

**Life of William Cochrane, D.D.\***

A handsome book of nearly three hundred pages bearing this title has just reached our table from the press of William Briggs, Toronto. Dr. R. N. Grant, to whom the family entrusted the preparation of this memorial volume, has performed his task with judgment and discretion. There is no undue adulation of the subject; no attempt at fine writing; and no unnecessary padding. As was expected the work is well done, and we venture to predict, will be more widely read than any other Canadian book issued from the press in 1899.

William Cochrane was no ordinary man. He put his hand to many things, and did everything well. He was pastor of a large congregation for thirty-six years. He was convener of the Home Mission Committee for more than a quarter of a century. He was one of the founders of the Brantford Ladies' College, and was president of the Board of Management for many years. Up to the day of his death Dr. Cochrane gave the college a great deal of his time, and much of its success, it is not too much to say, was due to his unceasing energy and zeal in its behalf. His lectures and platform addresses were always of a high order, and his contributions to the press during a third of a century or more contain not a little of the best work of this wonderfully active man. Dr. Cochrane was also the author of five or six volumes; carried on a voluminous correspondence; took an intelligent interest in public affairs; and was frequently called upon to open churches, preach anniversary sermons, and to act on judicial and other important committees. Added to all this he was for several years on the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Alliance, where he took his fair share of the work, and where his labors were greatly appreciated by his associates.

We present our readers with a few extracts from the "Life." About his school days we are told:

"William Cochrane went to school when he was four years of age. Quite likely he was older at four than most boys are. We have no information in regard to his school days; none is needed. He must have been a bright, breezy, pushing little fellow. Education has no resources by which a dull, stupid, heavy boy can be developed into a Dr. Cochrane. The primary schools of Paisley must have given much attention to fundamental work in those days, because at an early age young Cochrane wrote beautifully, handled figures dexterously and displayed no originality in spelling."

While manager of a book-store in Paisley young Cochrane determined to study for the ministry; and Prof. Clark Murray, of Montreal, tells how he entered Glasgow University and attended

\*Life of Rev. William Cochrane, D. D., for thirty-six years pastor of Zion Church, Brantford, and for twenty-six years Convener of the Home Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, by R. N. Grant, with Portraits and Illustrations. Toronto: William Briggs. Montreal: The William Drysdale Company.

classes there in the face of difficulties that would daunt most men:

"He was able to do this while still attending to his business in Paisley, in consequence of the early hour at which many of the classes at the university met. The Junior humanity, which he attended, met then, as did several other classes, at half past seven in the morning. He was thus able to be back at his post in Paisley before the business of the day had fairly begun in the shop. In those days there was only one train in the morning sufficiently early to take us to Glasgow in time to enable us to reach the university at half-past seven; and as it ran in connection with the steamers from Belfast and other ports arriving at Greenock, remember that it was often unreliable in stormy weather. This probably explains why young Cochrane sometimes preferred to walk the whole way—fully eight miles from his own home. But to realize his courageous and resolute perseverance it must be born in mind that, in the northerly and humid climate of Scotland, such a journey has for two or three months to be trod in complete darkness, and that during the remainder of the winter it is most frequently relieved only by a very grey dawn ushering in a cloudy if not a rainy day."

About this time Paisley was visited by Mr. Robert Brown, an old friend of the family, who on hearing of young Cochrane's desire to study for the ministry, offered to defray the expenses of a college course at Harvard and Princeton. After due consideration the offer was accepted, and on the 11th of January, 1854, he left Glasgow bound for New York. The narrative gives interesting glimpses of his college career, his graduation at Princeton, and subsequent settlement in the Scotch Church, Jersey City. Here Mr. Cochrane labored successfully until May, 1862, when he was inducted as pastor of Zion Church, Brantford, where he remained till the day of his death. Of the position of the congregation at that time Dr. Grant has this to say:

"Zion Church, Brantford, at the time Mr Cochrane first knew it, was not what, in Presbyterian parlance, is called a "desirable vacancy." According to the "retrospect" published in the last annual report of the congregation, written by the careful pen of Sheriff Watt the number of families in 1862 was about 150. The congregation was small, but the debt was large. . . . Zion congregation had a debt of about \$9,000, and the interest had to be met out of a revenue contributed by one hundred and fifty people, some of them financially weakened by the collapse of the "boom" . . . . Mr Cochrane must have known all about the financial condition of the congregation when he was called. He was a capital business man, and no doubt he examined the situation carefully. Nothing that he ever did showed his undoubted courage to greater advantage than it was shown when he took hold of this struggling little body of people, burdened with debt, deserted by their former pastor, and resolved to sink or swim with them."

Of his public appearances we are told:

"Whether he preached or lectured, or delivered a missionary address, or spoke at a social, he always stirred things up. Whatever else he was or was not, he was never dull. . . . Nature had made him a lively man—stupidity was quite beyond his reach. . . . His old lecture on the "Hero Martyrs of Scotland" stirred the blood, and stiffened the back, and moistened the eye of many a Presbyterian. No man with a drop of the "true blue" in his veins ever heard that lecture without feeling proud of his Church."

"The main secret of Dr. Cochrane's success as a minister was that he ardently loved his work. . . . He loved to preach, and he spared no pains in the

preparation of his sermons. . . . He was in the highest sense of the term an evangelical preacher. The texts he preached on during his whole life are in his diary, and they clearly show that the main object of his pulpit work was to bring sinners to Christ, and to edify, strengthen and comfort believers. . . . The old theology, as he heard it in Paisley, and was taught it in Princeton, he preached to the end of his days in Zion Church, and never with more emphasis and pathos than during the closing years of his ministry."

It would be easy to continue quoting extract after extract and all good reading. But go and buy the book. Having once commenced to read you'll not care to lay it down till the last page is reached.

**The Brownings and Dissent.**

The Church Quarterly Review, in dealing with the letters of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, finds a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence in the fact that the writers were both Dissenters. The reviewer admits that "both show a knowledge of and taste for the fine arts—music, painting, sculpture, as well as poetry. Above all, both take a high standard of morals and religion." After this not very remarkable admission, he proceeds to express the wish that both had taken as their guide in morals and religion the English Church, "which really would have been their natural home," if they had known it. He is touched by their religious earnestness, and exclaims, "Of such earnest souls may we not say, Cum tales sint utinam nostri essent?" (Since such they were, would that they had been of us!) The reviewer resembles the Scotchman who said of Shakespere, that "he was of six excellent pairs that he might weel a been a Scotchman." W. M. M.

**The Best Moment.**

What a moment is that in which a man for the first time hears and fully believes the Saviour's words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" Among all by whom it has been experienced, who has a tongue sufficiently eloquent to describe it to those to whom it is unknown? It is an exaltation, it is an abasement, and at the same time, in both, a blessedness with which no other state can compare. Ye full and self-satisfied souls, would that you but knew the full import of the word "grace"—grace without desert!

Never has so mighty a flood of inward strength caught and borne me along on its waves as in those hours when, kneeling in the silence of my closet, I felt the Saviour's hand upon my head; and, as the best recompense of my tears, heard Him say:

"From all thy sins I thee absolve,  
Look on me, and believe and rise, my son;  
Be of good cheer, gird up thy loins, and run."

Yes; though before I had only crept, in that hour I obtained strength to run. Grasping His hand, the beloved hand that blessed me, I vowed this vow in His presence:

"Yes, Saviour, both my hands I give  
To seal the promise I renew;  
I'll love Thee only while I live,  
And only live to serve Thee, too."

The Presbyterian Banner.