

Pastor and People.

SPEAK KINDLY.

BY REV. JOHN DUNBAR.

Speak always kindly, whatsoever is said,
And cultivate this loving winning power,
For heart's impressions, even though quickly made,
May live and last, even to a dying hour.

Speak always kindly, for the human heart
Has much to do and bear, both night and day,
With kindly words your counsels then impart,
To lighten grief, or wean from wicked way.

If one should err, O do not jibe and jeer,
Or even nurse a harsh unkindly thought,
But rather let true sympathy appear
And ever be with loving-kindness fraught.

Or if one's racked with pain, or deeply grieved
Because a loved one sickened has, and died,
Speak kindly to the suffering or bereaved,
And cheer and comfort those so sorely tried.

O, never bruise the heart that's bleeding now,
Or breaking 'neath the burden of its woe,
Whatever be the cause, the where, the how,
Your kindest fellow-feelings ever show.

The time may come, and O, it may be near,
When you of sore heart's grief may have to share,
O, how you'd then prize soothing words of cheer,
If so, help now another's ills to bear.

THE LATE DR. HORATIUS BONAR.

Horatius Bonar's funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. R. H. Lundie, M.A., from which the following interesting extracts are taken :

Still more interesting is it to trace their earthly source—for their true fountain-head was not of this world—the streams of sacred song which filled deep channels and fertilized distant lands. When superintendent of his Sunday school in Leith, Mr. Bonar began with the simple aim of putting into the lips and depositing in the hearts of the children Gospel truth in a clear and attractive form. Beginning in Leith, the hymns were multiplied in Kelso. The first seems to have been, "I was a wandering sheep;" the second, "I lay my sins on Jesus;" the third, "A few more years shall roll." Leith and Kelso children loved them. The children of Scotland and of England heard and loved them. Our sons in the colonies and our brothers in America heard and loved them. And now children and old people too, on the continent of Europe, from Spain to Russia, find in them, as rendered into their own tongues, fitting utterance for their spiritual longings. Hymn succeeded hymn, and some of them are scattered over the globe in millions. Like the richest of our Scottish songsters, which

Trills her thick warbled note
The summer long,

the singer ceased not to pour his lays. In joy they welled up, not without a shade of pathos in them, from the fountains of a thankful heart. In sorrow, as they flowed tenderly and touchingly, they assuaged the keenness of his woe.

As he tells us in that exquisite fragment of poetic autobiography, his preface to "My Old Letters"—

Thou art the lute with which I sang my sadness,
When sadness like a cloud begirt my way;
Thou art the harp whose strings gave out my gladness,
When burst the sunshine of a happier day,
Resting upon my soul with sweet and silent ray.

The sickle thou with which I have been reaping
My great life-harvest, here on earth; and now
'Mid these my sheaves I lay me down unweeping—
Nay, full of joy, in life's still evening glow,
And wipe the reaper's sweat from this toil-furrowed brow.

A somewhat silent man in private life, and markedly reticent as to his own feelings and experiences, he had less to gain than many from human sympathy in his unspoken heartaches, so God gave him the solace of His ever-present lyre, which yielded sympathetic response to his lightest touch. He recognized, as years ran on, that his "life-harvest" was being widely reaped by means of the same tuneful lyre.

It may be pardoned if, as a son of the manse that nestled by the banks of the Tweed, I venture to add this thought—Dr. Bonar's early settlement and twenty-eight years' ministry in the old border-town that lies so sweetly near the spot where Tweed and Teviot meet, with richly-wooded banks, and pasture fields aglow with the gowan and the buttercup; while the gray old abbey, in the cloistered sleeping-place of the dead, towers tall and solemn over all, and tells the story of eight hundred years, to one of the fairest scenes in all fair Scotland—surely this has not been without its influence in tuning the lyre he loved so well. In the same spot, to which in after years he led her back, was born and nurtured the gentle partner of his life, whose sensitive nature was keenly alive to the beauty of her father's and her husband's home, and who, at the same fountain, herself also drank some draughts of poetry and song. Well, it is over now; and the two lives are re-united, where no shadow rests upon the green pastures, and where the two harps shall never again be attuned to strains of grief. "I'm but a stranger here" fitted he and they have left; it does not fit the shore they have

reached. In heaven there are no strangers. And now, both can join in the jubilant acclaim of the poet's partner:

Farewell, mortality,
Jesus is mine;
Welcome eternally,
Jesus is mine;
Welcome ye scenes of rest,
Welcome ye mansions blest,
Welcome a Saviour's breast,
Jesus is mine.

