



I am, Ever Yrs affectionately,  
Thomas Houston.

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## Jehoiada's Memorial among the Kings.

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“ But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died ; an hundred and thirty years old *was he* when he died. And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.”—2 Chron. xxiv. 15, 16.

JEHOIADA, there is reason to believe, filled the distinguished office of high priest. The decisive authority that he exercised, the wide influence he possessed, his close relationship to the royal family, and the unprecedented honour accorded to him by the nation, all seem to presuppose this high official distinction.

At the time of his death, Jehoiada had reached an age far transcending the usual period of human life ; yet his last years were full of active exertion and intrepid exploits, while his predominant influence seems to have sustained no marked abatement. This has led to the conjecture that, in stating the number of his years as 130, an error must have crept into the text. But on the ground of mere probability we are not warranted to tamper with the integrity of the written Word. In the Old Testament long life and prosperity were associated with the pious and faithful observance of God's commandments, and were recognised as a palpable and sacred emblem of the “glory, honour, and immortality” that were devoutly sought for beyond the grave. Most of God's eminent servants lived to the full term of allotted earthly existence ; and many of them were permitted greatly to surpass it when work for which they were specially fitted required to be completed. In the respect and veneration implicitly offered to

them they consciously began, even in this life, to enjoy the promised reward of faithful service. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Unwasted by protracted disease, undamaged by a season of prolonged decadence, "full of days," and satisfied with life, they looked forward calmly and wistfully to the time of their departure as to a natural and necessary transference to a higher scene of riper and more satisfying existence. "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

The Jews were required to bury their dead at some distance beyond the walls of their cities. A limited exception, however, obtained in favour of the kings. David had a magnificent rock-hewn sepulchre prepared for himself and his successors in the outer side of the hill of Zion. The place is still visited, and distinguished as the "Sepulchre of David," or the "Tombs of the kings." Of the twenty-two kings of Judah who reigned at Jerusalem, only eleven found a resting-place in this royal mausoleum in the city of David. Impious and idolatrous kings received the flattery of sycophants, and the passive or enforced homage of the populace, while they were in power; but at their death, the moral sense of the people, long outraged by deeds of profanity and unrighteousness, gathered and darkened like a thunder-cloud, until it burst forth in a decisive declaration that they were not worthy to be buried among the favoured kings whom God had chosen, as the royal line from which the Messiah should ultimately spring. Of the king who died in Jerusalem immediately before the death of Jehoiada, and also of the one who died immediately after, it is significantly recorded that "they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings." This was an extraordinary indignity, a deliberate blot upon their memory, pronounced and enforced by the indignant sense of the people foreshadowing the sentence of the final judgment. And not less extraordinary, on the other hand, was the sudden and resistless decree of the same people, that their aged priest, who had so long and faithfully maintained the cause of God in Israel, and whose many and redoubted services had conferred such signal advantages upon the nation, should receive at his burial the very highest

honour which it was in their power to bestow, and from which so many kings had been excluded. "And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house." This was a unique and unparalleled distinction, spontaneously awarded in acknowledgment of his lofty character, surpassing achievements, and transcendent goodness, by a grateful and admiring people. The great principles of the Divine government, announced in the earlier books of Scripture, are seen thus to come into sure and decisive operation. Elihu, at a remote period, had given utterance to these emphatic words: "He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted."

It will be interesting to inquire why this distinguished and unparalleled honour was bestowed upon Jehoiada. The ordinary events of his life are left unrecorded. Only a few of the achievements and occupations of his latter years have found a place in the inspired history. These may be taken as a sample of the whole. The brief and simple memorial, traced by a Divine finger, which still stands like an imperishable epitaph over his grave, gathers up his whole life-work into a single garland of universally acknowledged and accomplished goodness, and serves to shed a flood of benignant and almost celestial light back over the entire extent of his untransmitted biography—"because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house." Greatness is not ascribed to him, unless in so far as it must be inferred from such surpassing and accomplished goodness. We are not told that he towered above his fellows in the display of superlative talents, of vast erudition, of resistless eloquence, or of refined and courtly wisdom. The common worldly ambition of personal eminence, of party celebrity, or of official dignity and distinction, does not seem to have formed a noticeable factor in the formation of his character. Not solicitous about the honour of his own name, never seeking great things for himself or his family, the whole current of his life was directed, in its steady and persistent strength, into those channels which duty and Providence opened

before him. He was thus constantly, though, it may be, unconsciously, exerting a mighty and far-reaching power for good through all classes, while diligently engaged in the ordinary discharge of his official functions; and, when circumstances arose, demanding the initiation of unusual and perilous events, concentrating all his talents, authority, and resolution in the task, he suddenly became great and renowned by the combined force of the transparent goodness of his character, the goodness of his motives, the goodness of his cause, the goodness of the measures and agents which he called into requisition, and, above all, the excellence of the work he so successfully achieved. Rising by this emergency, full-orbed and radiant, out of his former obscurity, he imprinted a brilliant and abiding memorial of his worth on the hearts of a people, and on the annals of the Church, more benignant and desirable than that of kings—"because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house."

In being called to improve the removal of my loved and venerated father and friend, Dr. Houston, from his multifarious labours in this congregation and in the Church for the space, I may say, of fifty-five years, to his rest and glory above, I have felt irresistibly impelled to the use of this text. I can think of no other which so exactly depicts the whole spirit and character of the man, and which so accurately expresses the common, the universal judgment as to the aim and result of his life-long labours. Besides, it was long ago incidentally suggested to me by himself. It is now many years since, in one of the free and confidential conversations which I often enjoyed with him—when, perhaps, overwearied in body, but still genial and child-like in spirit—we were speaking of the heavy abatements and discouragements which faithful servants of Christ must be prepared to encounter in comparison with the cheaply-earned popularity of many others, he quietly remarked that we must be prepared to labour for the glory of Christ and the advancement of His cause without any thought of present reward or even personal acknowledgment; and for his own part, he would desire no higher memorial to be placed over his grave when his labours and toils on earth were ended than that "he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and

toward his house." That observation, his ever onward, disinterested and unsparing course of public service for the good of Zion, never permitted me long to forget. However others might affect to undervalue his powers, or discourage or depreciate at times his fertile and perhaps somewhat too sanguine proposals, I could not but feel that, beyond us all, he was doing immense good in Israel, both toward God and toward His house. When I recall the fact, that, from year to year, during the whole course of his ministry, it devolved upon him to keep the claims, first, of the Home Mission and then of Foreign Missions, before the Church, and remember the full, hearty, stimulating reports he presented to Synod; and also the fact, that no literary service laid upon him by his brethren was ever declined, so that to his pen we were largely indebted for our Historical Testimony, Book of Discipline, and other Synodical publications; that he was never absent from his place in any of the courts or committees of the Church, and that in everything affecting her spiritual and material well-being, with voice and hand he was uniformly in the front, how can I do less than say, as I look back over his long ministry—"he hath done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house." As, one after another, in rapid succession, his many publications issued from the press, produced in the midst of cares, distractions, and pastoral and professorial labours that would have been of themselves more than sufficient for any ordinary man, and were possibly treated in some quarters with polite indifference or unsympathetic and unfriendly critiques, my whole heart and conscience constrained me, as I am constrained this day, to pronounce over each the admiring and hearty plaudit—"he hath done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house." And now that his restless, self-sacrificing, consecrated life—which, for the benefit of others, was graciously extended to almost ten years of unslackening activity beyond the usual term—has literally spent itself out in ceaseless and noble exertions for the common good, and for the good of posterity, what is the verdict which we are constrained to pronounce, with all solemnity, over his grave as to the character and value of his services as a whole? What is the spontaneous testimony of your hearts to-day, and of the whole

community around, and of the Church with which he stood immediately connected in this and other lands, and of many thousands, far and near, who have known him by reputation, by correspondence, or by his books? I venture to say that of very few since the days of Jehoiada who have been specially honoured and commemorated for their signal services to the Church, considering all their environments, can it be said with more heartiness and truth than of the late Dr. Thomas Houston that they deserve to be kept in loving and everlasting remembrance, "because they have done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house." May a double portion of his earnest, loving, devoted spirit now descend upon each one of us!

Let us first very briefly survey the good work which Jehoiada was honoured to effect, that in the reflex light of the great and important services he rendered we may be enabled to analyse and reproduce the character of a man, of whose personal history so little is recorded.

