

**THE BRETHREN OF OUR LORD****Andrew Bonar:****'For neither did his brethren believe in him.'****John 7:5**

**WE** know the names of four of our Lord's brethren, James, Simon, Joses, Juda (Mark 6:3). There seems to have been a large family. The idea is held by some that these were only relatives, not brethren in the strict sense of the word. But the word used, and the connection show that the family relationship is meant to be implied. In this family Christ was brought up. He was the eldest. They cared very little for Him, and treated Him with very little respect. It is a startling statement, but I think we can trace this through all the days of Christ's ministry. When they said to Him (John 7:3), 'Depart hence, and go into Judaea,' they were taunting Him. What a burden of grief must have come to Christ from this quarter! No sympathy at home! Excepting Mary His mother (for Joseph seems to have died very early) He had none to sympathise with Him in His home. How well, therefore, can He feel for any who are similarly situated! Then, again, what prayers this must have drawn from Him. You who have unconverted friends at home, do you pray as Jesus did?

These brethren must have done great injury to Christ's cause. 'They know Him well at home, and they do not believe His claims!' What responsibility they took upon themselves, what awful guilt was theirs! If there be any one of a family wherein there are godly ones living for Christ, and you will not acknowledge them, we say to you, What guilt is yours!

But we have evidence which there seems no reason whatever to doubt, that after Christ's resurrection a change took place. The James mentioned in Acts 15:13, and the Jude who wrote the Epistle, were the brothers of our Lord. When the one hundred and twenty disciples were met in the upper room, see, yonder comes in Mary, the mother of our Lord, and who are these with her? James and Jude, Simon and Joses, for it is said, 'Mary, with His brethren.' It seems, therefore, that all Christ's brethren and sisters were changed after His resurrection. We point out this to members of a family where there are unsaved ones. The Lord has often kept the head of a family, or members of a family, praying, and the answer did not come till after their death. Seek so to live that your life will speak after you are gone. The Holy Ghost can turn the most unlikely hearts. These brethren stood out Christ's prayers, His miracles, His sermons, His words; all were in vain. One would have said, 'There is no hope of such men.' But there was; and two of them became most eminent saints. Some stand out long praying-for. What a start James and Jude took! 'Many that are first shall be last, and the last first.'

But do not let unsaved ones delay. It is not likely that you will be changed on your death-bed; if you are changed, it will be in your lifetime, that you may afterwards live for Christ.

Turn to Him now.