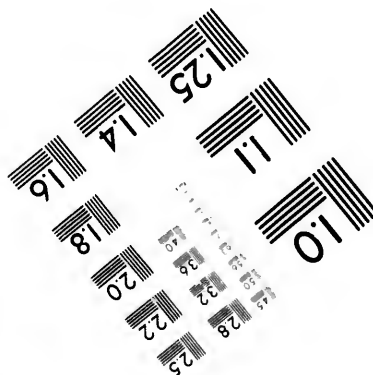
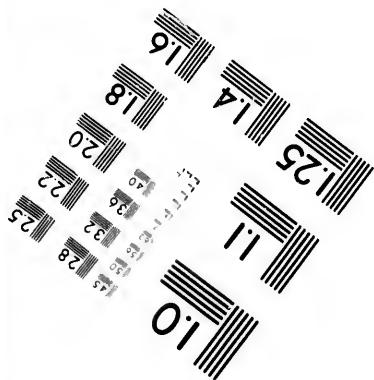
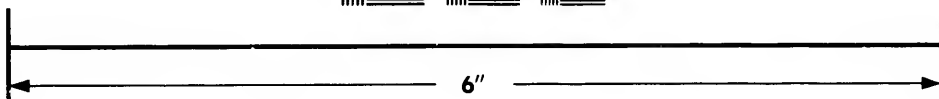
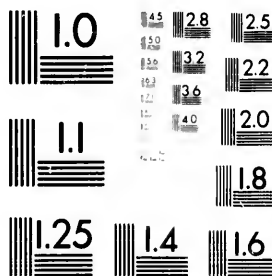


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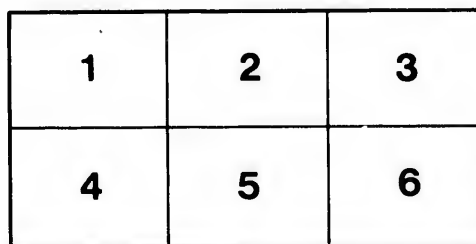
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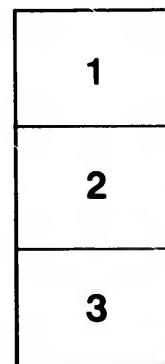
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A SERMON

BY THE

REV. W. MORLEY PUNSHON, M.A.

IN MEMORY

OF THE LATE

REV. ROBERT WATSON FERRIER, M.A.

PREACHED IN THE WESLEYAN CHURCH,

GREAT ST. JAMES STREET, MONTREAL,

SUNDAY, 19TH JUNE, 1870:

TOGETHER WITH AN

OBITUARY NOTICE BY THE REV. GEORGE DOUGLAS, LL.D.

AND A

MINUTE OF THE MONTREAL DISTRICT MEETING.

MONTREAL:

PRINTED BY THE MONTREAL PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY.

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P8

"THE LIVELY HOPE."

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."—1 Peter, chap. i., 3, 4.

We hardly needed to have announced the epistle out of which these words are taken—the words themselves, reveal the man of whom they are the characteristic expression. As in the time of his cowardice, so in the time of his loyal and self-denying labour for Christ, the "speech" of Peter "bewrayeth" him. There is a warmth in his full heart, and a freshness in his rapid utterance, which become contagious in hearts which are partakers of "like precious faith;" and it is difficult to read his ascriptions of gratitude, and refrain the while from our own. He has sat down to address words of comfort and counsel to the banished ones, who had been driven by persecution from their homes, but who preserved in their exile their steadfastness and faith; and immediately after the salutation he breaks out in tones which stir the heart like a clarion, in the words of the text. How could they faint or be discouraged with such a hope to hearten them? How could they but keep the precepts

with all diligence, lest they should embarrass the certainty of their inheritance, and forfeit the claim which the "lively hope" prefigured. What a well-spring of comfort would be opened up within them by the remembrance, that hunted as they were, outcasts from the friend's presence, and from the temple's privilege, they had yet a dowry and a home. Born in the pilgrim path which we are all called to travel—we become "acquainted with grief," as did our Master—there are long hours of loneliness and struggle—hours of "the power of darkness," where to the eye of sense there is but an utter cloud, and where even the eye of faith can scarcely pierce the shadows. It behoves us, that in these sad beaten days of life, we should glimpse an Easter beyond them, or we were "of all men most miserable." For us, therefore, it is a brightening thought that we have a "lively hope;" and if it be but assured and warrantable, we may console ourselves in the darkest of our experience by the remembrance of this hope of our calling. And of this hope, let us ask ourselves :—

