



W. R. Bilbrough

En Memoriam

WILLIAM HUDSON BILBROUGH

Born at the Park House, Gildersome, August 4th, 1816.

Died at Westbrook, Horsforth, January 27th, 1891.

"A good and faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ."

LEEDS :

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE substance of the following address was delivered in the Baptist Chapel, Gildersome, on Saturday Afternoon, January 31st, and is published at the request of the family and friends of the late Mr. Bilbrough.

In re-writing, I have amplified several portions, and trust that in its present form it will not only be a memorial of a good man, but stimulating to the living.

I consider it an honour to be the Pastor of a Church which trained and sent forth Joseph Brookes Bilbrough and William Hudson Bilbrough.

They both rendered generous help and unstinted service to our denomination in Yorkshire, and were illustrious examples of

the value of our too much neglected village Churches.

I have a melancholy pleasure in recording my personal indebtedness to them, and in dedicating to their surviving children this brief memorial.

I desire for them no richer blessing or higher honour than that they may by the grace of God prove worthy of the name which they bear, and "continue in the things which they have learned, knowing of whom they have learned them."

TURTON HALL, GILDERSOME,

February, 1891.

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IN MEMORIAM

William Hudson Bilbrough

(Of Westbrook, Horsforth),

WHO DIED JANUARY 28th, 1891.

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“THE LATE MR. W. H. BILBROUGH.—On Saturday last, amid many signs of regret and proofs of the high esteem in which he was held, the remains of the late Mr. W. H. Bilbrough were laid to rest in the old family burial-place at Gildersome. For more than a century the Bilbroughs have been connected with the Baptist cause at Gildersome, and many members of the family are buried in the ground, which, chiefly through their liberality, was purchased (as we gather from the published history of the Church) on the 7th of April, 1726. The funeral arrangements

were under the personal direction of Mr. Wales Smith (of Leeds), and were carried out in the most satisfactory manner. The coffin was of polished oak, with brass furniture, and was covered with wreaths of choicest flowers sent from various parts of the country by absent friends. Amongst those present, in addition to the members of the family, were the following gentlemen:—

From and representing Rawdon College :
 Rev. W. Medley, M.A., Mr. William Town (Keighley, Joint Treasurer), Mr. W. R. Bilbrough (Finance Secretary), and Mr. J. V. Priestley (Liverpool). Yorkshire Baptist Association : Rev. A. P. Fayers (Secretary), Mr. Arthur Briggs, J.P., (Ex-President), Mr. J. R. Birkenshaw and Mr. E. Fearnside (Members of the Committee). From the Baptist Church at Rawdon : Mr. J. H. Pratt and Mr. Grimshaw (Deacons). Pudsey Divi-

sion Liberal Association: Mr. Israel Rishworth (Treasurer) and Mr. Salter. We also noticed Mr. Henry Booth (Gildersome), Mr. Thomas Sanderson, Mr. Alfred Booth, Mr. Alfred Bilbrough (Leeds), and many ladies. As the coffin was borne into the Chapel, Mr. C. R. Fisher, Mus. Bac. (Organist at the College, Gildersome), played 'O rest in the Lord,' and, as the mourners departed, he gave the 'Dead March' in *Saul*. The Rev. John Haslam gave an address sketching Mr. Bilbrough's life, and pointing out the valuable services he had rendered to all the Baptist Societies in the county, and especially to the College, and also in Home Mission work. He said his chief characteristics were goodness and faithfulness. The Rev. W. Medley, M.A., offered prayer, and the Rev. A. P. Fayers (of Rawdon) conducted the service at the grave."—*Bradford Observer*.

ADDRESS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I HAVE never sympathised with the practice (popular in this district) of giving an address at a funeral service. God has spoken, and it is seemly for man to keep silence before Him.⁽¹⁾ In the case of the ungodly man who has been "driven away in his wickedness,"⁽²⁾ it seems to me presumptuous for any mortal to speak what he may consider "faithful words," to the survivors, and to add bitterness to their poignant grief. In the case of a Christian, who has "fallen asleep in Christ," it is better to leave the mourners "who sorrow not as those without hope" alone with Him,

(1) Habakkuk ii, 20.

(2) Proverbs xiv, 32.

who is the resurrection and the life,⁽³⁾ the friend of Mary and her sister and Lazarus.

But the circumstances which have brought us together to-day are special, and I feel that silence would be reprehensible.

You have brought back to his native village, to lay in the tomb of his fathers, the body of one whose name will not soon be forgotten.

Half a century ago his handsome figure, gentlemanly bearing, unassuming manners, kindly heart, and genuine piety, won for him many friends,—most of them are sleeping near where he will rest; but a few remain, and are with us to-day.

I have not undertaken this duty because Mr. Bilbrough was comparatively rich: that, in itself, would not interest me. Whatever faults I may have, I have never honoured

(3) 1 Thess. iv, 13; St. John xi, 26.

the rich man because of his wealth. On the contrary, I have always felt that wealth brought great responsibilities; and with the teaching of God's word to guide me, I have spoken out plainly to those who have "trusted in riches,"⁽⁴⁾ and I have placed covetousness where Christ and the Apostles placed it,⁽⁵⁾ in the same list as drunkenness.

I have spoken faithful words to some who have prostituted their lives to the amassing of wealth, who have been cursed with the lust of gold, who have lived and died unwept, unmissed, and have gone before their Judge, bankrupt, to find their condemnation as unfaithful "stewards of their Lord's money."⁽⁶⁾ Alas! there are many such. Hence when we find stewards of a different type; it is our duty to commend them for their conduct.

