

A Brief Sketch
of the
Life
of the Reverend
John Franklin Forbes

By Clarence Mackinnon, B.D.
Co-Pastor Saint Andrew's Church, Sydney, Cape Breton.

With an Appreciation by
W. H. Smith, B.D., Ph.D.
Pastor Falmouth street Church, Sydney.

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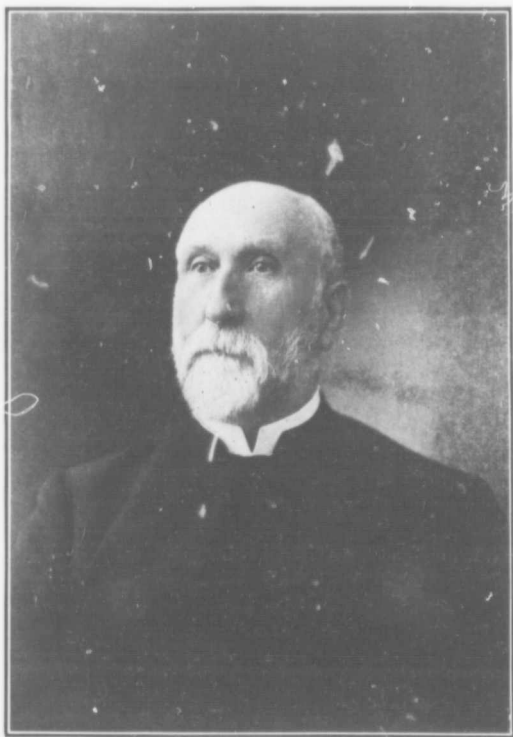


With the Compliments of

JUDGE FORBES.

Saint John, N. B.

February 25th, 1905.



REVEREND J. F. FORBES.

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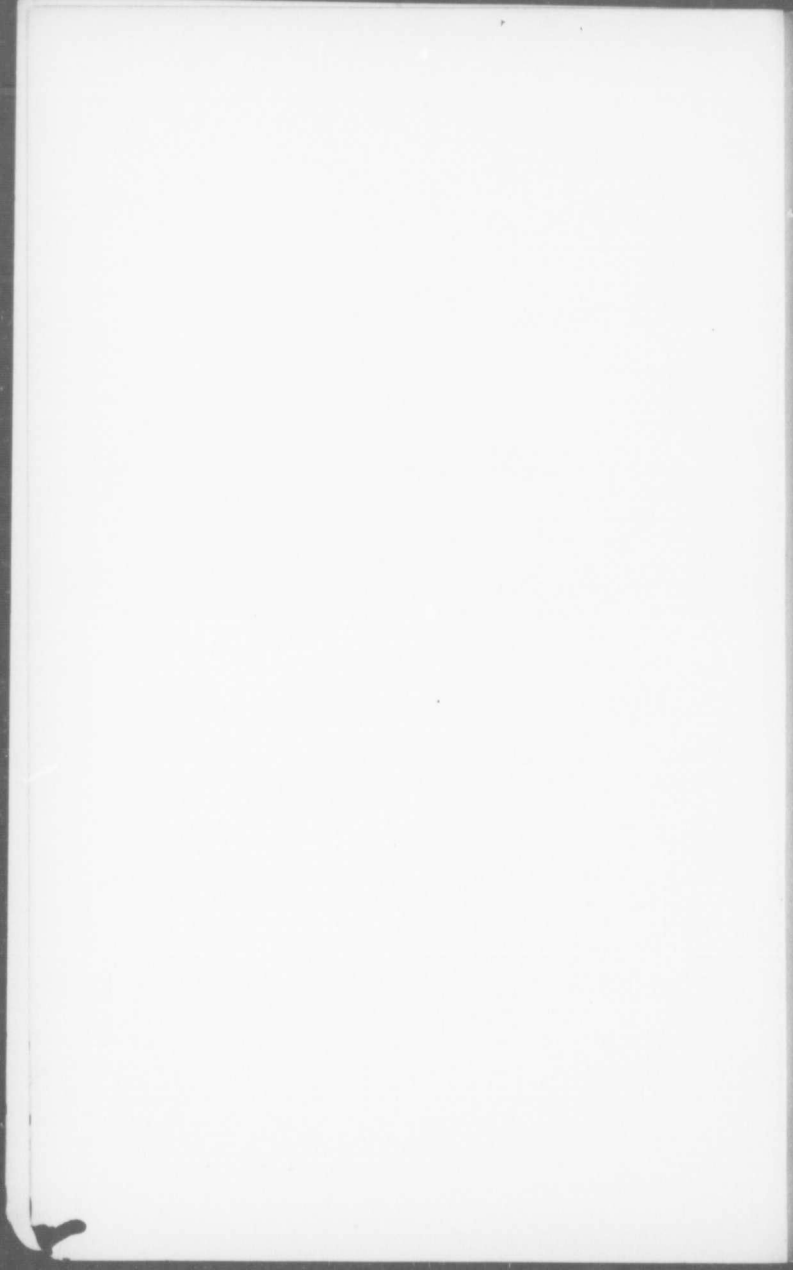
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Dedication.

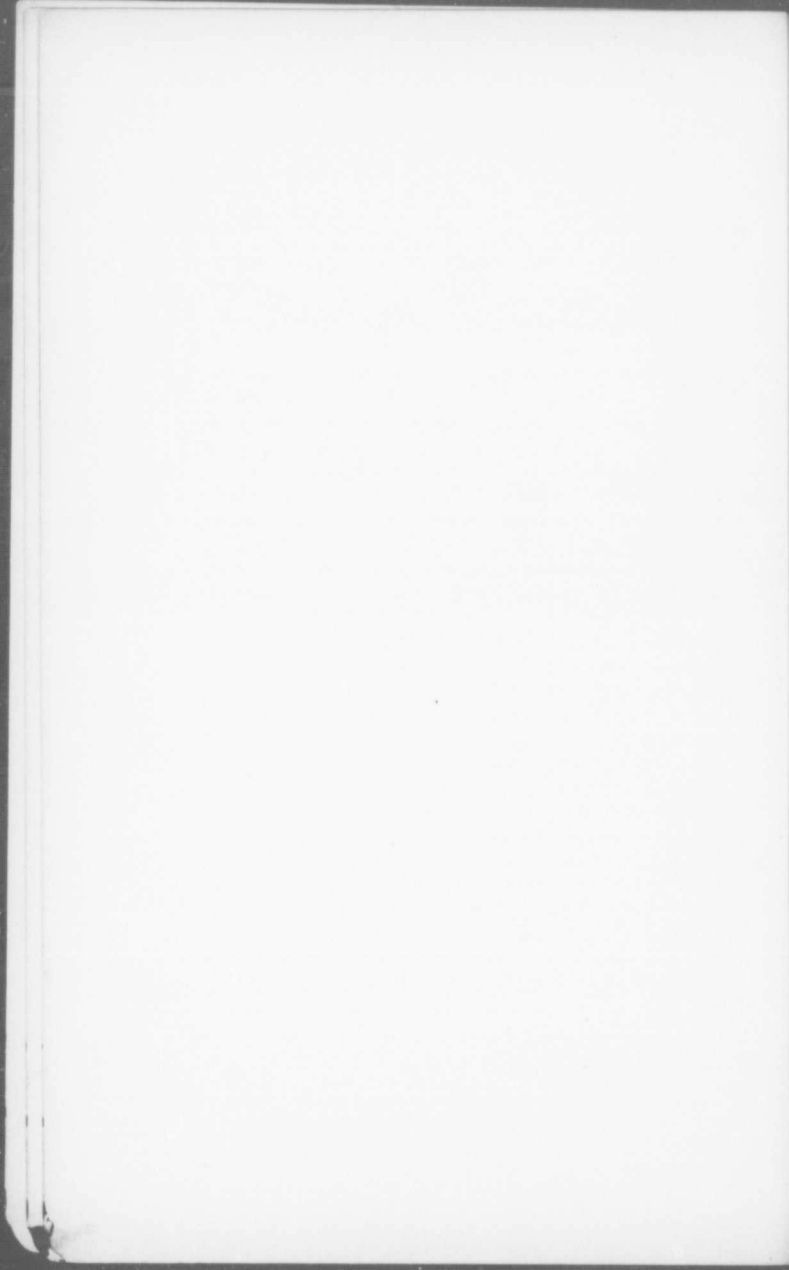
*To the Members of his Congregations
at Lochaber and Union Centre, Durham
and Green Hill, and St. Andrew's, Sydney,
this little book is dedicated in memory of
a beloved pastor and a faithful friend.*





THIS brief sketch of the life of the Rev. J. F. FORBES, with an accompanying appreciation by the Rev. Dr. W. H. SMITH, published through the kindness of Judge Forbes, of St. John, has been written that the life of at least one of the worthy builders of Presbyterianism in Nova Scotia may be preserved in better remembrance. It is sad to see the fathers passing away and no attempt to chisel their names deeper in the marble. Their unwearied labors deserve more gratitude at the hands of their more fortunate successors, who in happier times can build comfortably on the foundations which they laid, often with no little hardship. The writer is well aware of his lack of qualification for such a task, and regrets furthermore the inevitable hurry under which he had to accomplish it; yet, appreciating the value of accuracy in even so brief a memoir as this, he has been careful to verify his facts before committing them to print. He has been glad to render even this slight service to the memory of one who was his father's friend, and with whom he himself had been associated for two and a half years in the tender relations of the Christian ministry. Many are the hours that have been spent together in pastoral visitation, in driving over the snow-drifts, in conducting meetings, and in friendly chat by the cheery fireside. What a fund of humor, of anecdote, of genial good nature, of sagacious criticism of men and events, and, above all, of earnest enthusiasm to do the Lord's work, does he not miss in the removal of his beloved co-pastor! May God give to our church and country more of his like "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ!"

C. MacK.



A BRIEF SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE OF THE REV. J. F. FORBES.

