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Dr. Lorimer—An Appreciation

The company of those who have passed to their reward recently has received a notable accession in the death of Dr. George C. Lorimer. He was perhaps, all things considered, the foremost man in the leading rank of our own denomination. As preacher, author, orator, and leader of those who bring things to pass he had no superior and his going will cause a gap that will make its presence felt for many a day. It had been known for some time that the illness which came to him late last winter had sadly shaken him, but it was foolishly hoped that recuperation had begun and that he would soon be found again in his accustomed place. These hopes have been doomed to disappointment, for in the foreign land to which he had gone for rest and healing, the grim messenger suddenly came, and he was not, for God had taken him.

Born in Scotland, in 1838, at the time of his death, Dr. Lorimer was sixty-six years of age. Parentage had something, perhaps much, to do with his success, for out of the granite of Scotch character has been molded many a man who has stood foremost in the place where he has chosen to work. Coming to this country when he was seventeen, he expected to devote himself to the profession of an actor. That he would have made a success therein no one who appreciated his power of dramatic utterance in the pulpit and on the platform would for a moment doubt. But God had other work for him. His mission was not to amuse but to redeem. He was not to be the ministry of an idle hour, but one that should tell for eternity. He was converted at Louisville, Kentucky, and shortly after began to preach the word which had so changed his own life. He was pastor afterward at Louisville, Ky., Albany, N. Y., at Chicago at the First and the Immanuel churches, at Tremont Temple, Boston, twice, and at last at Madison Avenue church, New York City, where his career ended. Perhaps this last ought not to have been undertaken. Perhaps at his age it was too great a wrench to take him from soil in which he was so deeply rooted and transplant him to surroundings so wholly different. It was a magnificent hope though that lured him. It was his thought that in lower New York he might build up a second Tremont Temple that might centre about the Uplifted Christ and form a new source of light and warmth where so much of it is needed. It was not to be, however, and he had to leave the task he had so much at heart. That he was summoned to it was a splendid tribute to his virility and ever-enlarging powers; that he was compelled to leave it scarce begun may fashion an obligation other hands and hearts should assume.

Dr. Lorimer's power as a preacher and platform speaker was continuous and conspicuous from the start. He was massive in his conceptions and in the marshaling of his material. He needed a large field for the deploying of his rhetorical battalions and time in which to bring them to the desired end. No sermolettes for him! No mere accessory occupying a part of the scene would he be, simply an incident thrown out on the background of something else that might eclipse or rival him. He wanted the whole stage and he wanted it because he had thought and a vehicle of expression worthy of such monopolizing. He saw all truth focusing in Jesus Christ. He beheld in Him the solvent for life's problems and the healing for its woes. With a fervid imagination, with a wealth of verbal imagery, with a superb mastery of the art of expression and with a profound loyalty to the supremacy of divine revelation he set this forth. Nor did his message ever suffer from inadequate preparation. Latent power was not allowed to preclude work. The great truth to him was worthy of the best form. He brought the beaten oil to the pulpit and the platform. He laid all departments under contribution and made them enrich his themes. So it came about that people took him at his own estimate and they were ready to listen as long as he cared to

speak. We can think of no one now to just take his place, and for many a day it will be said, "If Lorimer were only here to develop this theme."

The characteristics marking his public addresses are to be found in his books. They give evidence of thorough study, of careful expression, of wide reading. He was quite voluminous as an author and had he done nothing else he would be remembered by what he has written. His mind dwelt on the social and religious problems of the day and in his published works he sought to grapple with them. He did it manfully and well. His "Argument for Christianity," his "Messages of Today to the Men of Tomorrow," his "Christianity and Social State," and his "Christianity and the Nineteenth Century" principal among what he did will live. Perhaps the best of these is the last, for it sums up in graphic form the progress and results of that which has been the greatest force in it since the world began. Perhaps had he kept to this line it would have been better. Not every successful preacher can be a novelist. He was not and his effort was a disappointment. That he has company in this did not remove the sting from the fact. Perhaps it would have been better had he not done so much. The bow incessantly bent must become less resilient. But his nature was strenuous, and its outcome could be no other. He lived his life and perhaps he would not have changed it if he could.