(4) Mark x, 24. (5) Mark vii, 21-22; 1 Cor. vi, 10; Eph. v, 5.

(6) Matt. xxv, 18-27.

This is a duty which we owe not only to the dead but to the living. In this district where thrift and industry accumulate large fortunes quickly, it is not easy "to communicate" as God prospers.⁽⁶⁾ The very faculties which have gathered the wealth grip it when gathered; and much good work is left undone, and deserving institutions decay and die, because of the avarice of the rich. Necessity is therefore laid upon all Christian teachers to speak out clearly and repeatedly upon this subject. Because of the temptations of wealth. Because it tends to deaden the sense of responsibility and to atrophy the soul. Because it is so much more difficult for a man to give hundreds out of thousands, than it was to give his ones out of tens. Because it is almost impossible for a man to "get on" as the vulgar phrase

(6) 1 Cor. xvi, 2.

is, and to retain the freshness of his piety, and fellowship with the associates of his early Christian days. Because it is so rare for men to enjoy social advantages and live where fashion casts her glamour,—and yet walk as children of light. Therefore, when this is done, it should not be unchronicled.

Our friend whose body is resting in that wreath-strewn coffin did this, and therefore I speak of him. He was rich, but he was “rich toward God.”⁽⁷⁾ I speak of him because his beautiful life ought to be known, and if remembered and imitated, will be influential still. “Considering the issue of his life, imitate his faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”*⁽⁸⁾

There is another reason. Whilst it is

(7) Luke xii, 21.

* (8) Heb. xiii, 7.—R. V.

possible to err by exaggerating the virtues of our friends, and by extolling them too much,—it is possible to err on the other side, and error in this direction is even more baneful.

There are times when silence is sinful, when it means ingratitude, and ingratitude is a deadly sin.

“Bless the Lord O my soul, and *forget not* all His benefits”⁽⁹⁾ is an exhortation needful in this nineteenth century. Forgetfulness; is responsible for desertion of principle, pride, spiritual insensibility and much ingratitude. Remembrance of the way which the Lord hath led us, the mercies which He has given us, the companions who have been raised up to share our burdens, and intensify our joys, the days of calmness and the nights of storm, would clothe us with humility, quicken our sensibilities, bind

us closer to our God, and make our lives a prolonged psalm of praise.

God's greatest gifts to us are men; good men. They do more for us than we are conscious of. They raise the average standard of goodness. They enrich all who come into touch with them, and after they are dead they influence us more than whilst they were with us.

The world is poorer, and heaven richer by their removal, and as the world has lost so much by their departure, it is our duty to minimise the loss by perpetuating the inspiration of their example.

With this object, and to glorify God, I speak of Wm. Hudson Bilbrough, father of some, friend of all; and I am in a position to speak. I have known him for 30 years. I have seen him in various circumstances, and in diversified positions. I have been

closely associated with him in Christian work. I knew him in his strength and his weakness. I have seen him grow old, and if you ask me what were the two most prominent features in his character, I reply without hesitation: *goodness*, unostentatious *goodness*, and *fidelity*, unsullied steadfast *fidelity*.

I never knew his father, but I was well acquainted with his mother. She was a woman of great energy of character, keen perception, most loyal to conviction, frank, out-spoken, a true heroine.

He was born into a refined Christian home,—a school of Christian nurture where the Bible was revered, and instruction in the glorious doctrines of religion intelligently and earnestly given.

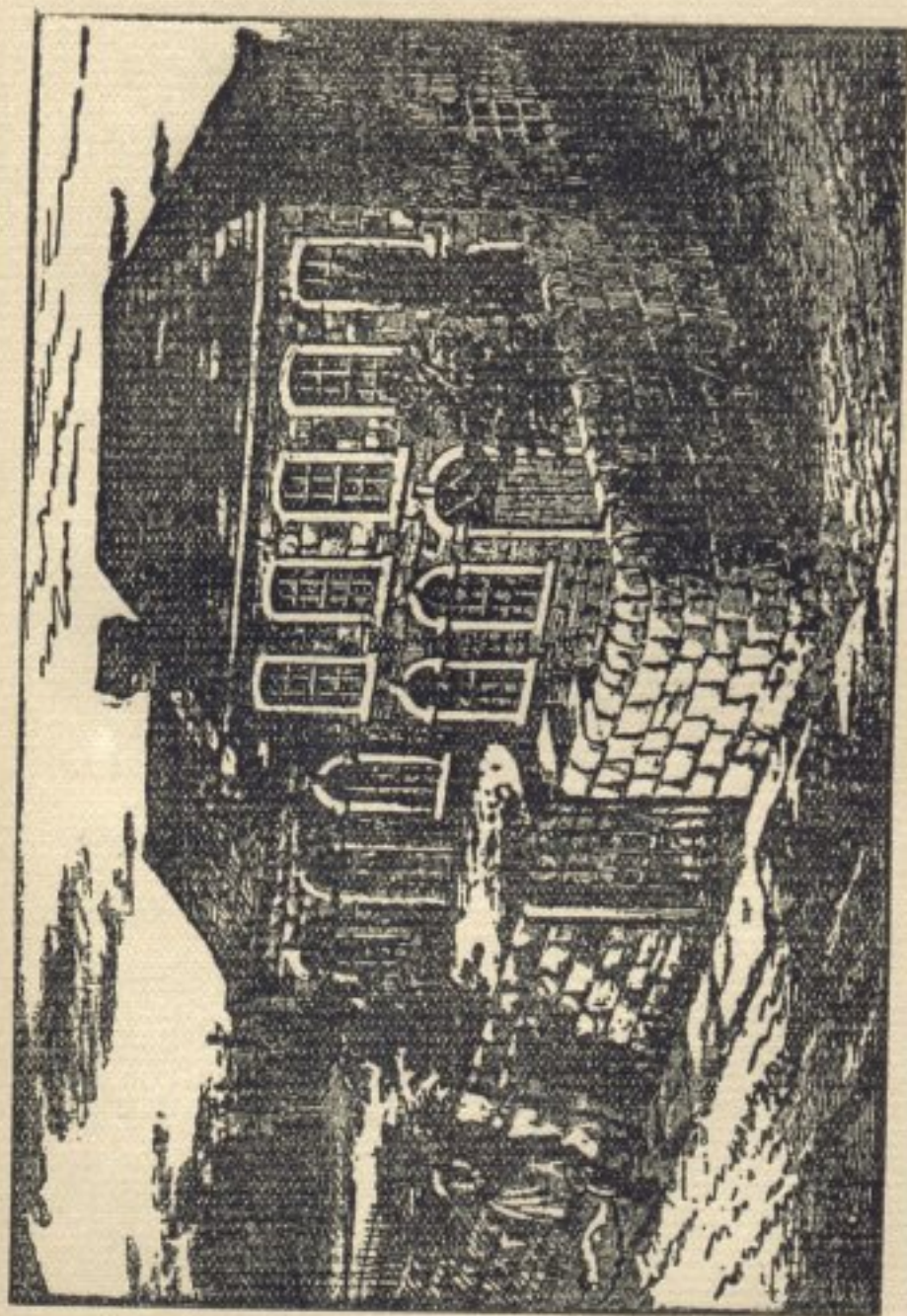
In early life, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he became conscious of personal

