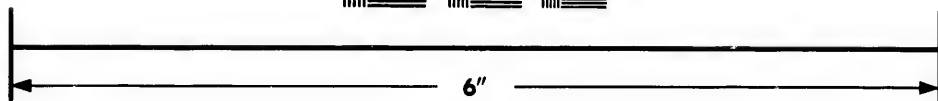
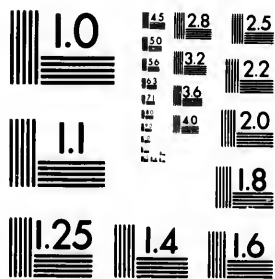
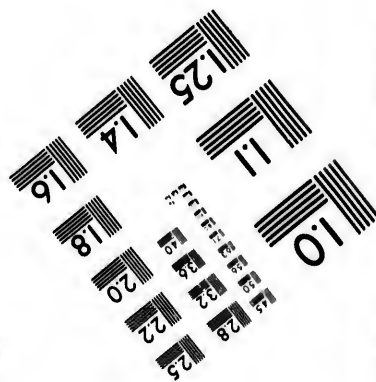
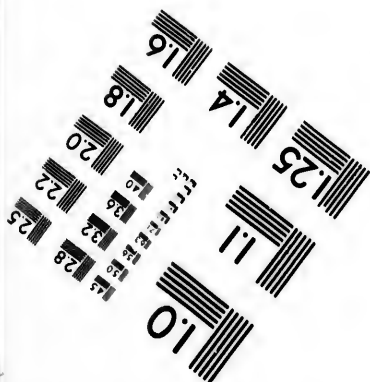


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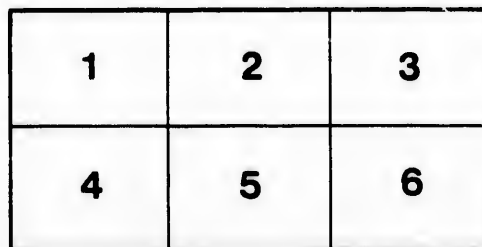
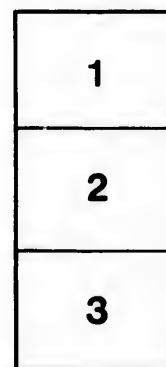
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In Memoriam.

The Good Fight

A Discourse

Preached in Presbyterian Church, Barrie,
1st January, 1893.

ON OCCASION OF THE

Death of Rev. Dr. Fraser

by

Rev. D. D. McLeod.

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The Good Fight.

*"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,
I have kept the faith."—2 TIM. iv. 7.*

THESE words are the language of a veteran saint, They express the view which he takes of his life, looking back upon it from the border of eternity, and to him it appeared to have been through all its course a fight. He is conscious that it now draws near to an end. He has struggled through it with a measure of success. He remembers the effort which it has cost him, and it is in no spirit of boastfulness that he gives expression to his confidence in these memorable words, "I have fought a good fight." Not merely the common battle of life, in which all men are called to bear their part, but the "good fight," the fight for the things that are good, for the faith of Jesus Christ, for the salvation of men, for the defence of the truth. And to contend for these objects embraces the use of every form of effort and every kind of weapon which the gospel allows.

The subject, then, brought before us in these words is this: That the Christian life is a life of conflict—conflict which ends in victory.

And the subject is a suitable one for us to reflect on this morning. Suitable whether we are looking back upon the year which closed upon us last night, or look forward upon the year which opens before us to-day. Suitable also as we are called this morning to reflect upon the passing away from our midst of one of the members of the congregation, one whom we all looked up to, both on account of his venerable age and his honoured position in the church of Christ.

" EVERY LIFE A BATTLE."

This text then teaches what our own experience has taught us ; that this life in the case of every man who seeks to make a right use of it, is a battle, and very specially is to the Christian a scene of discipline and conflict. Any one who has not recognised this, and who has not learned to look at his life in this respect, has not yet had his eyes opened to the position in which God has placed him. Sometimes life is spoken of as a pilgrimage, sometimes as a race that is to be run, but in every true representation of it there enters the idea of conflict.

