

SHORT HAND NOTES OF FUNERAL SERMON.

BY THE REV. C. HOFFAT, WALKERTON.

Abraham "the Friend of God," passed away, but what a glorious memory, what a noble example is left behind. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

And as every age sweeps past, what an honoured array of venerable patriarchs from pew and from pulpit passes before us. Their years may have been spent in the largest sphere of life or in the quietness of some lowly circle, yet 'tis life for God, potent for eternal good. And still the veterans of the old guard pass from us, one by one. Ripe in holiest experience, chastened by fierce temptation, magnifying abounding mercy, waiting in assured hope, they pass beyond. But "their works do follow them," the solemnity of the patriarch priest at a family altar, the earnest words of fatherly counsel, the many years of godly example, these cannot be soon forgotten. No, they are woven into the very soul of being, they remain sacred memories forever. In our midst, another Abraham (Abraham Rowand, Sr., has walked with reverent foot steps, and finished a Christian life that will not easily be forgotten. To-day, we would with a warm heart, briefly review twenty-one years of life, the last of his four score and eight, he spent among us.

Whatever may be the size of the cairn, we will lay one stone upon it, in memory of one of the noblest men of God we have ever known in Canada.

I.—HE WAS A MAN FULL OF GOD'S BIBLE.

No man can ever become a great Christian, unless he has drunk deeply at the fountain head. Whatever our culture may be, whether toned by the classic past, or by the scientific present, yet what is it worth for holy living or holy dying, unless filled with the very essence of the Book of God. Few men knew more of its power for a vigorous Christian life. And few knew more of its comfort for bereavement and old age. But this knowledge did not make him a narrow-minded bigot.

No, but we ever found him in his years of mental prime, thoroughly abreast of all the great questions of the day, whether political or religious. But as the years rolled on, and the eternal verities of life drew nearer, then the day came when he told us that he had done with them all. "There is just one book for me now," he more than once has said, and when even the palsied hand could hold it no longer, yet the very many golden texts he had stored in his memory were fresh to the very last, "rejoicing the heart." How different an aged Christian full of the sweetest promises, from a starving worldling, vainly trying to grasp the world fled forever.

II.—HE WAS A MAN OF FERVENT PRAYER.

'Tis no small boon to hear a venerable patriarch's prayers. With him prayer was a great reality. Whatever he may have been to others, to me he was always a man of very great power in prayer. There was an unction that came from the heart, telling of the soul that was oft in the audience of the King.

Fathers, are you priests for God in your own households, and does your every child feel, if ever there is a man of prayer, my father is that man? Often, have earnest Christian wives come to me, and told me with tearful eye, "Oh, if my husband would only begin family worship." Is there one such man here to-day? then away with all fear, all false pride. Your sentences may be broken, the grammar may be faulty, but to every Christian mother, worthy of the name, it will be heaven begun. I have stood by many a death-bed, but I never heard from human tongue the regret I have prayed too much. Fathers, to-day I plead with you, be men of Christ-like life, be men fervent in prayer.

III.—HE WAS A MAN SIGNALLY USEFUL IN CHRIST'S CHURCH.

I never heard him pleading to be excused from giving, because he had liberally given for the same work in another church. And yet in Bay street, Toronto, in Chinguacousy, in Free St. John's, Walkerton, he was neither last nor least. His was no selfish religion; nay, it was intensely practical.

Many a word spoken in season, many a kindly deed quietly done, tells of his sterling worth. In each of these three churches, he was ever foremost in far-seeing plans and active Christian work. 'Tis not in the length of the communion roll, but in the vigor of consecrated hearts, that we find the secret of successful churches. And when old age laid him aside from

active life, we ever felt that we had his fervent prayer and warmest sympathy in every work done for the Master.

Such was the man of whom our late much-loved friend, Dr. Jennings, told us, that when he left his church in Toronto, "He sat down in his study and had a good hearty cry." Yes, men of God are sorely missed.

IV.—HE WAS A MAN OF GREAT LIBERALITY.

No one ever knew how much he gave. Though I know that for years his giving was the largest amongst us, yet I never knew all.

To him giving was a pleasure, but one that no one ever heard him speak about. Alas! it is a pitiable form of religion which spends its strength telling others, "how much I have given to the church." The liberal soul deviseth liberal things, yea, and carries them out. Our second church had never been built when it was but for him. And his was the first gift, to lay the foundations of our present noble building.

More than once in the days of your past weakness, interest on loans, justly his, was generously given back. He never entered the house of God without a generous collection, and when he had it not, we know that he often borrowed it. For many years he paid for, and gave me, the first reading of Spurgeon's Sermons, which at his leisure, he read again and again with the greatest zest. Truly of him it could be well said, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age."

V.—HE WAS A MAN OF GREAT SPIRITUAL HUMILITY.

You may not be able to tell where the fountain-head of some well-known river may be found, but if you see it for twenty-one years steadily flowing, you never dream of doubting its existence. It is full to the brim to-day, it is in wonted volume by-and-by; so is it, in every Christian life.

The measure of the soul's rise is the measure of the soul's fall. 'Twas thus with him. We have often cheered him in deepest darkness; we have often rejoiced with him; when his joy seemed as fresh as if he had newly passed from darkness into the glorious light. But who more humble, and who more respected in this church? I know of none. Never shall we forget an incident of our early ministry, and the way he treated it.