I. Whence doth it spring? II. How is it certified? III. Unto what is it tending?

Hope is popularly defined to be the expectation of future good; but to render the definition complete, the good should be an object which the mind affects and which the heart desires. It has been implanted in the breast of universal man, and is one of the chiefest displays of the loving kindness of the Lord. Without it the world were a sepulchre, and the conscience a hell. There is hardly a condition of human adversity which it cannot soothe and sweeten. It has strung the courage of the warrior to achieve his deeds of daring; the mariner has felt its inspiration when the spirit of the hurricane sat upon the rattling shrouds; it has aroused from their sullen lethargy the trader of ruined fortunes, and the man upon whose shattered heart has fallen the pitiless hail of sorrow; it has kindled in the eye of the banished one, strained eagerly across the waters where rose the hill which hung over his home; the

poor captive, at the base of whose prison the wild waters have dashed in chainless play, has yielded to its spell, in slumber, and at least has dreamed of freedom ; and, piercing down to the most hapless lot of man, it has beat feebly in the heart of the slave, and redeemed him from uttermost despair. Surely there was truth in the conception of old classic times, in the fable of Pandora's box, which, filled with all evils, by the displeasure of the gods, had yet a preponderance of blessings, because hope lurked at the bottom.

But the hope to which the text refers is not an instinct, but a gift, and is not, therefore, the common heritage of all mankind. It is a hope of heaven, of which the world knoweth not, and to which the sinner is, of necessity, a stranger. Men tell you, indeed, that they have a hope of heaven, but, resolved into its elements, it is but a vague anticipation of future blessedness, resting upon no sure foundation, and working no beneficent results. Those who have not believed in Jesus are excluded from this hope, both by their prevalent unbelief and by the declared word of God: "The hope of the unjust man perisheth." "The hope of the wicked shall be as the giving up of the ghost." "They are without God, and consequently without hope in the world." In contrast to this delusive expectation, which can only ruin those who cherish it, the apostle refers to the "lively hope" of the Christian, into which, by Divine power, he has been "begotten again." That to which he had no native claim has been wrought in his soul by the free grace of God. It is a "lively hope;" that is, it is *living*, not a cruel mockery, nor a distempered dream, but a warranted assurance, resting upon sanctions which are Divinely authenticated, and upon a Word which cannot lie. It is a "lively hope;" that is, *active*, a mighty energy, influential to the very depths of the being. The hope which the worldling professes leaves his heart untouched, stimulates him to no spiritual action, does not prompt him to the faintest measure of preparation for the heaven into which he

hopes to be received ; but "every man that hath *this* hope in him purifieth himself, even as God is pure." It prompts the man to qualify himself for the possession of his inheritance. It makes him feel that the heir to royal honours should have a royal soul—and that though sweet were the minstrelsy and glorious the companionship of heaven, there would be discord and solitude to the heart that was defiled by sin—so while it joys in the prospect, it fails not in its endeavour to word the meetness within. It is a "lively hope;" that is, it maketh not ashamed—the man does not blush to confess it in the gate—he can talk of it to the princes of his people. It gives him courage amid the lowering clouds, or in the day of battle ; through the dark night-watches it teaches him the patience which anticipates the morning, and it fills him with a joy unspeakable, which makes all the present radiant, and which lights up the yet untrodden future with an ever crescent glory. Yes, it maketh not ashamed. With it in his bosom, the man can stand up amid his heart's ruins, erect and undismayed ; he can lie down calmly on the death-couch, defiant of the gaunt shadow that passes up the stair ; he can exalt in seraph-friends, ere yet the emaciate frame has ceased its mortal breathing ; he can breast the furious wave of the dark river—a brave swimmer in the swelling of Jordan—and there, at the heaven-gate, the good hope will die, happy, like a proud mother in her pangs, that, from its dying, an everlasting fruition will be born. It is manifest that such a hope can only be of Divine bestowment—it is at once too lofty and too lasting to come from meaner hands. And it *is* the gift of God to those who receive the Gospel of His Son. Faith in Christ produces it, and in proportion to the intensity of the faith does the hope increase and brighten. We must never forget that, like every other spiritual blessing, it is "not of debt but of grace." It is not of our prescription or unforfeited right, but "according to His abundant mercy." None of those who have realized the hope will deny that its source is thus divine. Their concep-