I. AT HOME.

“To him will I give the land he hath trodden upon and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord.”—*Deuteronomy i. 36.*

On January 8, 1815, was fought the foolish and futile battle of New Orleans. The treaty of peace had been already signed at Ghent between the British and the Americans. Rumours of it, though not definite information, had reached the opposing armies at the mouth of the Mississippi. But the infatuated British officers determined upon an assault. Safely ensconced behind a ditch and piles of cotton bales, the nondescript American army, composed of creoles, Barbarian pirates, free negroes, San Domingoans, some regulars and a few sailors, could fire with impunity upon the conspicuous redcoats that rashly charged at them across the open. With customary gallantry, the British soldiers rushed right up to the ditch, only to find that the pontoons and scaling ladders, on which their success depended, had failed to arrive. General Pakenham, the leader, was killed; the two next in command were shot also. There was no one to give the order to retire; and the well-disciplined soldiers, discharging their harmless shots against impregnable cotton bales, fell where they stood. The 93rd Highlanders went into the fray nine hundred strong. At the evening roll call they mustered only two hundred and fifty. Among them was a strong, well-built, athletic young soldier (afterwards promoted to sergeant for his bravery), who faced all the perils

of the day unflinchingly and came out at length from the whistling bullets without a scratch. Providence had protected him, as we shall see, for another purpose. His name was John Forbes, the future father of the successful minister whose life we are to sketch.

The war over, he was pensioned in 1818 and returned to Scotland. Leasing a farm in the parish of Kildonan, Sutherlandshire, he exchanged the sword for the ploughshare and betook himself to the peaceful arts of agriculture and to other arts not less pleasant; for there he met Miss Jessie Gunn, to whom he was happily married in 1820, and who proved a worthy helpmeet through his long and arduous life. The serenity of these quietly prosperous days was, however, rudely disturbed ten years later. Many of the titled land proprietors of Scotland, finding it to their monetary interest to convert the numerous small farms, the time-honored home of an industrious and economical peasantry, into large sheep farms and extensive deer forests, gave orders for the eviction of their tenantry. Kildonan, with many a rich and beautiful Highland glen, suffered the inevitable hardships of that cruel policy. It was before the day of union; the land owners were the law makers; resistance was impossible; and so John Forbes, with his wife and five children (the youngest but four months old) was forced to leave the little farm on which they had expended so much toil, and which they had hoped should be their lifelong home. They sailed from Leith and arrived safely in Pictou Harbour, Nova Scotia, in the year 1830. Sixty-six years afterwards two of his sons, on a visit to the old land, encountered a Mr. William Falconer in Leith, who was then a retired custom house officer, and who had been the most intimate friend of their father's early manhood. Mr. Falconer was delighted to find the two sons of his old honoured friend, one a minister of the gospel, and the other elevated to the position of a judge. He took them down on the pier to the very spot where more than half a century be-

fore he had bade good-bye to their father, and he added, "He was the best friend God ever made." It is pleasing to recover from the almost forgotten past this tribute to one who served his generation with equal fidelity in the field of battle or in the more tender ties of friendship.

After spending the greater part of a year in Pictou, John Forbes purchased a farm at Blue Mountains and proceeded to make a home for himself and his family. But the farm was disappointing, and so in 1840 he accepted a grant in Goshen, in Guysboro county, and removed his home thither for the rest of his days. He had seven sons and one daughter, all of whom were born before he came to Goshen. They were: William, born in Kildonan, 1822, and, although the eldest, still living in the old homestead and dispensing its generous hospitality; Daniel, born in 1824, who fought through the American civil war on the Union side and afterwards died in Kansas, where his family still reside; Alexander, born in 1826, who joined the rush to California under the gold fever of '48, succeeded in making money, purchased an extensive ranch, where he died in 1891, leaving a family of six, one of whom, Edward, has become a distinguished lawyer; Robert, born in 1828, who shares half of the old homestead and is still hale and hearty; Adam, the last born in Scotland, and only four months old when, in 1830, the family emigrated, he was settled as a minister first in Ontario, then in Dakota, and died in Winnipeg in 1895, for some years he had charge of St. George's school, Halifax; Isabella, born in 1832, married to Alex. Ireland and still lives with her family on a part of the old grant; John Franklin, the subject of this sketch, born at Blue Mountains, Pictou County, February 2, 1834; and lastly, James Gordon, born also at Blue Mountains in 1838, and now known throughout the church as Judge Forbes. Those who have listened to the eloquent Judge as he carried a resolution through the General Assembly by one of his powerful speeches, will be interested to learn that he be-

gan his ecclesiastical life at a very tender age. When only six days old he was carried by the faithful nurse Mrs. Chisholm, to the church, five miles and back, that he might be duly baptized and regularly enter into his religious responsibilities. Happily, he escaped without harm from the risks of this unadvisable zeal, and was preserved for a useful life both to this church and to his country. He left home early, undertook the superior school at Kouchibouguac, N. B., went to St. John, studied law, graduated LL. B. from Harvard University, Cambridge, and was appointed to the bench in 1895. He was also ordained elder in St. Andrew's church, St. John, in August, 1880. It must indeed have been a matter of deep satisfaction to the parents, despite the hardships they endured and the deprivations they suffered, to see their family grow up, not only unusually strong in physique, but possessing those intellectual and moral qualities that were to overcome the disadvantages of the times and win for them promotion and success.

It may be worth while to linger for a moment about that old pioneer home. True, it was only one out of many such homes, and probably its conditions are familiar to many readers; though in a few years this will not be so, for familiar facts are quickest forgotten. The old tinder boxes, once so common that our fathers did not trouble to preserve them, can now hardly be obtained by the antiquarian for either love or money. So the recollections of these early times are very perishable and will quickly fade, and that irrevocably. The commonplace of to-day is in oblivion tomorrow. It becomes, therefore, almost a sacred duty to rescue what flotsam and jetsam one can from the stream of time that is swiftly carrying custom and tradition alike into the impenetrable depths of the past. When the Forbes family arrived at Goshen they found their grant covered with tall timber, chiefly hardwood, birch and maple, though there was no lack of valuable spruce and pine. Nothing had been

cleared, no building had been erected. Finding in a vacant house in the neighborhood shelter for the winter, they began their work. Under their sturdy blows the forest giants fell crashing to the ground. The broad axe squared them into suitable logs, the whip-saw sliced the pines into boards, the draw-knife cleft out the shingles. Muscle and skill were in constant requisition. Slowly before their stout hearts the forest gave back. In the narrow clearing the log cabin was constructed. No other hands than those of the family were employed upon it. But in its spacious rooms the fire merrily crackled, and many a good song was heard, and many a good jest was told. There have been great and well-appointed universities established for the education of man, but it is questionable whether any curriculum ever equalled that of the pioneer's life in producing that sturdy manhood and that quick and nimble intellect which are life's best assets. The fare was wholesome, if simple, and was all raised on the farm. There were no sauces, nor was there any need of them. Lads that had carried their gleaming axes to the woods before the sun was up needed no dainty stimulants to whet their appetite at supper time. Football and hockey were but scantily indulged in. On coming home from school, the boys went to the barn, took up the flails and threshed out the grain on which they had to live. In summer, indeed, the exigencies of the farm forbade any schooling at all. But for all the hard work, there was none of that bored ennui that haunts the pale-faced city youth, whose sensations have been so pampered that there is hardly anything in the world that can interest him. Those were glorious days of boyhood, when the summer morning awakened them refreshed from dreamless sleep and "the forest glowed with fair, clear colours, as if the dust of thousands of rubies and emeralds were hanging in soft clouds above the earth;" or, when in winter's brief twilight the frozen sled glided into the yard, and the young lads relaxed their strenuous life before the ample fire, or in

the silvery moonlight coasted at breakneck speed down the Goshen hills. There are not lacking traditions to show that boys will be boys everywhere, and it would appear that little Frank, afterwards so resolute a reformer, took a modest wager that he would walk barefoot over the ice and snow to the brook at the foot of the hill, a quarter of a mile away, and bathe his feet in its frozen waters. He did so, as members of his future congregations will not doubt, having once said he would; and, it seems, suffered no harm. Verily the Scotch proverb is not amiss which says "a Providence watches over fools and bairns," for which Providence, I doubt not, our memory makes us all very grateful.

The father, with true Scottish appreciation of the value of an education, always secured schooling for his boys in winter at least, although sometimes they had to start before daybreak to travel on snowshoes three miles through the woods to reach the school. Regarded as a system, education could make but a sorry apology for herself in those days. There was practically no system. The teachers received but a pittance. Oftentimes not more than £1 a month in addition to the small government grant. But, as always, there were compensations. Ambitious students eked out a hardy livelihood by teaching odd terms; and not a few country lads have been the first pupils of brilliant intellects that afterwards shone in professors' chairs or on the public platform, and contact with such minds was worth all the systems in the world.

A certain William Brann, who, like the ark on Ararat, had been stranded by the fickle ebb tide of fortune on Goshen Mountain, was one of the teachers. His pay was meagre, and he boarded most of the time at John Forbes', who kept him rather than dispense with school. As the Protestant faith in that locality was divided into either "Free Kirk" or "Auld Kirk," and as an uninitiated German could hardly be expected to enter into the subtleties of Scottish

ecclesiasticism, poor Brann had no place for the sole of his religious foot, and earned the reputation of an outsider. But he was in many ways an excellent man and an enthusiastic teacher. The birch rod was a conspicuous part of the curriculum; and Brann might have posed as a model in some respects for Ian MacLaren's famous "Bull-dog." He loved the classics. He delighted to drill his pupils in declensions and conjugations. Goshen boys were not guilty of grammatical solecisms. "You, sir, shall begin Latin to-morrow," he would say to a young lad when his age was ripe; and he had the old Scotch dominie's joy in "anither scholar in the land." Another teacher was Thomas Sears, a Catholic, and afterwards an important functionary of the Romish church in Newfoundland, and who to his dying day never forgot his Guysboro pupils. Needless to say, the scholars of Rev. McGregor McKay would be well grounded not only in the rudiments of learning, but in those moral maxims so essential to a successful life. The Forbes boys had the advantage of his instruction. Of this early education it may be said that, while it had the inevitable limitations of a hap-hazard system and of short and broken terms, it had some compensation in the thoroughness of its discipline and in the strength of mind of its teachers. The number of prominent men who in after days conspicuously adorned the various professions is no unworthy tribute to its essential value.

