

THE BATTLE AND BURDEN OF LIFE

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The Battle and Burden of Life by James Baldwin Brown

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JAMES BALDWIN BROWN

**THE BATTLE AND
BURDEN OF LIFE**

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THE
BATTLE AND BURDEN
OF LIFE.

BY

JAMES BALDWIN BROWN, B.A.,

AUTHOR OF "THE HOME LIFE," "FIRST PRINCIPLES OF ECCLESIASTICAL
TRUTH," "THE HIGHER LIFE," ETC., ETC.

"Quit you like men, be strong."



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P R E F A C E .

I SEND forth this little book, on the Battle and Burden of Life, in the hope that it may help some young soldiers to bear themselves bravely in the battle, and, believing, to win the victory of faith. My aim, as will be seen, has been directly practical. I have but glanced at some of the more momentous of the theological, moral, and social problems of our times. My object has been to stir and to stimulate, especially the young, whose battle is a hard one in these days in which we live. Some of the discourses have already appeared in the *Congregationalist*; I have added two, which give to the subject a kind of completeness; and I now send them out in this completed form, with the earnest exhortation to all young friends into whose hands the book may come, "Quit you like men, be strong;" "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

J. BALDWIN BROWN.

KENT VILLA, BRIXTON HILL,
Christmas, 1874.

I.

ARMED FOR ONSET.

“Put on the whole armour of God.”—EPH. vi. 11.

THERE was once a little knot of unknown, unlettered, and wholly undistinguished men and women, assembled in an upper chamber in Jerusalem (the number of the names together was about one hundred and twenty), and that was literally the whole visible apparatus of force which God had at His disposal for the reconquest and the restoration of the world. The Lord came to the world to be “a King;” to rescue the earth from the hand of the Evil One, who was wasting and destroying it, and to re-establish it in peace and blessedness under the righteous Divine reign. The work which He came to accomplish had been for ages the burden of prophetic vision; nay, it had been from eternity the great thought and purpose of the Father's heart. This purpose alone explains the groaning and the travail of the vast Creation— all created things are pregnant with a

hope, which the Lord by His Incarnation came to fulfil. The purpose of the past and the hope of the future, the destinies of God's eternal kingdom, were hanging on the fulfilment of the prophetic vision of the Saviour, which He saw through the cloud of the last agony: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." And God had there a few poor men and women who loved Him, who knew His power, who believed His word, and who had received His King; and by them, and absolutely by nothing earthly but them, He was prepared to commence and finally to accomplish the work.

How entirely He trusted them! Those few poor men and women were charged with the vital energy which was to regenerate mankind. There was no attempt to supplement their weak human strength by any of the forces of this world. By them, as He could strengthen and inspire them, the world was to be won to Christ. And how grandly they served Him; how nobly they responded to the trust! Before the last of that little band was called to his rest, the Gospel had been borne in triumph through the civilised world. They "put on the whole armour of God," and conquered. We live in days when the Church has a vast apparatus of wealth, influence, and

worldly force at her disposal. She is set visibly in the world's high places. The man who calls himself the vicar of Christ, and the successor of the leader of that little Apostolic band, claims the supremacy over all the kings of the earth. The priest who is at the head of the Established Christianity of England is honoured by the State as the first subject in the realm. The resources of the Christian Church in our day are enormous, her wealth extravagant. The worldly powers gladly place their influence and countenance at her disposal for the accomplishment of her spiritual work. And yet we are moaning over a careless, listless, thoughtless, unbelieving generation. "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" is the sad question still. One cannot but smile at the contrast when one thinks of what once grew out of one hundred and twenty poor men and women, who had nothing, absolutely nothing, but a faith in their hearts, a word on their lips, a light in their eyes, which seemed to speak to the world's sad, weary soul of God and heaven; which made men think that God at last had visited His people, and which kindled a great, deep joy in aching, longing hearts, wherever those messengers of a Gospel trod. And the world literally went down before them. Its