tions of vileness are too deep. They are too enlightened upon the magnitude of their sin and of their deliverance to hesitate upon the matter for a moment. The brow of the sceptic may darken, and the pride of the carnal may rebel, but if you interrogate the godly you will find that his will is submissive and his heart is full. The penitent, who has but recently believed, who yet shudders as if he felt the sliding earth and nearing flame, "a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious," tells you, amid grateful tears—"But I obtained mercy." The white-haired saint, as just ready to depart, he surveys from the Nebo-summit the whole path of his difficult climbing, gasps out his latest testimony—"By the grace of God I am, what I am." May the blessed ones, whose long experience of the golden streets has made them at home in heaven, fling down upon us without ceasing the melody of the same eternal song:—

"Unto him that hath loved us, and washed our sins in his own blood,"

"'Tis mercy all, let earth adore,
Let angel minds enquire no more."

II. What is the medium by which this hope is certified to us? The Apostle says that it is "by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead;" and this calls us to the contemplation of the glorious triumph by which our Saviour has abolished death, and has been "declared to be the Son of God, with power." There is no part of the history of Jesus which is either unimportant in itself or uninteresting to those whom He shed His heart's blood to redeem. Matters which are seemingly trivial have couched in them a grave significance, and bear directly and impressively upon the great purpose for which He came into the world. And yet—save that death which is the foundation of our hopes of life,—there is no spot more hallowed to the affections of the believer, more sacred to His pilgrim feet, than the garden in which there was a sepulchre, where, amid the flowers of the opening spring, the body of Jesus was laid. Oh! surely the heart will kindle, as we visit it, with thoughts of triumph,

not of terror, for it speaks to us of a destroyed Destroyer,—
of a mighty Despotism shattered forever,—of a Deliverer,
whose victory were not complete unless a rejoicing people
share it.

"Yes, even the lifeless stone is dear,
For thoughts of Him who late lay here,
And the base world, since Christ hath died,
Ennobled is and glorified.
No more a charnel house to fence
The relicts of lost innocence;
A vault of ruin and decay,
The imprisoning stone is rolled away.
'Tis now a fane where Love can find
Christ everywhere embalmed and shrined;
Age gathering up memorials sweet,
Where'er she sets her duteous feet.
'Tis now a cell where angels use
To come and go with heavenly news,
And in the ears of mourners, say:
Come see the place where Jesus lay."

The resurrection of Jesus is fitly put here for His whole
atoning work, as it is at once the proof of the reality and
completeness of His death as a sacrifice and the token of its
acceptance as a satisfaction by the justice of the Father.
Take the first thought.

Without the death of Christ there could be no "lively
hope" for man. However spotless the character, and how-
ever beneficent the miracles, though the life was a perfect
obedience, and the ministry a transforming power,—we are
reconciled by none of these. It is the shedding of blood
which has purchased the remission of sin. It is the *death*
of Christ by which we live. Anything, therefore, which has
a tendency to assure us of the reality of that death, cannot
but be grateful to us, for our mistrusts sometimes master
us, and the sun of our hope is apt to go down in storm
and shadow. Now that Christ died there is small contro-
versy. I say small controversy, because there have been
insignificant insinuations that He was but in a swoon at
the time of the removal from the cross, and that, recovered
by the loving care of His disciples, He perpetuated the

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great imposture which has commanded the belief of the world. It needs not to waste time in an answer to such an allegation, which you perceive, impugns the spotlessness of that life, whose pure morality kindled even the selfish heart of Rousseau into an admiration of enthusiasm. God has taken care to fence round the death of Christ with evidences which no sceptic can gainsay. The cross was reared in the very midst of the ages,—when men with sharpened intellects had begun to weigh evidence, and to guard against fraud,—when the schools had fostered an inquisitive spirit, and when there was a general avarice for knowledge. There was history when Christ was crucified, and that history records the fact from the pens of writers who were unfriendly to Messiah's claims. Even men's evil passions were made to subserve the purposes of divine attestation. The imperious Roman and the jealous and cruel Jew were equally interested in the frustration of imposture, and they join with swarth Cyrenian and cultured Greek in witness of the death of Jesus. The soldier who pierced Him bears testimony as important as if Providence and not Malignity had poised his spear ;—and the sepulchre hewn out of the rock, with its quiet clay and rich embalmments,—with its imperial signet and its pomps of guards, authenticates so that all the world may receive it that Christ did actually die. The Resurrection rests upon evidence equally and if possible more convincing. Sophistry itself might well be silenced before the vast accumulation of testimony which crowds around the forsaken tomb. It is right, therefore, that we should comfort ourselves as we stand by the grave of Jesus,—a grave now emptied of its tenant,—with the expectation of the blessings which His death was undertaken to procure. During the time of His innocent life, His announcement of His coming fate, and of the purpose of expiation which it involved, fell often upon the ears of His disciples, like a startling rain ; and on several occasions He taught them to anticipate His resurrection as the completion of His work, and that which was to vindicate His character, and approve

