

REV. ROBERT URE, D.D.

An Application, by F. M. C.

Few of this generation know what a great soul passed away, when, last Saturday, Robert Ure, sitting in his garden chair, without a struggle, gave up his great soul to his Maker and Father. His was in many ways the most beautiful soul that man ever came in contact with. A great man without knowing it and without the least attempt to make it known. His humility was simply charming. He was capable of great things, but sensitively averse to public notice. His mind was strong, clear, trained by thought, and acute with exercise; and when he chose to apply it, original to a degree. Well does the writer, who was for years his neighbor in Clinton, remember his singularly sane views of the Macdonell controversy, in Canada, and the Robertson-Smith controversy in Scotland and how the whole church has come round to his views today. A few still remember how he smoothed down the sharp edges of the voluntary controversy, at the time of the union of 1861. More than any other man in the church of that day, his letters and speeches, made that union possible and harmonious, by shrewd, sanctified common sense and his rare gift of reducing imaginary mountains of spent theological cinders into very little mole hills, of no practical significance at all.

Few know the extent and exactness of his learning. He was not so much a reader as a thinker. He never cared very much for books. He hated pen and paper. He loved to look with his own eyes into the heart of truth. He liked to think.

He was an erratic preacher. His health was often bad. He was careless of himself; took exercise in his early days out of all moderation, and more frequently none at all. Sometimes his sermons were far and away above the average. I have known him to spend six whole days on a sermon. Of course this sermon was incomprehensible on Sundays. He sometimes went into the pulpit with little or no preparation. Occasionally, on such occasions, he sometimes exceeded himself. But he did not like it. I have known him more than once to arrive at the manse, on a Saturday afternoon, and order me away to Goderich because he had no sermons for Sunday. But even his un-studied sermons were always a treat to my people.

He was simply the kindest and most tactful preacher I ever knew. He was so sane in dealing with all sorts of people. His generosity was sometimes even reckless. He could keep no money while anybody else needed it more than he did.

The children were his special companions and admirers. He loved them so he would spend hours playing with them in their homes, yards and play grounds. Often have I been called in as umpire, or arbitrator, in a game of ball between him and the children. He would then saunter away to the nearest confectionery, and soon returning treat them royally with a feast of candies. He used to say that he found more simplicity, sincerity and true Christianity among the children than among adults. I know one family of children that got so excited with joy when Dr. Ure came to the manse that they lost all self-control.

Others will speak of, and perhaps write about "the late" Dr. Ure, but this writer will not remember him as "the late" but as the living and feel that Heaven is richer and more attractive now that this much beloved lifelong friend and brother has gone thither.

Welland.

The Welsh town of Pwllheli wants to change its name to Porthely. The mayor of Pwllheli attended a public dinner in London, and was referred to in the newspapers as a foreigner. Worse still, summer visitors are shy of going to a town whose name they cannot pronounce.

MINISTERS AS BUSINESS.

From an editorial in the Christian Observer we extract the following.

"We heard a minister telling some experiences along this line recently. He was to meet a visiting minister at the office of a business man at a certain hour. The visiting minister was delayed a few minutes by an accident on the car line. This did not prevent the usual lecture about the promptness, etc., of 'business men' as contrasted with the carelessness of preachers. What the facts? That preacher will not be five minutes late at one of his hundred and four appointments to preach, or of the fifty-two prayer meetings during the year. This elder, who prides himself in his business superiority, will probably miss absolutely half of his duty obligations to attend the same services, and will be from five to ten minutes late at half the few he does attend.

"The same preacher was put to the necessity of making a special trip to a life insurance agent's office to attend to a correction of an error about a dividend on a policy, which error had been committed by the business men in the office. While waiting to have the mistake adjusted, he was entertained by the general agent of the company with some very kind remarks about the general lack of business ability on the part of ministers!

"When everything is taken into consideration we know of but one person who is superior to the average preacher of the gospel in making the fullest, wisest, most effective use of his income, and that person is the preacher's wife."

MORAL LESSONS MOST IMPORTANT.

