

BROWNLOW NORTH:

THE STORY

OF

HIS LIFE AND WORK.

BY THE REV.

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MOFFAT.

POPULAR EDITION.

London:

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MCCCCLXXIX.

IV.

EARLY EVANGELISTIC LABOURS.

“Do not trifle; earth is groaning
Under wrongs and burdens sore:
Be in earnest; put thy shoulder
To the work that lies before.

Every hour is more than golden,
Every moment is a gem;
Treasure up these hours and moments,
There are princely pearls in them.”

H. BONAR, D.D.

WE have seen how Brownlow North was led to the entrance of what proved to be a long and eminently useful course of public evangelistic labours. He felt that the providential indications that this was the path in which the Lord would have him walk were so clear to his own mind, that to have refused to undertake the work would have been to decline the call of God. Most of those who knew him felt, as strongly as he himself did, that the Lord had need of him to publish the gospel of His grace in the country districts and the towns and cities of Scotland; and the Lord so manifestly accompanied the preaching of the word with signs following, that all doubt was gradually removed from the minds of most of those who had at heart the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in our beloved land. With characteristic energy and through-going, whenever he was assured in his own mind that the Lord had called him to pass through the towns and villages of the land, proclaiming the gospel which had gladdened his soul and renewed his life, he threw himself enthusiastically into the work, giving up without hesitation his stated home. What to a gentleman of fully middle life was the undoubted trial of having no settled residence was gladly met by him, and as gladly and cheerfully shared by Mrs. North.

Sir George Sinclair, Bart., of Ulbster, in a valuable letter addressed to the Rev. Dr. Guthrie, of Edinburgh, which was published at the time, after giving a brief sketch of Mr. North's conversion, and his commencement first of private, and then of more public efforts to save souls, says: “The foregoing unvarnished and interesting narrative presents, I humbly think, a complete vindication of our respected and indefatigable friend from the charge of having intruded himself into the functions of the ministry, and usurping a position to which he had neither claim nor calling. It must be evident, even to the most prejudiced caviller, that he was led on, not only gradually, but reluctantly and unexpectedly, to become a preacher of the everlasting gospel in truth and verity. When he first obeyed the summons to attend the death-bed of a dying Christian, it no more entered into his contemplation

that the time was at hand when congregated thousands would assemble from all quarters to hear him, than the prophet imagined, when he entered the shallow stream, that the waters which were only to the ankles would ere long be to the knees, and ultimately reach to the loins. Retaining as I still do my objection to lay-preaching in general, 'what am I that I could withstand God' (Acts vi. 17), when in such an exceptional case as that of Mr. North He is pleased to grant such unequivocal and uninterrupted tokens of His countenance and presence?"

This testimony of Sir George Sinclair was an important one; and those must be few indeed who having been privileged to listen to his addresses, whatever other faults they might impute to him, could possibly charge him with having rushed rashly or presumptuously, impelled by some merely carnal motive, into the position of a preacher, to which his Master had not called him. So solemn did he feel the post even of a lay-evangelist to be, that we are sure all his most intimate friends will bear us out in the assertion that nothing but a convincing and almost overpowering sense of his having been called or thrust forth by his Lord to "preach the word" would have induced him to stand up and plead for his God with his fellow-men. For hours before ascending the platform or pulpit he was weighed down with a sense of the greatness of the responsibility of addressing sinners in the name of the Saviour, and none can say that in the discharge of his duties he was ever light-hearted. His abiding impression was that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him, and that woe would be to him if he did not preach the gospel. He felt he owed a debt, not only to the Saviour who had washed him in His blood and pardoned his many sins, but to sinners around him who had a right and a claim to the sinner's gospel; a claim to have it declared to them and pressed upon them with all fulness, freeness, and forcibleness by one who had himself experienced its saving power. This was the debt which in the strength of God he now set himself with all his energy to discharge, and in the zealous execution of this great trust he continued to his dying hour.