sin, realised the meaning of sin and its penalty, of law and righteousness, and moral government. He felt that the violated law needed an atonement, that transgressors needed to be cleansed, as well as forgiven, that the love of God must not be divorced from the righteousness of God, or it would not endure to the end.

He sought for a Saviour as well as an example, and became conscious of a Divine change. He was regenerated, saved, accepted in the Beloved, and having received the forgiveness of sin, he declared by an act far more expressive than the most eloquent words, his allegiance to Christ, and his resolve to live a consecrated life.

On the 27th of September, 1837, he was "buried with Christ in baptism,"⁽¹¹⁾ and on the following Sabbath (October 1st) was wel-

(11) Rom. vi, 4; Coloss. ii, 12.



came into fellowship with this church.

His faith rested upon the sacrifice of the Saviour, whose sacrifice was to him vicarious and substitutionary. Jesus Christ became to him a living bright reality, and thus building on the Rock, he remained unmoved, unskaken, in the midst of many a theological and critical storm.

This faith of his was no blind credulous belief, ignorant of other teachings, and of plausible arguments against the supernatural, in religion and the atoning nature of Christ's life and death. He had access to a valuable library of philosophical and literary, and theological books. In this village then (as alas in a few cases now), Socinian doctrines were held and taught. He must have faced these difficulties and examined these doctrines; and his faith became firmer because intelligently fostered. The glad language of triumph

as he rose above conquered doubts and difficulties. "I know whom I have believed,"⁽¹²⁾ became the creed of his subsequent life, as it is now the key-note of his eternal song.

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing."⁽¹³⁾

Whatever men who are perplexed by the mysteries of our holy religion may say against the old evangelical faith, I know from the observations of many years that it is the spring of all philanthropic, self-denying, persistent Christian work. Men of "advanced thought" and culture may do educational and social work, but their "moral and spiritual achievements are found nowhere, except in books of modern fiction."

(12) 2 Tim. i, 12.

(13) Rev. v, 12.

It is the men who believe in immortality who prove that life is worth living. It is the men who believe in eternal life as the gift of Christ, who earnestly and successfully seek to save souls "for whom Christ died."⁽¹⁴⁾

I emphasize that. Faith in Jesus Christ such as our friend exercised for over fifty years not only secures pardon, and therefore peace, joy, strength, eternal life, "glorious hopes that flash lustre into the darkness and make the solitude of the grave companionship, and the end of earth the beginning of life," but it secures conformity to the Divine image, cheerful acquiescence in and obedience to, the will of God. "The river of the water of life"⁽¹⁵⁾ that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb is not sent merely to refresh thirsty lips and to bring music into the silence of a waterless

(14) 1 Cor. viii and II.

(15) Rev. xxii and I.

desert, but it is sent to "drive the wheels of life." Yes, evangelical faith is a practical thing. The life he "lived in the flesh was a life of faith in the Son of God." ⁽¹⁶⁾ Christ was the centre and circumference. He did all in His Name.

The homes which he created at Tong and Bramley and Horsforth were quiet Christian homes,—where the family altar was erected, and family devotion maintained.

The books which he read were such as were calculated to minister to his spiritual life, and to promote growth in knowledge and in grace. He had little time or taste for other literature.

The friends most welcome to his hospitable board were Christ's ministers and workers, and the poor: he had little fellowship with the fashionable and giddy world outside.

(16) Gal. ii, 20.



When he joined the Church, union with Christ's people implied separation from the world. The right hand of fellowship then meant (as some of us are anxious that it should mean still) fellowship "with light and love." Hence a Covenant was solemnly signed, and angels and men were called upon to witness thereto.

