

In Memoriam.

HON. A. F. RANDOLPH.

By Rev. J. H. MacDonald.

[Preached at the Baptist church, Fredericton, Sunday morning, May 18th, 1902.]

"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"—II Samuel 3:38.

For more than two years this announcement has not been unexpected, and many are they who have earnestly prayed that he, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, might retard the steps of the dread messenger. Very softly and with tenderness of approach did that messenger come at last Saturday night our friend, since departed, recited his golden text for the day as was his wont "Mine eyes shall see the King in his beauty." Committing himself to the care of him whom "having not seen he loved," he said a loving "good night" and retired to rest; but soon after the light of the new morning had dawned spent nature made the startling announcement to himself and friends that the hour of his departure was at hand. Three days later the death angel gently closed his eyes in final slumber. The prophecy of his last golden text was fulfilled and he passed into the beyond to see the King in his beauty and to awake in his likeness. When the news passed from lip to lip or flashed over the wires that Archibald Drummond Fitz Randolph had passed from mortal view there was none to doubt that a great man and a prince had that day fallen.

If it were required of me to give an appreciation in the fullest sense of that word to our dear departed brother, I would be obliged to decline that task. I have not the measuring-rod whereby to measure his power and worth. What manner of man he was, we can only vaguely discern, for our eyes are blinded with tears and analysis is overwhelmed with emotion. Nor is it expected of me to give an indiscriminating eulogy upon a character so lofty in all its aims and motives and a life so consecrated to God and to humanity. That would indeed be a congenial task, but he would be the first to remind me that this pulpit was erected for the exaltation of Christ and not for sounding the praises of even his most illustrious servants. But is it not possible in a measure, to do the one without the other? What is the servant except what his Lord has made him? He had powers, but they were the talents which the Master gave him in trust; he had noble ambitions but they were what heaven had inspired in him. He was elevated and ennobled by a holy passion which purified his heart and intensified his service, but that was a passion kindled at the altar of God. He was a prince among men, but that princely nature was imparted to him by personal contact with the Divine. If, therefore, we recognize the goodness and beauty of his life in this place where he was accustomed to worship, surely the honor is not given to the worker, but to him by whom the worker had been endowed, qualified and blessed. St. Paul as he returned to his old home, related the story of his Christian experience and said, "they glorified God in me." Thus it is ours to glorify God in him whom we all recognized as a great man and a princely. There is much, very much, about him and his work that we desire to cherish in loving remembrance. We recall what he was to ourselves personally, to this church, to this city, its social life, its commerce and its various institutions, the part he played in the development of this country. We take a retrospect and a multitude of remembrances come surging up, some soul-stirring in their tenderness, some inspiring in their lofty idealism and holy passion, some comforting by their tender sympathy. All these come thronging up, not by units but in battalions. We recall a multitude of those gracious memories which have left deep lines on all those who were privileged to know him and to enjoy his intimacy. We recall scenes of noble magnanimity, princely generosity, and unaffected charity. As this flood of recollection streams in upon us today we can but thank God for the man whom he gave to his church and to his world.

HE WAS GREAT IN GODLINESS.

I feel sure it must be the testimony of all who knew him at all intimately that they knew a man who more truly and habitually realized the Divine presence and who lived his life and performed his work more constantly and conscientiously under the Master's eye. He was a God-possessed man. He had nothing of that tendency all too prevalent which demands that God should justify his ways to man, but his desire was rather to be just before God; and the Saviour in a remarkable degree fulfilled his promise and "manifested Himself to him as he does not to the world." To him God was not an article of a creed but the most potent fact and factor of life. No man made less outward show of saintliness. Everything approaching cant was abhorrent to him in the highest degree. He talked with men on the ordinary topics of every day life and they marvelled at his keen business insight and the soundness of his judgment. They were struck with the shrewdness of his observations, the sweep of his knowledge and his insight into human nature. In the same tone of voice, without the assumption of superior sanctity, he discussed with them

the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. To him the spiritual was as real as the material. Think of the man leading his business partner to know Jesus Christ! Think of the partners in business for a period of thirty years, with all the strenuous experience which a modern enterprise entails, who with the light of eternity falling full upon their vision, could find not a word spoken during those years of varied prosperity and adversity which they would recall! Think of the man whose message one day to the same partner was a passage which at that time came to him with special comfort, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee!" Very truly might he have adopted the words of the Psalmist, "I have set the Lord before me, because he is at my right hand I will not be moved." He read God into the providences of life and into the events of the passing day. Upon the recovery from an attack of illness he invariably set himself to ascertain why it was that the Father had seen fit to prolong his life, rather than to inquire why he was afflicted, and he generally found the answer in some worthy cause or needy individual to whom he was sure to minister. In his presence men became conscious of God. He carried the atmosphere of heaven with him, and though he regarded himself as "less than the least of all saints" his presence was a foretaste of heaven. It was not given me to know him save in the days of his sickness, but I have never touched his life on one single occasion without being conscious of God. There was that about him which made one think of the Master. During his last illness that conscious sense of the Divine presence grew upon him so that he once remarked with characteristic humility, "If I had the choice of complete recovery which would enable me to return to the active duties of life and to my friends, much as I love my work and prize my friends, I would not return if it meant the loss of that sweet sense of the presence of God which I have experienced during my illness." He was great because godly, and well could he have said with the bard of Israel, did his modesty permit: "Thy gentleness has made me great."

HE WAS GREAT IN MANHOOD.