#### I.—THE GOOD THAT JEHOIADA EFFECTED IN ISRAEL.

(1). By far the most prominent and important work wrought in Israel during a period of terrible disasters—and wrought mainly by the instrumentality of the aged high priest—was *the marvellous preservation and restoration to the throne of Judah of the royal seed of David*. The Lord had graciously promised to David that his descendants, in the line of Solomon, should be continued upon the throne—"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." Upon the fulfilment of this far-reaching promise the mightiest issues were seen to depend. The building of the temple and the preservation of the true religion and worship of Jehovah, the continued safety of the kingdom, and at length, from the same royal seed, the rising up of David's greater son and Lord, upon whom the brilliant hopes of the past, the immeasurable interests of the present dispensation, and the ineffable glories of the future all centre—these were embraced and secured in the royal promise and charter which God had given to His servant. And to assure the hearts and strengthen the confidence of the people in after

generations this grant was confirmed in the most sacred and irrevocable manner. "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." When Athaliah, the wicked and imperious daughter of Jezebel, found that her son had been cut off by the avenging hand of Jehu, in the madness of her rage she formed the diabolical plot of destroying all the seed royal of the house of Judah, who were her own grand-children. But from the bloody fangs of this fierce tigress, and from under the heap of murdered princes, the wife of Jehoiada, in the merciful providence of God, succeeded in snatching the infant Joash, and secreting him in the temple precincts. There, by the anxious care of the high priest, he is guarded and nurtured for six years, almost under the eyes of Athaliah, in the full hope and confidence that the Lord would restore once again that sundered line, on which the destinies of the kingdom and of the world depended. When the hour for action came, this faith was gloriously justified and substantiated by his works. Having secretly concerted his measures with the utmost foresight and skill, he "brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king; and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king." Never, perhaps, in the world's history was a revolution so vast and dangerous effected so speedily and in so bloodless and perfect a manner.

(2). He brought both people and king back to that God from whom they had so deeply revolted in *an act of solemn covenant renovation*. There was nothing, on Jehoiada's part at least, of a factional or partisan character, in this great and sweeping revolution. If he had been open to the influences of personal interest he might have given to the movement a very different destination. His own wife had a much better claim to the throne than Athaliah. It was God's covenant with the house of David that determined and justified the conduct of the priest throughout this memorable crisis. His aim was deeply religious, as well as patriotic and loyal; so that all the good he was successful in achieving for Israel was done "toward God, and toward his house." But however lofty his own motives, the work would have been very inadequately and



insecurely accomplished, had he not succeeded in bringing the people and the king to an acknowledgment of their former apostasy and unfaithfulness, and to a solemn surrender of themselves and of their kingdom to the guidance of their heavenly King, by a public acceptance and renovation of His holy covenant. The question of the duty of covenanting with God and of the obligation and value of national covenants, does not seem to have been once raised for discussion, or to have caused a moment's hesitation on the occasion. This was God's established way of holding fellowship with the nation ; and, while the experience of past seasons of reformation showed its peculiar potency and force, their own consciences attested the propriety and importance of not resting short of this binding and crowning consummation, " And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD's people ; between the king also and the people." Both parties were engaged, by a sacred oath, to be loyal and obedient to God, as the sovereign King of the nation, and the king and the people were bound in duty and allegiance to each other, on the unalterable terms of God's written testimony.

(3). *He laboured successfully for the speedy completion of the repairs of the temple, and the immediate restoration of the public worship of God.* Under the instructions of his venerable preceptor we find that Joash "was minded to repair the house of the Lord," and that he incited the priests and Levites to the work, urging them "to hasten the matter." This intervention of the king strengthened the hands of the responsible officers, and greatly facilitated the undertaking. But it was not by the force of any civil enactment or the exercise of any regal prerogative that this purely ecclesiastical business was initiated and brought to a satisfactory completion. The king simply stirred up the priests and Levites to the active discharge of their appointed duties, and he remonstrated with Jehoiada for not requiring a more prompt observance of what Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded. The temple had been desecrated and broken down, and the dedicated things transferred to the house of Baal by those sons of Belial who had gathered round the wicked Athaliah. Jehoiada's

first care was to restore the regular worship of Jehovah by appointing the necessary officers to guard the gates against the intrusion of the unclean, and to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as David had arranged it. Then he set himself to raise, throughout Judah and Jerusalem, funds for the repair of the broken-down walls and damaged and neglected buildings. This seems to have been an arduous undertaking, other calls and exigencies of the time interfering with its success. But by giving great prominence at the temple to this special collection, issuing a proclamation or circular appeal on its behalf, and sending out officers to solicit not only the fixed amount of every man's assessment, but "all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord," the work was successfully carried forward—"And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in and cast into the chest, until they had made an end." If the high-priest had shrunk from the responsibility of this rather disagreeable task, under pretence of its secular or mercenary character, or because of the want of sufficient co-operation and zeal on the part of others, the work of reformation had been but half completed; and with their beautiful house standing neglected or in ruins, there could not have been at his death the same manifest reason for their hearty and honourable avowal, that "he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house."

(4). By his faithful counsels and powerful influence *he instructed the king, and guided the nation in the right ways of God.* The king proved eventually that he was not a man of genuine piety or of inner steadfastness of resolution. In his childhood he enjoyed the paternal care and holy, prayerful solicitude of Jehoiada and his wife. With grateful deference and loving veneration, he seems to have followed their counsels implicitly in all matters—"And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest." The influence of this wise and saintly man upon the conduct of the court and the affairs of the nation was of inestimable advantage both to the king and to the people. The cause of true religion was honoured and advanced, and no decided tendency showed itself towards a relapse to idolatry. But

the character of Joash was of the parasitical stamp. He clung for a time with reverent attachment to his generous guardian and protector, who had sheltered his infancy, informed his youth, restrained and moulded the actions of his manhood, and whose influence secured for him the loyalty of his people and the prosperity of his kingdom. At the death of the pious priest, the grateful and admiring testimony of the king, as well as of all parties in the state, was, that "he had done good in Israel." It is a humiliating and melancholy fact, although it sets forth more strikingly the immense power which the noble character of Jehoiada enabled him to wield, that immediately after his removal the king fell into the hands of flatterers—"And they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols." This speedily brought a succession of disasters upon the nation, that culminated in disgrace and ruin to the king. At his premature and miserable end, he was righteously deprived of the honour, which even Jehoiada had obtained, and his bones were not permitted to rest in the sepulchres of the kings of Judah—"For them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

(5). The greatest good of all which Jehoiada was successful in effecting is the one which we are least able to estimate aright, but which was the grand aim and end of all his exertions—*the general revival of true religion*. He was undoubtedly a pious and true man. As such he would be inexpressibly grieved at the idolatrous defections of the court and the demoralisation and miseries entailed upon the people. During the darkest times he adhered steadfastly to the service of God, in the earnest prayer and hope that the people might be brought back to His worship, and that religion might regain its righteous ascendancy. Sad as the situation was, we do not find him resorting to novel or extravagant methods or to erratic lines of action that would be likely to throw discredit upon God's ordinances and endanger the interests of revealed religion by the wild ebullitions or the disorderly outbursts of mere popular excitement. Waiting patiently, watchfully, eagerly upon God in the ways of His own appointment, he was at length favoured with an opportunity of rousing the people from the deep

stupour of sin, of striking conviction into their hardened consciences, and of recalling them powerfully and effectually to the path of duty. The result is seen in the awakened community solemnly pledging itself again to be the Lord's inheritance, repudiating and removing the worship of Baal, and so consecrating their means and service to Jehovah, that His house was speedily restored and replenished, and once more filled with His glory. So great and enduring was this revival of religion, under the influences of the Spirit from on high, that for many years there was experienced a season of rejoicing and prosperity, as in the reforming days of Asa and Jehosaphat, or like what was afterwards realised under the pious reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah.

II.—THE MOST PROMINENT AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES IN THE CHARACTER OF THIS MAN OF GOD MAY BE NOW EASILY DEDUCED FROM THE GOOD WORK HE WAS HONOURED TO ACCOMPLISH.

(1). *He was distinctively and pre-eminently a good man.* In the absolute sense there is none good save One, even God. All men are naturally selfish and corrupt. Some men, even while unconverted, are remarkably amiable, well-disposed, and benevolent; but though they were to give all their goods to feed the poor, and even their bodies to be burned, it never could be said of them that "they had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house." On the other hand, there are many converted, God-fearing men whose character in this world never sufficiently blooms and ripens into fruits of substantial and unquestionable goodness. To deserve to be called "a good man" we must, like Barnabas, be "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith;" and to become distinguished, like Jehoiada, for having "done good in Israel," there must be a fine combination of great practical talents thoroughly controlled and wisely directed to the most important ends. But no talents, however great, no philanthropy, however expansive, can enable any man without that faith which worketh by love to do one good action toward God, much less, to expend the whole force of his life in doing that which is admittedly and permanently good toward His house. "Every good tree bringeth

forth good fruit." "A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things." That Jehoiada possessed superior talents and discretion, with that high art of quiet, steady concentration of heart, soul, mind, and strength which is essential to successful working, must be evident to all; but it required, in addition, "the true grace of God" so to elevate, guide, and sustain the application of his talents as to merit at last the brilliant and enviable memorial of a nation's love—"He hath done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house."

(2). *He loved and valued intensely the house of God.* The "good man" loves God supremely, and all his desires and activities go forth in the channels in which God's thoughts and affections flow. "The Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell: for I have desired it."—"And I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." Perhaps the broadest and most tangible evidence of our interest in God's salvation and our corresponding zeal for its universal promotion, is given when our lives and lips together devoutly exclaim, "Lord, I have loved the habitations of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." Jehoiada was a patriot and a statesman as well as a priest, and stood ready to take a leading part in any movement that involved the welfare and safety of the kingdom. But he knew that the interests of the State and of the community were so immediately connected with the purity of God's worship and the prosperity of religion in the Church, that whenever he engaged in any enterprise for the common good of Israel, he did it primarily and devoutly toward God, and toward his house.

