

Letters: Rev. James Manson (4)

by Andrew Bonar

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking the power of the Holy Spirit and being commissioned by God to preach the Word effectively.

Scripture: James 1:2

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Trials in Ministry"

Description

Andrew Bonar reflects on the trials and sanctification of ministry, drawing parallels between his experiences and those of John the Baptist, who faced imprisonment while longing for the Lord's presence. He emphasizes the need for deepening holiness and reliance on the Holy Spirit for effective ministry, urging his fellow ministers to commit to prayer and fasting for spiritual revival. Bonar acknowledges the challenges of ministry, including feelings of inadequacy and the urgency of preaching the Gospel with power and love. He also shares personal reflections on the passing of a dear friend and the importance of remembering God's grace amidst the struggles of life and ministry.

Transcript

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 AEnon ; 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 AEnon; 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 his school

Write me if you can, and believe me, dear brother, yours in the Lord,

ANDREW A. BONAR.

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.

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. (Mr. Manson had fitted up his green-house in Crossford as a meeting-place, and services were held in it till a church was built in 1873) 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.

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!

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