

BRAMWELL A PATTERN OF DEVOTION.

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In the October number of the "Guide" I presented some of the characteristics of Bramwell. I propose now to present him more particularly as a man of prayer and devotion for our imitation. An essay on prayer pleases or instructs; but a living example sways the heart, and carries our emotions as by storm. The Bible excepted, we never read better books than those which present devotion in action. A philosophical dissertation on fire may attract our attention; but when the living fire descends on Sinai, or consumes the sacrifice of Elijah, or descends in sanctifying power on the day of Pentecost, we are awestruck, and made to feel, not to speculate. He that can contemplate such a life of devotion as that of Bramwell, and not feel his moral instincts powerfully moved, may justly suspect himself unprepared for that higher life above to which such devotion leads. Heaven would not be a happy place for us, unless we possess those passions, tastes and qualities that are possessed by angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect." If we seek eternal union with Bramwell in heaven, we will ardently desire to follow him as he followed Christ. Dr. Young says, "Heaven owns her friends on this side death." It is also true that holiness prepares us to "own" our friends on the other side of death, and of course to admire their example.

Mr. Sigston says that Bramwell "had frequent struggles concernig his call to the ministry; and the subject lay with such weight upon his mind, that he has been known to spend a considerable portion of the night in wrestling with God for divine direction." Bramwell himself says, "I once spent thirty-six hours together in prayer to the Lord that I might know his will concerning me." "Frequently," says Sigston, "when at prayer, so powerfully did he wrestle with God, that the room seemed filled with the divine glory."

Writing to Mr. Cranswick, Bramwell says, "Never lose the least prayer. It is praying continually that keeps the mind. I am more convinced of this than ever. Oh! let God have the first and the last. Your dear wife and all your precious little children are his. Strive to lay them all in his arms every morning; make the act on your knees. God will answer." Writing to Mr. Hargreaves, he says, "I see more than ever that those who are given up to God in continual prayer are men of business, both for earth and heaven. They go through the world with composure, are resigned to every cross, and make the greatest glory of the greatest cross. On the other hand, if not given up to God in prayer, every cross brings the greatest perplexity, and robs them of the little love and patience they enjoy. To be all alive to God is, as it were, two heavens; to be unstable, and not a whole Christian, is two hells. O my brother! I hope you and your house will serve the Lord."

Writing to Mr. Burrows, Bramwell says, "I never was so much struck with the word of God as at present. The truth, the depth of the promises, quite swallow me up. I am lost in wonder and praise. My soul

enters into Christ in this blessed book. His own sayings take faster hold of me than ever. I could read and weep and love and suffer, yea, what could I not suffer, when I thus see him? Justification is great; to be cleansed (wholly sanctified) is great; but what is justification or the being cleansed when compared with this being taken into God? The world, the noise of self, all is gone; and the mind bears the full stamp of God's image. Here you talk, and walk, and live—doing all in him and to him; continual prayer, and turning all into Christ in every house, in every company—all things by him, from him, and to him.

"Pray, pray, and continue in it; plead in it, weep in it, groan in it."

He writes to Mr. Armitage, "I never till lately had such striking views of the heavenly country. The world and the Church are gone, self is gone, when I view the place, the company, the eternity. My soul cries out, 'Oh, make and keep me ready!' Be pure in heart, never proud, never angry, never peevish, never fretful. Let all within be from heaven, God your all."

To Mr. Farrar he writes, "I am praying always; nothing less will do." Writing to Mr. Preston, he says, "I cry to God daily, hourly, constantly, to receive a thousand times more love. I must give myself away, for the sacrifice was consumed. I too must be consumed; self must be consumed; all the man must be consumed. And yet I must live. Thus to lose myself in him I find is my glory. Then nothing but Christ in thought, word, preaching, and praying, &c., &c. All the Son of God!—his mind, his way, his work, his manner!"

To his daughter he writes, "One thing is needful; which is, continual prayer. All will fail unless you labor in this way. Let the times be as frequent as possible, and the manner as fervent as possible. Full of expectation, look for the promise, and believe for the blessing. Be mighty in this duty. You will be strongly tempted to neglect prayer. Satan can continue his authority with all persons who do not give themselves to prayer."

After recovery from sickness, he wrote to Mr. Sigston, "The mystery of God I know not now; I cannot find it out; but I know he was with me. The glory I experienced was beyond all I can now relate. I was filled with mercy continually; yet I never had so clear a view of the torments of the damned." "It was also shown to me that a full salvation through Christ is ever near to those who hunger."

The following extracts are from various letters: "I am more than ever given to prayer, and enjoy much more friendship with my God. I feel a great desire to be in glory. To be cleansed from sin is great, but to be filled with God is greater." "I could write it twenty times over to you, that it is continual prayer with strong faith which will produce every effect." "I am receiving more love. It comes by drops after agony of prayer." "I never was so much taken up with the divine perfections as at the present time. To dwell in God is our place on earth; and this is perpetuated by acts of faith." "I long much to feel what it will be when separated from this vile body. I never had more pleasant walks by faith in the heavenly country. I see the

company, and I live among them. Glorious company! glorious place! I long, I wait, for his coming." "The foretaste of that meeting enraptures my soul. I long for that situation all immediately, and to all eternity. Praise him, O ye angels, ye saints of God, ye glorified!"

The life of devotion exhibited by the preceding extracts was not the outburst of moral emotion felt on some special occasions. It was the spiritual element in which he lived and moved from first to last. In the pulpit, in social company, at the hour of midnight, in the silent grove, he could ever say, as he said to Mr. Crane, "Forgive me when I say to you my life is now prayer. I feel the need of this continually, and can only live in this duty." If the conquering hero is greeted with the applause of millions, with what moral emotion should we greet Bramwell as a spiritual conqueror when he testifies!—"I have been for some months laboring to attain to that point,—for nothing for one moment to divert me from God. The Lord has given me this blessing. I now feel the full effect of that passage, 'He dwells in God, and God in him. I live in God. Oh, what views have I in this state! Creation, redemption, full salvation, the state of the world! I grieve; but it is in God. I rejoice; but it is in God. I speak; but I find it is in God. I am tempted much, but unmoved in God. Oh, how I long for all the Church to know this great salvation!" Though dead, Bramwell yet speaks to us. The Church inherits a rich legacy in the living and dying example of her martyrs and confessors.

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RESURRECTION DAY.

Hail the day that sees Him rise,
Ravished from our wishful eyes!
Christ, awhile to mortals given,
Reascends His native heaven.

There the pompous triumph waits;
"Lift your heads, eternal gates;
Wide unfold the radiant scene;
Take the King of glory in!"

Circled round with angel powers,
Their triumphant Lord and ours,
Conqu'or over death and sin—
Take the King of glory in!

Him who highest heaven receives,
Still He loves the earth He leaves;
Though returning to His throne,
Still He calls mankind His own.

See, He lifts His hands above!
See, He shows the prints of love!
Hark, His gracious lips bestow
Blessings on the Church below.
—Charles Wesley.

Duties are constraints till they are changed into charms of love. The word duty is a harsh one until the heart grasps it and then the lowliest service and the boldest endeavor are cheerfully accepted and welcomed.—Dean Stanley.

"It is not until we begin to count our blessings that we realize how many of them there are."