(3). *He was faithful and loyal to the Lord God of Israel in every situation of his eventful life.* With "a true heart, in full assurance of faith," he had drawn near to the heart-searching One in his early and repeated acts of self-consecration, and he never faltered or attempted to go back from Him. He had seen one king after another, with princely courtiers and applauding multitudes in his train, abandoning the temple worship for the house of idols; he had seen the stately and impressive services of the sanctuary, which he loved so well, despised, derided, and shunned for the

vile and degrading fascinations of the lascivious service of Baal ; he had seen all the princes of the seed royal foully massacred, and the temple stormed, desecrated, and spoiled, while an unnatural usurper—a murderer and a foreigner, overawed the people from the throne ; yet through all these terrible vicissitudes, “ true as the dial to the sun,” he turned with unwavering fidelity to the countenance of his covenant God, and, cheered by His approval, and satisfied with His favour, steadily moved onward in the prescribed course of public duty. His bold and steadfast career was the means of preserving the Church’s existence in a cloudy and dark day, and his prominent figure, with his well-known character for sterling integrity and indomitable courage, became the rallying point and the guiding star of a blessed and glorious reformation.

(4). *He was actuated by an invincible faith in the promise which God had made to Israel.* When that God, who cannot lie, has once spoken, we should hear and be obedient. The promise is never less likely to be found false, than when men conclude, from untoward appearances, that it is hopelessly broken, and need not longer be taken into account. It was when the Israelites in the wilderness, disheartened by the report of the spies, flung themselves down, to cry and to weep, in sheer cowardice and disbelief, and resolved to return to Egypt, after having stoned the man that still sought to lead them to the land of promise—it was in the face of such an overwhelming emergency that Jehovah uttered those sublime and re-assuring words, “ But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.” When Nathan the prophet announced to David the promise and oath of Jehovah concerning his house and concerning his kingdom, the king in an ecstasy of believing gratitude and wonder bowed himself before the Lord, and endorsed the promise with the supplication, “ Establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.” It was in circumstances almost the reverse when—the covenant apparently made void, the land covered with bloodshed and crime, the people clean gone to idolatry, and the fulfilment of the promise depended on the secreted life of an infant doomed to destruction—Jehoiada, still faithful among the faithless, bowed himself in the sad, solitary exercises of an anxious but inextinguishable faith, and must often

have said to God, as he wrestled with Him in earnest prayer to remember His covenant—"Thou wilt establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said." This heroic confidence made him strong and enabled him to do exploits.

(5). *But Jehoiada could be resolute, bold, defiant in action, when the cause of God required it at his hands.* He possessed all the courage which his high and sacred convictions demanded. In the full spirit of a martyr he stood prepared for all the risks and sacrifices that might confront him in the path of open loyalty to God and fidelity to His despised but covenanted cause. If not amid the stirring calls and general excitement of "the high places of the field," yet, in the quieter, but not less dangerous, retreats of ordinary duty, he right nobly "jeoparded his life unto the death." Not in humanity only, but in loyalty and faith, did he for six dreadful years preserve the life of the last surviving heir to the throne of David. And when events were ripe for an inevitable revolution, scorning every thought of selfish ambition, or personal safety, he calmly accepted the whole responsibility of the perilous enterprise, and with a promptitude, wisdom, and energy equal to the occasion, the kingdom was restored to God and to the King. Thus he earned a title to be ranked with the men—of whom the world was not worthy—"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

(6). *In all the great elements of his character he was consistent and uniform to the last.* No doubt deviations and imperfections would have become manifest enough if all the minor details of his life had been exposed to public scrutiny. In that case many who should feel only abashed and confounded before the sterling integrity and noble productiveness of his career, would have been ready at once to pounce upon the various perturbations it revealed, as if these determined the orbit of the man. But they are wisely spared the trouble and the shame. Endowed by nature with the instincts of competent greatness, he was enabled by Sovereign grace to consecrate all his capacities to the service of the God of

his salvation. Washed from his sins, from day to day, in that atoning blood, he so often celebrated at the altar of sacrifice, quickened, instructed, and sanctified by that Divine Spirit, who has ever vivified and perfected the church of God on earth, he presents a fine illustration, in the midst of predominating apostasy and hypocrisy, of the ancient apothegm—"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." With an utter absence of pretence or tendency towards self-glorification, his principles were so true and deeply rooted, and his habits of life were so regulated and confirmed in subjection to God's authority and to the best interests of the nation, that the current of his life flowed steadily onward towards the beneficent reforms for which he laboured. It was after this manner that he "waxed old and was full of days when he died." Although he must have had many personal enemies, chagrined and disappointed by the uprightness of his administration, yet not a solitary voice of detraction or of protest appears to have been raised against the extraordinary impulse that has given him a name and memorial above that of kings—"And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house." "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree : he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing : To show that the Lord is upright ; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him."

Amid the diversities of human talents and of the circumstances in which these talents come to be developed into action, in the case of all men who are really good, and who have been honoured to effect much good work in the Church of God, there may be traced a deep and prevailing similarity. The essential elements of character are the same in all. The sovereign and infinite grace, that makes them to differ so widely from others, implants in them all the same divine principles of action, imparts to them all, in varying measure, the same dominant spirit of true goodness, and notwithstanding endless variations, enstamps broadly upon them all



the same family likeness. If called to act amid the same environments, they would develop, in a greater or less degree, the same striking features of character. When loyalty to the Master and to His cause is supremely demanded, God's people will display their loyalty, just in proportion as their Christian intelligence and their power of self-sacrificing love may have been advanced into ascendancy. When devoted service is required they will respond in unsparing exhaustive labours, just as they have realised the spirit of entire consecration to His will. The key note of their character is struck when, in the rapt simplicity of an absolute self-surrender they exclaim "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" When the prison and the scaffold, the torture and the stake have demanded their bleeding victims, that spirit has never failed to produce a noble array of martyrs, adequate and ready for the occasion. They came unsought and unexpected like God's own dew—"that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."

"They lived unknown  
Till persecution dragged them into fame,  
And chased them up to heaven."

The same spirit, when martyrdom is no longer in request, will expend itself with equal readiness and self-abnegation, in braving reproach for the sake of truth, in standing fast by the cause of Christ when emoluments and distinctions and worldly fame are swept rapidly out of reach by the receding tide of popular favour, or in persistent and laborious efforts for the good of others, in the face of discouragement, and even ingratitude, which might force at times the Apostolic exclamation, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Men who feel called upon to witness for the despised truths and royal prerogatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, by a thorough and consistent separation from all that is anti-Christian, and by a course of conduct that runs counter to the tendencies of our nature and to the susceptibilities of the age, have a life-long "trial of affliction" to endure, without the stimulus of great personal excitement and the sense of special responsibility realized even by the humblest martyrs, in the presence of a great cloud of witnesses.

“ But not the less are martyrs now,  
 The holy men and true,  
 Who bear the worldling’s laugh and sneer,  
 Life’s toilsome journey through.  
 The man who battles for the right,  
 Who acts a Christian’s part,  
 What is he in these latter days?—  
*A martyr in his heart.*

Jehoiada had seen the reformation of religion and the prosperity of the kingdom in the reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat. And it fell to his lot to maintain the honour of Jehovah’s name and the integrity of His Covenant with David under the idolatrous and troubled reigns of their immediate successors. The imperious spirit of Athaliah presided over the kingdom ; and at last, having defiantly vaulted to the throne, she tried to extinguish in blood the expiring hopes of God’s covenanted inheritance. The temple was sacked and ruined to furnish materials for Baal-worship, and the ministers at the altar stood daily in apprehension of the fury of the multitude, or the fierce rage of a vengeful tyrant. In the midst of such scenes Jehoiada maintained his testimony for God, and solemnly dispensed the ordinances of His worship at the constant hazard of his life. Who will not say that, throughout this dark and bloody period, the aged priest showed more iron steadfastness of purpose, exposed himself to keener and more prolonged anguish of spirit, placed his life and that of his family, and of all who were dear to him in the balance with truer heroism, than did even his son Zacharias, who under a sudden and powerful impulse lifted up his voice in the Temple, in condemnation of idolatry, and for his faithful-remonstrance was immediately slain between the porch and the altar ?