There are those who are unwilling to acknowledge this view. They think they should be permitted to glide through the years like the vessel on the smooth, untroubled sea, with no storm to hinder and terrify them, no tempest to beat them back. And because they do not find life to be of this character, they murmur at divine providence and become discouraged and discontented. And there are those who would avoid the discipline and conflict of life by yielding to their desires, and to the temptations which arise in their path, and who seek their own way without respect to conscience, or to the authority of God. Life to them is not a good fight. It is a time of self-indulgence and in which conflict, so far as in their power, has been escaped. The fight which they have engaged in is a fight against conscience and against God, and that is a conflict in which

there never can be any success or any satisfaction. These who thus try to avoid this aspect of life are making a mistake. The truer view of our position is, that we are here to contend against evil, here to encounter and overcome difficulty, here to conquer and wrest from the circumstances of life that which is for our good. And every one who has been awakened to take a true view of life will regard it in this light. We are here in the midst of forces which hinder our progress, here in the midst of temptations which spring up from within and without, here where our fellow men are ever ready to take advantage of us, and to use us for their own ends, and if we would attain to any successful use of life we must be prepared to contend every day against these forces. To the great mass of mankind to live a useful and honourable life, to earn one's daily bread, to provide for the wants of the family is a hard battle, and one that has to be engaged in every day. In merely doing this common work of life there is much to endure and to suffer, and that life is the noblest, which presses on in the face of obstacles and enemies, and wins success by a manly struggle with these, and by a real and thorough overcoming of them. And in the common ranks of life God has many heroes and heroines. Many whose lives are felt by them to be a hard and constant battle and who with brave persistence and with faith in God press on in the path of duty. These are not forgotten of Him. No man has become great, or worthy to be considered great, who has not reached that position by a course of conflict against adverse circumstances. It may have been against the circumstances of birth, or education, or the difficulties which poverty surround us with, or the want of friends, or the enmity of his fellow men. Whatever it may have been, these obstacles have been overcome. The victory and the honour has been for him who fought, who refused to be overcome by these foes to his success, who toiled on

with a determination to reach the goal which he had set before him, and who used these very disadvantages to spur him on to greater effort. These disadvantages we complain of should rouse us to keener effort. Those hardships and trials which we have contended with have made us strong. They have opened our eyes to the reality of things. They have taught us the evil and the curse of sin, and the joy which attends the victory over evil. And indeed there is nothing really our own in the full sense, but that which we have conquered, that which we have fought for and so obtained. Conquest is the ultimate title to all possession. And there is no real joy in life but the joy which arises from our overcoming of evil. Happiness there then may be from many sources, but of the truest and deepest satisfaction of the soul, which is entitled to be called joy, that is only for the conqueror. Every life then is a battle. But the life we speak of here is the Christian life, and we find that in the fullest sense this language is true with regard to it.

The Christian life ever is and must be a scene of conflict and discipline. The great Captain of our salvation Himself the Lord Jesus Christ, "was made perfect through suffering." And all his followers are perfected in the same school. And it is very important that we should understand this and accept it as a principle of the kingdom of Christ. That this is the case—that suffering or painful conflict constitutes an essential element in the experience of the Christian may prejudice you against that life. Instead of the battle becoming easier in enlisting in the service of Christ it seems to become harder. New difficulties spring up and new problems meet you. And you require to exhibit a greater amount of courage and keep up a more constant watchfulness than you ever did before.

Our Lord does not conceal the fact that this will be the case from his followers. He gives you to understand

that in entering on his service, you enter on a life that will call forth all your manhood and all your courage. You enter on a life in which you will have to fight very earnestly for the victory "resisting even unto blood." But while that is the case, let us remember, that in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ there are compensations for this kind of life, and compensations in it ; namely this : That through these conflicts there come to us our highest spiritual joys, and out of these there come to us our most precious spiritual experiences. The Apostle on whose words we are dwelling, learned to glory in his infirmities, because he saw how through them there came to him richer blessing, and further knowledge of the divine will, how "the power of Christ rested on him."