Coupled with education, but more important, is the religious teaching of a neighborhood. Presbyterianism and Roman Catholicism, with a sprinkling of Baptists, were the only forms of faith familiar to Goshen. Presbyterianism was at first confined to "the old kirk," but after the disruption the great majority became "Free Kirkers." Of this distinction we shall have opportunity to speak later. Suffice it to say that the Rev. Alex. Campbell, who ministered from 1844 to 1864, during the formative period of the family's life, adhered to the Free church party. He is described as a

man of a scholarly mind, but without genial accompaniments. His sermons were caustic and severe. His diatribes against the old kirk were more gratifying to the passions of the natural man than edifying to the Christian spirit. He did not attract the young. That, however, was not accepted as an excuse why one should stay from church; so every Sabbath morning, after the needful chores were done, the Forbes family were marshalled and marched six miles through the woods to the nearest church, situated in a lonely spot, three miles from any house. There was no buggy in those days. One man, Squire Stewart, had a heavy shay that was the envy and admiration of the district. Horseback or "Neil's shanks" had to suffice all the rest. Gaelic service began at eleven and continued to half-past twelve; then came fifteen minutes of intermission, then English for another hour and a half; after that six miles home, the evening chores, supper and then the Shorter Catechism until the drowsy head fell asleep in giving the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment.

A profound religious stirring, however, came with the communion season, which occurred once a year. New ministerial voices gave an added zest to the meetings, which began on Thursday and continued until Monday, Friday being allotted to the "Cuiet" or question in Gaelic concerning the marks of grace. It is pleasant to recall memories of these voices of Zion, once so familiar here, now long since joined to the choir immortal above. Among those gratefully remembered are Alex. Sutherland, then of Earltown, afterwards of Ripley, Ont.; D. B. Blair, of Barney's River; Peter McIntyre and John McTavish (afterwards D. D. and minister in Inverness, Scotland). Sutherland was a blunt, earnest speaker, a powerful revivalist; some of his impromptu utterances are still retold, as, when the neighing of the impatient horses outside was distracting the attention of the people, he shouted: "The devil and the horses' voices call your attention

louder than the voice of God speaking to your soul." Often did he make the blood tingle with warnings of Divine judgment, or the heart to glow with hopes of a gracious salvation. D. B. Blair was always clear and sound, doctrinal in his method, and something of an extremist as a Free Churchman. It is said of him that he continued to read and re-read Hodge's Systematic Theology until the end of his life, sometimes covering these three comprehensive volumes as frequently as once a year. McIntyre, who afterwards went to Australia, was possessed of a commanding presence and a powerful voice. People did not sleep under his practical preaching. He did not beat about the bush, nor study honeyed phraseology. On one occasion he rebuked the irritating restlessness of feminine vanity in the church in these terms: "You needn't be afraid that people will not notice your bonnet. It's conspicuous enough. They'll see it without your turning your head." McTavish and others, all whose names it is impossible to mention, held series of services in different parts of the country. They could preach and visit and exhort every day and seemed never to tire. Their message was simple and direct. They denounced sin, called to repentance and offered salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. They were careless of literary effects, but they were bent on saving souls; and our country cannot esteem too highly their faithful, unremitting, self-sacrificing labors.

At the communion seasons the Gaelic services were outside. The preachers occupied a tent and the congregation seated itself on the ground in front. There were no organs, of course, nor were hymns used. A precentor supported by two or three well chosen voices took his place before the tent, chanting each line rapidly before the congregation joined in. To do this effectively required a powerful and musical voice, and this was found in Frank Forbes, as the subject of this sketch was ordinarily called, who performed this service for several years.

Such were the educational and religious conditions of that early home. But its most potent influence was the strong character and the true faith of the father, John Forbes. Oftentimes, when a minister was unavailable, would he be called upon to perform the religious duties of the community; and frequently has he stood in the little cemetery at Lochaber, or at Copper Lake, or on the banks of the South River, as the sun shed its parting beams over the still and beautiful landscape, and amid the group of bare-headed mourners lifted up the prayer of sympathy for the bereaved and of hope for that happy reunion when death shall be no more, and God shall wipe away all tears. The memory of those consoling words still lingers in many a home along the beautiful shores of the Lochaber Lake, while his body rests by the banks of Lake Katrine, under the shadow of the church where his son ministered so long, and by the side of his beloved wife and the devoted mother of his family.

JOHN FORBES,

BORN AT DUNBEATH, SCOTLAND,

28TH SEPTEMBER, 1788.

DIED AT GOSHEN, 18TH AUGUST, 1877.

"He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

II. AT COLLEGE.

“For even before I sought Thee, I hoped to find and possess Thee at last. And with this honeyed hope I was sweetly consoled in all my labors.”—*Prayer of Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury.*

With all the moral and virile advantages offered by the old home and its surroundings, it had serious educational limitations, and the young man who would push his way on in life was compelled to seek elsewhere those qualifications which were impossible in a country school. Accordingly, in 1856, John Franklin, then twenty-two years of age, betook himself to Halifax and continued his studies in the old Free Church Academy that stood on Gerrish street. The building was cold and dismal; but the teaching staff was fortunate in its personnel. Mathematics were taught by George Munroe, the future millionaire of New York and donor of munificent endowments to Dalhousie University; Classics by James Fowler, afterwards professor at Queen's College, Kingston; and the English branches by Neil Mackay, subsequently the well-known minister of Chatham, N. B., and a D. D. of the Presbyterian College, Halifax. It is interesting to find among his schoolmates J. C. McIntosh (and fancy can picture the future successful banker of Halifax learning to do sums like any other youth), Allan McLean, Alex. Ross, John A. Sutherland, all destined “to wag their paws in a pulpit,” as the Scotch would put it. But the work of that busy winter was seriously interrupted by an attack of typhoid, from which he happily recovered. Next summer he recuperated, teaching school in Goshen and living in the old home. One little boy in his school was J. H. Sinclair, the present distinguished lawyer and representative of Guysboro Co. at Ottawa.

Having attended Normal School, where he was the first Guysboro boy to win a first-class diploma and carry off a

scholarship, and having taught successively at Sherbrooke and Economy, Mr. Forbes finally decided to study medicine, hurried home to bid his parents good-bye, and set off for Philadelphia. But every life has its own echo to the truth that "man proposes, but God disposes." On his way he made what he purposed to be only a flying visit to his brother Adam, who was laboring as a catechist at Shediac and Buctouche. Adam was a zealous minded Christian worker and deeply interested in the great revival then sweeping over northern New Brunswick, and although it was a long and rough drive of several days, they both got into the buggy and started for New Mills. The spark that set the religious movement in flame was somewhat unique. A farmer, at whose place a "bee" or "frolic" was planned, promised in return a dance, but, slyly, without consulting his wife, for she was a woman of rigid puritanical principles. When she at length understood the preparations, she remonstrated, though in vain. Retiring to her room, she fell on her knees before God, earnestly entreating Him to interpose. An elder, who had forbade his daughter to be present, also kept praying that the dance might be prevented. Just as the violinist was tuning up and two couples were already standing in their places, the devout woman coming from her room, staggered across the floor and with a scream fell like one dead. Consternation seized all present. The minister was summoned, with him came the praying elder, the dancing party was transformed into a prayer meeting and that night the revival began. Rev. Mr. Sterling was invited, various meetings were conducted, the people were physically as well as spiritually moved and extraordinary scenes occurred at many of the gatherings. On arriving at New Mills, Adam was invited to preach. He chose the brazen serpent for his subject, and although his brother assures us that his utterances were only very commonplace, the people became affected, breathing heavily,

and here and there falling down in unconsciousness and having to be carried out by their friends. The very announcement of the Psalm was the signal for such manifestations to begin. Whatever may be our cold blooded judgment of the profit of such scenes, they seem to be the inevitable accompaniments of so profound a movement. But behind this outward excitement the true and permanent power of the Holy Spirit could be felt. "I there and then," writes Mr. Forbes, "gave myself to the Lord and resolved to study for the ministry." This was not the first impression made upon his soul. He had been piously brought up, was familiar with Divine truth, and on one occasion had been taken solemnly aside by his father, who said: "I have given you up to the Lord in prayer, and afterwards had you consecrated to the Lord in baptism; now you are come to years of responsibility and I place the vows on your own head. Against the powerful influence of these words it seems he fought with partial success. Even the earnest and wise admonitions of his brother had not brought him to decide for the Lord. He had not felt the need of a gospel of grace; he had been content with his moral and respectable life, he never swore, nor drank, nor kept bad company. Angel James' "call to the unconverted," and especially McCheyne's *Memoirs*, profoundly stirred his soul, but he complains the edge of his piety would be taken off by "some frivolity and foolishness of youth." At New Mills, however, it was no mere impression but a change that he experienced, and from that moment he was in spirit and life work the Lord's.

The College course of Mr. Forbes might seem at first to have a restricted interest for only his immediate friends; but as it is typical of the difficulties that confronted a theologian of a generation ago, and as it introduces us to faces once familiar, but now long vanished, whose memory it is a duty to cherish, and as it recalls the vigor of our Church half a century gone as she strove to build her colleges and extend

her work, it may have a wider interest for the student of to-day and offer something of an inspiration to our loyal people to confront the problems of our time with the same confidence and determination. Having decided to study for the ministry, Mr. Forbes hastened to Montreal. The classes at McGill had been opened more than a month before, and Principal Dawson, with generous regard to the student's best interests, advised him to proceed to Toronto and take his preparatory work there. The course chosen was an eclectic one, combining theological studies with lectures in Arts at the University. Under the circumstances this was the only alternative. The difficulty of getting an education at all required such strenuous application on the part of a lad from the country that it was out of the question to demand a complete Arts curriculum before entering on theological studies. Nevertheless, many an exceptionally keen intellect among the passing generation of ministers has never received its due recognition, because its intrinsic power had not received the careful training necessary for varied and effective expression. Years either wasted or omitted even in literary studies are to the preacher "as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." An intimate friend of Mr. Forbes' has expressed the opinion that had he enjoyed the literary advantages of young men to-day, there is no position in the church which he could not have filled with distinction, so ready and keen were many of his natural gifts. One has but to scan his college note books written out and preserved with scrupulous care to see with what clearness and avidity he mastered the various branches of theological science which his opportunities offered.