Those who knew DR. HOUSTON sufficiently will not fail to observe in how many prominent points his position, character, and spirit bore a close resemblance to those of Jehoiada. We can all say, now that he is gone, *he was a good man*—not in the reserved and tentative way in which that phrase is often pronounced, but in the most distinctive and emphatic way in which it can be employed. He feared God from his youth. His first-remembered yearnings and impressions were those of true religion. He never

could tell the time when the great spiritual change took place within him ; nor could he fix even the time when the purpose to devote himself to the Christian ministry in the Reformed Presbyterian Church became the one strong controlling principle of his life. The prayerful teaching and example of simple-minded godly parents, the sermons he heard, the books he read—these maintained from his infancy a Divine life that had already made known its mysterious cravings and powers within his soul. This life grew with his growth, and ripened, expanded, and became more and more mellowed as his years advanced. Piety, deep and pure, habitual and all-pervading, was the very life-blood of his character, the spring and stay of all his activities. It was the root-sap of that prolific tree whose efflorescence from season to season was so rich, and fragrant, and attractive, and whose large and unvarying supply of ripe and precious fruit has filled so many hungry souls, to the praise and the glory of the grace of God for ever. No one could be long in his presence, whether in public or private, without perceiving that there was upon him a very copious anointing of the Holy One ; and though he might not agree with all his opinions, or enter into all his loving and large-hearted projects, he was forced to carry away the conviction that he had been in refreshing contact with a pre-eminently good and gracious man.

Need I say to any of those who sat under his ministry how ardently *he loved the house of God*, with what glowing fervour he conducted every part of its instituted worship, or how zealously he laboured, by every means in his power, to promote the interests and glory of Zion ? To all his convictions of Divine truth, to every claim of Prince Messiah, whether over the consciences or the communities of men, to every vow that he had registered of fealty and service to the Most-High, *he was loyal at all times, and in the eyes of all men*, with the pure and fervent devotion of his whole nature, and with all the boldness and tenacity of an unconquerable faith. He lived, he laboured, and he suffered in open attestation of his undying fidelity to the Crown and Covenant of Christ. No worldly allurements could ever seduce him into any alliance by which true allegiance to his Lord and Master could be called in question ; and now that he has gone to his reward and

triumph we can well imagine that Master graciously welcoming him into the presence of His glory with the words which He applied to Antipas of old :—“ My witness, my faithful one !”

Jehoiada clung, as we have seen, with calm but unwavering confidence to the covenant which God had made with David, and with Israel, concerning the preservation of the true religion, and the perpetuity of the royal line till it should culminate in the Messiah, through all that disastrous time, when defection, conspiracy and crime had shattered the kingdom, and driven the hopes of many to the verge of despondency. In the very same manner did our departed father *realize and maintain the continued obligation of the Covenants* which these nations made and ratified with God in the halcyon days of Reformation ; and, while deploring and condemning the subsequent rejection of the oath of God, and the relapse of the nation into ways of wickedness and apostasy that have brought so many judgments and calamities upon the land, he never ceased to proclaim his belief in these Scriptural Covenants, as the true charter and pledge of the nation’s safety, and as the true practical test of all political privilege and allegiance. At no period of his life did he manifest more profound delight and satisfaction of soul than when, in 1853, the Synod of this Church, and thereafter her congregations, very largely under his own leading, were brought to display a distinct and tangible testimony on this subject, and to draw very near to the Lord God of Israel in a solemn Act of Covenant Renovation. His admirable “ Memorial of Covenanting ” has not only made permanent a full record of this transaction, but it contains so much exposition and argument upon the whole doctrine of Covenanting and Covenant obligation that it remains a valuable treatise and testimony on behalf of a much neglected Scriptural duty and reformation truth to present and future generations.

It may be desirable to look a little more closely at the life of our venerated friend and father, and mark the way in which the secret hand of God led and sustained him all his life through, that we may be able to estimate the vast amount of work which he was honoured to accomplish, and that, by closer contact we may feel the quickening stimulus of his ardent spirit, and be

provoked to emulate his zeal. But at every step we would ascribe the glory, and the praise, exclusively to the sovereign operation of that Spirit who divides to every man severally as He will. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

## DR. THOMAS HOUSTON

IN THE LEADING ASPECTS OF HIS LIFE AND WORK.

*First*, let us glance at his early STUDENT LIFE. He was born in Donegore, in the County of Antrim, about the 12th of October, 1803. His parents were comparatively poor, but pious and exemplary Christians. They had previously been members of the Secession Church, but from hearing the Rev. William Stavelly, then minister of Kellswater and Cullybackey, preaching occasionally in the fields, they were led to embrace the Covenanted Testimony, and became conscientious and devoted members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Soon afterwards they removed to the village of Cullybackey. This was an important change for Thomas Houston, as it procured him access to a very superior school, which was supported by certain linen merchants in the neighbourhood. It was all, however, that his parents could do for him and his two elder brothers, in addition to careful domestic training, to keep them for a few years at this school. But when the time came that he should make an independent effort towards self-support, it was found that he had made such progress in learning, and was so possessed with a keen and ardent desire for further acquisitions, that it was impossible to turn him aside to any other pursuit. At the age of 15, gentle and timid in his manner, and a mere stripling in appearance, he obtained by competition, the management of a country school, and from that time became not only self-supporting but able to minister, occasionally, to the greater comfort of his parents. In his 16th year he became a communicant at the Lord's table, and from that occasion could mark distinctly an elevation in the tone and bearing of his whole religious life—a more regular and earnest cultivation of the habits of daily piety, with a decided increase of conscious delight in the exercise of prayer and in acts of solemn self-dedication. In 1819 he came to Belfast to enter

upon his College curriculum, in which from the first he was ardent and successful. During his whole course at College he supported himself by teaching in the Royal Belfast Institution and by private tuitions. The two years after his first session he spent as assistant teacher in the Portora Royal School at Enniskillen. In the autumn of 1825 he commenced his Theological Studies at Paisley under the late eminent Dr. Andrew Symington, and continued them in Belfast under the late Dr. Hanna. And on the 25th of December, 1826, he was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Eastern Reformed Presbytery, in Belfast.

During all this period he was an eager and arduous student, ambitious of high scholarship, and able to maintain a distinguished place in every class that he entered. Had he allowed himself to give way to the natural bent of his ambition, there is no doubt he would have risen to a high rank in literary pursuits, and might have secured wealth and honours in abundance. Several offers of patronage and help were held out to him, if he would abandon the ministry of the Covenanting Church. But he had given himself unreservedly to a higher Master, whose service, in connection with a poor and despised band of witnesses, he considered the most honourable and desirable on earth, and in whose favour he was well satisfied to abide. While other students require a continual spur to keep them in the ranks, we find him deliberately checking the spirit of emulation that strove within him for the mastery, and solemnly reminding himself that the first and highest end of his being was, not to acquire personal distinction and rewards, but to glorify God by some good work at every stage, as he might have opportunity. This prevailing bias towards religious activity and benevolent exertion seemed to be as natural to him as the ordinary functions of his life. When but a mere lad, attending the Fellowship Meetings with his parents, he began to write little expositions of the passages of Scripture, selected for meditation, and to read them, to the astonishment and delight of the assembled friends. Whenever SABBATH SCHOOLS were within his reach he promptly joined them as an efficient worker; and where there was no school, he was not long in any place till one grew up and flourished under his own hands. While at Enniskillen he canvassed so diligently among Romanists and Protestants for the school at Portora, that very soon an additional and independent Sabbath School was founded

there, of which he was the first superintendent. Even Romanist families received him gladly, and notwithstanding the Bishop's denunciations, mothers exclaimed, "God bless the gentleman who comes to look after my poor children."

On returning to Belfast he became the superintendent of a large school, gathered mainly through his own instrumentality. His visits to the poor in the lanes about Smithfield in search for children, moved him to promote the origination and assist in the management of a DESTITUTE SICK SOCIETY, that still continues to do much good. This again suggested to him the necessity for some special agency by which the Gospel might be carried into the squalid and miserable homes of those whom he found to be destitute of religion and the means of grace. Taking counsel and co-operation with a few fellow-workers of kindred spirit, he founded the BELFAST TOWN MISSION, at the very same time, though unacquainted with each others movements, that David Naismith founded the Town Mission in Glasgow, the first in the British Empire; and this institution, planted by his juvenile hands, has grown and spread and borne such good fruit, that it is now regarded as permanently necessary in all large towns, and has been developed and sub-divided in Belfast into several important Town Missions. But even this great enterprise did not exhaust his energies, nor allay the cravings of his large hearted philanthropy in the cause of Christ. While attending to such local necessities, and labouring to promote these limited town agencies, according to his power, could not something be done, by diligent and systematic effort, to aid those societies that were feebly endeavouring to promote the kingdom of his blessed Master more extensively at home and abroad? The thought was no sooner entertained than he felt that necessity was laid upon him to put the project into execution. A JUVENILE MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION on an independent and catholic basis, whose funds should be given to assist Bible Societies, Evangelical Missions, and Scriptural Education throughout the world, was the immediate and gratifying result. Monthly public meetings were held in the churches, and addresses delivered by returned missionaries and other distinguished strangers. Auxiliaries were formed in other parts of the province, and a missionary spirit was excited and diffused among the students, ministers, and members of the evangelical churches, that tended much to the revival and extension of true

religion at home, while it has furnished several missionaries to the heathen field. For nine years he acted as secretary to this society, doing most of its responsible work, during which time £1,100 were collected for missions, and through the channels of larger societies, sent forth to aid in the enlightenment and conversion of the world. Is it to be wondered at that, amid such engrossing occupations, superadded to much unavoidable teaching, and to his regular college studies, he was seized upon by a dangerous fever that held him for some weeks at the point of death, or that his constitution should become so enfeebled that his lungs were considered to be in danger, and his voice became permanently impaired?