Him to have come down from heaven. And we, too, upon whom there has come fuller light from the descent of the Spirit, and from the fulfilments of the interpreting years,—we, too, may rejoice in this Easter-tide, even with exceeding joy. Jesus is risen!—then there has come a reversal upon the olden curse, and this noble nature of mine shall not cease in the tomb from an existence, whose rapture and whose resources it will but just have begun to feel. Jesus is risen!—then that terrible shadow which has clouded life, and kept the soul in bondage, is not invincible as I feared, and the stronger than he, who has conquered him and spoiled his goods, is my surety and my friend. Jesus is risen!—then the fear which has crept about my heart, like the mortal faintness about the life,—springs of the dying, need be my master no longer. Jesus is risen! and out of His tomb, into whose gloomy guardianship I cast my old despairs,—these raise for me acceptance and comfort and blessing, as the young lightnings are born out of the blackness of the cloud,—subdued and humbled beneath the unmerited mercy,—I walk freely on “begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.” But the Resurrection of Jesus is also the sweet token of the acceptance of His offerings on high. It was necessary, in order to assure the hearts of those who might believe on His name, that the prevalence of the Saviour’s sacrifice should be publicly declared. *He* knew that it was accepted when in the agonies of the cross. He spoke those meaning words, “It is finished,” so close was the harmony of counsel between the Son and the Father. But how was it to be manifested to the world,—to the heedful multitudes who awaited in wondering suspense the issue,—to the few true-hearted who had ventured on Him a Faith which was the common wonder and the common scorn,—to the disciples who laid down their hopes in obloquy, in the same sepulchre which held their Master’s body,—to the future ages, whose trust it was to secure, and whose hopes it was to enkindle for heaven? To these the only attestation could be by the

resurrection from the dead. Without this there would have been absolute uncertainty,—unending conflict of Faith with feeling, a blank earth, and a frowning heaven ; and even the most loyal of the adherents of the Nazarene might be excused, if he spoke of the trust regretfully as a dear relic of the past, upon which the hateful tomb had closed. “We trusted that it had been He who should have delivered Israel.” But the great triumph of the Resurrection chased all doubts away, and the three days’ suspense for the fortunes of the world was broken by an achievement of wondrous victory, which exceeded the loftiest thought and fondest dream of men. Hence the Apostle, in the exulting consciousness of privilege, asks—“Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea *rather*, that is risen again.” The argument in the fifteenth chapter of Corinthians goes even further. In that magnificent burst of mingled logic and eloquence, which has been selected by the Church as the requiem, in those words they express—in their last, fond lingering by their dead,—at once their triumph and their sorrow, the Apostle says :—“If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain, ye are yet in your sins.” It would seem from this that we are shut up to the Resurrection of Christ as a necessary preliminary to our salvation. And so it is : if Death had triumphed over our Champion, our doom must have been sealed for ever. Dark, indeed, would have been the destiny of a world of sinners if the Second Adam had lain powerless in the sepulchre which had entombed the first. “But now is Christ risen from the dead.” The chains of the olden bondage snapped when it was sought to bind them upon Jehovah’s fellow,—just as the withs, which would have fettered common men,—were as gossamer when Samson woke and tried them. “Now is Christ risen,” and therefore there is hope for the sinner. Our preaching is not vain ; there is a power in it which stirs the souls of the listeners. Sometimes gentle as the snow-fall, and sometimes resistless as the cataract, its influence descends, but it is the influence of

Jesus and the Resurrection. Your faith is not vain ; it rests upon sure promises and compasses mighty ends. Bravely does it upbear amid surrounding evil. Keenly does it pierce the invisible, as a land with which it dares to be familiar ; but it is Faith in a risen and exalted Saviour. Ye are not in your sins,—those of you who believe in Jesus,—for the victory of His Cross, declared by the marvel of His rising, has purged their every stain ; nay, they also that have fallen asleep in Christ are not perished as the scoffers slanderously affirm, the first fruits have been waved before the Lord, and the whole harvest of the immortal shall follow “they that are Christ’s, at His coming.” The whole ransomed universe, present at the Death of Death, shall swell the Triumph of Him who hath abolished him, and Creation in all its circlets shall echo to the one song, bursting from hearts which are glad in the fruitions of redemption,—“begotten again unto a lively hope.”