Certain clauses of that covenant run—

"We will make it a point of conscience to seek the promotion of religion in the families of which we form a part, or in which we dwell; and those of us who are placed at the head of a family will, through Divine grace, adopt the resolution of Joshua: 'As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.'"

"That whilst we consider it our duty to aid, according to ability, the interests of religion in general, we will use our utmost

endeavours to advance the cause of Christ in this place, by our fervent prayer for a blessing on the ministry of the word, by inducing others to attend the preaching of the gospel, and by encouraging and assisting those who appear to be enquiring the way to Zion."

"That we will cultivate towards each other a spirit of brotherly love and kindness; that it shall be our object to seek each other's welfare and happiness; that, sensible of the imperfections of the present state, we will endeavour to exercise towards each other a spirit of forbearance and meekness and gentleness; that we will watch over each other in love, and be willing, as far as duty will allow, to sacrifice our private interests and feelings to the good of the whole."

These things he covenanted to do, and

it seemed to me as if he were always saying, "Thy vows are upon me, O God."⁽¹⁶⁾ He had heard the Shepherd's voice. He loved to be controlled. To him the "sweetest word in the pastures of the wilderness was fold."^(Ruakin) "He went in and went out and found pasture."⁽¹⁷⁾ In communion with Christ and His saints he found spiritual stimulus and strength, and influences which transfigured him.

His goodness was not created instantaneously,—it was a *growth*. It was not reached without effort or suffering, it was the result of much pruning and purging; He passed through great tribulation.

He had many comforts all through life, but he had many sorrows. The storm blew upon him from every point of the compass, and into his cup almost every ingredient of

(16) Psalm lvi, 12.

(17) John x, 9.

bitterness at one time or other was poured.

He passed through strange experiences. He was often afflicted and bereaved. The keenest pang which any man can feel he endured. He buried two wives, and was bereaved of two children. "He learned obedience by the things which he suffered."⁽¹⁸⁾ He was purified by fire.

This explains much. All who came into contact with him were impressed with his goodness, but few knew the price at which it was secured.

So now that he is perfected let us think of him as a good man. He prayed—

"Nearer, my God to thee! Nearer to thee!

E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,"

S. F. Adams.

and the cross he endured without a murmur, for he knew that as the result, Christ would be glorified. As a disciple of the Lord Jesus, he did not hide his light under "the

bushel," but obeyed the Divine command. "Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven."⁽¹⁹⁾ He did not ostentatiously flash out the light, he "let it shine," that men might see it, not him, and "glorify the Father," not extol him. Hence the light which streamed out was quiet, steady, self-evident, consistent, winsome. He never obtruded himself, but his goodness was always manifest. He did not parade his influence, but it was not the less visible on that account. He was "clothed with humility,"⁽²⁰⁾ and he walked worthy of the "vocation wherewith he was called."⁽²¹⁾ He grew in grace, and in graciousness. He always seemed to me to beautifully illustrate the Psalmist's words, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall

(20) 1 Peter v, 5.

(21) Ephes. iv and i.

grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that he planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright."⁽²²⁾ Fixed and rooted he flourished. Planted by God, he bore fruit unto God.

His protracted life showed that God was faithful, "The Lord was upright." The text which will be inscribed on his tombstone was often on his lips:—"Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth;"⁽²³⁾ and his pew was rarely empty. He was a good man, and he loved to be in good company. "A Good Man"—a noble epitaph. Good men, though they have defects and failings, inspire respect. I do not say our

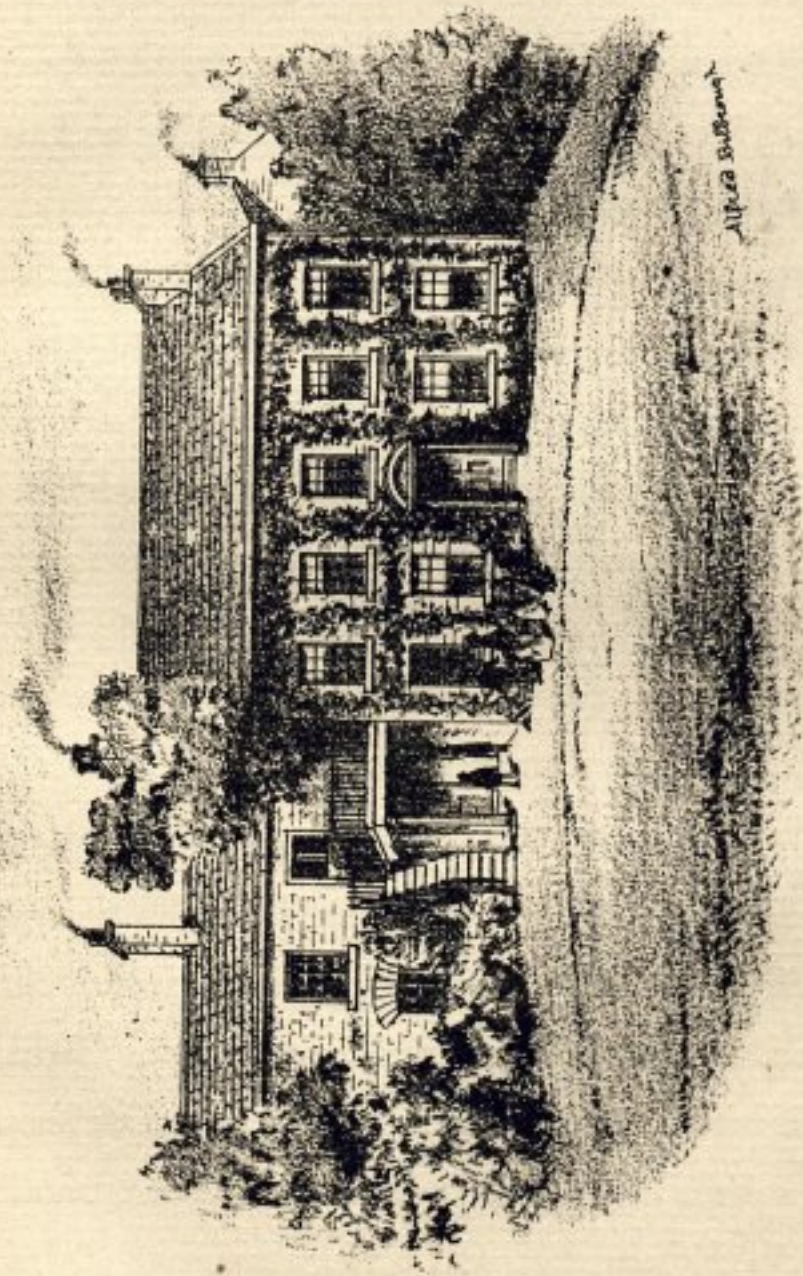
friend was perfect; doubtless he had his faults, defects, and sins, but I have sketched him as he appeared to me, a "good man," not brilliant, or learned or eloquent, but good "Intellect, like ice, is colourless, it may dazzle and awe, but goodness has our homage and our hearts." "'Tis only noble to be good." He was a good man—godly!