At Knox College the most popular professor with the students at that time was George P. Young, who taught exegetics, metaphysics, moral philosophy, logic, etc. (the "et cetera" oftentimes being like the Scotch "bittock," which was longer than the mile). Prof. Young seems to have

possessed the divine art of clearness and to have recognized that the duty of a professor was to teach. He was radical enough to employ the blackboard, a simple device that helped not a little to clarify even questions in theology. The prevalent idea of a professor's work in those days was to deliver learned, and if possible, eloquent lectures; and wearisome enough to the student oftentimes, were these erudite epositions, slavishly read, which he could not always understand and for which as yet the appetite had not been created. Many a learned and able professor has received scant justice at the hands of his students because he falsely construed his work as that of a lecturer instead of that of a teacher. Prof. Burns, father of the late Dr. Burns, of Halifax, taught Church History; but age was telling on him, who in addition to his work in the College had the onerous duties of a city congregation. But his personal kindness to his students was never forgotten to the end of their lives. Prof. Hirschfelder, a Jew, conducted the Hebrew class and disposed of Colenson's theories which were then agitating the religious world with great self-confidence of judgment. Systematic Theology was taught by Prof. Michael Willis. The strenuous efforts of these early professors to train an educated ministry for the church needs no better testimony, and would ask no other monument than the progress Presbyterianism has made in the hands of their pupils. Among those students in Mr. Forbes' times were Dr. Warden, the present agent of the church, whose brilliant financial ability has been a gift of God to Presbyterianism in Canada; Dr. Patton, the famous principal of Princeton in after days; Dr. Munro Gibson, now the most prominent Presbyterian preacher in London, Eng., and Dr. A. B. Simpson, the consecrated leader of the Christian Alliance. It was an exceptionally brilliant galaxy of intellect for any Theological Hall to contain at any one time.

During the first long College vacation, Mr. Forbes' mind, possessed of a keen relish for every new interest, got fresh

glimpses of human life on a brief visit to the United States. He found himself among the "United Brethren," but found them also anything but united. Content with a good name, they felt at liberty to be very impatient with each other. "Quite a number of their own members preach," writes Mr. Forbes. "I could see on Sabbath morning a man milk his cow, brush his boots and then ascend the pulpit to edify his hearers." We may be sure the meat of the united brother would need to be unusually sappy to atone for such lax preparation in the eyes of one accustomed to the strict Sabbatarian training of Guysboro County.

On returning to Toronto he united with Gould street church, where Dr. Burns officiated, and he has to this day a faithful outline of the many able sermons which he heard from those honored lips. Next summer with much hesitation he was induced to preach himself as a catechist. He was appointed to the Presbytery of Bruce and arrived at Proton on a "jumper," a sleigh whose runners and shafts were of one piece of wood, and that carried him over logs and roots on the primitive road without any damage. In this and the following summer he preached at Proton, Fraser Settlement, Concessions four, five and ten, Brant, Bentick and many private houses in those localities. He spoke in both English and Gaelic and usually three times a Sabbath, oftentimes walking as many as fifteen miles to and from the services. His first sermon is always a trying ordeal to the young preacher. We find this entry in Mr. Forbes' diary, which he kept of that summer's work: "I spent my time in getting up two discourses, English and Gaelic, preached them yesterday (Feb. 13th) at schoolhouse, 4th and 5th Concession. Felt my own unfitness to begin the great work. I trust I felt that, and I must now enter here my conviction of the goodness of God to me in His gracious assistance. The English discourse I wrote carefully and got the leading ideas imprinted on my memory. The text was

John iii. 14 15 : 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, etc.' The text in Gaelic was : 'Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' I found God my helper. I must attest to the fact that he who trusts in God will not want any good thing. I pray God that I may be led to trust more in His divine assistance. Seeing that these were my first sermons, if sermons they may be called, I now would more earnestly than ever seek the teaching of the Holy Spirit. I am dark, He can enlighten me. . . . I would wish greatly to see my parents, brothers and sister in N. S., but God must be obeyed in His disposal of me this summer and all my summers on earth. . . . Lord, pardon my sins for Jesus sake, increase my faith, love and heavenly desires. May I die daily to sin and increase in the knowledge of my God for Jesus sake." After another day's preaching he writes : "I have need of more humility. My heart is too cold. O, may it be changed. . . . May God own and bless the feeble efforts made for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom on the earth. The vessel is an earthen vessel, one of a poor kind!" Again : "Sab., May 23 : Spoke in English from Matth. xiii. 34 : 'What I say unto you I say unto all, Repent.' Rather dull and prosy—very dry—much need of Divine assistance—large attendance—something sleepy and dull. The Gaelic was not so effective as desired. On regeneration—a very, very important topic if realized so. We too frequently sleep under these things. At 4 p. m. met a fine few in Mr. Roger's house, when I addressed them. Old Mrs. Rogers, unable to come out, was the chief reason for this meeting. May it be blessed to her and all present! Came on that evening seven or eight miles to see Mrs. S., who is ill, very discontented, blames Proton for all her troubles. O, that she and I may see that we are the cause of our own troubles. . . . I require a great deal of patience and should frequently be upon my knees before God for His help and assistance in

everything. Lord help, vain is the help of man!" Naturally one approaching the serious responsibilities of the ministry in this tremulous spirit was not without souls for his hire. We hear of one woman travelling seven miles to hear a Gaelic sermon from his lips, of solemn moments when hearers stood convicted before God, of tears of repentance and of several added to the church.

Even in Bruce Presbytery he was not exempt from the sectarian trials of the ministry. On one occasion an over zealous covenanter who felt the people could not be blessed except through her own minister, invited that worthy man over to preach, but she failed to secure an audience for him. Taking advantage of the hour of Mr. Forbes' meeting she endeavored to start an opposition one in the bush across the road from the school house. Disappointed in this, she boldly approached him and asked him to give up his service to the Cameronian. With admirable tact Mr. Forbes expressed his willingness, provided the people would permit him. Of course the people refused permission and Mr. Forbes preached. At the end of the hour he called upon the covenanter, who preached for another hour, and wearied the people so it was his first and last appearance in that neighbourhood, although his loyal supporter sang at his service like a nightingale. In all these delicate but irritating situations Mr. Forbes even then displayed that self-restraint, insight into human nature and remarkable shrewdness that so conspicuously characterized his after ministry.

Next spring a very urgent request came from a Highland settlement in Elmira, Illinois, that Knox College should send them a student who could preach in Gaelic. Mr. Forbes volunteered to go and carried with him that strong evangelical fervour that marked all his preaching. So deep an impression did his student sermons make that, when through College, Elmira offered him a call, and even thirty years afterwards, when he visited those scenes of his first

efforts, many hands were stretched out to welcome him, and many voices still remained to express with gratitude their memory of these refreshing services.

In those days the name of Dr. Hodge was on every Theological student's lips, and Mr. Forbes decided to pass his last year at college under the teaching of that great divine; so he turned his steps toward Princeton. Green, McGill, Moffat, and C. W. Hodge added to the brilliancy of the teaching staff. Sickness interfered to some extent with the beginning of this session's work; but what was lost in this respect was possibly more than regained by the redoubled energy with which he bent his mind to the task. This was in the close of the year 1864. The American Civil War was near its climax. Feeling ran high at Princeton, and Great Britain came in for her share of ill-will. The Mason and Slidell affair had not been forgotten, and the conquest of Canada was not an uncommon topic among the Americans. Mr. Forbes' reply was: "Finish up with the South first. Don't be too ready to undertake anything against Canada. You know our country sends the smallest and weakest of her sons to college, but retains the stalwart and the strong for other purposes. Now, as one of the small and weak" (he was almost six feet, with large muscular frame and acknowledged the most powerful man physically at Princeton) "I will take my class one by one in contest and show you what Canada is as to prowess and strength; and if I can undertake such a task with success, what chance have you people with the brave giants north of you?" As Mr. Forbes' physical superiority was unquestioned it is needless to say this method of solving the international dispute was not adopted.

The spring of 1865 brought his college career to a close. He passed his final examinations, preached his prescribed discourse and was duly licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, then one of the largest in the

United States. The serious sickness of his mother called him immediately home. There was no Intercolonial in those days, no palatial parlor and dining cars to disturb the contentment of a peaceful rural valley. Boat and stage were the chief means of transit; but at length after five years' absence he stood again under the old roof. He had gone forth to win an education; he returned a licensed preacher of the gospel. All were well, except his revered mother on whose strong constitution a life of unremitting toil, bravely borne, had begun to leave its unmistakable traces of exhaustion, not obliterating but rather enhancing the grandeur of a life devoted to God and duty.

“ Would you be young again !
So would not I.
One tear to memory giv'n,
Onward I hie.
Life's dark flood forded o'er,
All but at rest on shore,
Say, would you plunge once more
With home so nigh ?”

III. AT WORK.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Matthew v. 9.

Rich interval, splendid forests and abundant fish attracted the first settlers to St. Mary's River district as early as 1801. Later on others came straggling in, one by one, chiefly from Pictou County, until by 1825 or thereabouts the pioneer who was pushing up the fertile valley of the South River, Antigonish, had almost met him who was clearing the forests from the upper reaches of East River, St. Mary's. The picturesque watershed between those beautiful valleys was settled sometime before 1830 by families from Argyleshire and Invernesshire, Scotland, and as the early emigrant from some rounded knoll gazed on Lake Katrine, sleeping securely in its nest of hills, its placid surface reflecting the glory of the autumnal tints on its limpid waters quietly flowing down the rich valley of the South River with its broad acres of grass and stately elms, or from Hulbert's hill beheld at his feet the graceful bends of Lochaber Lake, slowly emptying itself through the shade of maple and oak into the St. Mary's River, he must have felt something more than the naive to suggest the "land of mountain and of flood," from which he came, and whose traditions and customs, as well as memories, he had transported to these new shores.