After having begun to preach in the Free Churches of Dallas and Forres in the beginning of July 1856, Mr. North was invited and consented to preach in many of the churches in Morayshire and the adjoining counties. In August of that year he went to Fortwilliam and the district of Lochaber, in which neighbourhood he had held shootings for some years, and preached with much power both in the Established and Free Churches, creating among the people who had known him in his careless days a deep impression, and awakening among them a serious concern about Divine things. In October of that year he preached in different churches in the town of Inverness, thereafter at Petty, Auldearn, and Nairn, returned again to Inverness in November, and visited the towns of Forfar, Montrose, and Aber-

deen in the last months of the year. Wherever he went, the Lord accompanied His word by awakening the careless, and arousing the sleeping. Written statements by ministers of the Established, Free, United Presbyterian, and Independent Churches all testify to the deep impression made upon their congregations by his message.

Nearly twenty years had passed since the last revival in Scotland under William Burns, at a time of deep spiritual thought which may be said to have been a preparation for, and to have culminated in, the ever-memorable Disruption of the National Church in 1843. Strangers from England and America often seem to suppose that there is so much religious knowledge and spiritual life in Scotland as to leave no room for anything like a deep or widespread religious impression. No idea could be more erroneous than this. Religious knowledge is not, alas, at all the same as spiritual life, and is not unfrequently found in an unnatural separation from it. Even in regard to the former it is the simple fact that at the time when Mr. North began his evangelistic work, as at the present time, there was a very large amount of ignorance, both of the letter of the Word of God and of the doctrines of grace. This ignorance prevails especially in certain districts of our land, namely, those which were under the deadening influence of Moderatism in the latter part of the eighteenth and the earlier part of the nineteenth century, in some of which there had been no general spiritual movement since the Reformation. Indeed, the state of Scotland in regard to Divine things, over a pretty large extent of her territory, was very lamentable, and two sins, viz., those of drunkenness and immorality, had given her a sorrowful prominence among Christian communities. The former, through the falling off of the rural population, the introduction of railways, and the consequent superseding and suppression of wayside inns and public-houses, is now chiefly confined to cities, towns, and large villages, while the latter is more prevalent—at least in some of its forms—in the strictly rural districts. To a certain extent its prevalence may be traced to the absence of proper house accommodation for our agricultural population, to the indiscriminate subsidising of the mothers of illegitimate children by the Poor Laws, to the draining away of the more enterprising and thoughtful portion of the youth into our large cities, and to distinctions of race. But there can be no doubt that its most inveterate root is simply irreligion, and it is remarkable that the divisions of the country in which this sin is most flagrant, and in one of which Mr. North began his evangelistic labours, are precisely those which had lain for a very long period under the sway and blight of Moderatism, which was just the Rationalism of a former age. It is noteworthy that this rationalism, which prided itself on confining its preaching to legalism and morality, ignoring faith, free grace, and the work of the Spirit, was not able to produce that virtue which it so extolled, and bent itself wholly to culti-

vate.

It shows us in a practical instance that the gospel of God's grace is the only way of holiness, as well as the only way of salvation. This grace of God, exhibited in all its fulness by this novel and powerful preacher; this gospel of God, containing the good news of a Divine Redeemer, all-necessary and almighty to save, and of a Divine Spirit, all-necessary and almighty to sanctify, burst upon many individuals, many families, and even many congregations, as an altogether new discovery.

His public ministry, like his private labours, was fruitful from the very first. A gentleman wrote to Mr. North, that his visit had produced a deep impression in his own household. "The two nurses, I am happy to see, continue to evince much earnestness, the other two maids are also evidently inquiring, and the men-servants have become greatly sobered down and subdued. On Sabbath, instead of their wonted frolicsome and light habits, they are now found reading the Bible and religious books. This in a 'bothy' is a step certainly in the right direction. We are making a very feeble effort to foster these sympathies by having a very interesting little prayer-meeting in our house."