III. We can but briefly glance at the recompense in which this hope of the Christian is fulfilled—“to an inheritance.” The word at once traces the blessing to its source ; and humbles, at the outset, all the vapourings of human pride. An inheritance is neither reward of industry nor meed of valour. In its common acceptation, it comes upon those who inherit, at the moment of their birth—ere yet they have awaked to personal consciousness of being ; and there have been cases in which the wealthy or royal sire has died before his heir was born—and broad lands have had a baby for their owner—and imperial dignity has sat idly on the infant of an hour. It is by a like title that believers enter heaven. They cannot purchase it. They may not win its honours, as a knight his spurs, by bravery. They are heirs, because of their sonship—and their sonship is by adoption and grace. Boasting is excluded, and gratitude inspired by this boundless love of God.

Of this inheritance we are told that it is “*incorruptible*.” It does not contain the seeds of dissolution. There is nothing about it which tends to its own decay. This is the

first point of contrast between earth and heaven. Here all things are fleeting. Enjoyment, even of the keenest, wears itself out by its own continuity. Wealth brings a curse to those who hoard it. Renown pines in the lofty loneliness to which it has climbed. Pleasure palls upon the sense, even of her maddest slaves; the vile body itself—the vehicle of all enjoyment—falls away to corruption and the worm. But everything in heaven is of a nature that is fitted to survive. It is of the essence of celestial joy that it is changeless. This corruptible shall put on incorruption that it may be fit to enter upon it; there is no mixture, as here, of elements which chasten its raptures—there are no disturbing forces nor warring legions—nor crafty or vigilant foes.

“No slightest touch of pain, etc.”

It is *undefiled*. Herein the reason of its incorruptibility is found. It is earth's defilement which induces earth's putrescence. It may be, as some affirm, that there is no provision in the human anatomy for eternal existence; but death, in a sinless world, would have been but a chrysalis sleep—to be reproduced in a brighter and more glorious being. Death—a curse and a penalty—came only by sin. Banish sin from the world, and from the heart, and you have burnt out the seeds of the plague. But in heaven there is no sin; and where there is nothing which defileth, there can be nothing which decays. Listen to this, ye Christian warriors, struggling manfully against the evil of your own hearts, and longing for the time when you shall have full deliverance from its power. Yonder, in heaven—that heaven of which you have the lively hope in Christ—your highest ambition shall be realized. There shall be a world without a tempter, and a soul without a stain. The long night-watch of the soul shall be over. The morning cometh, and it broadens and brightens into a noon, whose sun shall never go down.

This inheritance “*fadeth not away*.” Then comes upon it rare enjoyments—no whisper of a change. Here we walk

amid the tombs of our pleasures. We remember them: how hot our pursuit—how fierce the brief delight—how speedy the unmasking of their hollowness. We thought the world an Eden—and each terrace and alcove a scene, God-ordered, and sparkling with his very light and beauty; but how we were deceived! We find it but a cemetery—grassy turf on graves, with urns full of ashes—here and there a broken column, and cenotaph that does not even tell us where the body of the departed lies. “Vanity of vanities”—so we scorn it. “Creatures made subject to vanity”—so bitterly we speak of ourselves. But yonder there will be neither consuming memories, nor boding fears. Once pass the portals of the inheritance, and you are safe for ever. It would be unparadised by thought of change or end. Its still waters always flow—its flowers always bloom. Its rest remaineth. Its knowledge grows—its purity shines—its friendships embrace for ever. Its God lives—an everlasting light—and in his presence is fullness of joy and pleasure for evermore—

“Reserved in heaven.”

Dear Friends,—This is a solemn occasion which has gathered us, and there are many lessons which we should fittingly learn. To myself it is personally admonitory. But two short years have elapsed since I set foot upon American soil; but in that period death has entered the house where I was first welcomed in New York, and has robbed it of one who was its ornament and strength; and the first kindly greeting into the New Dominion was from the lips of the dear friend whose loss we mourn to-day. How loudly the summons sounds—high above the tumult of the world’s furious voices—“Be ye also ready!”