The most cherished of all these customs was love for the sanctuary. It was not long, therefore, until the minister was welcomed into the new home. The first to preach at St. Mary's River seems to have been Dr. James McGregor, the honored founder of Presbyterianism in Pictou. But Dr. McGregor was anti-burgher; and the St. Mary's and Lochaber people adhered to the Scotch established church,

the "Kirk Church," as it is conveniently, if tautologically, designated. It mattered not, it was the same gospel and the same creed that both proclaimed; the hand of tradition lay heavy on the sons of Scotland; and there was no regular pastor until 1833, when Rev. Alex. McGilvray (afterwards of McLewton Mountain) took charge of Barney's River, St. Mary's and Lochaber. He left in 1835. Rev. Donald McConichie ministered until 1839 and Rev. Hugh McKenzie for three years more. In the Disruption in Scotland of 1843 the colonial churches took a profound interest, and the questions of state and church, endowments, headship of Christ, etc., were freely canvassed on the slopes of Goshen and by the banks of Lochaber. The majority of the people declared for the Free Church; but quite a respectable minority adhered to "the auld Kirk." Rev. Alex. Campbell, who was pastor from 1845 to 1863, was a somewhat violent Free Churchman; and although all but half a dozen signed his call the breach between the two parties remained. The old Kirk not wishing to leave its tender lambs entirely to the mercy of such hostile teaching, came over about once a month in the person of one or two of its eminent men and occupied the pulpit of the little church in the woods. So acrimonious did the dispute become at length that an Established Church minister on entering the pulpit was insulted by finding there an anonymous and very un-Christian poem, whose opening lines will serve better than any further description to show to what extreme lengths the quarrel had gone:

"We moderate thieves at last have come,
A sink for filth, to take the scum."

It was into the aftermath of this very unprofitable strife that Mr. Forbes was called in 1867. He naturally hesitated about undertaking work at his old home, and especially under such difficult conditions; but the call was very

urgently pressed upon him and he at length consented. If Mr. Forbes possessed any quality in pre-eminence, it was that of making peace; and so providential was his settlement at Union Centre and Lochaber, and so successfully did he set himself to the difficult task imposed upon him, that within a few months the last whisper of the angry strife had died away. The Kirk felt it no longer needful to come and the peace as of a summer Sabbath settled down not only on the green hillsides and shady banks of that prosperous countryside, but on the hearts of its happy and reconciled people.

An incident in connection with Mr. Forbes' examination for ordination and trial discourses may be permitted, as it reflects the character of Pictou Presbytery in those days when it was particularly eminent for theological ability. After an examination in Greek, when we find Mr. Forbes complaining that these classical enthusiasts could not be confined within the legitimate restrictions of the Greek New Testament, the popular discourse was delivered. The text was John iii. 16, and the sermon glowed with all Mr. Forbes' evangelical fervour and received well merited approbation. A discussion, however, immediately ensued among the members of Presbytery themselves as to what was the significance of "world" in this familiar text, "God so loved the world." "The world of the elect to be sure," said one. "No," replied another, "it is the world of sinners." Whereupon all the Presbytery took sides and joined with zest in the theological discussion, and "in the smoke," adds Mr. Forbes, "I escaped."

The first problem that faced the newly settled pastor was church accommodation. There were two churches, but very awkwardly situated; one comparatively new was in the woods three miles from any house, the other at Copper Lake was open to all denominations and was, on that account, criticized by the Scotch scrupulosity of those times

as altogether too "latitudinarian." Two new churches were a necessity, one at Union Centre on the banks of Lake Katrine (South River Lake) and the other beside the Lochaber Lake. Although the distance on the map between the two sites may only measure about four miles, no one who has ever toiled up the intervening mountain, nor risked his neck down its precipitous sides will feel that compasses on a map can ever do justice to distances. But the two churches would cost \$8,000, and the congregation, though prosperous, had no wealthy men, nor had they ever faced so formidable a task before. Naturally the more timid had their misgivings. But the unfailing optimism of their new minister and his happy humour—*seria mixta cum jocis*—overbore all obstacles. The contract was let out to Donald Grant of New Glasgow. Mr. Forbes pledged himself that autumn to raise \$2,000 himself, outside of his congregation, and set out to fulfil that apparently rash promise. He visited Halifax, St. John, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Boston, New York and other places, and returned after a few weeks' absence with more than the pledged amount. Some of the canvasses used are still jocularly remembered. Men were surprised at their own liberality as they found themselves good-humouredly handing over sums that otherwise they would never have dreamt of. Could an Orangeman refuse to support a Presbyterian church in Antigonish county? Could an Upper Canada confederate fail to show the material advantages of the newly formed confederation and thus by the most tangible of all arguments confound the grumbling "Antis?" "Do you send flour to Nova Scotia?" he asked of a Montreal merchant. "Yes, quite a quantity." "Do they pay you promptly?" "We have had no reason to complain." "Well," added Mr. Forbes, "it is my business to inculcate the principles of honesty and reliability." Could the Montreal merchant fail to support a cause that was so serviceable to himself? A generous Catholic who offered

him a subscription, added smilingly, "if you are not afraid that Catholic money will burn your pocket." "On the contrary," he replied, "I am prepared to risk the other pocket with a similar amount."

In January, 1869—less than two years after his ordination—the two new and handsome churches were opened with impressive services. No one who has seen these buildings will fail to recognize in them models of simplicity, convenience and taste. Two days after the opening ceremony the enthusiastic people gathered to purchase the pews. One man paid \$100 down; others followed with varying amounts, and by the end of the year not only were both churches fully paid for, but there was a balance on hand that was expended in more handsome pulpit furniture and other helpful adornments. The best eulogy that can be paid to a man is to point to what he has done; and Mr. Forbes' ministry needs no higher eulogy than the erection in so short a time of two such fine edifices, and without a cent of debt. His energy was indomitable. When taxed with the possibility of a heavy debt, if he undertook the erection of these churches, he replied, "I will wear my legs off to those (indicating quite a length of shin-bone) before I leave a cent of encumbrance on the congregation."

The next undertaking was to secure a home. On Oct. 20th, 1867, he married Janet Louisa, eldest daughter of John McMillan, Esq., then of St. Andrews, later of Antigonish; and in 1870 entered the new manse, so beautifully situated by the shady borders of Lake Katrine, a house which is another tribute to his wisdom, taste and enterprise. But there was no rest for him. Hardly was the marriage service ended when a letter was placed in his hands requesting him to give a month's services in Inverness county, Cape Breton, at that time unhappily destitute of preachers; and although he replied, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. Give me the Jewish year." He was only excused

until March, then he undertook the trip, going in a wood sled to the Straits, and crossing on the broken ice-floes to Port Hawkesbury. One church he preached in had adopted the simple device of carrying the stovepipe out through the window by removing a pane of glass. As on that day the wind set from that quarter, Mr. Forbes declared there was not a dry eye among the hearers, although he confesses the sermon was not responsible for all this emotion. His services were very welcome and accomplished much good wherever he went. This was not his only preaching tour. At times he would harness his horse and visit the scattered remnants of Presbyterianism in Guysboro county at Country Harbour, Isaac's Harbour, Wine Harbour, Goldenville, and any other spot where he could see even a rag of "the blue banner" still fluttering.

Reform work at home called for strenuous effort. Within the bounds of his congregation five or six places were selling liquor and were demoralizing the young life of the place. A Sons of Temperance Division existed, which he took hold of. He further formed two lodges of Good Templars, and the battle royal was on. One place after another was closed until only one remained on the outskirts to defy the combined power of himself and the priest. At one time the struggle was so keen that a party of "rummies" attempted to raid a meeting, and there was a hand-to-hand encounter, in which Christian muscle, unenervated by alcoholic poison, proved its superiority. Such zealous and faithful work could not fail to bring down the promised blessing of Heaven. There were signs of spiritual awakening. On one occasion the late Rev. Alex. Sterling, a man of deep piety and constant prayer, was invited, and his helpful services are remembered with gratitude at Lochaber and Union Centre until this day. On another occasion the revival sprang up spontaneously. After a service in which he was despondent, Mr. Forbes asked those of his flock who would to remain

and pray for him. Quite a few stayed, and as they prayed the Spirit of God seemed to come to them and stir their hearts. "Let us come back to-morrow night," said the minister. But on the morrow it snowed heavily, and he lived four miles from the Lochaber church. God was testing his faith. Despite the storm, however, he set out furnished with a shovel, and aided by a strong companion. They were almost exhausted by the deep snow drifts when they crossed the mountain, but as they descended the other side the clouds parted, the sun came out in its winter splendour, a cheering promise of the blessing in store. At the meeting that night one of the most careless in the locality stood up and expressed a desire to get right with God. The meetings continued for a month; a hundred came out; they were then transferred to the Union Centre church. The impression was profound. One girl who found peace herself became greatly concerned about her sister's condition. Through the snow at two o'clock on a frosty morning these both walked a mile to arouse the minister and pray over this, the most urgent of all concerns. The other girl found peace also. Then both besieged their brother; one sat on either side, holding his hand and pleading with him until he at length decided for Christ. Another, running to the meeting, was asked, "Why this haste?" "Everybody is being saved, and I fear I will be left out," was the anxious reply. But God had other thoughts for his seeking child. A cold shudder passed through one meeting as a woman stood up and cried in despair, "I'm lost, I'm lost." Bidding the choir continue to sing, Mr. Forbes gently led her and her husband to the session room, where he said, "If I can show you in God's word that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost, will you believe?" "Yes," she said, trembling like an aspen leaf, "but you will not find it." Turning up the familiar text, he made her look at those gracious words of mercy. She read them and then asked, "Who said that?" "Jesus

said it." "Then I believe, I believe Him; I'm saved, I'm saved." Coming back to the anxious congregation, he announced, "The woman who a few moments ago declared she was lost has found the Saviour, for it is such He has come to seek and to save." Her father-in-law tremblingly arose and said "Pray for me." It was a time of deep conviction and of great rejoicing. It left a lasting impression on the congregation, of whom 127 made confession of their faith at the next May communion; it gave a still further evangelical bent to Mr. Forbes' preaching, and it riveted the bonds of attachment between pastor and people so close that the latter felt they could not show enough personal kindness to him who in God's providence had been the instrument of the salvation of their souls. In return, when a call came from Tara and Campbellford, in Ontario, although it offered him a larger salary and many advantages, he declined to leave, in deference to the affections of his people.