From the very first Mr. North was made a means of quickening and reviving to the Lord's children, as well as of awakening to the lost, and was used as an instrument for bringing many into the full assurance of their interest in the Saviour. On the 18th December, 1856, a blacksmith in one of the towns he visited wrote to him: "I am desirous to express the sense of gratitude which I feel for what of the Lord's goodness I have experienced through your instrumentality. I trust it was a day of the Spirit's power to my soul. I have had such clear views of the glory and excellency and suitability of Christ Jesus to the sinner's case, and of my personal interest in Him as my own Saviour, that I have been enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and with the great Apostle of the Gentiles I have sometimes had a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. I have known more of what it is to have the full assurance of faith for the last four months than I ever did in all my past life. Surely a believing sense of the presence and favour of God enjoyed is heaven begun on earth; and although I have heard you preach in Forres, in Raiford, in Dyke, in Kintessae, in Boghole, in Nairn, and Auldearn, still I want to hear you again, and I know there are hundreds here equally anxious to hear you."

Of his first appearance as an evangelist in Huntly, where he had spent some of his godless years, as already referred to, the Rev. Mr. Williamson writes: "The first time he spoke at Huntly I well remember. The Duchess of Gordon had asked him to visit her, and he agreed to address my weekly meeting for prayer. The attendance was very large, from anxiety to see one who had been so notable in all the ways of folly in the neighbourhood in

other days. When he stood up, he was greatly moved, and said, 'My friends, you all know me; you know how I have lived in other days; but God . . .' Here he was so overcome that he had to sit down, and was overwhelmed with a flood of emotion. After a little he twice again tried to speak, and failed, and indeed was unable to address the meeting. Towards the close of the meeting he led in prayer, thanking God for His wonderful mercy to us all, and especially to himself."

When he first went to Aberdeen to preach after his conversion he was welcomed by the Rev. J. H. Wilson, a zealous minister, the founder of what was called "The Ragged Kirk," afterwards pastor of Albion Street Congregational Chapel, and now of London. As Mr. North's first addresses, though very earnest, were somewhat confused in style, at the request of a friend who heard him in this church, he agreed to write out his next address and keep its leading points before him in the form of an outline. In his opening remarks he seemed much distressed, though further on in his discourse he spoke with great freedom, and in reply to his friend's interrogation at the close of the service, as to how he had felt in preaching, he said, "Like a steamer going down the Thames, with no liberty until I got to the open sea; but then, lifting up my heart to God for special aid, I got along with real comfort. But these notes, brother, *these notes* I had to throw overboard, or I should have sunk under them."

He had had a similar experience in another town in the north about the same period. There, a minister who, seeing how Mr. North's labours were blessed, gave him the use of his church, and often listened to him with pleasure himself, remarked, "Oh, Mr. North, if you would only study more, you would do still more good." "What sort of study do you mean?" was the reply; "for I devote three hours every morning, before leaving my room, to reading the Bible and to meditation and prayer, and during the day I think of Divine truths as much as possible." "Oh," said the minister, "that is all well; but if you would arrange your addresses with more method, they would be more instructive." "Well, as you advise it so strongly, I will try what I can do before next Sunday." And accordingly, after this prudent manse-drilling, he did try much to put his next address into a more "connected form." Sunday arrived, and a great crowd of hearers assembled, so that every space for standing as well as sitting room was occupied; and after praise and prayer he commenced his address. For the first five minutes the ideas that he had arranged came out in nice order, when suddenly his chain of thought was broken, and all he had intended to say passed entirely from him, and a dead silence ensued. It was a trying moment, and most men would have found it overpowering. Not so Mr. North. He knew that his mission was not of man, and did not depend on the method in which his discourses were arranged, but on the power of the Holy Spirit. He therefore

frankly told the congregation of the advice he had received, of his endeavour to follow it, and its signal collapse, as the whole train of thought had passed away from his mind! “But,” he added, “there is one subject that has not passed away, and that is that many of you are sinners ready to perish, and I know the way whereby you may be saved, and it is the true way, because it is God’s way.” He then delivered a most powerful address as the Spirit gave him utterance, which was much blessed to several of those who heard him.¹ Probably his command of his subject and method of orderly arrangement of the topics increased rapidly with constant practice; for we cannot say that when he first visited Edinburgh in 1857 we observed any lack in these respects, although he did not formally announce divisions, but took naturally the points that successively presented themselves to his mind as being taught in the scripture he was expounding, confining himself usually to the leading topics, and hardly touching upon those that were subordinate.