In the *second place*, let us recall for a little his PASTORAL LIFE AND LABOURS. On the last Sabbath of the year 1826 he began his ministrations, as a probationer, in this pulpit, where they have been continued for the long and uninterrupted term of fifty-five years. Walking out alone on a bleak wintry day, from his lodgings in Belfast, he found the bare unplanted grounds covered with snow, the doors and windows of the church closed, and not a solitary worshipper within view. By-and-by the doors were opened, the congregation slowly assembled, and the young preacher entered upon his work with a warm and throbbing heart, in the midst of all these cold and chilly surroundings; but not without some evidence of the Divine presence and assistance, he thought, even on that first occasion. From this time the predominant feeling of his soul was expressed in the words of the great apostle:—"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." In the summer of 1827 a call was issued to him from KNOCKBRACKEN, to become the pastor of a small congregation there. By this time other fields of labour, of a more alluring kind, were beginning to open before him. Knockbracken had been long a vacancy, and never had enjoyed the full labours of a separate pastor. For several years towards the end of the previous century, the Rev. William Stavelly ministered to it as a part of a widely scattered charge. In 1805 the Rev. Hutchinson M'Fadden was ordained here, and at intervals, in conjunction with Newtownards, occupied the pulpit with an eloquence and a fervour that made his brief ministry an extraordinary success. Then, for about twelve years, the Rev. Josias Alexander



nobly laboured under the burden of the joint charge of Knockbracken and Belfast. The congregation was now greatly reduced, and could offer few inducements to their unanimously elected pastor. But Mr. Houston was brought to see it to be his duty to undertake a charge where a Covenanting standard had been early raised and ably maintained; and with the prospect of hard labour and small remuneration to endeavour to build up the broken-down walls and heal the breaches of Zion. Confidently could he appeal to the great Heart-Searcher, that it was not ease, nor worldly ambition, nor self-seeking of any kind, but devoted attachment to the testimony of Jesus, and a desire to advance the cause of truth and righteousness, in making full proof of his ministry, that led him to this determination.

It was not until Tuesday, the 8th of April, 1828, that his ordination took place. The Rev. John Alexander, D.D., preached in the church from 2 Tim. ii. 2. So great was the interest excited by his settlement throughout the district, that after the house of worship was crowded, a second congregation had to be formed and addressed on the green by the Rev. James Dick, afterwards his honoured colleague in the Theological Hall. Carefully writing out and committing his discourses at first, Mr. Houston soon acquired the habit of masterly ease and freedom in the pulpit; while his prolific well-stored mind and swelling heart poured forth a torrent of the richest heavenly matter, with a melting pathos in his tones and a beseeching earnestness of address that have seldom been surpassed. What though his voice was weak, and, often raised to the point of tension, it became somewhat unpleasant, like that of the saintly and seraphic Rutherford, to ears that were unfamiliar with it? The whole heart and soul of the preacher glowed with burning zeal; every feature became charged with emotional force, until the eyes could no longer hold back their floods of sympathy; and the whole man became eloquent and thrilling as he displayed the glory and the love of a suffering and an exalted Saviour; or as he reasoned, we might even say wrestled, with sinners, as in Christ's stead, that they might be reconciled to God. The solemnising effect was manifest at once; and the blessed living fruits of these discourses have not yet all been garnered. In no period of his ministry did he make such deep and over-powering impressions on the minds of his hearers as in these opening years, and perhaps never again had he such abun-

dant evidence of the presence of the Spirit in the conversion of sinners, and in the building up and quickening of saints.

Large assemblies, in every kind of weather, hung upon his lips. Earnest men and women from great distances, shocked by the open irreligion, or the infidel or Unitarian sentiments that prevailed around them, flocked to his ministry, and besought him to carry the living Gospel into their neglected districts. Three times upon the Sabbath as a rule, and often again in some barn or school house during the week, did he preach throughout this neighbourhood, until his appearance, and voice and character, became familiar to every child. Then beginning monthly evening discourses in Dundonald, at the solicitation of one of his elders, he suddenly awakened a slumbering community to a new sight and sense of the Divine glory of Christ, and of the loveliness of the Gospel of God's salvation, which had been too long kept concealed from their view. In 1829 he was invited by some who, in the good Providence of God, are present with us to-day, under a deep sense of our great and common bereavement, to break up the fallow ground in the Killinchy district, then overrun with fatal errors and shameless immoralities and disregard of all religious observances; and he was permitted to open a new School House with a sermon, instead of the dance, which had been the usual mode of dedication before. The good seed which he scattered profusely took root, and soon began to shake with prosperous fruit. There, too, he commenced monthly sermons, awakened the careless, defended and diffused evangelical truth, revived an interest in personal and family religion, gave heart and cheer to all earnest workers for Christ; and now a commodious and beautiful house of worship, mainly through his persevering exertions and influence, and a separate congregation have been standing for years in the centre of that district—a monument to the value of those large overflowings of his loving and superabundant pastoral services. This practice of preaching throughout the country at every call was kept up to the very end of his ministry; and, although it required him to be far away from home at night, and in all kinds of weather, it never unfitted him for the regular discharge of other duties. Like Joseph, he was “a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall.” Eternity alone will disclose the spiritual results that have, directly or indirectly, been produced by these incessant and prayerful exertions.

In addition to his great and sustained labours in preaching the Gospel, which Dr. Houston considered his most important and honourable work, and in which he took the greatest delight, he was equally indefatigable and unsparing in the other departments of the pastoral office. House to house visitation was systematically and laboriously attended to. The deep sympathies of his loving nature drew him very frequently to the homes of affliction, bereavement and sorrow; and there the fountains of his heart so gushed out in tenderest emotion and fervent prayer that he was esteemed a very prince of consolation. Not by his own members alone, but by the diseased and disconsolate all around, were his visits of sympathy eargerly sought and highly appreciated. The lambs of the flock were the objects of his most anxious and loving care. His communicant's class was kept up during a large portion of every season, and young men and women felt it to be a privilege to walk five or six miles twice over to enjoy its extensive and profitable course of training. Besides, on the Sabbath morning he was accustomed to gather all his young people into the Church for an hour before public worship, and while they were being individually instructed and impressed, as he carried them through the Shorter Catechism, their parents and many others participated with delight in these Catechetical exercises. For the convenience of young persons residing in Belfast, for several years, during the vacancy there, he conducted a Bible Class, and trained up many in the doctrines and principles of the Church. Special days of fasting, humiliation and prayer, in private and in public, were often observed by him; and in addition to the regular business meeting of Session, it was his rule to meet with his Elders and spend one whole day every quarter, in fasting and prayer on behalf of the congregation and for the revival of religion and the spread of the kingdom of God.

Dr. Houston had the power of inspiring others with a measure of his own earnestness and engaging them enthusiastically in the Lord's work. A Sabbath School for the neglected children around was early established, and many devoted teachers were pressed into the service. But as his congregation was scattered over a large district, earnest men and women were induced by him to engage in family visitation and Tract distribution in their own neighbourhoods, and several large classes were gathered in their own houses for instruction on the Sabbath evenings. A Missionary

was supported for some time by the congregation to assist in visitation and in holding Prayer Meetings, and a house was built within the grounds of the Church to accommodate occasional meetings and for daily Scriptural Education. From the very first he was an enthusiastic advocate of the TEMPERANCE REFORMATION. Seeing the deplorable effects which the unchecked and unblushing use of strong drink was constantly producing, his soul was moved within him to grief and indignation, and he at once declared himself its open and determined enemy. On the 24th of September, 1829, he was one of the memorable six who signed, in Belfast, the first Temperance pledge. On the 25th of April, 1830, with the assistance of Captain Charles Stuart, he organised the Knockbracken Temperance Society which has never ceased to exert a healthful influence in the locality. On that occasion an active member of the congregation, Mr. John Meharg, in stating his reasons for joining the Society, said he held in his hand a list of 22 persons once well known in the neighbourhood, who during the last 15 years "have all perished miserably in a state of intoxication." Until his death Dr. Houston was a zealous and consistent advocate of the Temperance cause, lamenting only that he had not been able to produce a more thorough practical reformation in the community. Just as his voice began to fail, he was honoured to read a historical sketch of the movement in Ulster at the great Temperance Jubilee Celebration held in Exeter Hall, London.