One or two incidents will throw more light than anything else on the admirable taste with which he handled pastoral difficulties. An unwise habit of many rural congregations was to leave the minister's stipend until near the close of the year, when, together with the other obligations which then pressed upon the farmer, it became a real burden. To avoid these harassing arrears it was suggested that the subscriptions be collected each quarter in advance. Criticism was inevitable, and the opposition was led by a miller by trade, who declared that while the workman was worthy of his hire even God delayed the final "well done" until the task was completed. This apt allusion to Scripture had all but squashed the more systematic proposal, when Mr. Forbes rose to his feet, complimented the speaker on his cleverness, and then pointed out that notwithstanding his logic, the miller himself took his toll before he ground the grist, and suggested that what was so approved a practice among the millers might also be adopted successfully with the minis-

ters. The miller laughed good-naturedly, withdrew his objections, and let the more business-like scheme come into force.

Higher Criticism and Evolution had not disturbed the honest faith of Lochaber and Union Centre; but the conflict with Science in a mild form could not be altogether excluded, and the six days of creation was a constant menace. Mr. Forbes, like many of his peers in the ministry, had something of a taste for geology, and took occasion one Sabbath to explain to his congregation that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and illustrated this truth by the age of the earth as indicated by "the wrinkles" in the rocks. He was, of course, waited upon next day by an indignant hearer, who felt that the foundations of the Christian faith had been undermined. Argument proved of no avail. "Away with your wrinkles in the rocks," was the only response it could elicit. The minister remembered that this man was in search of a cow. He had two himself, so he changed the subject by proposing that they should go out to the barn and see if one of them would suit. "How old is she?" asked the man. "I am not sure." "Is she a mooley?" "No." "Then I'll soon tell by the horns." He examined the cow and said, "She is twelve years old." "How do you know that?" asked Mr. Forbes. "Because of the wrinkles in the horns, three for the first year, and an additional one for each succeeding year." "Away with your wrinkles," replied the astute minister, and the confused theologian began to feel that it was hardly consistent to be sure of a cow's age by the marks in its horns, and to refuse to calculate the age of the earth by the marks in the rocks.

One of the gravest dangers to social harmony is some trivial misunderstanding. It may occur among men of unquestionable truthfulness and fine Christian character; but, wherever it occurs it opens the door for suspicion, dislike and a thousand forms of covert hostility. Like the rift in

the lute, it slowly widens and silences the music of happy, helpful friendship. No one was more alive to the dangers of such misunderstanding than Mr. Forbes, and none had a more ready faculty of promptly bringing the estranged parties together and effecting a reconciliation. Sometimes his methods were very daring, but he was not often defeated. On one occasion when two very estimable and Christian men fell out as to whether one of them had made a certain statement or not, and when it became apparent that a life-long feud might be the unhappy consequence of this disagreement, he requested both to meet him in the school house at 11 o'clock. He took as hearty a meal as he could himself at 10 o'clock, and then went over to the place of rendezvous. Locking the door of the school and putting the key in his pocket, he announced that none of them should leave the building until the dispute was settled. A couple of hours passed, and agreement seemed as distant as ever. It was long after dinner time and the men proposed to go home, but the doorkeeper was obdurate. "Settle your dispute first," he said. The afternoon had begun to wear away, when at length the disputants capitulated to hunger and signed an agreement, which, to their honor be it said, they faithfully adhered to.

Among many other practical branches of information, the older generation of ministers were supposed to have a smattering of physic. The expense and trouble of sending twenty miles for a doctor made his visit a matter of serious consideration, and Mr. Forbes was usually sent for first to decide whether the case was grave enough for a doctor. He showed unusual skill in these difficult matters, and his judgment was implicitly relied upon. People still tell with pride how, when the faculty itself was baffled, he came to the rescue and by his ingenuity saved a patient. It was a woman who had lost her sleep, and whose abnormal excitement was fast exhausting her vitality, and yet defying every medical

means to allay it. The doctor gave up hope, and drove home. Mr. Forbes hastened to the house of the apparently dying woman. On the road he picked up the Gaelic precentor. "Jump in," he said, "I want your services for a little while." The man obeyed; they reached the house, entered the sick room, where the restless woman tossed about. "We are going to hold a service," he said to the astonished relatives. Then, giving out a psalm in Gaelic, he read it through monotonously, the precentor chanted the line and began a minor melody. At the first verse the patient became more quiet, at the second her eyelids drooped, and at the third she fell into that natural slumber that saved her life. Call it hypnotism, or suggestion, we do not guarantee anything but a Gaelic psalm as a cure for insomnia.

But sorrow mingled with success in the home at Union Centre. Shortly after his settlement his mother died, and years after he writes of her: "She was an affectionate mother, and we boys owe much to her indomitable force of character." His eldest son, a sweet little boy of barely two years of age, wandered one fateful Saturday from the house to the lake, and was found floating on the water, buoyed up by his new starched clothes, but with his head beneath the surface, and drowned. To the end of life the memory of that dear little boy was cherished by the bereaved parents. Later on his aged father died at the advanced age of eighty-nine.

In 1885 it was found feasible to unite the congregations of Durham and Green Hill, in Pictou Presbytery; but it was needful to secure a minister who had the art of blending different sections into one in the newly united congregation. Inevitably the eye turned toward Mr. Forbes, and he received an urgent call. It seemed to him his duty to go. A new generation was growing up at Union Centre and Lochaber, where he had labored for nineteen years, and he imagined a new voice might be helpful to them. His family, too,

required the advantages of high education, which could not be secured so far from a town; so he sadly agreed to accept the call and sever his connection with a congregation as loyal and devoted as any to be found in the bounds of the church. The people were heart-broken at the news. They had regarded Mr. Forbes as a fixture. The farewell service was bathed in tears. One little lad present remarked that he could understand women crying, but to see tears on strong men's faces at Lochaber was an unwonted sight. It was hard to tear himself away from so kind and appreciative a people. True, he was beloved wherever he went, and made new friends both at Durham and at Sydney, where he rendered faithful service to the cause of Christ, but in neither place did he remain so long; and although in both these latter places he has left the strong impress of his work, yet Lochaber is his monument.

IV. AT REST.

"The clouds are round us and the snowdrifts thicken,
O Thou dear Shepherd, leave us not to sicken
In the waste night, our tardy footsteps quicken;
At evening bring us home."

—*John Stelton.*

The task that awaited Mr. Forbes at Durham was by no means an easy one. Fitted by temperament and constitution for arduous work, he never seemed to lack it. Three churches had just been united into one congregation, two at Durham and one at Green Hill, and the union had been a matter of circumstance as much as of choice. The glue was not yet dry, and discretion was needed in handling the delicate fabric. One serious difficulty emerged at the outset. The Presbytery of Pictou had not been able to effect the union except on condition that the new manse should be built at Green Hill. Mr. Forbes at once perceived the great inconvenience of this arrangement. The distance from the railway, poorer schooling facilities than he had enjoyed at Union Centre, the fact that two-thirds of the people resided in the other section, convinced him that it would be unjust to condemn future pastors to pay their penalty for present peace. The educational needs of his own family made it impossible for himself to submit to these conditions. Two men came over from Green Hill to discuss the situation with him. "Let us first pray about the matter," they said. "No," replied Mr. Forbes, "I am not going to pray over it; for my mind is made up. You have a perfect right to build the manse at Green Hill, for that is one of the conditions of the union. But I will not be a partner to its erection and then leave you at the first opportunity. If I have made a mistake, it is better to leave now." To the credit of the Green Hill people, be it said, they saw the honesty and wisdom of so

firm a stand, and they gracefully relinquished their claim to the manse.

The erection of a manse in a country congregation is a very delicate matter. Many of the houses around, while comfortable, are not ornate and a weak minister is apt to affect a false piety and say, "I will not dwell in a house of cedar while my neighbors dwell in humble homes," and as a consequence injure the congregation by an economical but undesirable home for the pastor. Many a one would as soon minister in the country as in the town, provided he could screen his throat from draughts and was not condemned to sacrifice precious hours of study to the hewing of wood and the drawing of water. Manses with as many modern conveniences as possible are therefore the most far-sighted policy for a country congregation, so that no one who comes to reside in them, whatever his previous habits may be, should feel that he is suffering any privation. Mr. Forbes felt the wisdom of this policy and none of the three manses which he erected in his different pastorates but is to-day a source of satisfaction to the congregation and a tribute to his own sagacity and courage and a perpetual benediction to his successors.

But long before these temporal matters are disposed of, we find him in the thick of his evangelistic work; special services, cottage prayer meetings, pastoral visitations, communions, Presbytery and Synod demands, in addition to his ordinary Sabbath work. He was constantly in requisition and the record of his services and addresses would puzzle a man of less powerful physique and untiring energy. At one time we find him travelling all over Cape Breton, dodging in and out of the romantic bays that skirt Cape North, in the interests of the Augmentation scheme; at another, assisting at communions in Souris, or, it may be, Clifton, in Prince Edward Island; or sent by higher courts on missions that required shrewd and delicate handling. Later he wrote of

those days: "I was well then and strong and although I find after a continuous week's work the entry, 'tired, very tired,' in my note book, a day or two's rest, and it was up and at it again. Surely the work of the minister is no sine-cure. Some people think a minister has an easy time of it. Let them look over a minister's diary and they will change their opinion."

How faithful was his pastoral work the following incident will show. A parishioner was slowly dying of consumption. She was a Christian, but did not seem to have peace. He asked her if she trusted in Jesus. "O, yes," she replied. Still something seemed lacking, and he was unsatisfied. Probing her conscience, he asked if she forgave everybody. "All but one woman," she answered. "Will you not forgive her?" "No." He pointed out the condition of her own forgiveness; but she was obdurate. At last he said, "If you will not forgive her for her own sake, will you not forgive her for the Saviour's sake?" She paused and then added, "Yes, for His sake I will." The desired peace came and some time afterwards she passed away rejoicing to meet Him, for whom she had given up all.

In 1891 the strain of overtaxed nature began to manifest itself. He was threatened with insomnia, and took four months' holidays visiting St. Paul, Winnipeg, Victoria, Los Angeles, Leadville and many centres of industrial and historic interest in Canada and the United States. He returned with renewed health and vigor.