Thus out of those things which we count evil God has brought forth good—highest good. All the wounds and bruises which we have received in the strife have turned out to the healing of the soul. And this becomes the settled conviction of the Christian. That this conflict though it has its painful hours is necessary, and through its painful hours is brought home to the heart the truth that the battle is not ours, but Gods, and he is with us in it. This now is our creed. The secret of the battle is found out. Then let us further remember, that on entering the service of Christ, the battle over a large part of the field is ended. Satan has been overcome, and many of those things which were a temptation, and which we had to fight against, we have to fight against no longer. The temptations fall away. We enter on a new liberty and enjoy a new mastery over evil. Thus these two elements serve to render the Christian conflict a very different thing from the conflict of life without the spirit of Jesus Christ with us.

Nor should we wonder at this—that the more earnestly one seeks to follow Him, the more good we strive to do, and the more unselfishly we seek to live, the more are the difficulties and opposition which we encounter. The care-

less and the indifferent who are not striving to follow Christ, meet with few difficulties. They are not striving to reach any high standard, and therefore do not feel how far short they come. But while this is the case, that the conflict thickens as we give ourselves to the service of the Master with greater zeal and fidelity, this does not discourage the true soldier but only nerves to further effort.

This discipline works out for us new blessings, new strength, new attainments.

The necessity for it is realized, and our faith is strengthened thereby. And the result of it is, that the feeble and the timid are transformed into the strong and steadfast soldiers of the cross, and the joy of victory becomes more constant and more exalted. It is realized that the fight is a "good fight." It is for the mastery over evil in every form, over the devil and over all his agents and agencies. This great servant of God whose words we are considering, entered with all his soul into the conflict and took all the trials and sufferings of it in a manly and heroic spirit. The mission in which he was engaged and the work which was given him to do was in his sight the very highest in which man could engage. The satisfaction which he had in making known the love of God to a perishing world and in leading souls out of darkness into the marvellous light of God, was a work in which the more he did, and the more he suffered, the more zealous he became in it. When he came to look back on his career he did so with the sense of having been engaged in a conflict, which was worthy of all his efforts, and in which he was willing to expend all that he had. Though his efforts may not have accomplished all that he desired, the work which he was engaged in was one in which he had the sympathy and countenance of his Saviour. And when he reflected that his whole efforts since he had come under the power of divine grace, were expended in trying to teach men the way of truth, and to save men from sin and from its in-

evitable consequence, everlasting perdition, and that his efforts had been greatly blessed to bring about these results, he could with all truth speak of his life as a "good fight."

How many are there looking back on life, who can see in it nothing but a long continued struggle to promote their own selfish interests, and the whole result of whose life work has been the accumulation of some of this world's property. They have done nothing for God or man. There has been no service rendered to humanity which they can look back upon with satisfaction. They have reached the end. The shades of night are falling upon the field, and they and their schemes are together swallowed up in the darkness. How much happier they who have contended throughout life for the triumph of righteousness, and whose efforts have contributed to the final victory over the evil forces of the world. The Apostle adds: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." And this is a great thing to be able to say at the close of life. Having for a lifetime laboured for humanity in the ministry of the gospel, and having by a consistent and devoted life testified on behalf of the gospel, the servant of God can say with very justifiable satisfaction "I have kept the faith." That is much to be able to say in the present day. But it meant more in the Apostle's day. To keep the faith entrusted to him then, was by no means an easy thing to do, or one unattended with suffering. The strongest answer which we can present to the assaults made upon our faith is a brave true Christian life. And the life which the apostle exhibited to his age was a testimony of the highest kind to the faith which he preached. And no assault made upon it, or upon him because of it, had any effect upon him. He went forward in his daily course of toil, of self-denial, of suffering, with cheerfulness, with courage, with hope, with a confidence in the final victory of his cause which no persecution could shake. He handed it down to those

who should come after him, as a faith which had proved its worth and strength in every conflict. There are those who in the strife lose confidence in "the faith once delivered to the saints." And who fear that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not equal to the work of saving the world, and has lost its power to take possession of men's hearts. Therefore they are disposed to depart from it, or to add to it. But the apostles did not find it a weak instrument in their hands. It was equal to all that was demanded of it, and by the preaching of it the kingdom of Satan was overthrown, and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ was established in many lands. And there is the same power in the gospel still, where it is preached with apostolic zeal and faithfulness. Therefore let us rejoice in those, who through long lives of toil and conflict have by the grace of God "kept the faith" entrusted to them, and who have handed it down to us as they received it, in its fullness and purity. Let us set a just value upon their lives, and upon that which they have left us. And let us also fight the "good fight," finish with diligence the course appointed to us, and "keep the faith."