Being away the most of the week on Presbyterian work, there had been used in the sermon on the following Sabbath, more scholarly words than the wont, yet when he asked the reason, it was done so humbly, so tenderly, that it was a pleasure to explain. Cold-hearted criticism always forgets, "That God giveth grace to the humble."

"So let me pass away, humbly and lovingly,
Only remembered by what I have done."

VI.—HE WAS A MAN OF NOBLE STEADFASTNESS.

His ordination vow as a Christian elder did not mean till he got tired of his church or his minister; no, it meant with him, till death do us part.

His promise had in it such intense vitality of honesty, that it was unbreakable. His religion meant lifelong stability to God and man.

Happy is the minister who can say of all his elders: I never once doubted one of them. Neither did I ever once doubt, that he was a man of God. "By their fruits ye shall know them." No worldling could have lived such a life as his. How sad to see a gray-haired man with one foot in the grave, and another clinging to the ever-shifting sand.

With him, it was the glorious Rock of Ages. And amid all religious fickleness, what a noble sight to see elder and minister working zealously together for twenty-one years, without one jar, faithful unto death.

To-day, I can fearlessly say of him, he never gave me one moment's pain, but often, very often, he strengthened my hands in God. Oh fathers, I plead with you so to live, that when your sons may stand tearfully around your open grave, they may honestly say in their heart of hearts, "I thank God that I had such a father."

FINALLY.

A grand old standard bearer has fallen. Who will grasp the flag? His voice cries, "Do not let that old flag go down." Who will follow his example? Be men in blood-earnest, and the Master will give you grace and strength. Who will carry on his work? Let every son and father here to-day gird himself afresh, and say, "God helping me, I will." And then, when devout men may carry us one by one silently and solemnly to God's acre, they may triumphantly say, "to-day we buried a father, every inch a man and every inch a Christian."

MINISTERS AND CHURCHES.

REV. JOHN WALLACE, of Lunenburg, N.S., has resigned his charge, as his health has given way.

THE Rev. John McAlpine, of St. Mary's, has gone to Europe on a three months' trip for the benefit of his health.

THE Rev. W. Wilson has resigned the charge of St. Andrew's Church, Chatham, N.B., and has returned to Scotland.

THE Clinton Presbyterian congregation presented Rev. Dr. Ure with \$20 as an acknowledgment of his service as Moderator during the vacancy in their church.

THE Rev. A. V. Millingen, formerly of Constantine, has declined a call to Yarmouth, N.S., and is now called by St. Paul's congregation, Fredericton, N.B.

THE new Presbyterian church in course of erection at Norwood is expected to be ready for occupation in October. It will accommodate an audience of over five hundred persons, and the cost is placed at \$6,000.

THE Rev. P. Lindsay, Convener of the Home Mission Committee for the Presbytery of Quebec, having removed to Three Rivers, all correspondence for the Presbytery connected with that mission is to be directed to him there.

AT a meeting of the congregation of the East End Presbyterian Church, in this city, held on the evening of the 7th inst., it was decided to build a new church on a plan submitted by Messrs. Gordon and Helliwell. The structure is to be of brick; to cost about \$18,000, and to be commenced without delay.

THE new Presbyterian Church at Mount Pleasant, the corner-stone of which was laid a few months ago, is rapidly approaching completion, and the dedication is expected to take place next month. It is a handsome brick building, and will be a credit to the pleasant little village, also more particularly to the hard-working pastor of the church, Rev. Mr. Alexander, and his congregation.

A congregational meeting was held in the Presbyterian church, Seaforth, on Monday evening, 5th inst., at which there was a very fair attendance. It was resolved to take a vote of the congregation by ballot, on six of the candidates for the precentorship, on Sunday the 18th inst. The candidate receiving a majority of all the votes cast to be the one to secure the engagement. The precentor's salary was definitely fixed at \$300 per annum. It was also decided to extend a call to Rev. Mungo Fraser, of St. Thomas, to be the pastor, and the necessary steps for the moderation of a call will be taken in due course.

THE Presbyterians of Greenbank are building a beautiful brick church, fifty-six feet long by thirty-four feet wide. The main part of the building has four windows in each side, with two in the south end, also a circular window of stained glass in the south gable and a suitable window over the entrance door. There is a good basement ten feet between floors, with windows above ground corresponding to those in the main part of the building. There is also a gallery in the one end. The steeple is of sufficient height to be seen for miles. The building is to be completed in October, so that it will be ready for dedication ere the close of the current year. It will cost nearly \$4,000.

—COM.

ON Monday evening, 5th inst., a Young People's Association was formed in connection with the Presbyterian congregation of Brantford, under the management of Rev. Mr. Wilkie, assistant pastor. Like other associations of a similar character, it is expected to foster a warmer social feeling among its members, be productive of a deeper interest in the work of the Church, and materially advance the spiritual interests of the congregation generally. The meeting was well attended, and, from the active interest evinced in its organization, gives promise of a future useful and successful career. The following is a list of the officers elect. Honorary President, Rev. Jas. Pringle; Acting President, Rev. John Wilkie; Vice-Presidents, George Ballantyne, Misses Blain and Wallace; Treasurer, Miss Ballantyne. Secretary, Ed. Chisholm; Managing Committee, Mr. Phillips, Misses Hartley, Burnett, Macdonald, Heglar, Jane Pringle, Annie Kirkwood, and Messrs. A. Little, R. W. Williamson, N. McConnell, W. Kirkwood, D. J. McKinnon, R. A. Hartley, and R. McClure.—COM.