

THE LATE REV. JAMES ROSS, D.D.

On the 15th of March Dr. Ross passed to his rest. He was found in a kneeling position in his bed chamber, on the evening of March 8th, stricken with paralysis, as if, in the act of prayer before retiring to rest, the stroke had come. He lingered for a few days, growing weaker and weaker until the end.

He has been so intimately connected with the efforts of our church to provide for the education of a native ministry, that his life can scarcely be reviewed, without taking into account, that, in which he bore for many years a prominent part, and with a brief sketch of his work, may be noted the progress of the Church in that work.

He was the son of Rev. Duncan Ross, who came to Pictou in 1795, and who was many years pastor of the congregation, comprising all the country about West and Middle Rivers, and Roger's Hill. He received his classical education at Pictou Academy, then under the charge of Dr. Thomas McCulloch, father of Dr. McCulloch of Truro, and pursued his studies in Theology under the same instructor, for Dr. McCulloch was, apart from his Academic work, the Synod's teacher of Theology; and several of our earlier native ministers, Dr. Ross among the number, were thus taught and trained. After completing his Academic course, and while pursuing his Theological studies, he taught the High School in Sackville, N. B. After his father's death, October 25, 1834, he was chosen by the congregation as his successor, and on Nov. 3, 1835, was ordained at West River, and inducted into the pastoral charge of the congregation, at a salary of £150, N. S. Currency, (\$600) "one half to be paid in cash and the other in produce." This was some time after increased to \$700, and was, with one exception, considerably larger than the salary paid by any other pastoral charge within the bounds of the Synod.

The congregation was at that time about the largest in the church. It was the largest in numbers, embracing over three hundred families, and with one, or perhaps two exceptions, the widest in territorial area. But he entered upon his labors with great energy and zeal, and for several years discharged the whole duties of the ministry throughout its wide extent.

His preaching at this time is universally reported as having been of rare excellence. There are still those who can remember sermons preached by him which in intellectual power, they will say they have never heard surpassed any where. His discourses were always characterized by clear statement of the truth, logical arrangement, and forcible expression, and often set off by rich scriptural illustrations. They were indeed largely doctrinal, but they were also practical and sometimes deeply experimental. His voice though not of great compass, was strong and sometimes touching in its tone, so that every where he went his preaching was greatly relished by intelligent Christians, and indeed was often regarded as a rich intellectual feast. In the discharge of private pastoral duty, he was also for some time energetic and faithful. And his labors were not without fruit. Souls were added to the Lord, and Christians increased in knowledge, and in fruitfulness in good works. It was rare to find a body of people, of the same number, among whom could be found as much Christian intelligence and piety. The congregation which, under his father, had been universally acknowledged as among the best in the body, and indeed sometimes claimed to be the best, retained or increased its reputation for liberality and zeal on behalf of all church work.

While thus laboring he was struck down with severe illness, and for a time there was anxiety for his life. But through the blessing of God he was restored, apparently, to his former health. On the first Sabbath after, on which he was able to occupy his pulpit, he preached from Hezekiah's sickness and restoration, to a deeply solemnized audience. But it was the will of God that he should give three times fifteen years service to the church on earth.

He had not been many years a pastor till circumstances tended to draw him from congregational labor. From his ordination he had shown a deep interest in the public work of the church; being soon after elected Synod Clerk, and taking an active part in all its business. He conducted, in 1842-3, during its short life of fifteen months, *The Presbyterian Banner*, a paper published under the auspices and by the direction, of Synod. In particular, he had been chosen as a trustee of the Pictou Academy under its old constitution,