On this visit to Aberdeen, a lady who had known him well in his thoughtless days went to hear him preach with much prejudice, and through his message was brought to the knowledge of the Lord. It was also on this visit that he was the means of the conversion of two students who afterwards became ministers of Christ, the Rev. James Collie, of York, and a fellow-student who is now labouring in the Cape Colony.

On this occasion also his words were made a means of blessing to a young lady whose life has since been devoted to advancing the Saviour’s kingdom in the foreign mission-field. Were sufficient space at our disposal, it would not be unprofitable to give her very full notes of Mr. North’s dealings with her and two of her young friends at this time. Of these we can only give an abstract. She had reason to believe that she had given herself to the Lord a few weeks before hearing Mr. North in Gilcomston Free Church, Aberdeen, in December 1856; but in her case the work was greatly deepened, while her friends J. and M. F. were then for the first time savingly awakened and led to Christ. She writes: “I was struck and startled with the faith of his first prayer. I thought, What is my religion worth? I can’t say ‘Father’ to God, as that man does. His text was Acts xvii 12, ‘Therefore many of them believed.’ There was much of the power of the Holy Spirit with him that evening; and as he went on it was all to me so tremendously real and present. I felt as if I had never believed before that the Son of God really came down and died for sinners. At the close he entreated us all most earnestly to speak to Jesus there and then. He cried, ‘O, speak to Him! if you can say nothing else, tell Him that you hate Him, but speak to Him as you are.’ I remember well hiding my face in the pew, and saying that to

¹ This incident is recorded in Mr. Grant’s Book, “Abounding in the Work of the Lord.”

Him in deepest grief, and begging Him to change me. Next Sabbath his text was Proverbs i. 20-33. In opening up the clause, 'Fools hate knowledge,' he brought together one after another of the Bible descriptions of fools, and applied each most impressively; *e.g.*, the atheistic fool of Psalm xiv., the rich fool of Luke xii 20, the self-confiding fool of Prov. xxviii. 26, and the backsliding fool of 2 Peter ii. 22. As he described the backslider, and said, 'You are only a fool after all, and now Christ is saying to you, "Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you,"' I broke down, and turned to Christ to beg to be received, and to ask His Spirit. The following evening my two friends and I went to his lodgings at the hour when he intimated he would be at home. He prayed with us first, then spoke pointedly to each, setting Christ before us from Rom. iii. 21-26, in His righteousness and death and power to save. He gave us Christ's invitations and promises, but we could not believe. I asked, 'Has one a right to believe that Christ loves one personally?' He answered quickly, 'If you don't believe that, you will go to hell,' and read to us 1 John iv. 16, 'We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.' He asked, 'Are you willing to forsake all for Christ? to give up the world, its pleasures, companionships, etc.,' and rapidly grouping up a list of trials for Christ, he asked me in his own direct, forcible way, 'Could you bear that?' and I said, 'I think I could.' He answered, 'You remember Peter, he thought he could, and what did he do?' He put the same question to J. F. She did not answer at once, and he said, 'Remember, it is not to me that you say it, but as you must answer at the judgment-seat of Christ.' She answered 'Yes,' very solemnly, and Mr. North turned to her younger sister, M. F., with the same question. She answered 'Yes,' and he added, 'Remember the young ruler.' He said, 'Don't expect to be perfect Christians in five minutes: you must be babes first, and then grow, feeding daily on the Word.' He spoke with evident delight of some of the rich portions of the Word, and said, 'Is not that food?' He talked with us of pardon, and acceptance, and victory over sin, and the welcome at last, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' and bade us meet at least once a week to read and pray together, which we did for some years, till our paths in life separated. The servant came a second time to say that many more were waiting to be spoken with; and warning us not to lose our convictions, he bade us farewell, saying, 'God bless you, my dear sisters!' Next day I called again to see him, when, after further instruction and encouragement, he read Romans x. 1-4 with me, reading my own and my friends' names in place of 'every one' and 'they;' and prayed very earnestly for each of us."

