

## JOHN DOUGALL.

When our Lord Jesus spoke of the death of His people He always called it sleep, and we should think of it in the same way. It is not the end of life but merely the passing from one form of life to another. Certainly never did sleep come to tired eyes more gently and unconsciously than death came one morning lately to Mr. John Dougall, the founder of the *Northern Messenger*, the *Montreal Witness*, the *New York Witness*, and a number of other publications. Actively engaged in the duties of his profession, working for both Montreal and New York papers till within a few minutes of his death, he sat down to the breakfast table surrounded by a little circle of children and grandchildren, and in a minute or two his head drooped and he "was not, for God took him." Terribly sudden, does any one say? Not so. He had long been waiting for the call, earnestly hoping that he might die in harness, and not be laid aside from usefulness, for to his active mind the thought of doing nothing was most painful. His beloved wife, with three dear children, two grandchildren, and a host of friends and fellow-workers were already on the other side; his treasure was there, and his heart was there, and his Master was there, and at any moment he knew he might be with them in glory. Yet up to the last he earnestly desired to live and work for the good of others. He visited his daughter two days before he died, and after remarking that each of his grandchildren—of whom he leaves thirteen, was a source of great joy to him—he said with deep earnestness, "I tell you there is much to live for. I never felt more that there was something to live for, but," he added, "there are not wanting indications that the end is near." Every letter was answered, every good-bye said, for he never parted from his dear ones without the thought expressed or understood that he might not see them again in this world, and when the call came, without a pang he entered into the joy of his Lord. During his long life of seventy-eight years of intense activity he had hardly known what illness was, but the thought of death was one never long absent from his mind. This may have arisen from the fact that when a boy of fifteen he had seen his grandfather, a man of sixty-two years, and apparently in perfect health, come in from the garden where he had been working among his beloved flowers, sit down on the side of the bed and suddenly expire. His father, too, had passed away at the age of fifty, though not suddenly, and it therefore was not wonderful that when past middle life death should seem very near. His whole aim was to use to the utmost, while life lasted, every power and capacity which God had given him, for the benefit of his fellow-men, and even up to the last when the infirmities of age were creeping on him, he would often work fifteen hours a day.

John Dougall was born in Paisley, Scotland, in 1808, in the troublous times of war and revolution. His home was a long rambling stone house in a large garden, on the top of a hill. The Potter Hill garden, as it was called, was celebrated far and near for its choice flowers and fruits. Duncan Dougall, his grandfather, a muslin manufacturer, was passionately fond of flowers, and the banks of variegated hollies and rare roses, and the beds of the finest tulips which money could procure, accounted for the taste which descended in great strength to the grandchildren. The family consisted of the father, grandfather and grandmother, and the two boys, John and James, whose mother had died too young for even the elder boy

to retain any distinct memory of her. Here an active, happy childhood was passed. Each boy had a piece of work set daily for him in the garden, and when that was done almost unlimited freedom for reading and roaming. They, however, delighted to assist their grandmother in the work of the house, and in after years her simple cookery on the old-fashioned hearth was the standard of everything that was excellent in that line.

Paisley, a busy manufacturing town, was noted for the intelligence and earnestness with which the questions of the day were studied and discussed by young and old. Clubs even met in the street to advocate free trade, repeal of the corn laws, reform in parliament and other changes. Duncan Dougall took a prominent part in such discussions, and one can picture the grandsons standing listening with eager pride to his enthusiastic eloquence, even when his views did not accord with those of their quieter father. This father, John Dougall, a man remarkable for the kindness and courtesy which he showed to all, was known as the greatest reader in Paisley and a keen reformer in politics, and his tastes likewise descended to his sons. There was a good public library in Paisley, besides a large number of standard works in the home, so that with reviews and magazines the supply of reading was practically unlimited and vast stores of general information were laid up by the boys for future use. A boys' literary club for the reading of original essays and poems met weekly at the house, and of the six who formed it four afterwards became editors and one a poet of considerable fame. In an address given at a *Witness* Office festival in 1871 Mr. Dougall said, "Nurtured on such mental food I early aspired to be a writer myself, and an unfinished epic in imitation of Beattie's 'Minstrel' and a play entitled 'The Black Prince' in imitation, I need not say how distant, of Shakespeare, occupied my leisure time before my fourteenth year." At the age of fifteen he had to manage the manufacturing business during his father's illness. In 1826, at the age of eighteen, he came to Canada with a small consignment of the celebrated Paisley shawls and business prospering he was soon joined by his brother and became a comparatively wealthy young merchant. He was not, however, the kind of man to accumulate wealth, even apart from business reverses, as money had no charm for him, except for what could be accomplished by it, and a man whose leading passion was to set right whatever was wrong, and to elevate the race generally could never have taken pleasure in adding interest to principal and piling up money to leave behind him. Still as a young man he seems to have had some expensive tastes. One who knew him well says of this period:—"He had not yet reached the point where

'The individual withers, and the world is more and more,'

for he considered the finest pine-apple handkerchiefs none too good for daily use, while his spirited black riding horse, and his need of a valet seemed in after years accessories which would have been quite distasteful to one who had the needs of a world lying in sin so laid upon his heart, and had such an ardent admiration for the unselfishness of our Saviour, that he counted money only useful when it was laid out to bear 'interest,' as he said, in the cause of Christ. He often called attention to the fact that money given at once would go on doing good in increasing circles and that a small sum given now was better than a large one given years hence."