But to return. One cardinal feature of Dr. Bonar's hymns is that they are not merely sacred poems, but hymns indeed; that is, they contain such expression of adoration, confession, aspiration, as is fitting in the devout worshipper. And while they express they lend intensity to his thoughts. It needs no effort to interpret them; a child may understand them; they flow limpid as the mountain stream. Yet they sparkle with the graces of imagination and felicities of expression.

The Church of God has not been slow to discover that they ministered to her devotion, and met her spiritual need. Some of them are found scattered in the hymnals of all lands. Fifty years of sacred song give large opportunity for selection; and there are doubtless yet others of the hymns that will receive the stamp of general acceptance. They were written in very varied circumstances; sometimes timed by the numbers of the tinkling brook that babbled near him; sometimes set to the rude music of the railway train that hurried him to the scene of duty; sometimes measured by the silent rhythm of the midnight stars that shone above him.

There are few honours on earth equal to that of giving harmonious, elevating, enkindling utterance to the deepest devotional thoughts of the children of God. A sermon does its work and passes. But a true hymn is sung and sung and sung again by souls humbled, animated, inspired by its breath in countless assemblies of the faithful, in various lands, through many generations. That honour have not all the saints. That honour God has given to your late lamented pastor.

The stir of strife did not suit Horatius Bonar, the din of controversy was distasteful to him; his weapons were not fashioned for such employ, and so—

In days of public strife, when, sharp and stinging,
The angry words went daily to and fro,
Friend against friend the polished missiles flinging,
Each seeking who could launch the keenest blow,
I went to thee, my harp, and bade thy numbers flow.

When many a keen controversy of the nineteenth century shall be over and forgotten, "I lay my sins on Jesus" and kindred strains shall utter and shall swell the devotion of God's united children. We are not all fitted for all work; and that he felt himself. But which of us is fitted for his work?

It would be interesting to know the poet's preference and his judgment about his own hymns. One little guide to this we are enabled to contribute. When a friend one day said to him, "My favourite among all your hymns is 'When the weary seeking rest,'" he replied: "I think that is my own favourite, too; it has less of poetry in it than some of them; but I like it." And well he might. Its swell and sweep of tearful compassion for sorrow under every form, and its successive bursts of passionate pleading on behalf of the sorrowing, may well give it a foremost place in the worship of the suffering sons of men. Perhaps the next hymn in the poet's own esteem was:

I heard the voice of Jesus say.

And on this point the judgment of the Church will hardly differ from the judgment of the author. Bishop Fraser, of Manchester, thought this hymn the finest in the English language. The breath of Dr. Bonar's poetry has wafted the message of salvation to many who do not hear it in sermons, and who might not welcome it in tracts, or in ordinary books. The history would be voluminous, and of tender interest, could it be written, of the dark souls enlightened, the troubled souls comforted, the dying souls revived by repeated or remembered verses of Horatius Bonar's hymns. One present at the funeral told Andrew Bonar that the hymn beginning "I hear the words of love" had led him into clear light. How many others could bear such testimony? We mourn to-day that the voice of the sweet psalmist, not of Scotland, nor of England, but of the Church of God, "the sweet psalmist of Israel," will be heard no more.

Of his last long illness I will not say much. In its earlier stages, before prostration and uneasiness became extreme, his sufferings seemed to quicken all his sympathies. He was compelled to lie stretched out at full length in search of ease. In that recumbent posture the sick man used, night and morning, to conduct family worship. His children listened to the outpourings of his heart. Thoughts and feelings which he never breathed otherwise, in human hearing, he poured into the ear of his God, till he seemed to forget the presence of earthly listeners. Family matters were referred to in detail with the mention of the names of his children and others. His petitions were particular and minute. For his loved congregation he always poured out his supplication, mentioning tenderly by name persons in affliction. His prayers reflected his own frames, sometimes coming out of the depths, and sometimes rising into songs of deliverance. Taught by his own sufferings, he would say: "Oh! how many people are in pain; I never knew how to pray for them enough before." At that time his parallel New Testament lay by him all day long, and satisfied him.