After this the writer of the above sketch went through a period of deep spiritual darkness and conflict, which the Lord graciously dissipated in His own time. Her friends received full peace while conversing with Mr. North on his second visit to Aberdeen, a few months later. At that interview he

said, "The Lord has His own way of leading us all; but when He gives you comfort, don't be afraid to take it." "He spoke to us," she continues, "like a father, and bade us work for the Saviour, even when we felt unwilling, saying, 'When I first began to visit and speak for Christ, I did not like it. There were nasty smells in poor people's houses, and I hated to go. I thought, I can't make myself like it, but I can make myself do it, and as I went on I grew to like it, and now I am as happy as the day is long.' I met him again afterwards, more than once, and he always had some message that was a help to me. He never lost his warm interest in us; and after I had come abroad, he sent me a copy of each of his works as they were published, inscribed with select verses."

The effect which Brownlow North's appearance on the platform and pulpit produced in Scotland was altogether electric. The striking contrast of the work into which he now threw himself with all this wondrous energy to the pursuits of his youth and manhood was alone sufficient to attract notice. Added to this there was the intense earnestness of the man, the natural eloquence which he possessed, the originality of the mode in which he presented truths which had nothing of novelty in themselves, the response which his appeals elicited from ten thousands of hearts, and the hundreds of cases of awakening and conversion that took place under his ministry, which all combined to turn towards him the eye both of the Church and of the world. We cannot do better than transcribe to our pages descriptions of his preaching and labours given in the newspapers of the day, when the impression was freshly struck upon the hearts and minds of our countrymen.

In an account published in one of the Northern journals of the first sermon which he preached in Banff, the writer says: "I was prejudiced in the extreme against Mr. North, but I listened with astonishment and pleasure. So many in this locality must remember him leading so different a life, mingling among so opposite a class of associates, that it is strange for them to listen to him now, and believe that all is genuine and real. But we must remember God's ways are not as our ways, and the instruments He uses for the accomplishment of His designs are often the very opposite of those that men would have selected. He spoke as one just escaped from the sacked and burning city, with the roar of the flame and the yell of the dying still fresh in his ear, full of gratitude for his wonderful escape, yet still looking back amazed and fearful. We think it was Garrick who, on being asked how he and his friends kept the listeners in rapt attention, when the preacher with a subject so great, so vast, acted too often more as a soporific than anything else, replied, 'We speak as if our fictions were truth, they as if their truth were fiction.'"

Another journalist inserts a very discriminating article under the heading of "Great Preachers: Mr. Brownlow North." He classifies the great preach-

ers whom the Lord has from age to age raised up in His Church into three divisions. In the first he places Jeremy Taylor, Massillon, Hall, and Chalmers, men whose original and sublime conceptions fire the train of emotion, who are great thinkers and literary artists. In the second class he ranks those who primarily appeal to the reflective consciousness, and whose power resides in the originality and moral pertinence of the thoughts which they utter. As examples of this class, he cites John Howe and John Foster. In the third class he places those, the secret of whose power lies in the vividness of their spiritual realizations, and the intensity of their spiritual emotions. In them thought, affection, fancy, all live and play in the burning fervour of the spiritual life. The influence of the last class is the widest and most direct of all, because they address themselves to elements which are found in the universal heart of humanity. The audiences of the first two classes are to a certain extent select, that of the third embraces all men. He gives George Whitfield as the best known instance of this class of preachers, and says, "The black faces of the Kingswood colliers, furrowed with the tears of a pungent spiritual emotion, bore testimony to Whitfield's power at one extreme, and the pockets of Benjamin Franklin, emptied at his resistless appeal, bore testimony as striking at the other. Within the last few days large numbers of our citizens have had opportunity of hearing a preacher of the same order as Whitfield. All the distinctive elements of Whitfield's power, as we are led to infer them from the effects of his preaching, are found in Mr. Brownlow North. The prime characteristic of such men is a simple, direct, realizing, all-absorbent faith. They believe, and therefore speak. They live in as close relation to the spiritual world as the mass of men do to the sensible. Blind must be the eye that does not recognise the Divine hand in a man so transformed and inspired. In an age of prevailing pharisaism, spiritual stupor, and practical infidelity, we hail in his mission a fresh proof that God has not forsaken the earth. Our gratitude need not be the less, but the greater, that we recognise the adaptation of the human medium to the Divine power. The earthen vessel is not picked up at random that is charged with so precious a treasure, and let us feel assured that it is by no accident, and through no random craze of enthusiasm, that Brownlow North, whom hundreds amongst us knew but yesterday as at once the genius of sport, the charm of drawing-rooms, is now the great preacher of the cross of Jesus Christ, on whose lips thousands hang, and to hear whom more struggle in vain for admittance." It may be noted that he attracted and interested these multitudes without ever uttering a sentence intended or fitted to amuse them, or to distract their attention even for a moment from the absorbing theme of his message.