Two years later a minor trip to Cape Breton to assist at a sacrament resulted in a call to St. Andrew's church, Sydney, which he accepted and where he was settled on Feb. 14th, 1894. St. Andrew's church had been organized under the famous Dr. Hugh McLeod, who came to Cape Breton from Scotland in 1850 and devoted his exceptional gifts to the promotion of Presbyterianism on that Island. He turned a deaf ear to all other enticements, remained true to

his first Canadian flock, and as a result won at one time a hold over his congregation that one may safely say is without parallel in the history of our church. In 1875 there was associated with him his future son-in-law, the Rev. Alex. Farquharson, a man whose gentle and earnest ministry won many hearts and whose sudden death on Oct. 21st, 1892, was lamented throughout the whole church. It was in this line of succession that Mr. Forbes followed.

On this occasion he entered on work well organized and established. Still, it was his fate to build, and he was no sooner settled than he was again confronted with the problem of a manse. A handsome and well appointed house was the happy result in which he lived until nearly the end of his life. Optimistic, as he always was, he felt that Sydney had a future and that suitable preparation should be made for coming developments. Two wings were added to the church, with a convenient Sunday school hall, basement, and other modern appliances. It was through this timely addition to its capacity that St. Andrew's church was able to cope as successfully as it did with the "boom" which struck the town when the Dominion Iron & Steel Company began to erect their extensive plant in 1899.

In 1898 the Synod of the Maritime Provinces showed its appreciation of Mr. Forbes' unremitting labours by appointing him to the moderator's chair. The Presbyterian Witness writes as follows: "Rev. J. F. Forbes was a capital moderator, fatherly, patient, genial, using his authority promptly and with discrimination when occasion required. Once or twice he showed that he could use great plainness of speech. All were delighted with him." But the years of his moderatorship was somewhat trying owing to a persistent hoarseness that he could not well get rid of. He had experienced severe attacks of the grippe, which had rendered an assistant necessary in his congregational work, and the services of the Rev. F. C. Simpson were secured. He

was compelled to restrict his preaching and his visitation, which was not easy to a man of his habitual activity. At the Halifax General Assembly he gave the address after the communion, and we find him writing quite cheerily at the close of the century. "At the close of the year and century I must put up my Ebenezer. 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped me.' I have been spared till nearly sixty-seven years of age and nearly thirty-four in the ministry. This is my third charge—nineteen years in Union Centre and Lochaber, eight at Durham and nearly seven in Sydney. My experience is replete with incidents and coincidents of God's goodness to me in His providence and grace. In so far as I have been enabled to preach the gospel and be of service to my fellow-men I am thankful to God for it. In so far as I did not live and work as I should, I ask God to forgive me for my dear Saviour's sake and give me grace and strength to do better in the time to come. Surely it is great thing to be born in the 19th century and to see its close—to be on the threshold of a new century—the 20th—with all its possibilities!"

And what fateful possibilities were so soon in store! That very year saw the Sydney fire in which to some extent his family suffered, the sickness of one son, and on its last day the death of his beloved wife, a loss of which he was ever conscious to the end of his days. A year later he writes: "This is the anniversary of dear Janet's death. She became unconscious about this hour and ceased to speak to us. Oh, how sad for us, but how joyous for her! She died in the full hope of heaven. May this be our portion when we too depart. The Ladies' Sewing Circle remembered me by presenting me with a beautiful dressing robe and slippers. They have tried to cheer and make me glad, but the wounds are too deep to rejoice when I feel like weeping. Still, it was very kind of them." At the beginning of 1904 he writes again, "Oh, how time flies! May God according to His promise give us strength according to

our day and grace according to our need! I consecrate myself unreservedly to the service of Almighty God more than ever. This day brings saddened recollections. It reminds us of what we have lost in the death of dear Janet, a loving wife and affectionate mother, who was taken from us two years ago. Can we ever forget it? No, no." Only an intimate friend was permitted to know how deeply this loss had eaten into his heart. For the sake of his family and his work he bore it with brave resignation.

His strength was not now what it had been. His voice never recovered the resonance of earlier days. He nearly lost his life in a serious sickness in 1901; and though at times vigorous after that, could not place the same confidence in himself as formerly. A permanent colleague was found necessary and the present writer was associated with him in the pastoral work in August, 1902. The following spring, to escape the chill ice winds, he took a trip to the Southern States, visiting old friends and standing on the spot where his father fought in the battle of New Orleans. With renewed energy he took up the work of the congregation, visiting with great assiduity and conducting cottage prayer meetings. In the spring of 1904 he achieved one of the dreams of his life: a visit to the Holy Land, climbed to the very summit of one of the pyramids in Egypt, walked the streets of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, conversed on the street that is called "strait" in Damascus, beheld the luxuries of Constantinople, astonished a ship load of tourists by talking Gaelic to a Highland soldier at Malta, gazed upon the classical hills of Greece, touched the ball on the top of the dome of St. Peter's, Rome, re-visited parts of France and Germany where he had been in 1896, and arrived home full of many a tale of travel to while away a fireside hour or to entertain a lecture hall. In October he attended Synod at Pictou and refreshed the Alumni gathering with one of his old-time speeches, replete with humor and sagacity. He

conducted the Christmas service in St. Andrew's church and the Gaelic prayer meeting on Monday evening, from which he never permitted himself to be absent, if possible. No one dreamt of anything serious, although he did not feel quite up to the mark. On Tuesday morning he awoke with a violent pain in his hand, produced by a scratch so insignificant that he could not remember how he came by it. Medical aid was secured at once, but blood poisoning had set in and despite all the remedies that were applied he quietly passed away on the morning of Jan. 4th, 1905. The funeral, which took place on Jan. 6th, drew an immense concourse of people notwithstanding the severe cold. Twenty clergymen were present, representing all the different denominations of the town. The utmost capacity of the church was overtaxed and hundreds could not gain admission. The sympathies of the community were deeply stirred by the sudden loss of a man, whose handshake, people said, was more hearty than that of other men, and whose cheerful countenance was gladly welcomed in every home. The setting sun was casting its ruddy beams over the busy city and the snow mantled forests as the long cortege wound its solemn way up Cemetery Hill and in that hour of evening calm and glory, singing "Nearer My God to Thee," laid its burden to rest until the trump of the archangel shall sound and the dead in Christ arise.

" Earth to earth and dust to dust,
Calmly now the words we say;
Left behind we wait in trust
For the resurrection day.
Father, in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we now Thy servant sleeping."

Mr. Forbes has left three sons and three daughters, all of whom with the exception of the youngest son, Harry, were born in his first manse at Union Centre. They were Arthur Gordon, now in business in Sydney; Dr. Albert

Ernest, practicing at East River, St. Mary's; Isabella Margarita; Jessie Loieson Alexander, married to Dr. Alonzo Jones, of Moncton; Constance Aleine, married to Mr. John D. McLean, of Sydney, and Harry Oswald.



ST. ANDREW'S, SYDNEY, C. B.

V. AN APPRECIATION.

With the firm conviction that the life and work of Mr. Forbes well merits a memorial tribute, but with the consciousness that the writer can ill hope to adequately delineate the beauty or disclose the source of its power, the task is undertaken in the hope that it may do something to preserve the memory of faithful workers, oft times most sadly neglected, and also to inspire our young people with devotion to the great work of the Kingdom. With an acquaintance beginning nineteen years ago, renewed at many times and deepened by close fellowship in the work of the church, the writer trusts that this tribute may in some small measure express his appreciation and also be true to the convictions of the large number who intimately enjoyed his friendship.

It may be that we are too near the hour of our loss to see his character in all its aspects. The end came so unexpectedly that its meaning may not be fully grasped. There is something touching, yet fitting, in the manner of his home-going. The words concerning another may appropriately describe him: "To him it was granted to end almost simultaneously his labor and his life, and not to drag on an existence in this world with the decaying faculties and the miserable decrepitude of extreme old age to obscure in mind, memory and imagination the bright image of what he had been."

Oh ! change — oh ! wondrous change !
Burst are the prison bars !
This moment 'here, so low,
So agonized — and now
Beyond the stars !

Oh ! change — stupendous change !
There lies the soulless clod !
The sun eternal breaks ;
The new immortal wakes —
Wakes with his God.

It is to be remembered that the deepest feelings and convictions of one's life are always far removed beyond the grasp of formal language. If in this brief analysis some miss familiar traits which they associated with him, it is to be attributed to the nature of the case, and not to any intention on the part of the writer to obscure or overlook any disposition of his character.

If first impressions are worthy of note as an estimate of the type of character producing them, my first impression of Mr. Forbes may be taken as the keynote of all that was to follow. When a young man I engaged to teach my first school at Union Centre, quite near his manse. The autumn had come, and the hills surrounding the quiet lake were glistening in the beauty of the first snowflakes, as we wended our way to the church. The little company of Highlanders, with their characteristic love of spiritual mystery and devotion to their spiritual guide, gave the stranger to understand that the minister was not an ordinary man from Pictou, but one who had the vision, and their only regret was I did not understand "the Gaelic." He appeared in his prime, strong, sturdy, the picture of perfect health and abounding energy. He was such an one as unconsciously impels attention, and it was always given. The whole service was deeply impressive. His manner, his consciousness of God's nearness, his spiritual fervour, his urgent appeal and his sympathy in prayer all combined to make the unseen real and urgent. No word or idea remains of that first sermon, but in the background of memory there is the conviction that he produced that day that he was a master with a message to the souls of men.

A few weeks later he accepted the call to West River and Green Hill. Until that time the people did not know how much they loved him; nor was he aware of the strong ties round his own life which he had to sever. The parting revealed what had been in process during these nineteen years.

The man who could live among his own kin, who received a call from the boys of his boyhood, and in things spiritual became their acknowledged and trusted leader and friend, and who could win the hearts of hundreds in the way which called forth the most profound sorrow and regret at parting, must be one who understands the secrets of the human heart. Dr. Fred. Temple remarks that there are three great qualifications for a man to lead his fellows—he must have a sympathetic heart, he must have the insight of genius, he must have a strong tenacity of purpose. In each of these respects he shared in some measure, and to these may, humanly speaking, be attributed his success.