How should the possession of the lively hope upbear the soul of the believer beneath present experience of trial? The inheritance is not now in possession. It is reserved in heaven. The Christian is not exempted from present visitations of sorrow. He becomes “acquainted with grief,” as was his Master. It is necessary for his discipline—for his

growth of soul—for the evolution of his perfect character—that it should be so; not as an arbitrary allotment, but as an arrangement, benign and effectual, it is “through much tribulation” that we enter the kingdom. In the haste and eagerness of spiritual youth, this necessity comes upon us as a new disappointment; but experience chastens our impetuosity, and we feel that when we have companied with stronger trials, we have, like Abraham, been entertaining angels unawares. Oh! there is many a grateful spirit which has learned to sing—

“I thought that the course of the pilgrim to heaven
 Would be bright as the summer and glad as the morn;”
 God showed me the path, it was dark and uneven,
 All rugged with rock and all tangled with thorn.
 I dreamed of celestial reward and renown;
 I asked for the triumph which blesses the brave;
 I asked for the palm-branch, the robe, the crown;
 I asked, and Thou showedst me a cross and a grave.
 Subdued and instructed, at length, to Thy will,
 My hopes and my longings I fain would resign.
 Oh, give me the heart that can wait and be still,
 Nor know of a wish or a pleasure but Thine.

The lively hope! How it should comfort the mourners, even in the time of their intensest sorrow. It is no sin to weep for the loss of friends. Rather it were sin not to weep, when God himself has scooped out the channel for our tears. Religion does not rest herself upon the ruins of nature. She looks upon a Rachael weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted in Ramah, and she has no word of rebuke for the mourning mother. She bids you listen to a bereaved father, sitting in all the majestic loneliness of sorrow,—“Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”—and then she takes you to the tomb of Lazarus, and, in the touching poetry in which St. John has painted that interesting scene, she tells you that “Jesus wept.” But the Christian must not be conformed to the world, “even in his grief. He must not sorrow as those that have no hope.” We have not

looked our last upon our friends. We shall see them again, not as we last saw them on earth—emaciate, feeble, plague-stricken, infirm—but in a beauty that is stainless and unfading, and in a youth which defies the years. I have known a case in which a mother mourned her son—a profligate, a criminal—and yet the hope sustained her, gave sublimity to her faith and intensity to her prayers, and encouraged her through humiliation, disgrace, degeneracy and public shame, to grasp the promise and to hold on to the undying word. If, in circumstances of such sharp contrast to those of the mourners of to-day, the Religion failed not of its comfort, what are your sources of consolation—yours, who mourn a son of fragrant reputation; “who wore the white flower of a blameless life;” who was affectionate to you and dutiful to God; in whom the love of Christ burned, and the zeal of holy labour dwelt like a consuming fire; who never made an enemy and never lost a friend; who left the witness that he rejoiced in dying, and has now, through the merit of the Redeemer, passed through Death triumphant home? Therefore, dear friends, comfort one another in this your hour of trial with these words.

OBITUARY NOTICE

OF

REV. ROBERT WATSON FERRIER, M.A.

BY REV. GEORGE DOUGLAS, LL.D.

After the presentation of the touching and tender truth to which we have listened, it now only remains that we gather up a few of the fragrant and sacred flowers of memory, and bind them into a precious and fadeless *souvenir* of the departed.

The late Rev. ROBERT WATSON FERRIER was born in this city on the 26th of September, 1838. It was his priceless privilege to be the son of a pious parentage, who made the sanctities of religion the laws of the household. By their Godly culture it may be truly said, that from a child he knew the Scriptures, and was nurtured under the sweet persuading influence of a holy example.

From his earliest years he gave evidence of considerable mental activity, and was animated by a strong thirst for knowledge, which gave promise of that ripe scholarship to which he ultimately attained.

Like many of those who, with high honor and signal success, have ministered at the altars of God, the desire to become a servant of the sanctuary and a minister of Christ early took possession of his mind, and, even prior to his entrance on the spiritual life, began to influence and direct his thoughts for the future.