Brownlow North's personal appearance was one that was likely to imprint itself on the memory of all who ever heard him preach. Somewhat un-

der middle height, he was of portly form, deep-chested, broad-shouldered; his address was gentlemanly, and his bearing aristocratic. His manner in private as well as in public was marked by dignity and gravity. Though he dressed in dark clothes, generally in black, his attire was that of a country gentleman, and was not in any way ministerial or professional. He used an eyeglass in reading. His lower jaw was square and heavy, and his forehead, lighted up by the glancing eye, was well developed and thoughtful. He had a massive head covered with curling locks of very dark hair, afterwards tinged with grey; the cast of his countenance, which was well seen from the absence of any hair on his face, was also massive, and his features, though by no means handsome, were striking and impressive, and in his dark and sparkling eye there dwelt earnestness, penetration, and gentleness. The physiognomy is considered by good judges to bear the impress of the history and the character of the man; and while those who trusted to their powers of thus reading character could doubtless detect in his features and expression the stamp of an average lifetime spent in the fashionable world, and in the service of self and sin, they could hardly avoid also seeing clear traces of the great change which at the age of forty-five was wrought upon him, and of the Divine life and the new nature which, then implanted within him, maintained a life-long and successful conflict with the old. A minister, who had known him before his conversion, when he heard that he was a changed man, and had begun to preach to sinners, said to a friend, "Well, if he is to do any good, he will require a reformed face as well as a reformed life," and we are told by some who knew him previously that after his conversion the whole expression of his face became changed in a very striking degree.

The general cast of his countenance strikingly recalled the pictures of the great Luther, to whom in his energy, his faith, his boldness, his views of Divine truth, and even in the dogmatical cast of his mind, he bore a very marked resemblance.

One day the late Professor Duncan remarked to a friend, as he looked at a good photographic likeness of Brownlow North that was hanging in her drawing-room, "There is intellect in the brow, genius in the eye, and eloquence in the mouth."

His opening prayer always had a solemnising effect on the congregation, and though the language was unconventional, it had no lack of real reverence and holy awe, and was the expression often of Jacob-like wrestling with the great God for a blessing upon the souls of men.

His speech on first rising to address an audience was diffident and laboured, but gradually became more fluent, except towards the climax of his appeals, when words seemed sometimes wholly to fail him. His language was always simple, natural, scriptural, and was used for the sole purpose of

conveying his meaning in the clearest manner to his hearers, without any thought of either rules or flowers of rhetoric, although he was a natural orator, a gift which he probably inherited. He always threw his whole soul into the subject he was treating of, and was so evidently interested, impressed, and moved by it that he could not but communicate some of the impression on his own spirit to his hearers. Having read his text, or the passage he was about to lecture from, several times very slowly and solemnly, emphasizing almost every word, he entered at once into his subject, gaining the attention of his audience at the outset, and retaining it in an ever intensified degree to the close.

After his first essays, his sermons or addresses were all carefully studied and prepared, but were not written out—far less committed to memory. Some of his sermons were frequently delivered and seemed engraved upon his very soul. His thoughts were written on the margin of his Bible, or on blank pages of interleaving, while the heads and leading ideas of each lecture or address were jotted down on small slips of paper.

Of these pithy, thoughtful, and practical annotations, we may present the reader with a few specimens. Others will occasionally be found quoted in different portions of the volume.²

“The precise moment will come when you will have been five minutes in eternity.

“The devil has gained the whole world, and lost his own soul. Who would change places with him?

“Trying without praying, and praying without trying, both are a mockery. Let your motto be, Pray and try, pray and try.

