No word from Thee can fruitless fall :
 Hear, in this solemn evening hour,
 And in Thy mercy heal us all !'

FOREBODINGS

'WHAT if I must lie here for weeks and weeks? How could I bear more? And what if trouble overtake my family!' Live *one day* at a time ; no more. It is the burden of one day that the Lord carries. "Give us *this* day our *daily* bread.'

WISHES

'O THAT I were again in health! O to be able to go up to the House of God!' There is no sin in such wishes. 'Let this cup pass!' was the longing of the Holy Substitute. 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!' You may sing Psalm lxx. 1-5: 'Make haste! make haste! make no tarrying. I am poor and needy.'

REGRETS

'*If I had only known!*' How like Martha, how like Mary, when they said, 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.' The Master purposely so arranged that you should not know, as part of your trial.

'O my folly!' The Lord puts folly out of His sight as well as sin, when He makes you 'the righteousness of God.' (See Job xlii. 3, 6, 9, 10.)

A COVENANTER'S STORY USED IN THE SICK-CHAMBER

YOU have heard how once on the lonely moor, from a moss-hag, a voice was heard singing :—

‘ O let the prisoner's sighs ascend
Before Thy sight on high,
Preserve those in Thy mighty power
That are design'd to die.’

and forthwith from unseen sympathising listeners came the response :—

‘ Though ye have lain among the pots,
Like doves ye shall appear,
Whose wings with silver and with gold
Whose feathers cover'd are !’

I come to-day not to the moor or moss-hag, but the sick-chamber. As I draw near, a low voice is speaking in calm faith :—

‘ The mistakes of my life are many,
And my soul is sick with sin ;
And I scarce can see for weeping,
But the Lord will let me in.’

But from a chamber within hearing of this languid, yet believing mourner, another voice sends up a more cheerful confident appeal :—

‘ Show me Thy face, the heaviest cross
Will then be light to bear !
There will be gain in every loss,
And peace with every care.
With such swift feet the years will glide,
My life seem brief as blest ;
Till I have laid my burden down
And enter'd into rest.’

The Covenanters we spoke of rose up from their hiding-place, each refreshed by the other ; and so let it be with our saddened ones in their lonely retreats.

Remember James i. 12: 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation' (or trial): 'for when he has stood the trial, he shall receive the crown of life,' as surely as the true martyr shall receive his crown in the day of Christ.

BLESSED ARE THE SICK

SOME one ventures to add a line to Psalm cxxxvi. which so abounds in thanks for what God has done. Give thanks to Him who 'made heavens high,' 'who Israel brought from Egypt land,' 'Who through the desert led His own,' 'In our low state who on us thought.' The addition, in the very spirit of the psalm, runs thus:—

'To Him *who withered our gourds*, for mercy hath He ever!' Can you join in this expansion of the psalm? What if you will one day think that the Lord might have gone on to say, on the Mount of the Beatitudes, '*Blessed are the sick.*' Of course we speak of the Lord's sick ones; and they *are* blessed, for they not only get peculiar visits from the Comforter and the sympathising High Priest, but they give out much to others. The care bestowed on them by attendants teaches unselfishness, and suggests abundant thankfulness to those in health. And not least, *angels* learn by their means, studying the wisdom of the all-wise God and Saviour who 'strengthens' His sick, faint, feeble ones 'unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness' (Col. i. 11). Angels who were never sick, and on earth the healthy and the strong, are taught in this school, and you, sick believer, are the blessed teacher.

SILENCE AND MEMORY

IN the stillness of the room where you are left alone for hours, does not memory work? and does not the Holy

Spirit work as remembrancer? (John xiv. 26.) Hymns, texts, providences, perhaps happy Communion seasons, days spent with friends now in glory, persons for whose soul you laboured, all come before you from time to time; and each one of these comes like Noah's dove with its olive-leaf, or like Elijah's ravens with food to you at the Brook Cherith.

SHORT PRAYERS

How many *short* prayers have prevailed with God! Recall some of them. How few *long* prayers, and these all from the healthy and strong! The sick and dying thief, what a reply was given to his one short prayer! Paradise that day! Paradise with Christ! Grace and glory!

5 pages of Paul pp 118, 119.

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