In connection with his business he travelled extensively through Upper and

Lower Canada, even spending a winter in the backwoods of Lanark, and thus became thoroughly familiar with the needs of the country, having a personal acquaintance with great numbers of its most prominent men. As early as 1828 he was interested in the temperance reform, and in 1832 he became an active member of the Montreal Temperance Society. In 1835 he started *The Canada Temperance Advocate*, which he edited himself, although a large and prosperous business might be supposed to occupy all his powers. The business supplied the means to run the paper, which was sent gratuitously to every minister of all denominations, and in 1871 Mr. Dougall said: "I often from time to time meet with people from various parts of the country who tell me they never tasted intoxicating drinks in their lives, because their fathers took the *Advocate*, and brought up their families on total abstinence principles." Not satisfied with this he held temperance meetings on the docks and in different parts of the city, trying specially to enlist the children, and one frequently hears the remark from gray-headed people: "I signed the pledge when I was a little boy at one of Mr. Dougall's meetings." As he travelled through the country on business he made arrangements beforehand for the holding of public temperance meetings, where he urged the importance of forming temperance societies, and no one can look at these facts without seeing that the proud position which Canada now holds in the temperance ranks she owes largely to his untiring enthusiasm. In 1840 he married the daughter of the late John Redpath, a man prominent in the Presbyterian church, and in every good word and work. Not willing to join any church which, in the language of the day, "fellowshipped rumsellers," he and his wife united with what was then a little struggling Congregational church which, however, under Dr. Wilkes soon grew into a power in the city, furnishing many workers for the great religious societies then recently formed. In 1846 the *Montreal Witness* was started as a weekly, and thus a long cherished ambition was fulfilled. "It was," said its founder on its 25th anniversary, "religious without being sectarian, and political irrespective of party. It advocated from the first the claims of evangelical religion—the temperance reformation—the Sabbath—human freedom and every other good cause, to the best of its ability, and with no uncertain sound. In this course it has continued for a quarter of a century, and in it with the help of God it will still persevere." This paper rapidly became a power in Canada, and its editor, still carrying on various lines of business for the support of his family, never ceased to invent new plans for extending its influence or adding to it other publications. In the course of time semi-weekly and tri-weekly papers were tried, and in 1860 a cheap religious daily paper was started in Montreal. Its success was such that the far-seeing eye of its founder saw the almost infinite possibilities of good which might arise from the establishment of similar papers in every great city, and from that time he never rested in his efforts to get other people to see the matter as he saw it. A gentleman of means, residing in the State of New York, came in 1871 to Montreal, and invited him to start a daily in New York, towards which enterprise he engaged to give a large sum, and this was the origin of the *New York Daily Witness*, (which after years of usefulness was at length dropped under the pressure of hard times), as well as of the *New York Weekly Witness* which now exercises a world-wide influence wherever people are interested in temperance work.

Of the sufferings and sacrifices through which such an end was attained, it is not our purpose to speak here. When God calls a man to a certain work, He gives to him and to his family strength to endure, but the fiery trials through which faith is perfected form a theme too sacred for discussion.

During the whole of his earlier and later work Mr. Dougall had the families of his subscribers prominently before his mind, and never sent out a paper without something in it to interest the children, many of whom felt toward him as a very dear friend. With special reference to their needs the *Northern Messenger* was started in 1865, at the lowest possible price, and it soon found its way to the outskirts of civilization in the new country, its circulation extending rapidly in all directions. It has passed through many phases of character, but has been always and everywhere welcomed by the children as their special friend. While working thus earnestly for the families of others, Mr. Dougall's own children were growing up around him. Of these there were nine, three boys and six girls, who worked and played in a lovely garden, on the side of beautiful Mount Royal, the gift of Mr. Redpath to his eldest daughter. Their interests were first with their father, who himself instructed them thoroughly in the Bible in a manner very rare in these modern days. Old Testament history was more familiar to the children than any well-counsed school book, and the language of the Psalms, both in prose and verse, became to them the natural expression of the needs of their souls, and of their confidence in God. Both father and mother had firm faith in the promises of a covenant keeping God, who had said "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee," and trained as they were in faith and obedience, it was not wonderful that all the children early yielded themselves to the Master so devotedly loved by their parents. At meal times the father talked over the news of the day with the young people in such a manner, that all grew up with world-wide sympathies and interests. One of them says:

"I never knew anyone with such an intense interest in whatever was occurring in the world's history. At the time of the Crimean war, though news in those days arrived but once a week, the family was kept wrought up to such an intense pitch of excitement, that the successes and defeats of the war, the miserable mismanagement in the hospitals, and the grateful relief brought by Miss Nightingale are to-day much more vivid to me than the events of the last ten years. At the time of the Indian mutiny the suspense and distress were even greater, but nothing equalled the excitement of the American civil war. My father had always championed the cause of the oppressed. The sufferings of the slave were a burden on his soul, and I shall never forget the time when the news came that John Brown had been thrown into prison and was to be hanged in three days. Had the grand old man been my father's son he could hardly have pleaded for him more earnestly at family worship, and it may be imagined with what feelings the vicissitudes of the war which was to free the slave were followed in that home, and how prayers and tears were mingled at the family altar when there seemed reason to doubt the early triumph of righteous principles."

The first break in the family occurred in 1858 in the death of a little boy, named Arthur, nearly four years old. The deep sorrow of the time left a lasting impression on the character of the family. The next loss was the death of a three months' babe in 1861, and afterwards in