

My colleague pronounced this forenoon a eulogium on him as just as it was beautiful. With that I entirely accord. A man of devout and sincere piety; a man as loving as he was lovable by those that knew him—we have cause in these respects to mourn his loss. What struck me, as expressed this forenoon, about this man, was the singular, and rare, and happy combination of properties that you find often separated, rarely united. He was himself a combination of properties that seem contradictory, and yet may be found in the same person. Had any man a harder pen, there was no man had a softer heart; no man so fit to advise, and yet no man so ready to be advised; no man less moved by fear, and no man so ready to be melted by kindness. He had the paw of the lion, and the heart of a lamb; he had the intellect of the giant, and he had, as I know, the simplicity of a child. There was no man of greater power, and no man of less pride. He was a man of war; and what would we have done in the battle-day if we had not had a man of war? He lived in controversy, and he loved peace. I can certify for that,—I have heard him sigh for peace when he stood in the front of the fight, dealing blows like a champion on the head of error. He might say with the prophet of old, "Woe's me, my mother!" and he was ready to say it, "Woe's me, my mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife." I do not say he was perfect; no man knew that better than himself, and no man so ready to acknowledge it as himself—no man so ready to acknowledge those imperfections that cleave to the best of men. There was no need that some poor, mean, wretched creature, who could not reach his greatness nor appreciate his goodness, should tell William Cunningham that he was imperfect. He had the greatness to acknowledge his infirmities; and I never felt displeased with him so much as when, with rare humility, he exaggerated his own imperfections. I do not say that he was perfect, but he has not, in many respects, left his like behind him. He never loved war, he never wished to war but for what he believed to be the truth. He was a great warrior, and what, as I have said, what had we done without such a powerful man-at-arms, with immense resources, and erudition, and learning, and knowledge, with almost matchless intellect, ready to fence, ready to fight for the truth, and fearing no man. But he did not love controversy even when he lived in it. He fought because he fought for the truth. And how ready he was when any man threw down the gage of battle! The echoes of the horn at the gate had not ceased when out he came in full armour to do battle for the Crown and Cross of Jesus Christ. No man more loved peace, and yet no man was more fitted for war. And it is in that light I knew him best. Fighting with him side by side, but always feeling how far I was his inferior, I had the honor and pleasure of being intimately associated with that man during all the struggles that ensued in the Free Church. For now more than 24 years I was intimate with him, and I thank God this day, that during these 24 years there never came across our intimacy the shadow of a shade of cloud. I followed him in all his history, and my gratitude this day is almost equal to my grief. When, two-and-twenty years ago, he was as near death as he was on Friday at noon, I remember well the dread that sat on every face at our prayer-meetings, and the anxieties expressed to God in prayer. And God mercifully spared him; He had a great work for him to do; He eminently fitted him for it, and raised him up from the very grave to fight the battle that he fought. He fought it, and fought it well. And now, as he said himself, when dying, "I have done with fighting, I am going quietly home." And he went quietly home. But even then it was fine, in the occasional wandering of his mind, to find that, even then and there, he was the friend of truth, the defender of the faith, the defender of those that had struggled for the faith. Fancying he was John Calvin—Calvin was of all men uninspired the man he most respected, the man he held in highest admiration, and whose principles he was the ablest to expound,—imagining in the wanderings of his mind that he was John Calvin, he said,—"I did not kill Servetus." His last hour and breath, as it were, spent in defending the fame of that great founder of our Church and confessor of the faith. Then, when yesterday I saw him lie stretched on the bed, with the peace in which he died—for he died in blessed peace—imprinted, as it were, on his solemn countenance,—I could not but look on him as a warrior that was taking his rest. He had hung up his sword, he laid by his shield, the battle was fought, the victory was won, and now he had laid himself down to sleep till that trumpet—not the trumpet of battle, which he always rose to answer, but the trumpet of Christ's coming—should sound, and he should hear the words that were the last he sought to be read to him on earth, "Servant of God, well done." May God enable us to follow in his steps!