Two years ago the National Educational Association adopted the following resolution:

"We urge public school authorities of the country, teachers and parents, to give strict attention to moral instruction in our schools as the true foundation of character and citizenship. Every consideration of good public policy and healthful social conditions point to the necessity of such instruction; the testimony of educational leaders justifies it, and an overwhelming public opinion demands it. We plead not for sectarian training of any kind, but for that moral instruction which must underlie true life and character."

From these statements we can easily conclude that a consensus of opinion would recommend the systematic teaching of morals in our schools. Our schools must not depend upon an incidental word here and there, or simply a moral lesson drawn from a literary selection. These are good and must not be neglected. But incidental instruction carried through the entire school life, adapted to the age and ability of the student, is an imperative need. It goes without saying that the Bible is the only book which is at the same time a source and inspiration for all such instruction. "By focusing the brightest rays from the Bible and from literature upon those topics which make for character, the moral lesson may be burned into the heart and conscience as in no other way."

The times are ripe for such instruction. May sentiment soon so crystallize that this crying need may be met!

The report of the English Quakers recently published shows that the entire membership is about 17,000. The largest congregation of Friends in England 50 years ago was that in Bristol, at whose morning service there was then an average attendance of 455. Today the largest First Day meeting in Great Britain scarcely reaches 200. For sterling and unobtrusive piety there is no denomination which surpasses the Quakers, and yet they are suffering from the general decline in membership.

Following the Custom of previous years there will be no issue of The Dominion Presbyterian for the next two weeks.

RELIGION IN AUSTRALIA.

In the Australian Commonwealth all the religious denominations are regarded as equal denominations should hold equal, so far as the Federal and State Governments are concerned. Western Australia being the last to abolish the system of State-aid to religion. The Anglican Church, which claims 1,497,579 members according to the census, has six archbishops and sixteen bishops, three vicars apostolic, and one abbot-nunius; the various cathedrals and leading churches being large, well built, handsome structures, equal in every respect to those found in Great Britain. The support afforded the Anglican Church has not been affected in the slightest by the withdrawal of State assistance, the number of its adherents having become increased between fifty and sixty per cent. during the last thirty years. The number of Anglican churches and buildings in which religious services are held is 3,412. The Roman Catholics are the second largest religious body in the Commonwealth, numbering 855,799, the increase during the last thirty years being much in the same ratio as that in the Anglican church. The Presbyterians number 426,105, and possess 1,957 preaching stations, exclusive of those in Queensland. The strength of the other denominations is as follows—Baptist, 92,670; Congregational, 73,501; Lutheran, 75,021; Unitarian, 2,829. The strength of the Salvation Army has been roughly estimated at 34,000 in 1904.

A CONFESSION THAT COSTS.

A missionary of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society tells of a native lady in India who was ordered by her father to repeat the Mohammedan confession of faith. She refused, although a hot iron was pressed upon her bare foot as a persuasive. "I cannot," she said. "You will not," thundered her angry father, and with that he heated the iron in the fire again. Pressing the hot iron upon the other foot, he triumphantly shouted, "Now you will!" The brave woman, white to the lips from pain, answered, "No, I cannot, for I am a Christian." A conclusive answer. But let us envy the sturdiness back of it.

Remember "To-morrow never comes." The wise persons work while it is day.

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; He shall not stand before mean men."

"Let none hear you idly saying,
"There is nothing I can do,"
While the souls of men are dying,
And the Master calls for you:

"Take the task he gives you gladly,
Let his work your pleasure be,
Answer quickly when he calleth,
"Here am I; send me, send me."

He who thinks he can live in any form of self-indulgence and in the end obtain the favor and peace of God, is a self-deceived man. The law holds good that "like produces like." If we want fruit that will satisfy us, we must sow the seed that will produce it. Men vainly hope that sin will not be punished, forgetting that "the wages of sin is death;" that is, it inflicts its own punishment. As with intemperance, licentiousness and kindred vices, so it is with every disobedience of God's law, whether in the realm of the natural, the physical or the spiritual. We find national warnings in history, and individual warnings in the lives of men about us; may we not by thoughtful search find personal warnings in our own experiences? Whether we do this or not, the word of God standeth sure. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." But, blessed be God, it is equally true that "he that soweth the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap eternal life."