“If a place is lukewarm, be sure the Christians in it are lukewarm. What do you do to prevent this lukewarmness? How much do you pray? how much do you labour? Lukewarm people make lukewarm ministers.

“‘Ye cannot serve God and mammon.’ It is not said ‘do not,’ but ‘cannot.’

“Those on the left hand are condemned for duties left undone and for negative religion.

“We speak of killing time: we expect a resurrection, but when will there be a resurrection of dead time?

“The smallest allowed sin is far more to be feared than the greatest evil that we would not.

“If you are not sure whether a thing is wrong or not, and do it, it is *wrong in you*.

² Two entire chapters of these are given in “The Records and Recollections “(xiv., xv.) under the titles, of “Winged Words “and “Longer Extracts.”

“As long as a man lets God alone, the devil will let him alone.

“Whatever God commands, He gives power to do.

“Next to losing your soul, fear losing your convictions.”

“A Christian is not afraid of death, but of sin; an unconverted man is not afraid of sin, but of death.

“The man who cast out devils, and followed not with the apostles, was the first dissenter, and the whole visible Church rose to forbid him! But Jesus said, ‘Forbid him not.’

“Ignorance in religion won’t save a man.

“God never says more than He means.

“There will be twenty knocks on visits of pleasure, even at a minister’s door, for one of an anxious inquirer.

“Christians doubt because they are walking dubiously.

“Get your doctrine from the Bible. Get your example from Christ. A day will not pass after you have closed with Christ’s promise, ere He will meet you with a counsel. Embrace both.

“Begin with sin pardoned and the law kept. What a beginning!

“No one can prevent your being saved but yourself. If you die the second death, you must be a suicide. God will say to you in the judgment, ‘Thou hast destroyed thyself.’

“Every man’s life is a prayer.

“Seek the wealthiest man in every city, and the holiest man in every city, and let their other circumstances be what they may, in every instance you will find that the holiest is the happiest.

“The sinner in Christ is his justification; Christ in the sinner is his sanctification. The two invariably go together.

“The whole question is not whether sin tempts or not, but whether it reigns or not.

“Are we speaking for Christ as we have opportunity? If not we are still in possession of a dumb devil.

“Godliness with contentment is great gain, but contentment without godliness is the greatest curse.

“If a man receives the Bible, he has to receive a great many things he can’t understand, as well as a great many he does not like.

“Let the question of eternity have a monopoly in you. It is an intensely personal question, but instead of making you selfish, it will expand your heart. He who has never felt for his own soul cannot feel for another’s.

“If Paul had not had the thorn in the flesh, we should not have had the blessed text, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’

“God has no power to save sinners but by Christ: Christ is His Power.”

The form of Mr. North’s discourses was objected to by some critics at

first as not being run in the conventional mould of the “sermon,” but it must be remembered that they professed to be “addresses”; and the very fact that this criticism was once and again publicly made proves, what was the case, that they were really “sermons” in everything but the form. And if they were not presented in the form of sermons, they were conceived and delivered in the form of the “lecture” or exposition, which has always held a leading place in the Scottish churches as one of the most popular and most useful forms of pulpit discourse. They were indeed much fuller of doctrine than the “lecture” or exposition usually is, and this was no doubt the reason why some persons would have expected to find them exhaustively arranged into “heads” and subdivisions. He chiefly addressed himself to the unconverted, whether openly godless or self-righteous, and to slumbering Christians; and so little did he beat about the bush in his exhortations, that a lady once remarked that “he spoke as if people never said their prayers or read their Bibles.”

The truths he expounded were usually the leading doctrines of Scripture. These he apprehended very vividly in his own mind, handled with a master’s force, and presented to the intellect, conscience, and will of his hearers in a way that was always striking, and often had the charm of originality as well as power. He quoted Scripture with great aptness and effect, appealing to its testimony in every argument and exhortation.

When preaching in Aberdeenshire Mr. North met Mr. Gordon Furlong, who, seeing how the Lord was blessing his message, induced him to come South; and the Rev. William Reid, then editor of the *British Messenger*, hearing him in Forfar, also urged him to extend the area of his labours, and gave a notice of his work in that periodical, which had the effect of drawing the attention of the general Christian community to this new evangelist.