It was the happiness of our departed brother to become savingly converted to God at the early age of twelve ; and

the spiritual change through which he passed was at once deep, luminous, and abiding. The character which was naturally gentle and amiable, as the result of this change, ripened into a pure and noble Christian excellence,—an excellence which kindled the admiration of all who came within its immediate influence.

And now the first yearnings of the heart for a ministerial life returned with redoubled power. Out of the affluence of a deep personal experience, he was fired with a holy ambition to proclaim the love of Jesus to perishing men. This, henceforth, was the master motive of his life.

Believing that a liberal and thorough education would be a valuable handmaid in the accomplishment of this, his life-work, he entered and graduated at the McGill University, and subsequently repaired to Edinburgh to enjoy the advantages which a residence in that famed seat of learning supplies.

In the attainment of a theological training, it was his rare privilege to sit at the feet of one of the first masters of theological learning which Methodism has given to the Church of Christ, viz., Dr. John Hannah,—a name which will be fragrant through the circling years.

While listening to the prelections of that venerable man in the Divinity Hall of Didsbury, he gathered those full-orbed conceptions of Scriptural truth which established his mind as on a rock, from which none of the subtle and specious theories of the age could move him, but which were to him a rest and rejoicing while life endured.

The result of a mental strain, endured through a series of years, began to tell on a somewhat fragile constitution. To recuperate his impaired energies, and secure that completeness of mental outfit which a course of travel in Classic and Oriental lands is believed to supply, he accompanied his parents to Egypt,—the cradle of the world's civilization,—and spent some months in visiting the sublime antiquities which grace the wondrous valley of the Nile.

And now we come to a point in his history where we can

only stand and say of God's dealings, "How unsearchable are Thy judgments, and Thy ways past finding out." Just at the moment when he seemed about to enter on the holy vocation, for which he had been arduously preparing, he was seized by an Egyptian fever, which prostrated, and smote, as with a paralysis, the energies of his constitution, casting the shadows of debility over the entire of his subsequent life.

Through a period of weakness and deep depression he walked for a time wearily. This was the most trying passage of his life, and nowhere was the hour and power of darkness more severely felt than during his sojourn at Mentona.

Gradually recovering, in part, his strength, he freely spent it in the service of his Master ; and after fulfilling his probation, he was, in this church, solemnly ordained to the office and work of the ministry in the spring of 1865.

In various fields of the church he rendered ministerial service, and the memory of his faithful and affectionate expositions of divine truth, combined with a painstaking pastoral oversight of those amongst whom he labored, lingers still in many grateful hearts.

Nearly eighteen months ago his ministry was suddenly closed by an attack of hemorrhage from the lungs. Henceforth his way was one of silent suffering and a beautiful acceptance of the will of God.

Like the autumnal leaves of our northern forests that put on their most warm and beautiful tints immediately before their death and sepulchre, so the experience of our deceased brother ripened into a moral beauty which was the assurance of hope and the true meetness for the beatific vision of God.

By medical advice he was led to seek a residence in Scotland. And now the stricken Benjamin of the household, separated from those who loved with a love stronger than death, and who, by that royalty of our common nature which clings all the more strongly to the feeble and failing,—separated from all, he entered into a covenant of prayer with

her who now mourns a sainted son. Through the earlier parts of his home correspondence we find constant allusions to this plighted hour of prayer. Thus, on November the fifteenth, he writes : " I could not account for some blessed thoughts and feelings which come over me again and again, I could not help saying to a friend that I felt as if they were praying for me at home. I rise into the assurance that God is over all and with me, ordering all things right, and I am in peace. Mother's hour is not forgotten." Again and again does he allude to this blessed covenant of devotion with his mother, which was seven here and midnight in Scotland. Another instance may suffice : " Tell mother whenever I hear the midnight strike, and I do so pretty often, I think that it is her exact hour, and a tear and a prayer are seen and heard by the Omniscient."

And now, it is touching and blessed to record that, as the weary pilgrim came towards the end of his pilgrimage, he, too, found the delectable mountains and the Beulah land, where no shadows of darkness or of doubt crossed his vision, but the " Lord was his light, and the days of his mourning were ended." Let him here speak for himself. Having alluded to his temporal condition, he says : " But these are small matters compared with what I have to write you to-day. How freely, fully, firmly, sweetly I have yielded to that love which I can withstand no longer. I cannot otherwise express the change of last night than by saying the power from above came over me suddenly, reviving every motion within me for God. I looked up and said, ' It is the Lord,' and, ever since, I have felt so sweetly resigned to the will of God, and so full of love to everybody and everything, that all former unpleasant feelings are gone, it seems, never to return. I cannot write ; my heart has scarcely let my hand get through thus far, and my tears of joy are coming so plentifully, that they must have been noticed. No matter, I shall rejoice to confess what they mean."