Men are first judged by their mental power, or the way they handle problems. Afterward this judgment may be modified by other traits known only by personal fellowship. Nature had been very generous, and intellectually he was well equipped for his work. He belonged to the older school of ministers, which is just now passing away. Before seeking to estimate his strength, it is well to bear in mind, not as an apology, for none is needed, but as an explanation, that in his early days the educational advantages were few and meagre compared with those of to-day. It was only the choice energetic spirits who were willing to toil for an education that attempted a college or professional training. He was unable to acquire that broad liberal training preparatory to theological studies, which is now within the reach of all. Then, again, it is to be remembered that his different pastoral charges demanded a great deal of preaching in both English and Gaelic, and pastoral work which involved immense physical labour. His pulpit work was of a strong evangelical character. He did not give much attention to abstract speculations, but was very pronounced in his exposition of the Gospel and its application to human life. His theology was personal and characteristically practical. In his best days he was an outstanding preacher, gladly wel-

comed everywhere. He had an alert, observing mind, ready to see and appreciate, which marked him to the end. To hear him describe his recent trip to the Holy Land, to observe the facts, incidents, vast information given in detail, was a rich treat. He was always quick to appreciate the humorous side of events, and in the field of anecdote and story he was inexhaustible.

Another marked characteristic was his large social nature. He inherited a social disposition of wonderful capacity, which he improved by constant exercise. He greatly delighted in social fellowship, and his social qualities constituted much of his power. Greeting everyone with a hearty hand-shake, he soon found an opportunity to relate some amusing incident, which enriched his friend's appreciation. He was keenly alive to the humorous in life, and of ready reply. His quaint sayings would form a respectable volume, and in many there was a refreshing originality. His social tendency gave him much tact in reaching people in a natural friendly way, and made him a pleasant and helpful pastor. This he used to brighten the way in travel, to cheer the home, to rob life of many stings, and to gain the victory over enmity. He was pre-eminently a peacemaker, and in this capacity he was able to render excellent service in his congregations. Many instances could be related of his victories. His generous treatment of his people created the same virtue in them. Harmony and good will was the heart of his gospel, and by means of it old difficulties were forgiven and forgotten. His genuine human sympathy made him a great favorite everywhere, so that all classes and creeds united in bearing testimony to his kindly interest and generous sympathy.

His devotion to his ministerial duties is praiseworthy. He felt that his first responsibility was his congregation, and every resource at his command was utilized to build up his church. Once more it was the power of the practical.

Others who sought to gain a footing among his flock were surprised at his alertness and generalship, and they did not feel called upon to repeat the experiment. His people felt that he would safeguard their interests. In the work of the ministry he was whole-hearted, giving his time, thought and means freely and gladly to the work of the Kingdom. His enthusiasm was contagious and constant. His pulpit ministrations were abundant. In addition to regular services he held many prayer meetings in English and Gaelic. He was always ready to assist his brethren. He took a deep interest in evangelistic work and enjoyed a period of marked spiritual revival and ingathering in his first congregation.

He excelled as a pastor. He had a genius for this kind of work, and delighted in it. In his country charges he frequently commenced early in the day and continued it unceasingly. The sick, the dying, the sorrowing, the lonely, all shared his ministry in large measure. None were forgotten. His people always found him ready to respond to any call. Bad roads and bad weather never conquered him. He was pre-eminently a pastor. Many will remember his visits long after his public utterances are forgotten, and one secret of his strength is found in his devotion to the good of his people generally.

Though giving first place to his congregation, he never confined himself to that. He was a good churchman. His work in Presbytery deserves mention. Much of his life was spent at considerable distance from the meeting place of Presbytery, but he took a deep interest in the work. He was ready to assist, and his shrewdness, patience and good cheer made him a valuable member of committees dealing with vexed questions. Synod and Assembly received his support and in recent years his interest deepened. At Pictou he seemed buoyant and his addresses, especially the one at the Alumni Association will not soon be forgotten. He had the genius of practical common sense, and used it vigorously.

In addition to his ministerial duties, strictly so called, he took a deep interest in all that concerned the welfare of the community. He was a man of the world in the sense of keeping in touch with human problems. As a citizen he was identified with the good of all. In his late sphere he entered actively into the current of civic life. The City Improvement Association and the Sydney Board of Trade claimed him as a useful member. He was the friend of righteousness and the enemy of humanity had to reckon with his message and influence. The sworn foe of the saloon and every form of iniquity, he was the zealous advocate of reform. His position on moral issues was above suspicion, and he used his talents in the cause of humanity.

Thus far we have sought to see him as he moved among men, but a word should be spoken concerning his personal friendships. It is a good test of a man's life when intimacy inspires to better purposes.

What is the best a friend can be
 To any soul, to you or me ;
 Not only shelter, comfort, rest,
 Inmost refreshment unexpressed,
 Not only a beloved guide
 To thread life's labyrinth at our side,
 Or with love's torch lead on before.
 Though these be much yet there is more.

The best friend is an atmosphere
 Warm with all inspiration dear
 Wherein we breathe the large full breath
 Of life, that hath no taint of death.
 Our friend is an unconscious part
 Of every true beat of our heart,
 A strength, a growth, whence we derive
 God's health, that keeps the world alive.

So writes the poet, and the general judgment of mankind supports it. Of the subtle influence radiating from his large generous friendship no one can fully tell. It is an "atmosphere." Though mysterious, it is nevertheless real, and if he be judged by the number whose lives he strengthened and

cheered, we may safely say he was a true friend, for few have been more loved than he, the natural consequence of his own loving heart. Young men found in him a friend and wise counsel, and the old found sympathy when the earth held out but small hope of a summer day. Some men shine brilliantly in things of the intellect; he was a past master in things of the heart.

Little reference has yet been made to his spiritual life. The best test of a man's religion is not the verbal advice he gives to others, but what it does for himself. His spiritual life was in keeping with his active life, being practical and personal. He unhesitatingly accepted the great fundamental facts of the religious life and trusted implicitly in the God and Father revealed in Jesus. On communion occasions he was joyfully at home, and many saw him at his best. His words of comfort to mourners beside the open casket were genuine and helpful. He gave the message in which he rested. He also knew life in its sadder meaning. Death and affliction had come to him, but he accepted the great fact of the Christian life and faith, and went forward. When three years ago he was suddenly called upon to yield up his beloved wife, he went down into the valley, but not to murmur or give way to despair. He fought his battle and won, and came up again and his countenance was still lightened with hope and good cheer. Whatever he may have endured of loneliness, the world did not see or know. He returned to his work with enthusiasm, a genuine Great Heart, a practical active man in his work and spiritual view. Of him it might have been affirmed,

He asked no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky;
Give him the glory of going on and not to die.

This energy was wonderful when we consider he passed the three-score years and ten. He did not tire of life. To him

faith brought its reward, and it stood the storms and war. May we not think that he felt as he who first penned these lines:

We pace the deck together
Faith and I.
In stress of midnight weather
Faith and I.
And catch at times a vision
Of the bright eastern sky
Where waiteth God to tell us
That we shall never die.

The best memorial tribute that has been or can be given is not in the funeral addresses or written page, but is found in the living experience of hundreds in his three congregations. In view of all that has been said, it will be remembered that he had his human limitations. Of decided convictions, he was capable of strong opposition and denunciation, but these were only exercised when all others failed. He was all things to all men when no principle was at stake, but he was bold as a lion when he believed anyone was playing false with his view of the Kingdom. He differed with honest men on matters of principle and method, and some would have preferred that he had done otherwise. These differences belong to practical men in practical work. But when all has been said, it still remains that, viewing his life as a whole, he commanded the respect of all with whom he was associated, and won the love of all who knew him well. The affection of his people, the many tender ties he created, the memory of glimpses into the unseen, the lives touched and redeemed, the strength imparted in the hour of need and the tribute of respect from all classes in the communities where he lived, these constitute his enduring monument. We need not seek to summarize the secrets of his strength, but his message would seem to be that by God's grace and hard work one can use every power of the soul for the good of the people, accomplish great things and be led into the ministry of helpfulness.

His life should serve as an inspiration to the young men of the church. Beginning life when conditions were less favourable than now, by faith and perseverance he overcame and left an honoured record. Anyone attempting great service will face real difficulties, but the record of this life should stand as an inspiration to go forward.

It was his great desire to welcome the Synod to Sydney. He extended the invitation at Pictou and anticipated the happy time when he could show his old friends the progress of his adopted city. It will be a keen disappointment to many to meet in Sydney without his kindly welcome, but they will wend their way to Hardwood Hill Cemetery to the sacred plot where his mortal ashes rest, and feel that though he has gone to his rest and reward, that his work remains and his memory is lovingly cherished by the loyal-hearted people in whose interests he toiled and with whom he died.

To experience the loss of a fellow-worker and true friend arouses within us the eager cry of the soul, "Man dieth, and where is he?" Can it be that he has ceased to be who meant so much to so many? Can it be that the last word has been spoken, the last fellowship enjoyed, the last welcome heard? The human heart rebels against such a philosophy of the universe and life. The contrast between the human soul, so buoyant and free, and the mechanical world of matter suggests the supremacy of the former. It is according to the genius of Christianity to believe that death means the entrance into a large life which is "far better." And now that he has finished his course and was glad when the invitation came to go home, we leave him in peace and hope, waiting only the day when the whole plan of God will be unfolded, and faith pass into glorious open reality.

For ever and for ever
The changeless oceans roar ;
And dash their thundering surges
Upon the sounding shore ;
Yet this keen soul, this lightning will,
Shall these, while they roll on, be still ?

For ever and for ever,
The eternal mountains rise,
And lift their virgin snows on high
To meet the silent skies,
Yet shall this soul, which measures all,
Whilst these stand steadfast, sink and fall?

For ever and for ever
The swift suns roll through space ;
From age to age they wax and wane,
Each in his ordered place ;
Yet shall this soul, whose piercing eye
Foretells their cycles, fade and die ?

For ever and for ever
God willed it, and we are
More wondrous than the ocean wane,
Far greater than the star.
Though suns stand still and time be o'er,
We are and shall be ever more.

