

## THE LATE DONALD FRASER, D.D.

Presbyterianism has sustained a great loss in the death of Dr. Donald Fraser. For over twenty years he has been a prominent figure in the world's metropolis. He was by birth and education a Highlander, being born at Inverness in 1826, where his father was sheriff. After graduating in the University of Aberdeen he came to live for a while with relatives in Canada, but soon returned to Aberdeen to complete his Divinity studies. His first charge was Cote street church, Montreal, where he is still personally remembered by a large circle of friends. After eight years in Montreal he accepted a call to his old home in Inverness, and in 1870 he undertook the pastoral charge of the great congregation at Marylebone, where he remained until his sudden death from pneumonia on the 15th of February last. On his coming to London the University of Aberdeen conferred on him the rare distinction of an honorary D.D. During his twenty-two years of ministry in London, the present magnificent church was built, and the communicants' roll has rarely been under eight hundred. Dr. Fraser is the last but one of the male side of his family. His brother, Colonel D. Torrance Fraser, is well-known in Montreal, especially in connection with Sabbath-school work. The following sketch of Dr. Fraser, taken from the *British Weekly*, will be read with interest.

While in his first charge in Montreal he began to publish a volume of his pastoral papers showing much of the bright and racy wisdom for which he became well known. His fame travelled, and he was called to the pastorate of the Free High Church, Inverness—a position of influence and importance. It was the leading church in the Highlands where English alone was preached, and represented a more liberal spirit than that which prevailed around it. The regular audience was reinforced by the large number of visitors who stream through Inverness in summer. Dr. Fraser preached to an audience always crowded, and during some months of the year very varied. There was then no Cathedral in Inverness, and the controversies which have broken the peace of the Scottish Highlands were just beginning. Dr. Fraser took his place as the "star" minister of the town, though he was never to be compared for a moment, either in oratorical power or intellectual strength, to Dr. Kennedy, of Dingwall—perhaps the greatest preacher who has ever risen among the Celtic race. But Dr. Fraser was much more a man of the world, less exacting, less austere, easier to understand, and much more easy to satisfy. He was showier, too, but never could use even the English language as Kennedy used it. His popularity steadily increased; his church was enlarged; and he was named for many vacancies in leading pulpits. If we mistake not, he was called as successor to Dr. Guthrie in Edinburgh and Dr. Kirkpatrick in Dublin. Yet he never stood on the highest ground as long as he was in Scotland. In church courts he had little influence, and the very commendable attention he showed to the proprieties provoked more amusement than admiration. In short, he was looked upon by many as a popular preacher, and nothing more—a character that does not go far in Scotland. He proved afterwards that his capacity was very much underrated.

All the eleven years he spent in Inverness the conviction that London was his proper sphere deepened in his mind, and when he was called to succeed Dr. Chalmers in the Marylebone Presbyterian church he accepted. It is the barest justice to say that the succeeding years have shown that he and the congregation were alike wisely guided. In London Dr. Fraser's gift of graceful oratory found full scope; and when at his best he was not surpassed as a platform speaker by any man of his time. His preaching swiftly attracted attention, and his church became crowded. In the end the fine building now occupied by the congregation, and with seats for 1,800 people, was built for him, and he ministered there to nearly the largest congregation of his denomination to the very last.

In English Presbyterianism he immediately became a prominent figure. It was remarkable that a man who could hardly secure the barest footing beside the Free Church leaders succeeded almost at once in becoming the head of the Presbyterian

church in England—a body certainly not destitute of able men. But this position was accorded to Dr. Fraser beyond dispute, and he showed himself an excellent man of business—clear, prompt, accurate, and courteous. His picturesque figure, crowned with silver hair, his musical and ready speech, commanded the attention of all. He willingly took upon himself great burdens of labor—opened new churches, managed the College Committee, and took a chief share in preparing a new directory of public worship. He had a distinct conception of what the Presbyterian church in England should be, and worked very hard to realize it. In his view it was not a Dissenting body, and ought not to reckon itself with such. It should, on the contrary, lay stress on the fact that in Scotland Presbyterianism is established, and is the religion of the Queen. It ought rather to learn from Episcopacy than from Dissent, and this especially in the matter of worship. It ought not to take a political side and specially it should not assume any aggressive attitude to Established churches. The calculation was shrewd. A body of that

his last public speeches was devoted to spurring on Lord Hartington (as he was then) to greater exertions in the cause of the Union. It is certain that his visits to Scotland greatly chilled the feeling of the Scotch Presbyterians outside the state connexion to their English brethren; equally certain that it has turned away the enthusiasm of many Scotchmen in England who think, rightly or wrongly, that the true representatives of the Free and United Presbyterian churches in Scotland are to be found in England in the ancient Dissenting churches. For ourselves, we believe a clear distinction should be drawn between a church and a rat-trap, and that the English Presbyterians are essentially liberal and democratic. Time will soon show.