The fruit, rare and precious, of this baptism of the Spirit,

at once appears. Intelligence comes to the dying one of spiritual revival, and he responds, "I am gladdened to hear of a good movement in the church, and believe I have benefited from transatlantic prayers." Again, when he heard of some he knew coming to the Saviour, he exclaimed, "I am rejoiced at the news, truly I am full of joy, for am I not like Israel myself coming to Zion, returning and weeping,—I feel how very close must be the watch over self and clinging to Jesus, if one would walk wholly pure."

And thus was it with our brother through all his mortal affliction. The last sentence which he penned, only five days ere the hand that wrote it was palsied in death, was this: "I am very weak; but however these things be, my heart is fixed, and the Lord is with me by night and by day."

In this spirit he entered the "valley of shadows, fearing no evil." His last utterance was one of confidence, "I am in the Lord's hands, resigned to His will," after which he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

In the midst of those who knew his manner of life from youth upwards, it is unnecessary to dwell on those features of character which were manifest to all. It is enough to say that he was generous, independent, and gentle in spirit, dutiful and affectionate as a son, true as a friend, and faithful to God.

To the young men of this congregation he stands as an example of consecration to a noble work. Seldom has the world offered greater attractions to the youthful heart. By social status, and by the resources of enjoyment which wealth always supply, life opened before the departed with a rare brilliancy. Yet he gladly renounced all, and made his election for the Christian ministry, and to that election he was faithful unto death. Would that many young men might catch the fallen mantle of the ascended one, and, like him, offer all of life a sacrifice to God.

To the suffering he presents an example of that patience which, through years of debility, accepted the will of God, till finally it had its perfect work. And, though dead, his

triumphant death shall speak of the sufficiency of that grace which made him more than conqueror through the blood of the Lamb. Standing, as by that silent tomb, where to-night the weeping willow and the shadowy cypress sing their mournful requiem to the sunset breeze, we can say,—

“Rejoice for a brother deceased;
Our loss is his infinite gain.”

For

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord—they rest from their labors.”

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MINUTE OF THE MONTREAL DISTRICT
MEETING,

Presented at the Toronto Conference of 1870.

ROBERT WATSON FERRIER, M.A., son of the Hon. JAMES FERRIER, Senator, was born at Montreal 26th September, 1838, and died at Blairgowrie, Scotland, 2nd May, 1870, in the 32nd year of his age and eighth of his ministry. He was brought up by his parents "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and, at the early age of twelve, was soundly converted to God. Manifesting a strong desire for knowledge, and an aptitude for learning, he was thoroughly and liberally educated. During his entire collegiate course at McGill and Edinburgh Universities, and Didsbury Theological Institution, his Christian character was steadily maintained. Many were his efforts to commend the love of Jesus to others. His attainments as a scholar were considerable. In 1865, at the close of his probation, he was ordained to the work and office of the Ministry. His sanguine expectations, however, for a life of efficient service in the Master's vineyard, were not realized. From the effects of a fever, which prostrated him while travelling in the East, he never fully recovered. His vocation henceforth was suffering. But, as strength permitted, he labored with acceptance and profit. Brother FERRIER was remarkably kind-hearted and generous—independent, yet very affable. There was the beautiful blending of courtesy and firmness. His long affliction was borne with Christian cheerfulness. A year ago he

retired as a Supernumerary, and spent most of the time abroad in order to recruit his health, but without success. A letter written home, and dated 16th February last, touchingly describes his spiritual condition :—"I cannot otherwise express the change of last night than by saying, the power from above came over me suddenly reviving every motion within me for good. I looked up and said, it is the Lord, and ever since I have felt sweetly resigned to every pain and full of love to everybody. My heart has scarcely let my hand get through thus far, my tears of joy are coming plentifully—no matter, I shall rejoice to confess what they mean." From the moment of this baptism of the Holy Spirit until death he was unusually happy in the Lord. The last lines penned by our departed brother, which were received by his father and mother in Montreal after his decease, were : "My heart keeps fixed, and the Lord is with me by night and by day." On the evening of his death he retired at eight o'clock, and in about an hour he was away to his Father in Heaven.