But the cause which, of all others, lay nearest to his heart, and moved the springs of his whole nature in the most effectual manner, was the CAUSE OF MISSIONS. We have seen how, as a student, the spell of this mighty enterprise for the conversion of the world to Christ, laid its imperious grasp upon his soul, and checking the impulses of natural ambition, drew him at once into new paths of pioneering labour and fruitful organization. No sooner had he charge over a congregation than, next after seeking intently the salvation of all those committed to his care, his great desire seemed to be to give to them an intelligent and prayerful interest in this cause, and make them individually contributors to its success. Without waiting for any call from the courts of the Church, an Annual Sermon on Missions became one of the standing and most attractive features of his ministry. The young were organised into a Juvenile Missionary Association that has laboured, with no inconsiderable success, in collecting funds by which every Mission-

ary work in our own Church, and many movements beyond it, have been largely assisted ; while in spirit and intelligence on Missionary subjects it has never ceased to be a vigorous and fresh institution. Every event specially affecting the kingdom of Christ in the world was made the subject of reference or of illustration in the pulpit, and of earnest pleading at the Throne of Grace : and when an urgent call for help came from any part of the Mission field he instantly presented it to his people, that by means of their smallest contributions and their prayers they might feel a continual interest in the world's conversion. His early Missionary zeal was recognised by the Synod as soon as he became one of its members, and he was appointed one of the Secretaries of the Synod's Missionary Association. This office he continued to hold to the end of his life. Not less than fifty Reports containing much important information, and all inciting to larger and more adventurous action, were presented by him and published to the Church, in the course of his ministry. The end of all his prayers, aspirations and efforts found frequent expression in the sublime strains of the sweet Psalmist of Israel. " His name shall endure for ever ; his name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and men shall be blessed in him ; all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen."

In the *third place*, let us hastily review the PUBLICATIONS that issued from his marvellous and indefatigable pen. In the midst of such engrossing and exhaustive labours in which his strength was continually tasked to the utmost, we can never cease to wonder that, in addition to his large private and official correspondence, he was able to write almost anything, however fugitive, for the public press. And, as he often said himself, with his hands so full of work, it was only by "snatches" that he could write anything. That God who had breathed into him at first a spirit so ardent and eager for useful enterprise, furnished him at the same time with a constitution of mind and body so singularly attempered, adjusted and attuned, that it became the ready vehicle of every holy impulse, and afforded the most perfect facility—almost without wear or tear or perceptible friction—for every kind and degree of work. Lithe, hardy, equable ; alike unconscious of nervous excitement and debility, he could sleep off his fatigue in

all circumstances, and resume his occupations with undiminished elasticity. Thus every snatch of time was turned to good account. Such frequent and rapid alternation of important work could be accomplished, however, only at the cost of heavy drawbacks. Just as he had deliberately turned aside from the alluring paths of scholarship, that he might be free to render instant service to the Master; and as he put away every attempt at the studied eloquence of diction or of delivery in the pulpit, that he might be always ready to preach the Gospel in season and out of season; so now in composition he was forced to sacrifice the elegance and force of slowly condensed and constructed sentences—with picked and packed words—and nicely balanced periods, that in his brief and broken snatches he might be able to embody some of the good matter concerning the King, with which his heart was ever bubbling up, in a series of books that might be of service to the present and future generations. Besides occasional sermons, tracts and pastoral addresses, and some controversial pamphlets—which went against the whole grain of his nature, and sorely distressed his heart—he edited and wrote a very large proportion of the original matter of the *Covenanter* for about thirty years; and now his independent publications, numbering fourteen important contributions to Practical Theology have been collected and re-issued in SIX GOODLY VOLUMES, while a SEVENTH—which will be the most interesting and probably the most important of them all—is now passing through the press. These works were all prepared because he perceived there was a need that demanded to be met—a want that required to be supplied. They were separately conceived, written out and issued in the spirit of earnest believing prayer that they might be the means of glorifying Christ and doing good to the souls of men when he would be slumbering in the dust. They are all Scriptural and evangelical in matter; pure, healthful and lovely in their spirit; sympathetic, gracious and comforting in their tone; and everywhere refreshing and stimulating with the odour of that devotional incense which seems to exhale from and hang over every page.

Some of these books have had a secret history hidden in the depths of his own spiritual experience. Ministering and watching at the bedside of affliction gave origin to one; the low state of family religion and the neglect of domestic training suggested the preparation of others. His labours in the Killinchy district called

forth the Life and Times of Livingston ; and his intense admiration for the spirit and contendings of Scotland's covenanted witnesses, and his confidence in the permanent value of their testimony for truth, led to the issue of the Life and Letters of James Renwick. Concerning this publication he has written, " My earnest desire is that after I have ceased from earthly work, my labour in editing the letters of this noble martyr may be blessed by leading others to embrace his testimony, and to imitate his heroic, self-sacrificing spirit." While the prospect of a harassing and ruinous law case, incurred in the faithful discharge of his benevolent duties as a trustee, was darkening upon him, until it could be dismissed he found all the consolation and spiritual strength he so much needed in writing upon " The Adoption of Sons." Here is the recorded result of his experience—" The best way to have the mind lifted above perplexity and distress is to attempt some work that may serve to advance the Divine glory and do good to others." In 1874, his youngest and dearly beloved son, Dr. John Knox Houston, was taken " up higher " just when he was entering upon what promised to be a career of great usefulness and honour, and the stricken father raised himself grandly from beneath the shock by undertaking at once the re-issue of all his works in a collected form, and setting about the preparation of several additional volumes. Incessant labour, instead of being a drudgery to him, proved to be a blessed restorative and a source of boundless consolation. Books that are fashioned and brought forth in such circumstances as these, may be lightly esteemed by the disciples of culture, the professors of high art, or the lovers of a spicy and sensational literature ; but like the somewhat involved and ponderous productions of the despised Puritan divines, they will be valued for their spiritual unction and rich variety of savoury and substantial food by the children of God who, perhaps, in after ages, may meet with such samples of the old corn of the land ; and when scoffers and critics and the ephemeral productions of the day are all forgotten, these collected works of Dr. Houston will be a memorial to his praise, more precious than gold, more enduring than brass, " because he hath done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house."

In the *fourth place*, let us consider Dr. Houston in his connection with THE THEOLOGICAL HALL. His scholarly and Christian instincts led him at all times to manifest an affectionate interest

in students, and especially in candidates for the holy ministry. When himself attending the Theological Halls in Paisley and in Belfast, he originated a students' prayer meeting, and tried to establish a students' missionary association. At the close of his first session in Paisley, he engaged some of the students to set apart a portion of one evening in every week in which they would pray for each other. This arrangement was conscientiously kept up by himself, and he often mentioned that he had derived the greatest satisfaction and comfort during his life from intercessory prayer. In a little note book which he had prepared the year before his death, in which to enter "subjects for special prayer" and such "answers" as he might be able to record, after mentioning his own family and congregation, he mentions "ministers and candidates for the ministry" as subjects of special intercession. In the very first meeting of Synod which Mr. Houston attended as a member, he moved the appointment of a committee to revise the Plan of Education, with a view to such additions and alterations as might be to the advantage of the students. This resulted, in 1830, in the adoption of a series of resolutions, from which we take the following extracts:—"That at each examination of Presbytery, after entering College, the students shall be examined in portions of the Greek Testament. These examinations should be so managed that they shall include the whole Testament before the close of the curriculum of study. That the Committee deem it desirable, at as early a period as the Synod may see fit, to provide a Professor of Divinity in this country to superintend the theological studies of students under the care of this Synod; and meanwhile, the Committee would deem it highly desirable to commit the students, during their stay at College, to the care of some minister of the Church, who may meet with them regularly, at least once or twice a week, to read with them the Scriptures, prescribe to them exercises, and otherwise direct the entire course of their studies." This work naturally devolved upon Mr. Houston, for the efficient performance of which he was known to be particularly adapted. A respected and now venerable minister of the General Assembly, on hearing of his death, wrote to me from London the following reminiscences:—"In the year 1836 Dr. Houston commenced a class for the critical study of the New Testament in the original Greek. It was, of course, specially intended for Covenanting students, but not exclusively. I had the



privilege of attending for a time, and I can well remember his clear and scholarly remarks, both on the structure and rendering of the original, and the meaning and lessons of the portion considered." For the use of this class he originated, in 1843, the Theological Library in Belfast, as "the students felt the want of approved works on Theology, Biblical Criticism, Ecclesiastical History, and Jewish and Christian Antiquities." A scheme for the establishment of a Theological Hall in this country was submitted to Synod in 1846; but it was held in abeyance, chiefly out of the profound regard entertained for the Theological Professor in Paisley.