Let us mark briefly—the crown of victory—the reward of the righteous.

The Lord does not ask us to serve him without recognition from him. But that full and sufficient recognition of all that his servants have done in his name shall not be made here, on the earth, but in the future world. Here we must bear the cross. But the patient bearing of the cross will end in our receiving the crown of everlasting reward. There will be in the day of final award a great reversing of the positions which men have occupied in relation to one another on the earth. And the servants of God who have toiled and suffered here without adequate recognition, or without recognition at all, shall in that day receive the crown. Of the glory of that crown we cannot speak, because we do not understand the nature

of it. But we know it carries with it the joy and blessedness which Jesus Himself shares. It is the emblem of eternal victory and eternal glory ; says the apostle, to be given " not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." And of these there are many. Unknown yet true and faithful servants, as well as many who march at the head of the army amid the blare of trumpets ; for all, the crown remains. They who here in the world's judgment were least and lowest, and most to be pitied, are there the crowned ones, the occupiers of thrones, thrones that abide.

Let us then fight on, wherever our post may be, high or low, let us keep the faith as we would keep life itself, and then we will be prepared for " His appearing."

If then it is justifiable to apply the language of the text to any sphere of human life, it most certainly may be applied with truth now as in the apostles' day, to the ministers of the gospel and especially to those who entered upon their work in the backwoods of this country forty or fifty years ago. And there were a number of able men who willingly gave themselves to this pioneer work, and with a spirit of self-denial continued in it for a lifetime. They laboured in the remote and new settlements then existing, sharing the rough experiences of their people, and with diligence and faithfulness laid the foundations of the communities growing up around them, in the principles of the Word of God. Their position in these charges was one of great usefulness and influence, but also one of much difficulty.

The minister of a small and struggling charge has a position and work far more difficult to fill than his, who has a large and prosperous congregation. This is always the case. It is as true to-day as in those earlier days. We should remember that these smaller charges constitute the great majority in the church, and contain the majority of the members in the church. The

character and life of the church therefore depends on the condition of these smaller congregations, rather than on the larger. And the strength and influence of the Presbyterian church have arisen in a great measure from the fact, that in these small rural congregations even in the remotest corners of the land, men of ability and education have been content to labour, and to spend their lives. And it is from these congregations that a stream of members has been constantly flowing forth and filling the ranks of the Churches in the towns and cities of the land.

The continuing to labour for many years, perhaps a lifetime, in such narrow fields, required men of strong faith, and of heroic spirit.

Because the minister in such a field has special difficulties and discouragements which his brother in the city congregation knows nothing of. There is in the first place, the small remuneration which he receives for his work. Small, that is to say, in comparison with what he might have secured had he devoted his talents to some other calling. Small in view of the requirements of his family, and sometimes small in comparison with the means of many of those to whom he was preaching the gospel. His circumstances did not always improve with the increased wealth of his people. Not infrequently of all in the community, he alone had to live on upon the same amount of stipend as he had been paid in the early days of people's poverty. A much better state of things exists now throughout the smaller congregations in the church. The people are now abundantly able to sustain the gospel with liberality, and are becoming more alive to their obligations. They are also coming to know, that to maintain a poorly paid ministry, is to bring an inferior class of men into the pulpit, and to have the work done in a very imperfect manner.

But this is not the greatest of difficulties with which a pastor has to contend in a small rural charge.

There is in such a field very little to encourage or stimulate the minister in his work. There is little opportunity of intercourse with kindred minds, wherein is so great a help to one engaged in the work of the ministry. And in our church such ministers are left by the church very much to themselves. We boast of our system as developing a spirit of mutual dependence and help between the congregations of a district, but practically no such thing obtains. We are in this respect practically Congregationalists. If Congregationalists prefer to live apart and alone, each church by itself, they would have the widest and freest opportunity of doing this in the Presbyterian church.