He was a *faithful* servant of the Lord Jesus Christ; faithful to his baptismal vows; faithful to the great principles of Nonconformity; faithful to the denomination which he had joined, and to the churches of which he was a member; faithful in fitting himself for the diversified service to which he was called by his brethren and his Lord; faithful in realising the responsibilities and discharging the obligation of stewardship; faithful in little things as well as great duties; faithful in every sphere; faithful through good report

and evil report; faithful when all went well, unmoveable when all went ill, "always abounding in the work of the Lord."⁽²³⁾

He had many temptations to be unfaithful. Born and brought up at the Park House in this village, a model English home, with its then noble avenue of trees, unique lawn,—beautiful garden, and fruitful orchard, no wonder that throughout the whole of his life he had a passionate love for birds, and fruits, and flowers. The temptation to quit this comparatively barren district, and live in the country, where trees and flowers can breathe and grow, must have been at times almost irresistible. If any man is justified in retiring to a country home, and worshipping in one of our historically interesting Parish Churches, he was; but he resisted the temptation, that he might attend a Baptist

(23) 1 Cor. xv, 58.



Park House, Gildersome.

Chapel, and in pitching his tent, unlike too many, he thought of its relation to the sanctuary that he might continue to worship with his own people.

His fidelity cost him much. How much, he and his Saviour only knew. It is simple truth to say that the churches with which he was identified were not always characterised by sweet reasonableness and concord, the "charity which suffereth long and is kind."⁽²⁴⁾ His sensitive spirit was grieved and saddened by many things which he heard and witnessed. His large heart could not be bound by denominational lines. He loved all and desired to have fellowship not with Baptists only, but with all "who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."⁽²⁵⁾ He was a thorough Baptist, but he was also a thorough Christian. He held his own convictions so

(24) 1 Cor. xiii, 4.

(25) Ephes. vi, 24.

strongly, that he felt bound to give credit to those who differed from him, for being as conscientious as he. He followed after charity, and sought to promote peace. Intolerance, strife, division, controversy, he witnessed with pain. As far as possible he endeavoured to check the growth of these "fruits of the flesh,"⁽²⁶⁾ and when he found his efforts unavailing he stood aside. But he remained faithful, knowing that principle must not be surrendered because some abused their liberty, and that Christ was not responsible for the imperfections, and the blunders, and the sins of some who bore His name. And so he lived for fifty years a faithful member of Baptist churches, and had the joy of spending his latter days in happy fellowship with one of our ancient and most honoured churches, being edified and com-

(26) Ephes. ii, 3

forted by one of our worthiest pastors.

As an earnest Baptist he did not confine his sympathies to the churches of which he was a member, but rendered valuable service to our Association and its affiliated societies in the county.

He was one of the founders of our Chapel Loan Society in 1852, contributed towards its capital of £10,000, and served on its Committee. He was a member of the Committee of the Home Mission or Itinerant Society, and was deeply interested in the rural Churches. He was one of the originators of the Aged Ministers' Society (established in 1845), acted as Joint Secretary with his cousin, Joseph Brookes Bilbrough, for some time, and in 1879, when it was merged in the National Society of the Baptist Union, was appointed with him, an Honorary Member of our Association

Committee, in recognition of the services rendered to the denomination.

He was for many years a Trustee and member of the Committee of the Northern Baptist Education Society, regularly attending the meetings at Rawdon, and in later years served on the House Committee, and Finance Committee, both of which demanded much time, energy, and thought.

He was frequently appointed Auditor of our Denominational Societies, and in discharging this duty, he brought into service his prominent characteristics—close attention to details—the examination of every voucher—the checking of each item, even the smallest—the fullest inquiry into every matter that needed examination, before he would attach his name.

He believed in making religion a business, and in transacting Christian business with

rigid scrupulosity. In this ministry, he rendered service, which is not always valued as it deserves to be.