Dr. Fraser's preaching was at times admirable—nobly eloquent and evangelical to the core. His books do not represent his real power; he mercilessly excised from them everything in the nature of "eloquence." But his volumes on the Bible, published by Messrs Nisbet, are sound and useful, and have had a well-deserved popularity. Like others, Dr. Fraser was great



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kind, with churches planted in good suburbs of large towns, was sure to draw many Scotch families, and also many more or less dissatisfied with the Church of England, who yet could not bring themselves to eat the spiritual bread of Dissent. It was also likely to be a half-way house for discontented Nonconformists. Of all these classes Dr. Fraser believed there would be more and more in times to come, and that the Presbyterian church would be a haven for them. Accordingly he took a vehement part in opposing disestablishment in Scotland, visiting the North for that purpose, and occupying pulpits in the church of Scotland—lamenting also on establishment platforms the folly and the weakness of the present Free Church leaders. Some imputed very mean motives to him for this, but, as we believe, without a grain of justice. He was no doubt at times sufficiently provoking, but he felt strongly. An aristocrat to the finger-tips, he hated the stigma of Dissent and everything that savored of the new democracy was loathsome to him. Whether Dr. Fraser's policy for the English Presbyterians will prevail or not, it is too soon to say. If neutrality in politics were possible it might, but it is not. One of

on the subject of editing, and in a rash hour undertook to show practically how it ought to be done. For some time he issued weekly the *Outlook*, but it did not attain, and we cannot say in conscience that it deserved, success. Dr. Fraser took this failure to heart, and went to the Mediterranean for three months.

His theological position it is very hard to define. He had many hands—each grasping something. One took hold of Mr. Spurgeon; one of the Midway Conference; one of the Higher Critics, and so on. His last published works contain a distinct disclaimer of rigid views on inspiration; and he was independent in some disputed matters of practice. Notwithstanding, he continued to the end a friend of Mr. Spurgeon and a "supply" at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The best side of him was seen in his Mission work, of which the late Professor Elmslie used to speak with great admiration. To this he devoted himself quietly, but with untiring devotion and a simple heart. There the deep religious character of the man appeared, and it was plain beyond doubt that in his inmost nature he was a profound and loyal believer, and a faithful minister of Jesus Christ.

## A MOTHER'S POWER.

Mr. Moody says that when he was in Oxford, and when the young men gathered night after night in a spirit of carelessness, it seemed as though he would not be able to touch their hearts or lead any of them to Christ. He noticed in the congregation several women who were associated with some of the undergraduates in the university, and he announced that the next day there would be a prayer-meeting for the mothers of young men in the university. Fifty of them came and spent the afternoon in prayer, and that night many young men were pressing into the kingdom of God.

There was a mother who had a son grown to manhood, living in the outskirts of the village of Somerville in New Jersey, and this young man had commenced to lead a dissolute life; and one night his mother pleaded with him that he would not go out and spend the evening away from her, but he insisted upon it. He said, "Mother, I'm not going to be tied to your apron-strings, I am going to go;" and she said, "Please try and remember every moment to-night that until you come back I am going to be on my knees asking God to save you;" and the young man with a rude gesture and with a muttered oath sprang away from his mother, and he went out and spent the night in an indecent carousal. At four o'clock in the morning he came home. He hadn't thought of his mother in all of those hours. He saw a light shining out from between the blinds; and he turned the shutters and looked in, and there was his old mother down on her knees, saying, "God save my wandering boy." He went up to his room; he lay down upon his couch, but he could not sleep. He finally knelt down and as he knelt there it seemed to him as if the Redeemer's power came from that other room where the praying mother knelt before God, until he cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" God saved him that morning. The word went out into the houses round about of his salvation, and in three weeks from that time there were between two and three hundred of the young people of that vicinity that stood up there in the church and confessed that they accepted Christ as their Saviour. This son that was led to Christ by that prayer of his mother was the father of Dr. Talmage of Brooklyn and the father of Dr. Talmage of China.—*Rev. B. Fay Mills.*

## THE WORK OF OUR SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

The side of the question which does sometimes cause us serious anxiety, is the relation of Sunday schools to the fatherhood and motherhood of the future. It is not yet fully realized that culturing for the parenthood of the future is the work of our Sunday Schools; at least the culture of the higher moral and religious fatherhood and motherhood is. Again and again is it necessary to plead with our teachers, that they have to work for "the life that now is," as well as for "that which is to come." What duties call for the energies of parents? What difficulties perplex parents? What scenes try the patience of parents? What moral forces are at the command of parents? There is a science of home life and relations which we, Sunday school teachers, should be skilled to teach.—*Sunday School Chronicle.*

## SEE THINGS.

In one of his essays on self-culture, Professor John Stuart Blackie gives the following admirable advice concerning books and reading:

As there are persons who seem to walk through life with their eyes open, seeing nothing, so there are others who read through books, and perhaps even cram themselves with facts, without carrying away any living pictures or significant story which might arouse the fancy in an hour of leisure, or gird them with endurance in a moment of difficulty. Ask yourself, therefore, always, when you have read a chapter of any notable book, not what you saw printed on a gray page, but what you see pictured in the glowing gallery of your imagination. Have your fancy always vivid and full of body and color. Count yourself not to know a fact when you know that it took place, but then only when you see it as it did take place.