The country minister has to bear his trials alone, and the little controversies and quarrels which are inevitable in such a community, are often very injurious to the prosperity and progress of the cause of religion. To continue to preach the gospel with faithfulness, and in a hopeful spirit for a period of half a century with very small remuneration, and often very little to encourage one, sometimes in the face of cruel ingratitude, and of a congregation gradually diminishing entitles the servant of God to say, "I have fought a good fight." He has not had the same kind of enemies to contend with as the apostle had, but he has had as real enemies. His life has been as much a fight. A fight against ignorance, and evil report, and poverty, and discouragement. A kind of fight, which it requires a brave spirit to carry on, and to overcome in.

It is a life totally different from that of the minister who lives in abundance and even luxury from year to year. Who has his repeated and protracted holidays. Who has frequent help in his pulpit from visitors of note. Who never knows what it is to wait for payment of his salary, or to receive it in small instalments at intervals. Who has no

anxiety over the loss of one family or one individual from his congregation, and who has many helps and encouragements such as are always experienced in a populous and wealthy community.

It requires great grace to put into such a life of luxury the qualities required in the life which toils in obscurity and privation in some unknown corner of the land. Such inequalities of experience have always obtained in the church, and will obtain, until the church possesses more of the spirit of Jesus Christ, and therefore more wisdom in conducting His affairs.

When that day comes, there will be a change. It is not union of the churches that is wanted at present in order to show the power of the gospel, it is very much more the spirit of brotherhood within the churches—a spirit almost banished from them, and finding its development in societies outside of the church, and the spirit of unselfishness and justice. When the church has got up to the Old Testament requirement of “doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God,” then she may be able to go forward and exhibit more of the New Testament standard of religion. The wealthy minister of the gospel, like other wealthy men receives many “good things” in this life, but the minister who has walked in the self-denial and poverty and patience and loneliness of his master for a lifetime, has to wait for his good things in the life which is to come.

This toiling on in hardship and obscurity is not a thing to boast of, or to complain of. It is, nevertheless, a life which can only be the outcome of a religion that is not superficial but that has its roots deep in the heart, and is built upon a strong foundation. The religion of these pioneer ministers of the gospel was not reserved for special efforts, and special occasions, but made its influence felt every day and on all occasions. It taught that it was a better test of religion to be honest in buying and selling, to

keep the Lord's day with reverence, to observe his worship with regularity, to support his cause, to honor father and mother, and have respect to The Commandments of God, than to merely testify with the lip to a high spiritual experience. It was a religion which was humble, and silent, but which tried to walk in the Statutes of the Almighty. It flourished in obscurity, and was as faithful in ministering to a score of poor people as though the occasion and the numbers were much more imposing. Toiling through storms of snow and frost, or roads almost impassable with mud, to reach that handful of people, and keeping this up for forty years without break or cessation, faithful in all the varied duties and offices of the ministry, keeping every appointment, taking part in every work that was conducive to the welfare of the people, visiting and preaching from house to house, undergoing the trials of life with patience, and bearing the burdens of the people in a spirit of sympathy, preaching from Sabbath to Sabbath at stations far apart from one another, and doing this from one year to another without thought of a holiday, doing it all in contented submission to the divine will, "knowing how to be abased and how to abound; everywhere and in all things instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

One would imagine that a record of this kind—that one who had lived in this way, would at the close of such a career be regarded with honour, and be willingly supported in the declining years of his life by the church at large with a measure of comfort. But such does not appear to be the estimate which our church places on the life spent in that way. Indeed it would appear as if length of service and experience in the work of the church, constituted no claim to additional confidence, no claim to honour. The old and faithful minister is in many cases, regarded not as one whom it should be an honour to cherish, but as an encumbrance to be got rid of, and for

the venerable servant of God there is reserved neglect and poverty, while for the youthful minister who takes his place, untried in every form of ministerial duty there is abundant honour and support. This is not as it should be. It is not so in any other important calling in life. Only in the church of God, does increase of knowledge and experience and capacity go for nothing, and a premium is placed upon inexperience and ignorance. The first effect of a revived religious life will be to reverse this state of things, but that revival under our present system of building up the church by unordained men is yet a long way off. The manner in which infirm and aged ministers are treated when no longer able to work is far from creditable to the church. To the burden of age is often added the burden of anxiety and care in regard to the necessities of life, and the evening of life is spent under the shadow of a penury which is a discredit to our religion and a proof that the Spirit of Christ is not in us, whatever boast we may make.

