

# Letters: His Son James (2)

by Andrew Bonar

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*The sermon explores the themes of Christ's grace, joy, and sorrow, using poetic metaphors to illustrate the indistinct discovery of God's presence.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 30:5, Isaiah 41:10, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:6-7, James 1:5

**Topics:** "Faith in Adversity", "Grace"

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## Description

Andrew Bonar writes to his son James, reflecting on the profound truths of Christ's grace and the bittersweet nature of joy and sorrow, as illustrated through poetry. He shares insights from Dante and Byron, emphasizing the gradual revelation of grace and the lasting impact of memories. Bonar encourages James in his literary pursuits, appreciating his work while suggesting clarity in expression. He also expresses his ongoing commitment to his Bible classes and the importance of faith over fear. The letter concludes with a reminder of the blessings of faith and the need to trust in God's generosity.

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## Transcript

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.)

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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 nemesis' ? This is a heathenish fear. Faith in Him who giveth without upbraiding knows nothing of it.

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