Darker days came, and physical uneasiness and pain engrossed him more. The effort of continuous thought became too much for him, and his spiritual nourishment was supplied in broken snatches of truth, or in single texts. Listening

fatigued him, and it was easier for him to repeat brief portions of Scripture which, from life-long familiarity, still clung to his memory. "Have mercy on me, for I am weak; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed, but Thou, O Lord, how long? Lord, help me to bear this." If refreshed by quiet sleep, he would say: "Oh, what a mercy to be free from pain! Let us say the 103rd Psalm." Even at this time he would repeat it correctly from beginning to end. Through life it had been his habit to read this Psalm, on the occurrence of any joyful event; and when the end drew near, the Psalm was still his song. In his later weeks he scarcely spoke but from necessity. And so the way-worn pilgrim fell on sleep, to awake where there is no more pain, for the former things are passed away.

What a city, what a glory,
Far beyond the brightest story,
Of the ages old and hoary;
Ah! 'tis heaven at last.

Christ Himself the living splendour,
Christ the sunlight mild and tender,
Praises to the Lamb we render,
Ah! 'tis heaven at last.

Now at length the veil is rended,
Now the pilgrimage is ended;
And the saints their thrones ascended;
Ah! 'tis heaven at last.

Broken death's dread bonds that bound us,
Life and victory around us;
Christ the King Himself hath crowned us,
Ah! 'tis heaven at last.

Denique Coelum, thus beautifully expanded by the soaring and sanctified imagination of the sacred poet, was the motto of his family—a family identified with the ecclesiastical and spiritual history of Scotland, and enshrined in its grateful memory. Let us think of him, now that he is gone, not in connection with the parting shadows, but with the greetings of the open gate above. *Denique Coelum*; Heaven at last.

PIOUS PROFANITY.

Young Christians, learning to pray in public, are apt to fall into the habit of repeating the name of God so frequently and in such quick succession as not only sounds ridiculous, but is in violation of the commandment that forbids the taking of God's name in vain. In that short but most comprehensive prayer which the Saviour gave us as a model, He uses the name of the Father but once. To have used it oftener would have been using it in vain. Such careless and unnecessary use of the name is not only profane, but, if done mostly to fill up, would be letting it down to the level of a sort of wadding or packing material to fill in the vacant space where ideas or words run short. Thus to use the name of God as a substitute for words to make up the volume of a prayer, or to give time to think up something else to say, is tantamount to turning it into a sort of verbose crutch or wooden leg on which to keep along in lingual lameness until the tongue can move on again in its wonted way, and is irreverent, as well as inadequate and ugly. Some good and well educated young ministers of the Gospel sometimes err in this particular without knowing it, and their friends feel a delicacy in calling their attention to the fact. And to avoid this error it is necessary to be careful as to how we use God's name in either praying or singing; and from a want of this reverent care, there is seemingly much pious profanity in prayer-meetings and æsthetic church choirs.—*Uncle John, in St. Louis Presbyterian*.

OUR SAFE FRIEND.

There is our safe friend for every maiden. It is her mother. Whom should you trust, in whom repose confidence, if not in her? No one else loves you so unselfishly, and no one else has loved you so long. It is a pity when girls are not confidential with their mothers. There are times when every young woman needs an old woman to guide and help her, and her mother is at these times her natural counsellor and guardian. If she has no mother, let her pour her troubles and unfold her perplexities to some motherly woman, aunt, sister, friend, in whom she can believe. Many a heartache would be soothed, many a vexation rolled away, and many a mortification saved, if girls would remember that they have not the wisdom of Solomon nor the dignity of Deborah as yet on their unwrinkled brows. Situations which baffle them would be plain to more experienced eyes, and they would be guided over bad places.

PARENTAL PRAYERS.

Surely among all prayers that go up to God none are dearer or more prevailing than the intercessions of parents for their children. They are the hallowed breathings of the purest, tenderest love. Such prayers, if persistent, believing, and importunate, may we not say that God always answers in some way in the end? Monica, the mother of Augustine, prays for her son. For a time he goes deeper and deeper into sin, and it seems that the mother's supplications are unheard or unavailing. But she faints not; she will not give him up; she refuses to be disheartened. For many years her son wandered far from God, farther and farther, but she stays at her altar, undismayed, believing still, and pleading with renewed earnestness. At last all her intercessions are answered in one hour, when Augustine falls down at Jesus' feet in submission, and instantly turns all the wealth of his splendid life into the service of his new Master.