I am not speaking here of any individual case, but I do not think a reference to the subject is out of place at this time. It is a living question and one which seriously affects our church, and the discussion of it should be continued until the evil is remedied. The church owes to those ministers who have spent their lives in its service and who have not had opportunity or skill to make provision for old age, that they should receive an adequate support—a support not given as a charitable dole, but as the discharge of a just obligation. There is no class of citizens to whom a larger debt is due for the good they have done than the aged and faithful minister of the gospel. The moral greatness and influence of such a life and work does not depend upon the intellectual ability, or eloquence of the man, but upon the long and well spent life, which by its influence and example, by its sympathy and encouragement of all good work, of all noble effort, by its honest fulfilment of

life's duties, by its diligence, by its devotion to spiritual things, by its cultivation of the mind, and of the heart of the people, has made an impression on the life of the country which shall last through many generations. And in this age when man makes haste to be rich, when ministers like others are seeking, to be placed in positions of prominence, when men are disposed to look slightly on the silent continuous forces which do after all mould the character of a people, and to forget that the whole fabric of human society rests upon the lives and labours of those who are faithful in that which is least, it is our duty to reflect upon the life of the servant of God which has been of the character I have described and pay to his memory such a tribute of honour as is just.

I have made these remarks in view of the removal from our midst by death, of Rev. Dr. Wm. Fraser, for twelve years a member, and for seven years an elder in this congregation.

It is fitting that we should reflect on this event, not only because Dr. Fraser was a member of this congregation, but on other and broader grounds. Apart altogether from his ecclesiastical connections, his life is one which has been so useful in many relations, and marked by qualities so admirable, that it deserves to be spoken of.

My acquaintance with the deceased has been comparatively brief. At the same time it has during these few years, and particularly in the closing period, been intimate. So that although I cannot speak from personal knowledge of the work which he has done in this part of the country for more than half a century, my acquaintance with him enables me to speak with some appreciation of his character. Some months ago, when parting with him before going to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in Montreal, he spoke as if we might not meet again, and among other things said: If you are called upon to speak of me after I am taken away, see that you

do not speak of me in terms of praise! Because when I look back upon my life I see it to have been marked with many imperfections and I do not deserve praise for anything I have done. This consciousness of his unworthiness he felt with ever increasing force until the end, and was one of many indications during his confinement in his last illness, that he was daily growing in grace. It would be out of place here to say anything concerning him that would be in the slightest degree exaggerated. Nor would our own feelings of respect for him lead us to do so. In what I say therefore I only desire to pay to his memory a just tribute of our esteem. And to speak of him as he was known to the generation in which he lived, and for which in his own sphere he laboured with so much diligence and with so conscientious a regard to the responsibilities laid upon him. The more prominent features in the character of Dr. Fraser, as it was known outside of the family circle, were easily recognized. He was a man of a calm and even cautious temperament, not liable easily to be moved out of the even tenor of his way. His emotional nature was kept in subordination. ~~And~~ even when under strong feeling he still gave expression to his sentiments in deliberate and studied language. Being of this balanced temperament, he carried into the work which he undertook a clear and deliberate judgment. ~~And~~ having entered upon it he performed it with a thoroughness and conscientiousness, which could scarcely be surpassed. He found the greatest satisfaction not merely in the work itself in which he may have been engaged, but his satisfaction was also in the fact that the work was done with accuracy and completeness. Whether what he was doing was something of great importance, or merely a matter of form and of very little consequence, it was done with the same carefulness and attention to detail. He may sometimes have carried this feature to excess. But even supposing that to be the case, he showed in this one

element of character, that he possessed that essential quality of moral eminence which has been well called a "firmly accentuated conscience." And that quality of mental eminence which is the basis of all successful labour, namely the recognition of the importance of that which is least, as well as of that which is greatest.