There was somehow wrought in him a great and generous love for his fellow men. He believed in God, he believed also in man. He knew men in their various struggles, their labors, and necessities. He knew them in all walks of life. He believed there was an angel in every man. He looked only for the good and never failed in discovering it. He saw in every man some lineament of his Maker and somehow he created in those who had lost self-respect a desire to lead a nobler life. If they could not be virtuous for virtue's sake, they sought, after touch with him, to be virtuous for his sake. Men who had failed others were so impressed with his genuine belief in them that they kept faith with him. He loved all men and spoke ill of none. Indeed, it might be said of him as it was said of Henry Drummond, "he was the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians." He had so incorporated the spirit of charity that he became the living embodiment of St. Paul's marvellous photograph. Thus he was a prince among men, and all who knew him crowned him as if by divine right. He had not in the city of his adoption a rival claimant for the first place. None asked, who is the greatest among you, for all recognized him as chief. He was *facile princeps*. He was an exception to the rule that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country. The highest gift at the disposal of his country might have been his had he shown the slightest desire to receive it. It was no wonder that he made hosts of friends, and no man prized his friendships more. He believed with Ruskin that "a man's life consisted not in the abundance of the things which he possesses, but in the abundance of the persons whom he loves and by whom he is loved." I am sure I speak within the bounds of moderation when I say that no man in private life in all Canada was richer in the number and nature of his friendships than was he.

HE WAS GREAT IN SERVICE.

"The greatest among you is he that serveth." Few men have served their generation better. In the various departments of commercial life, mercantile, lumbering and banking, he stood in the foremost rank. The daily press in their splendid tributes have so spoken of the part he played in the world of commerce and philanthropy that I need not further call attention to it; suffice it to say that his name will go down to posterity as one of the master-builders of this country. Let me speak of his service to the church of Christ. This church has been blessed by having enrolled in its membership many good and worthy men, but none more worthy than he. He served it with that energy which characterized all his enterprises and with unwavering devotion to Him who is the Great Head of the Church. The pastor always had in him his warmest friend and supporter, his brother deacons a most valued counsellor, and the poor and lowly an unflinching helper. He gave most liberally of his means to all its enterprises, and his contributions to missions and education and to the other schemes of the church were given with that princely generosity which characterized all his benevolences. More than that, he gave himself, his time, his love, his prayers. But his

contributions, like his religion, were not limited by denominational bounds. Every good work which commended itself to him, found in him a friend and helper, and the extent of his benefactions will never be known till that great day when the books are opened. For men took more joy in giving than he, and one of the last acts of his life was a deed of generous helpfulness. Sitting on his own verandah one day last autumn he quoted to me the lines of Archbishop Trench, which seem to express the philosophy of his life of service:

"Dig channels for the streams of love
That they may widely run,
For love has ample streams
To fill them every one;
But if at any time you fall
Such channels to provide,
The very fount of life itself
Will soon be parched and dried;
For you must share, if you would keep,
This good thing from above;
Falling to share you fall to have,
Such is the law of love."

While he was universally beloved for his work's sake, there is a sense in which his services have not been fully appreciated. This congregation bowed with a sense of common grief; the vast concourse of people who joined in the procession or stood along the line of its route—his remains were borne to their last resting place; the men who left the workshop, the mill, the factory, the office, the women who came from elegant homes and humble kitchens, the children and teachers who came from schools all seeking to pay their last tribute of respect, these all seem to negative this utterance. Surely no man could be more appreciated by his own townsmen! Yet we lived too near him to have a full and accurate conception of the man and of his service. In the view which contemporaries have of any great man the perspective is lacking. They see too closely to measure rightly. I do not know that the members of this church understand how precious a gift God bestowed upon them when he gave them Deacon Randolph, and I do not know that the people realize what a blessed life was introduced into Fredericton when he became a citizen of it. It is no disparagement to you to say that you hardly realize the full measure of his greatness. You have looked at the man and thought of his nobility, but you were too near to see what a stranger can perceive, namely, the spirit which he has imparted to those with whom he came in contact both in this church and in this city. His stamp is upon the church and will always remain upon it. There could be no harsh or discordant notes struck in the congregation with which he worshipped. To those who have been closely associated with him in business and social life he imparted much of his spirit. Like the alabaster box of precious ointment which Mary of Bethany broke at the Master's feet, the life which was gladly broken in unselfish service for God and his fellow men has filled this community with a gracious aroma that savors of himself. A gentleness, a kindness, a charity, like the leaven of the parable, is permeating the church and community in a way, which few of you perhaps realize; and it is only after the passing of many years that men can look back and see the full measure of the service of this one noble life.

HE WAS GREAT IN CHIVALRY.

If I were asked to describe him in a single phrase I would call him a Christian knight, *sans peur et sans reproche*, without fear and without reproach. He was the very soul of chivalry, fearless, unselfish, generous. It would be a small thing to say it was impossible to associate with him the idea of anything ignoble or unworthy of a Christian gentleman, even when tried by the highest standards. He was a man of immaculate purity, no stain was upon his escutcheon, no syllable of suspicion was ever whispered about his character. He walked in perfect and noble self-control. Though deferential to the judgment of others, he was firm as Gibraltar in his convictions and beliefs and nothing could swerve him from the path of duty.

There was within him a certain largeness which made itself felt everywhere. It was in his nature and found expression in his thought, in his bearing, in short, it was characteristic of the man; if men talked with him, although easy of approach, they felt they were in the presence of no ordinary man. He did not look at the various subjects that demanded his attention in any narrow way, but with the comprehensive and far-reaching view that characterizes the statesman. The church was not merely to him the local organization which he loved, it was larger than that, it was the Kingdom of God, and his fellowship was "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's." In considering a business proposition he looked upon it not only from his own view point, he saw it also from the other man's angle of vision. Other men's horizon might not reach beyond the bounds of their own province, his sympathies included the entire empire, indeed the entire world. Those who knew one side of his life only could hardly suppose that such feminine grace and tenderness were blended with such masculine strength. But this is more frequent in such