Two or three years ago, his intimate friends (because kindred spirits), Mr. Arthur Briggs, J.P., Rev. T. George Rooke, B.A., and another, introduced Colporteurs into the county. He heartily joined in the work, feeling that an agency of this character was needed to reach the homes of the poor, and to disseminate healthy literature. The success (which was far greater than our most sanguine expectations) with which God crowned this simple agency at Boroughbridge and Dishforth, filled his soul with joy. He engaged a colporteur at his sole cost for the Horsforth district, and purposed contributing towards the employment of a third in the East-Riding. Hearing that disused Chapels at Northallerton and Brompton, were

about to be sold for business purposes, he joined the friends previously mentioned, and purchased them.

The one at Northallerton was renovated at his cost, and at the crowded re-opening service, though in feeble health, he was present, humbled, but grateful, as he saw the earnest of spiritual blessing yet to be enjoyed there.

As a Liberal politician, he was always true to the great principles of civil liberty, and religious equality. He knew how much of our prosperity and stability was due to the extension of the franchise, the abolition of unjust monopolies, and the better education of the people. He had lived and worked through the most eventful period of our country's history, and having seen the result of the fuller development of the powers of the individual, he was anxious to see the

work perfected, and every measure which was calculated to promote "the greatest good of the greatest number" exalted and enthroned in law. When the unhappy cleavage took place, which caused many honoured comrades to forsake our ranks, he became more active and earnest in the work, loyally supporting Mr. Gladstone, and the representative of this Division (Mr. Briggs Priestley, M.P.), who has written a letter testifying to the high regard which he felt for him as a friend and fellow-worker for over 30 years.

It is only as we thus review the life that he lived, and the labours in which he was abundant, that we are able to realise the value of the life which has passed away.

He was a *quiet worker*. I do not think he ever spoke in public. In committee meetings his counsel was always valued, but his words were few. Let us learn from his life

to appreciate more than we have hitherto done the power of quiet, unostentatious private work, for after all the silent forces and the hidden currents are the greatest powers.

Oh the power of quiet workers! "In almost all cases the great, the permanent work has been done, not by those who seemed to do very much, but by those who seemed to do very little. Our Lord's founding of the Church was but the most striking instance of a universal rule. He seemed to all outside spectators to do almost nothing. The Roman rulers hardly heard of His name. What was He doing? He was sowing the seed, whose fruit was not yet, whose perfect fruit was not to be gathered as it has since turned out for many centuries, the seed which seemed small and perishable, but was certain to grow into a great tree."

“All the greatest work has been done both before and after, not often by producing immediate results, but by sowing seeds. So have sciences all grown, not from brilliant declamations to the world, but from patient labour and quiet thought and language addressed to the few who think. So has all growth in politics always begun in the secret thought of men who have found the truth, and have committed it to books or to chosen learners.” (*Bp. Temple*)

Of the great men produced in this county perhaps none will live longer than John Foster. His essays, and letters, and reviews, and sermons, will I doubt not be printed and read as long as the English language exists. Some of them practically exhaust the subjects with which they deal. Yet as he wandered in the hanging woods, or studied in the library of Brearley Hall, few knew

him. As a preacher he could never command a congregation, but he does now.

Paul, the chief of the Apostles, owed much of his strength and influence to many whose names are found in no history, but which are written in the "Lamb's book of life."⁽²⁷⁾ When he gave up all things for Jesus Christ, he was disowned by his own mother and brethren, but he found a home and mother in the house of Rufus—a refuge when in peril from false brethren; a mother who nursed him in sickness, encouraged him when cast down, welcomed him when out-cast, and did much more which he recalled when he wrote, "Salute Rufus, and his mother and mine."⁽²⁸⁾ Wonderful is that epistle of his to the Romans, and amongst its beauties the salutations are not the least significant. Strange names, Phœbe, Priscilla and

(27) Rev. xxi, 27.

(28) Rom. xvi, 13.

Aquila, Epænetus and Philologus, Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who were helpers in Christ and labourers in the Lord.⁽²⁹⁾ They were perhaps unknown beyond their homes and their churches. They never thought of fame, only of service; content to be quiet workers, content to be faithful,

“Content to go to the crowd untold
Of men by the cause they served unknown,
Who lie in the myriad graves of old,
Never a story and never a stone.”

But eighteen centuries after their death, their work is fruitful. Good work never dies. The influence exerted by a holy life does not end when that life closes on earth, and we say, “It is done.” After the days of the Apostles, Christianity extended on every side, gradually leavening the corrupt and seething mass of humanity. Still the leaven

(29) Romans xvi, 12.

which worked most powerfully was the pure and stainless lives of its converts. As Farrar says, the ideal of the Christian family was its direct creation. "*Familia*" to the ear of a Roman meant a multitude of idle, corrupt, and corrupting slaves, kept in subjection by the cross and the *ergastulum*, ready for any treachery, and reeking with every vice.^(A) But the new faith encircled the position of womanhood with all that was pure and tender in the names of mother and wife. It gave divinity and sweetness to that word home. "Heavens! what women these Christians have," exclaim Libanius, the sophist, when he found his onslaught against Christianity thwarted and defeated by the fidelity and firmness of the Christian women of Antioch. It was a reluctant panegyric of the courageous devotedness and unwavering

(A) "The Witness of History to Christ."