It was this feature of character which fitted him so thoroughly for the various positions which he held in connection with the educational system of the country, and also in connection with the courts of the church. ~~And~~ I think it would scarcely be possible for any man to have discharged these duties with greater fidelity and accuracy than Dr. Fraser. The records which he has left behind him, of the baptisms and marriages which took place forty or fifty years ago, in the fields in which he then laboured, as well as other records left by him, show, that this feature of thoroughness and attention to form and to detail characterized his work throughout. ~~And~~ we can scarcely overestimate the important influence of such a character in the time and in the society in which Dr. Fraser's lot was cast, and in which he occupied so honoured a place. This prominent feature of his character, this love of accuracy and finish in what he did and said, I think will be acknowledged by all who were acquainted with him. ~~And~~ as I have indicated behind this and kindred elements of character, there was a high conscientiousness. Those of you who are familiar with the toil of the earlier years of the Doctor's pastorate, who have known the hardships of an earlier generation, who know what it involved in those days to travel from one station to another, know with what determined regularity the pastoral duties of our departed Father were performed. There was in him, in addition to the conscientious determination to carry out what was expected of him, an element of celtic resoluteness which added strength to his character, and together these made it sure, that whatever appointment Dr. Fraser had

made it would be attended to with punctuality, no matter what the difficulties might be which lay in the way. Besides this Dr. Fraser was a man of entire veracity and honesty. Therefore through all the years in which he moved up and down among the people scattered over a wide section of country, he was regarded with confidence, as one on whose wise counsel and whose unselfish aid they could at all times rely. It was by the force of these elements of character of which I have spoken, that the Doctor has gained the high place which he holds in the regard of the people of this county. For he was not a man who could or would court popularity by any of the arts to which sometimes weak men resort. He would discharge his duty to the very least tittle of it. But he would do it from his own sense of duty, and he would do it as he thought it ought to be done in the sight of God, whether it might be popular or unpopular. Such a pastor among a people capable of appreciating worth, and capable of recognising in a man and his work the elements which are of value in ministerial work, would have been cherished to the last, as one whom it was a privilege to be associated with, and whom it was an honour to sustain. We often hear it said, that it is the life which we lead, and which the world can read and judge, that is the strongest witness to our Christian faith, if it be a life in harmony with the principles of the gospel. and that is true. ~~And~~ the fact that for more than half a century Dr. Fraser lived before the world in his public office and in every other relation a consistent Christian life, that in the midst of the hardships and toil incident to the life of a pastor in a new section of country, he discharged important public duties, both for the state and for the church, and that he brought up a large family, and gave to them an education which has fitted them to hold honourable positions in the country, constitute a claim to the

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highest honour, and is a witness for religion which will abide, and tell with effect long after he has passed away.

Dr. Fraser was an example in a marked degree of the power of early religious association. He was the product of a school of religion which is not known much in this locality among us, but which was and is well known in Scotland, and in other parts of our church in this country, and which was transplanted in all its native vigor in Nova Scotia. The religious type of character which was prominent in him, was derived from that branch of Scottish Presbyterianism which was called the Secession Church—and which form of Presbyterianism produced a race of religious people characterized by a staunch adherence to principle, by a spirit of devotion to the formal duties of the church, and by a steadfast loyalty to the truth as apprehended by them.

It was not a school in which emotional religion was encouraged. On the contrary the enthusiastic expression of religious feeling was rather kept down, and the religious sentiment found expression in the faithful discharge in a serious and silent manner of the duties which the occasion demanded. Dr. Fraser was naturally of a reticent disposition; though in later years, he took pleasure in expatiating on the religious questions of the day, and in recalling the incidents and acquaintances of his earlier years. His mind was stored with interesting facts connected with the earlier history of the country and the church. Of his own religious feelings he was not disposed to speak, but towards the close of his illness he spoke without reserve to his intimate friends of the light in which he regarded the labours of his life, and of the faith and hope which sustained him in the prospect of eternity. With expressions of deepest humility, and in that clear manner of expression which was customary with him, he spoke of his perfect reliance on the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his desire to bow to the will of God. It was a great

privilege to have the opportunity of intercourse with him during the whole of his retirement from public duty. He was naturally of a sensitive disposition, and received with much appreciation the visits and attentions of his friends who came from far and near, to express their sympathy with him. And although his views of religion, and his habit of religious life were such as I have indicated, his whole course of life, and the position which he took on all public questions made perfectly manifest his sympathy with whatever tended to promote the religious life of the community.