We have left little space to speak of him as a man. We ever found him delightful, genial, kindly, inspiring,—and the relations between him and this writer during the past ten years were very close. No one has he ever found to appreciate service rendered more fully or to express it so generously. He will not forget the close fellowship of many a conference and his life will be richer for their having been. It is but a slight tribute we have paid to Dr. Lorimer's memory, but among the many he will receive none more than it will have come from the heart.

The Suffering of Christ.

By Alexander Maclaren, D. D.

The suffering of Christ was threefold—the suffering of flesh and blood—the suffering of the body, every nerve of which became the avenue of pain; the suffering of the mind, in view of great problems; the suffering of the heart, pouring out love not responded to and left solitary and alone—the suffering which a man bears as part of the human family, which made the Master often sigh, and extorted tears at the grave of Lazarus.

Our Master had flesh and blood. He knows what flesh suffers when it is lacerated and torn; He knows what blood suffers when it runs hot or cold; He knows all the exigencies and conditions and sorrows and pangs of our human heart. All this is known to him, and he was perfected in knowing it, that he might be a perfect Priest and Savior, Friend and Sympathizer.

There was suffering that came to him from temptation. He did not know what it is to fail. We have known temptation by failure; He knew what it was by bearing and vanquishing it—as in the forty days of temptation and in the garden of Gethsemane.

There were also his sufferings as the mediator, when upon his heart he took the guilt of the world. We know something of that. We know how we feel when we are in contact with those tens of thousands who are pent up in miserable hovels, where prayer and decency are alike impossible. We know something of what it is to

bear the injustice and pain and wrong of the world; but not as he did, for he bore it as the Mediator, and, by bearing it, put away both the penalty and the blame.

And so today we behold him perfected through suffering; through suffering making his way into glory and standing there perfected, to become priest and Savior for us. We must not look at the cross alone, but at the throne to which it led. Angels are beneath his feet, and devils; all creation does him homage; all the worlds wait upon his will; but we are his brothers. He is the Son and we are sons. Our brother is on the throne, and we are being brought to stand by his side.

We, also, must be perfected—by the suffering of flesh and blood, by wrestling with temptation, by bearing in our measure the sorrows and sins of men, and filling up what is behind of the sufferings of Christ.

Do not tell us to evade suffering; do not hold us back with pity; do not spend tears upon us; do not tell us that we must stand aside and be darlings of fortune, only caressed by the soft air and kissed by sunbeams; let us go the way our Captain went before. There is no way to his crown but by the cross; no way of being perfected but by suffering.

Let us bear it as he bore it—willingly, with the sweat upon our brow, but with loyalty to the will of God in our heart. Let us suffer so. Then the darkness will vanish and the light come; then the cross will be behind us forever, and the crown beckoning us before; and, like our Lord, we shall be perfected through suffering.

Prayer Hymn.

By Chas. B. Botsford.

O come and live with me, dear Lord,
In condescending grace;
The furnishings are poor indeed,
Unworthy is the place

For such a royal Guest divine,
Our risen reigning King,
Whose triumphs as the Prince of Peace
The worlds celestial sing

Thou wilt rebuild the broken walls,
The temple reardon,
The darkened windows will replace
To greet the light of morn.

New day in brightness will begin,
The clouds will disappear;
The home renewed made clean and sweet,
Be brightened all the year.

To life with Thee I cannot reach,
O condescend to me,
For Thy companionship I pine,
My help must come from Thee.

O come and live with me, dear Lord,
Thy presence will be strength;
All that is best in me will then
Fruition find at length.

To think Thy thoughts and do Thy will
And breathe Thy spirit sweet,
I must have fellowship with Thee.
Thy daily presence meet.