In 1854, immediately after the death of the Rev. Dr. Andrew Symington, the Synod unanimously agreed "to appoint two Professors of Theology, one for Systematic and the other for Exegetical and Pastoral Theology and Church History, who will also conjointly train Students for the Missionary work." On the unanimous appointment of Dr. Houston he selected the second department of study; and for the last 28 years has laboriously and efficiently discharged all the duties connected with it. These were very extensive, and involved an immense amount of reading and careful preparation. He delighted in the critical study of the original Scriptures, and kept himself abreast of all the learning produced on the subject. His constant aim was to make the students familiar with the Hebrew and Greek originals, and he encouraged them to read with him the Celtic and Syriac versions, if they had any acquaintance with these languages. In Pastoral Theology the necessity for the influences of the Divine Spirit, and the importance of believing prayer were freshly presented every succeeding year; and he never failed to bring the duty of Missions and some view of the progress of the work before the class. As new topics of discussion evolved in the critical study of the Bible, he dealt with them at once in lectures specially prepared for the occasion. During the last Session, in spite of all the disabilities with which he had to contend, he prepared six new Lectures on the Revised Version of the New Testament. Previous to this Session he had been warned by the highest professional experts, that without a surgical operation upon the throat he might at any moment expire from suffocation; and that the least exposure to cold might superinduce the crisis. Notwithstanding this, such was his determination to complete the business of the Hall, that during all the severity of the winter, literally taking his life

in his hand, he permitted neither the remonstrances of wife or child, of friend or of physician, to detain him from a single meeting. His conduct said more impressively than any words could have done "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

Such was the life of your late distinguished pastor from his cradle to his grave. Instinct with love to his Divine Master, and to the souls of men, full of beneficent impulses and large-hearted projects for the benefit of the world around him, capable of prodigious application, which could be sustained without flagging, and rendered with a complete forgetfulness of self, if it had pleased an all-wise Providence to have placed him in a situation where, with adequate resources and popular sympathy at his command, he could have followed the bent of his nature, he might have ranked this day among the noblest benefactors of mankind, and his name have been written among the most illustrious in the annals of the Church. Undeterred by the insuperable difficulties that often rose before him, undiscouraged by the limited measure of public support that was accorded to his labours; never disheartened by the apathy of others, and never despondent with regard to the ultimate result, he held on his self-sacrificing course, spending and being spent, and hoping even against hope, as if his eye never fell short of the goal, and as if he felt that the eyes of the Great Master and of the "great cloud of witnesses" were never for a moment lifted from him. "Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, he pressed on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"

Singularly free from everything like idiosyncrasy of temperament, or eccentricity of conduct, his life was blameless, and would have been unnoticeable but for that intense power of human sympathy that mingled with and effectually dominated all his activities. While his heart was full of inexpressible tenderness, and his voice often quivered with speechless emotion, all his working sinews seemed to be of iron and brass. Into the sanctity of the home circle we do not dare to penetrate, but we know that language cannot express the sense of grateful indebtedness, of affectionate admiration, and of inestimable

bereavement that every member of that circle will long cherish towards his memory. And of a very large circle of friends and observers, near or more remote, some of whom have only watched from a distance the even tenor of his way, while some have known him only from an occasional sermon or a passing interview, or a few quiet, kindly calls in times of sore affliction, as of others who have grown up under his genial, fructifying influence, enjoying the full advantages of his ministerial solicitude, we can say that a larger place of love and veneration has been left vacant in their hearts by his removal, than they ever thought would have been possible. Their spontaneous exclamation now is, "a prince, and a great man is fallen this day in Israel."

For about two years before his death a diseased state of the throat, which painfully affected his breathing and his voice, became gradually developed. This was found to be occasioned by paralysis of some of the vocal cords, a further attack of which must prove fatal, if not anticipated by tracheotomy. His medical advisers in London and Belfast agreed in urging the adoption of this remedy as a likely means of prolonging his usefulness and enjoyment. As a matter of duty he cheerfully consented to the operation, although he often said to me in confidence, when we met at the Hall, that he was very doubtful as to its success, adding, that he felt the end was not far off, and he trusted he was not unwilling or unprepared to meet it, and that he felt quite indifferent as to whether it came as a sudden crisis, or resulted from the surgical operation. He had often expressed the wish that he might die in harness, if such were the will of God ; and he seemed now to be assured that this wish was about to be granted. All work that could be carried on by the pen, or in a laboured, whispering breath was conducted as usual. He visited the sick who were within reach, wrote letters of affectionate counsel and condolence to such as he could not visit, and to others who had been bereaved, and directed all the ordinary affairs of the congregation. Every week he wrote a sermon for the pulpit, showing that his sermons were prepared first for his own edification, and then for the benefit of others ; and he kept up all his habits of devotional preparation, as if the responsibility of declaring the counsel of God still rested upon him. The first sermon that he wrote, when unable to preach, was on Job xiv. 14, 15—"If a man die, will he live *again*? All the days of my

appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands." For the next Sabbath, which was the *fifty-fifth* anniversary of the day on which he first preached at Knockbracken, he prepared a discourse on Gen. xlviii. 21—"Behold, I die; but God shall be with you."

Unwilling to distress his family, he did not speak much of the premonitions that deeply impressed his own mind; but a quiet submissiveness of spirit, a singular clearness and elevation of mind, and a strange, celestial calmness and brightness of expression pervaded all the exercises in which he engaged. His face, too, beamed at times with a peculiar radiance, that seems now as if it had somehow stolen down upon him from above. He often acknowledged the full enjoyment of the promise—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." The whole current of his life was set steadfastly towards eternity, as if he had known certainly that death was very near at hand; yet no duty was evaded, no courtesy neglected that earth could require on that account. Nor could Aaron have ascended Mount Hor with more cheerful resignation, nor did Moses go up the rocky sides of Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, with greater alacrity than Dr. Houston showed in leaving the Manse and parting with the loved ones of home, to go to the Belfast Royal Hospital, where, in less than a week, he was to die. Leighton "used often to say, that if he were to choose a place to die in, it should be an inn, it looking so like a pilgrim's going home, to whom this world was all as an inn." This desire was granted. He went to London in better health and spirits than usual, and in a few days expired at the Bell Inn. And Doddridge, on embarking for Portugal, where he died among strangers, wrote—"If I do not survive all will be well. I hope I shall embrace the wave, that when I intended Lisbon, should land me in heaven." The surgical operation was successfully performed, and instant relief was experienced. The strongest hopes were entertained of a speedy recovery; but it was afterwards discovered that an abnormal growth was going on at the lower end of the windpipe, which had caused the paralysis of the vocal cords, and was certainly producing death. This could not be affected by the completed operation, nor reached by surgical appliances. Everything that unremitting and kindly

attention could do to afford relief was resorted to in vain. The power of speech being totally removed, frequent writing became irksome. But his undisturbed composure of spirit and thoughtful consideration for all about him, made a deep impression on his attendants. The last message he wrote was on the Sabbath, requesting his son to retire for some refreshment, adding that he felt that the Lord was with him, and that all would be well, whatever the issue might be. On Monday morning, the 27th of March, the struggle ceased; his soul was rendered up into the hands of his Covenant God, and after a long life of incessant and honourable toil, he passed into "the saints' everlasting rest." The eminent surgeon who performed the operation, although hitherto a perfect stranger to the life and character of his patient, could not withhold an expression of his admiration. Thus he wrote to his son:—"I beg to say that, like you, I have felt sad and disappointed at the termination of the case of your late respected father. The deep interest I took in the case was heightened by the calm, Christian heroism and resignation manifested through all the stages of his illness." "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."

In applying this subject, and the solemn event which has so largely engrossed our attention in connection with it, permit me, in the way of IMMEDIATE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT, to press upon your attention the following considerations:—

(1). Let the members of this congregation seriously consider the exceeding great and even eternal weight of responsibility under which the ministrations of their late Pastor have unquestionably placed them. If ministers be accountable to God for the efficient discharge of all the duties of their office, and if the souls of those who have been committed to their trust shall be required at their hands, surely the people who have been long favoured with the abundant ministrations, the faithful warnings, the melting appeals, the holy wrestlings, and the stimulating example of so eminent and honoured a servant of Christ must incur a fearful load of responsibility. To apply the words of the Preacher to your situation—"I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and

God requireth that which is past." Then, dear Brethren, how very much will be required at your hands! Keeping nothing back that was profitable unto you, did he not declare unto you the whole counsel of God in a way that was far more winning, soul-searching and impressive than is at all common? Even the youngest of you must have felt assured that in his own closet, as well as in your families, and in the pulpit, he was frequently in travail for you, never willing to find rest until Christ should be formed in you. Now he has gone to render his account; and we are persuaded it is with joy and not with grief; but what account are you able this day to render? His preaching was indeed "a sweet savour of Christ," not only unto God, but unto all who heard him; but the testing question is this—has it been to you the savour of death unto death, or of life unto life? Have you accepted the precious Saviour he so earnestly commended to your hearts as "altogether lovely?" Are you now cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart and endeavouring, more and more confidently to say—"My beloved is mine, and I am his?" If not, then, "know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Nay, is He not even now, by the removal of him who so long occupied this pulpit into yonder silent grave, calling you to judgment, at the bar of your own consciences, and before the eyes of the whole community! "And now, O, inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?"

(2). Feeling deeply your indebtedness to one who so long and so faithfully ministered unto you the word of life, and who so freely dispensed, in all your troubles, the consolations wherewith he also was comforted of God, how can you best show the great respect and love you cherish for his memory? "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." It is your duty to show your gratitude to the Great Master who sent such a minister among you, by rendering that remembrance in every way fragrant and fruitful. This is not to be effected by a mere material monument, or costly testimonial to his name. If your revered pastor were now to speak on this subject we could imagine him saying, "Let my name perish. What am I? The cause of Christ alone is great and worthy to be perpetuated." For him "to live was Christ." But his life was in his work. He lived in

this congregation, for has he not often said before, "that ye are in our hearts to die together and to live together?" Therefore improve his death by striving daily to die, like him, to sin and to the world; and so act as a congregation, that he may be said still to live and work and rejoice with you. Let every part of that work in which he was so deeply interested be carried on as if he were still at your head. "Those mourn the dead who live as they desired." As long as you continue to love the House of God, to prize the Fellowship Prayer Meeting, to carry on with unflagging zeal the Sabbath-school, the Juvenile Missionary Association, the Temperance Society, to take a lively interest in every part of the Missionary work, and to give a hearty and liberal response to every Missionary call, so long will you continue to show that his mantle has descended upon you, and that his name is cherished as a fragrant memory and an impulsive power in your hearts. A united, loving, liberal-hearted, prayerful, devoted congregation flourishing in this place, under a successor in the ministry "like minded, who will naturally care for your state," this will be the best monument you can ever raise to the memory of Dr. Houston.