As an elder and member of this congregation, he was as we would expect, faithful and conscientious in the discharge of any duty entrusted to him, and as long as his strength permitted, was never absent from his place in church and prayer meeting. He frequently visited the Sabbath School when he was able, and would take charge of a class of children, when asked to do so, with as much interest and vivacity as the younger teachers around him. His relations with brethren of other churches were always friendly. He frequently gave help in supplying the pulpit of one of the churches of the town, in the absence of the pastor, and everyone in the community of whatever church, who had any acquaintance with him, regarded him with the highest esteem. In the cause of temperance he took a warm interest, and gave all his influence to uphold it.

For a number of years he acted as President of the Bible Society and gave much time and care to the discharge of the duties of that office.

He was a man who was diligent in business. When no longer able for public duty, or to go in and out in the congregation as in the days of his health, he devoted much of his time to reading and correspondence, taking an interest in the religious discussions of the day and in such literature upon it as he could procure.

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He was of a most hospitable and kind disposition and as far as his means allowed was generous in the support of every good cause. His conversation was at all times instructive and enlivened with interesting and humorous incidents and anecdotes of the past.

And in reviewing his character, all who knew him, knew him to be a man of decided convictions, who was prepared to defend them and to advocate them, whatever might be the opposition he had to meet.

Altogether he was a venerable and worthy servant of God whom to know was to esteem and honour, and when he came to die, he was enabled by the grace of God, given to him, to look forward into the unknown with a calm and unshaken faith. The closing months of suffering greatly ripened his christian character as he himself gave testimony. And he passed away as he had desired, without a struggle, in the assured hope of a child of God, entering into his rest, and entering on the enjoyment of the reward which awaits the faithful servant of the Lord.

It is right that we should not permit his death to pass without reflecting upon the lessons which it teaches us. And the lessons which come to us from his life, and from his dying bed, are the same as we have been taught from the beginning. That a life spent in the service of Jesus Christ is the most useful and honourable, as well as the happiest kind of life. That it brings to us a daily satisfaction and secures for us a peaceful and honored old age. That the memory of the just is blessed, and the influence and example of a consistent christian life is the best legacy we can leave our fellow-men. And further, it teaches us, that when we come to die, there is no other thing in which we can find comfort, which brings peace to the conscience, and fills the heart with hope, than the gospel of Jesus Christ. The oldest saint still finds his comfort and his salvation only in the cross of Jesus Christ. Our good works afford us no ground of confidence at such a time,

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but only the finished work of Christ. Let us open our hearts to the lessons which come to us from the life and death of our departed father and friend. Let us now while the day of grace lasts, accept the offered salvation, that we may look into eternity without fear, and may when our time comes, enter into the rest and blessedness and glory of the heavenly kingdom, with all those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

This venerable servant of Christ entered into his rest on Sabbath last, December 25th, 1892. He had reached his eighty-fifth year, and was ordained to the ministry in September, 1834. He was born in Nova Scotia, and received his education under Dr. McCulloch, at the Pictou Academy. In the year of his ordination, along with the Rev. Alexander McKenzie, he came to Upper Canada, and became minister of the congregation at Bond Head, in connection with the Missionary Presbytery of the Canadas, afterwards the United Presbyterian Church in Canada. On the death of the Rev. William Proudfoot, in 1851, Mr. Fraser became Clerk of the Synod of that Church. At the Union of 1861 he became associated with the Rev. Dr. Reid in the clerkship of the Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church; and at the Union of 1875 he and the late Professor Mackerras, became the Recording Clerks of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Constrained by the infirmities of age, Dr. Fraser, to the great regret of all his brethren, resigned his office at the last meeting of the General Assembly; the Assembly putting on record its expression of gratitude to God for the valuable services to the Church which Dr. Fraser had rendered during so many years, and its prayer that the God of all grace would continue to be his support and comfort in his declining years, and that, relieved of the cares of office, he might be spared for a good season to enjoy well-earned rest.