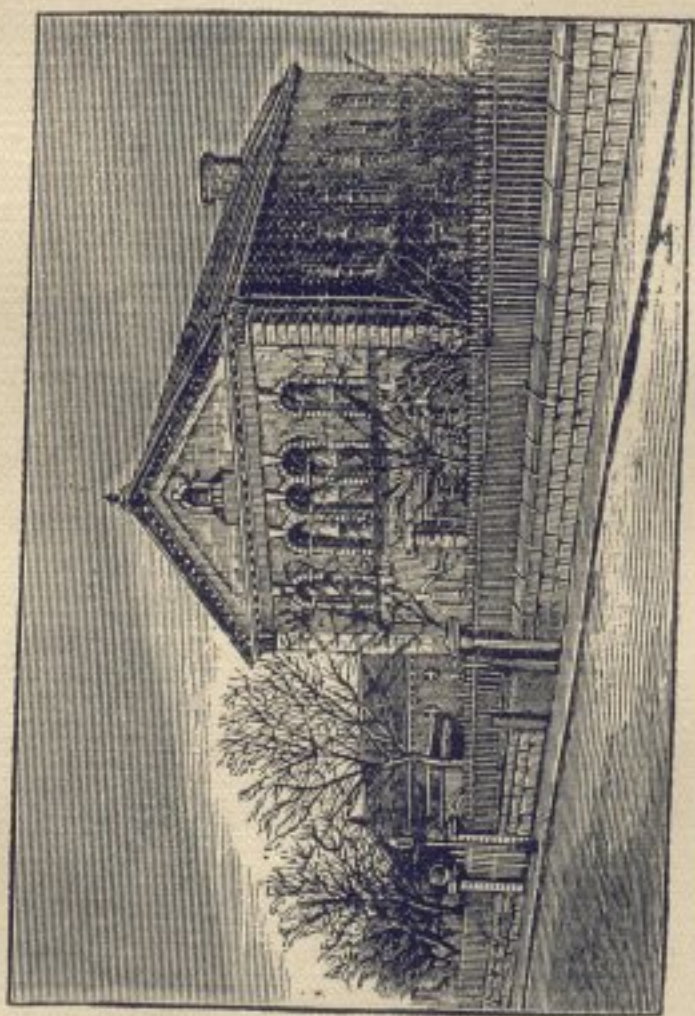
piety of womanhood, which has proved a glory and benediction to the Church of Christ. "The unfeigned faith of Eunice, and the deep religiousness of Nonna, will be always associated with the names of Timothy and Gregory Nazianzen, and the pious influence of mothers has given both the Greek and Latin churches their most distinguished names.^(B) And it is so to-day; we owe more than we have an idea of to the gentle moulding influences which have surrounded us from our youth, to the men and women who have laboured, and passed away, into whose labours we have entered,—“the sceptred dead, who rule us from their graves.”

After thirty years of happy and not unsuccessful work here, I feel and confess that if this Church has made steady progress, and is now in a position of influence and

(B) "The Prophets of Christendom."—*Boyd Carpenter.*

power seldom equalled in a small village community, it is not due to us the workers of to-day, merely, but to those who have preceded us—whose names need not be mentioned—who laid deep and four-square the foundation on which we have been permitted to build. It is well to think of them, to cherish the remembrance of their words and their lives. The record which we have of their work is not only an interesting study, but a constant inspiration. Our old Church-book, with its quaint records of nearly 200 years, is a priceless volume. It shows most clearly what forces were at work during the Puritan age, which purified our literature, sweetened our social life, and largely made England what she is to-day.

They were Biblical students, who lived saintly lives, and whose homes sent forth a healthy savour all around.



There are many such to-day, lineal and spiritual successors, to whose influence England owes her stability and prosperity. Yet they are unknown. Poets have sung of obscure martyrs. I would, were I a poet, sing of obscure workers whose lives are unseen,—wives, mothers, sisters, who make homes what they are, "quiet resting places,"⁽³⁰⁾ and schools of Christian nurture.

Thank God, the race is not extinct, there are scores and hundreds of good patient souls, the real potent forces of life; who hear cross words without retaliation; who carry heavy burdens without murmuring; who do daily drudgery, and sing as they labour. They wear the imperishable ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, and thus are far more powerful for good than if they lived the busy, bustling lives of agitators and re-

(30) Isaiah xxxii and 18.

formers and lecturers. This kind of service is needed in these days of noise and publicity, for home is losing its charm; and in proportion as this is the case, our national character will be enfeebled, and our glory and strength be clouded, if not destroyed. Whatever else our friend did, he showed piety at home, and much of that sweetness of spirit which he manifested in the world was ripened there.

“ There all the jarring notes of life
 Were blended in a psalm,
 And all the angles of its strife
 Were rounded into calm.”

Whittier.

One of the last public services attended by Mr. Billbrough, was the commemoration service held at Rawdon College, on Thursday, December 11th, 1890, previous to the interment at Frome, of its honoured President—the Rev. T. Geo. Rooke, B.A., when

the Rev. Dr. Angus of London) delivered a most appropriate address. It was evident from his appearance, that the dissolution of his bodily "Tabernacle" had commenced, and that he would soon be compelled to retire from all active work. But he was warmly welcomed, for his presence under the circumstances revealed the genuineness of his friendship, and his determination to be faithful to duty even to death.

On Sunday, December 14th, the *In Memoriam* Service was held at Rawdon Chapel, with which Mr. Rooke had been identified, and of which Church he was a member. The weather was bitterly cold, and Mr. Bilbrough had for several days been confined to his room. He knew that by leaving his home, he incurred great risk, but as he was one of those who love not in "words only, but in deed and in truth,"⁽³¹⁾ he was prepared

(31) 1 John iii, 18.

for any personal sacrifice, and therefore took his place amongst the mourners.

