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DR. WILKES.

We give in this number of the *Messenger* the portrait of a man whose memory will always be cherished in Canada as one who during a long life helped to lay broad and deep the foundation of righteousness, truth and morality, on which only a truly prosperous community can be built up. The Rev. Henry Wilkes, D.D., who died on the 17th of November, wielded for fifty years an immense influence for good, not only in the city of Montreal where he was the pastor of one of the leading congregations, but throughout the whole of Canada which half or even quarter of a century ago was a much smaller and more easily reached country than it is now.

Henry Wilkes was born in 1805 in Birmingham, England. In 1820 the family of which he was the eldest son arrived in Ontario, then Upper Canada, and two years later he came to Montreal and became a clerk in the employ of Mr. John Torrance. Five years after, in 1827, he was admitted into the business as a partner. About the same time he became a member of the American Presbyterian Church, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Christmas. Like most of the men who have left their mark on the world for good, he was the son of an earnest Christian mother and his Christian aspirations could not be satisfied by a mere business life. Accordingly, in 1828, seeing the need which Canada had of a thoroughly educated ministry, and having, as he stated many years after in an anniversary sermon, the means of paying his way without dependence on any one, he went to Glasgow, Scotland, to study for the ministry under the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw. In 1833 he took the degree of M. A. and entered immediately on the pastorate of the Albany Street Independent Church in Edinburgh. His theology was thoroughly evangelical and during his years of student life he had had much practice in preaching. His work was blessed from the first, and finding in his church a membership of 140 he left it three years later with a membership of 240.

The young and earnest-hearted minister had accepted this charge on the explicit and recorded understanding that as soon as the British Congregational churches were prepared to take up Canada as a field for colonial missions his services would be at their command should they be desired. Accordingly, in 1836, he received a notification from London that if he would relinquish his Edinburgh charge and go out to Canada, acting as its agent, they would form the Colonial Mission of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. At the same time a call reached him from the small Congregational Church in Montreal and seeing in this conjunction of things a plain leading of Providence he took leave of his attached flock and sailed for New York, arriving with his family in Montreal in 1836.

In the sermon before quoted, preached in 1878, he says: "Though arriving in August I did not take charge here until the first Sunday in October, for I had to visit the leading points in Upper Canada and in the Townships of Lower Canada, as agent of the Colonial Mission. The design was to furnish that Society with general and local information by which they might be guided in selecting and sending out suitable ministers of Jesus Christ." The former pastor, the Rev. Mr. Miles, had left a membership of 48, and an average attendance of 100. Both grew steadily and the little building was often full in the evening,—even French-

"During all this period I was secretary to our Auxiliary Bible Society, and from 1839 an active promoter and officer of the French Canadian Missionary Society. It was my custom to make an annual visit to our newly planted churches in the Eastern Townships, and also north-west of the city. As I drove my own sleigh and went alone, I had some rough experience amid our severe winter storms. During several weeks of one summer I was engaged, at the instance of the Mission, in visiting the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, looking after our lonely churches there, and making arrange-

The Church meanwhile was growing steadily. While in St. Maurice street it was recognized as a power in the community and in 1846 it moved to the well known Zion church in Beaver Hall. There Dr. Wilkes preached with rare exceptions twice every Sunday until in 1870 he was called to the Principalship of the Congregational College. His preaching was distinguished by its sound doctrine and its thoroughly evangelical character. His texts were not chosen as a nail on which to hang his thoughts and theories, but he found in each of them a "Thus saith the Lord" which it was his duty and privilege to lay before his hearers.

If there was one part of the sermon thoroughly impressed upon the minds of old and young it was the passage of Scripture on which the discourse was founded, and in this was, doubtless, the secret of the continued success and popularity of a pastorate of thirty-five years. The Bible is practically inexhaustible and a man who preaches its truth need never be at a loss for new themes to interest his audience. His sermons were, as a general thing, specially intended in the morning to build up Christians and in the evening to bring in the unconverted, but he made it a rule never to preach without making the way of salvation through Christ so plain that a chance hearer, whose last sermon it might be, would be without excuse if he neglected the offer. Under this teaching, joined with loving pastoral care, a large number of young people were gathered into the church and the activity of young and old in evangelical and benevolent effort both inside and outside of the denomination became phenomenal. The influence exercised in this way by the pastor cannot be estimated, as those who passed through the church in Montreal are now scattered over the continent and the world, and very many have gone to heaven before him who owe their conversion to his efforts. Another secret of the success of the church was that every member, official or otherwise, was expected to do his part in the working of the Church. The Sunday School, the Wednesday evening prayer-meeting, the ladies' prayer-meeting, the young ladies' prayer-meeting, the young men's prayer-meeting and other associations were kept up vigorously, and frequently



THE LATE REV. HENRY WILKES, D.D.

Canadian young men coming "to improve their knowledge of the English language." Toward the close of the St. Maurice street period a determined attack was made on the fundamental Christian doctrines in this city, and Mr. Wilkes's replies were listened to by crowded audiences for nine Sunday evenings. "I am not," he says, "favorable to rushing at all times into controversy, for it often distracts the mind without any corresponding benefit. But there are occasions when it is our duty to stand for the defence of the Gospel, and I have ever thought that this was one of them."

ments for the occupancy of new fields." The Mercantile Library Association and the Mechanics' Institute having come into existence, lectures began to be desired; and Dr. Wilkes prepared and delivered free of any charge quite a number on commerce and on the elements of Mental and Moral Science. "These," it is said, "were delivered in public halls; and I remember one occasion when the Earl of Elgin and his suite were on the platform, and after my lecture on 'Freedom of Mind,' that nobleman, then Governor-General, delivered an eloquent address to the Association."

daily prayer-meetings at eight o'clock in the morning or in the evening were sustained for weeks together, bearing satisfactory witness to the vigorous spiritual life of the church. Dr. Wilkes was remarkable for his vigorous health and immense vitality. It is said that in his 35 years pastorate he was only kept from his pulpit two Sundays and then by being thrown from his horse. He walked a great deal and used to saw wood for exercise. For the last ten years of his life, however, he was unable to walk except on crutches, but his general health remained good and his activity because even more