Few in that congregation mourned as he did. I know (from frequent conversations) that his admiration of Mr. Rooke was deep and profound. *He understood him*, as very few did, and such men as Mr. Rooke need to be known before they can be appreciated. Ordinary minds and ordinary hearts can never comprehend such saints. David and Jonathan were not more fervently attached to each other than these two kindred souls, and it was only natural that when the "mighty had fallen," the survivor should say, "I am distressed for thee, my brother, very pleasant has thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." (32)

He felt it a great privilege to be

(32) 2 Samuel i, 26.

associated with him; to know his pure and beautiful life; his hidden ministries amongst the poor, and the more than Spartan courage which he had shown in grappling with difficulties, and contending with disease.

He also knew that the Church of God was poorer, and that a void had been made which would not easily be filled; and therefore, though he sorrowed as a Christian, yet great was his lamentation over his departed comrade.

Possibly too (for we cannot always see God's mysterious dealings with his children, or hear the words which he speaks to them in the deep silence of their souls) he had a premonition that it was the last public service which he would be permitted to attend upon earth—the last opportunity which he would have of fellowship on this side the eternal home, with “the whole

family in heaven and earth.” (33)

There is nothing unduly fanciful in the thought, that as he sat in that ancient meeting house, sanctified as no other place in the West Riding is, by its hallowed associations and memories, he would feel transported to the “land of Beulah”; and “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation,” (34) came to tell him of the glory of the place into which his sainted brother had entered, and whose gate was open for him to follow.

“Here, said they, is the innumerable company of angels, and the ‘spirits of just men made perfect.’ (35)

“You are going now, said they, to the Paradise of God, wherein you shall see the tree of life, and eat of the never fading fruits thereof; and when you come there

(33) Ephesians iii, 15. (34) Heb. i, 14. (35) Heb. xii, 23.

you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King. . . . You will there receive the comfort of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow. You must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your prayers and tears and sufferings for the King by the way. In that place you must wear crowns of gold, and enjoy the perpetual sight and visions of the Holy One, for there you shall see Him as He is; there also shall you serve Him continually with praise, with shouting, and thanksgiving, whom you desired to serve in the world, though with much difficulty, because of the infirmity of your flesh; there you shall enjoy your friends again that are got thither before you; and there you shall with joy receive even every one that follows into the Holy Place after you." ¶

Doubtless with thoughts such as these he bade farewell to the sanctuary, and returned to his home and to his room for "a little while."

Who would not desire thus to finish life? honouring one who had so bravely fallen at the post of duty, communing with "his own company,"⁽³⁶⁾ and with Him who "is in the midst, where two or three are gathered together in his name,"⁽³⁷⁾ re-calling many similar services, and anticipating with joy the hour when he would hear the summons and ascend to meet his Lord.

In an interview I had with him shortly before he died, he could scarcely walk or speak, but his interest in Christian work was as keen as ever. He spoke about our Home Mission; the proposed union of the two sections of the denomination; the critical

(36) Acts iv, 23.

(37) Matthew xviii, 20.

state of the College, and the need of greater fidelity and consecration if denominational work is to be worthily done.

Soon after this, he was confined to his bed, comforted by the loving ministrations of all his children, cheered and soothed by his little grand-daughter, who, by an influence which we cannot explain, learned, and sang again and again, in sweet simplicity—

“Calm on the bosom of thy God

Fair spirit, rest thee now ;

E'en while with us thy footsteps trod,

His seal was on thy brow.

Dust, to its narrow house beneath !

Soul, to its home on high !

They that have seen thy look in death

No more need fear to die.

Felicia D. Hemans.

He has gone home. We have lost another of our princely givers—only a few days before he passed away, he drew with trembling hand a cheque for £250, and sent

it to the Treasurer of the proposed Chapel at Rawdon. Such men as he are not easily replaced. We seem to be getting poorer every year; but though perplexed, we do not despair—the God who made them, can raise up others; and He will never forget His Church, so long as she remains faithful.

We follow him in thought, but oh, we know but little of that future life. This we know, the good and faithful servants still serve Him; they see His face; and His name is upon their foreheads; they are with Christ which is far better—they are “welcomed into the joy of their Lord.”⁽³⁸⁾ Christ’s own joy—promotion to a higher sphere and wider range of work, they are

“For ever with the Lord,
Amen, so let it be.”

(38) Matt. xxv, 21.

IN
MEMORY OF
HANNAH,
WIFE OF WILLIAM HUDSON BILBROUGH
OF TONG,
WHO DIED JUNE 30TH 1852,
AGED 35 YEARS.

ALSO OF
EVELYN JANE ELLISON BILBROUGH,
SECOND DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE, WHO
DIED NOV. 27TH 1869, AGED 22 YEARS

ALSO OF
MARTHA JANE BILBROUGH,
ELDEST DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE, WHO
DIED OCTOBER 25TH 1873, AGED 27 YEARS,

ALSO OF
ELIZABETH, WIFE OF W. H. BILBROUGH,
WHO DIED DECEMBER 28TH 1863
AGED 71 YEARS,

ALSO OF THE ABOVE NAMED WILLIAM HUDSON BILBROUGH
OF WESTBROOK, HORSFORTH,
SECOND SON OF JAMES AND ELLEN BILBROUGH,
WHO DIED JANUARY 27TH 1891,
AGED 74 YEARS.

*"LORD, I HAVE LOVED THE HABITATION OF THY HOUSE,
AND THE PLACE WHERE THINE HONOUR DWELLETH."*