(3). But should not the sketch we have given of the life and labours of Dr. Houston furnish a loud and cheering call to young men to devote themselves, in a similar spirit, to a life of devotedness to Christ in the holy Ministry? If he had chosen the path of scholarship, he would have secured, no doubt, distinction and affluence, and have accomplished much useful and honourable work. In choosing the Christian ministry he selected a life of hard toil, with poor remuneration, and many discouragements, in order to promote the glory of Christ and the salvation of immortal souls. As an unbefriended lad, he devoted himself to that office, and never drew back. In that office his higher nature was elevated and strengthened by the very difficulties he had to surmount; his talents were kept within the channels of purest and loftiest goodness by the many impediments he encountered; he contributed powerfully to advance the testimony of Christ and the cause of pure and undefiled religion; many souls were converted under his ministry, who shall be his glory and joy and crown of rejoicing for evermore; his family was highly educated and prepared for careers of usefulness; in the midst of apparent poverty, he had all things and abounded so as to make many rich, and to be able

to help forward every Christian enterprise ; and this day, in the affection and gratitude of many hearts, his name is inscribed deeper than those of kings—"because he hath done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house." To the last hour of his life he looked upon the work of the ministry, as he had viewed it from the outset, "as the most honourable and desirable on earth ;" and, no doubt, it is now a cause of eternal rejoicing that, by Divine grace, he was enabled so thoroughly to fulfil it. There is much need at the present time for young men of the same spirit. Why should anyone, whose heart God has touched with love to Christ and to the souls of men, be deterred by difficulties that at first sight may seem to be insuperable, from responding to the call—"Here am I : send me?"

(4). Let us all improve this solemn occasion by laying to heart the warning it addresses to ourselves. Few are permitted to enjoy so long and unbroken a career of public usefulness as our departed friend ; but at length even to him the signals became loud and distinct enough that the Master was at hand, and he must soon render an account of his stewardship. No longer able in voice to address the living, his thoughts went forth towards the future of the Church, and he was busily plying his pen for the good of after generations when the final dismissal came—"But go thou thy way till the end be ; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." "Therefore, be ye also ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Our powers and opportunities of usefulness may be very inferior to his, and the remaining period of active exertion on behalf of our own salvation, or of the conversion of the world to Christ, may be very brief. Impressed with the awful nearness of death and judgment and eternity, and stirred to activity by the noble example that has been set before us, let us address ourselves at once, with renewed earnestness, to all the duties and responsibilities attaching to our sphere in life. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."





# ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL, KNOCKBRACKEN,  
MARCH 30TH, 1882.

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WHEN over the beloved and venerated remains of our departed father, I use the appropriate words of David concerning his lamented friend:—"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" you might answer me as did Elisha on an occasion of similar solemnity:—"Yea, I know it, hold ye your peace." And in the deep sense of deprivation and sorrow with which this event has overwhelmed me, I might well hold my peace, only saying, in humble resignation:—"I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it." But necessity is laid upon me. The deep and general impression which this event has manifestly produced should not be permitted to pass away in silent bewilderment. We too must endeavour to rob death of his apparent victory, by snatching some life-lessons and hopes of final triumph out of the very mouth of the grave.

I would not obtrude myself upon your attention at this solemn moment merely to inculcate such lessons of mortality and religious improvement as death is at all times fitted to suggest. These might be more appropriately left to the ordinary instructions of the sanctuary. But the sudden removal of one so eminent and so beloved, who for more than half a century held so large a place in the affections and the veneration of a widely-extended circle of attached and indebted friends, is calculated to sound a note of warning, more loud and impressive than what is usual, which may awaken memories and suggest considerations for our guidance of the most serious and profitable character. From this silent bier a voice seems now to issue, in our hearing:—"Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children; for if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" "Therefore, be ye also ready, for ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh."

Before the grave which is now open is permitted to hide from

our view the remains of one who was so lovely and so much beloved, until this confined body shall arise in the splendour of immortal freshness and beauty at the resurrection, there are lessons and incentives to holy living which we would hastily glean and present to you, in the hope that they might stimulate us to immediate improvement ; while they signalize and illustrate the glory of that grace which, during his long lifetime, has made him so marvellously to differ. In doing this we are following, though at an infinite distance, the condescending example set to us by God Himself, who, in the special interest he cherishes for those who delight to do him honour, bottles up their tears, writes even their words in His book, and registers their humblest actions, that they may not miss their reward. "And the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." "Only the actions of the just smell sweet and blossom in the dust." "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." Not, however, in heaven alone is this true ; by many on earth their memory is esteemed too sweet to be allowed to perish. Those who have been blessed through their instrumentality, whose lives have been lifted up to a nobler standard by their godly example, who have been provoked and stimulated by their glowing love to a wider range of beneficence, whose hearts have been often comforted and their eyes brightened by the mystic spell of their exuberant sympathy, will cherish the memory of their deeds and words as a precious thing that is too sacred and divine to be soon forgotten, "and piety shall learn to burn, with holier raptures o'er their urn." "The memory of the just is blessed ; but the name of the wicked shall rot."

The important lessons to which I solicit your attention can receive but very scant illustration in our present circumstances ; but these illustrations I do not need to seek at second hand. I but reproduce the impressions which frequent contact with the throbbing sympathies and noble efforts of a good and great man have made upon my mind. Drawn, as a child, into the consciousness of religious experience by the glowing fervour and attractiveness of his pulpit ministrations, and by the singular power of his genial and loving personality, I have walked with him as a son in the Gospel hitherto, counting it an honour to follow in the wake of his ever onward career of devotedness and love, offering to him meanwhile what help and succour I could in his often difficult and most disinterested exertions. Now, that he has been suddenly taken from our head, I can only exclaim with Elisha—"My father, my father ! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

(1). First, let me mention him as an example of the noblest powers, almost intuitively, I might say, consecrated to God and to

His service. From childhood he manifested an intense eagerness for knowledge, and an extraordinary readiness in its acquisition. To a large extent he was self taught, and very soon passed beyond the aid that local schools could afford him. All the books within his reach were devoured with an appetite that never ceased to be insatiable. With remarkable swiftness he early began to excel his compeers in arithmetic, in mathematics, in English literature, in the sciences, and in the classics. A life of usefulness, opulence, and honour might have been assured to him if he had chosen to concentrate his powers in the cultivation of any one of these branches of learning. But having unreservedly consecrated himself to Christ, and chosen the work of the ministry, with its boundless labours, incessant anxieties, and uncertain remuneration, as the most likely way in which he might glorify his Lord and Master, he turned away from every worldly allurements, in the spirit of the Great Apostle, who could say—"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." In the very midst of his ardour as a student, with the spirit of emulation strong upon him, and the richest prizes within his reach, we find him turning aside to devise new schemes of beneficence and philanthropy, pioneering through the lanes and courts of Belfast for Mission work; going to Glasgow, that he might study the organisation and working of the first Town Mission; then, after he had established a similar enterprise in Belfast, originating a juvenile Missionary Association to help forward the cause of the world's conversion, conducting its business and fostering its growth, until it had spread out its fruitful branches and propagated healthy seedlets in many parts of Ulster. In the same ready, unsparing, and earnest manner he threw his youthful influence and energies into the work of Temperance Reformation, Tract Distribution, Scriptural Education, and human freedom and enlightenment at home and abroad. Personal advancement, literary eminence and success, and social distinction were deliberately put aside, and, to a certain extent, sacrificed, that he might be enabled to spend his strength, even from the first, in following in the footsteps of his Divine Saviour, who went about doing good.

(2). In the second place, I would emphasize as worthy of imitation the entire absorption of his soul in his own chosen work—the work of the Gospel ministry. He began his pastorate in very humble and discouraging circumstances. These must have been felt all the more keenly from the natural ardour of his temperament, and the easier paths to success in life that had been opening out before him. But there was no hesitation, no looking back. Having placed his services at the absolute disposal of his Heavenly

Master, with an unquestioning confidence and whole-heartedness of surrender that has not often been surpassed, he prosecuted the work without flagging until that Master directed his release. In labour of different kinds he was more abundant than any other pastor known to me of his generation. Eager for every opportunity of doing good, the gushing flow of his activities broke down all traditional barriers, and soon opened up new channels for themselves. Preaching three times on the Sabbath, catechising the youth of the congregation an hour in public before commencing worship, visiting, catechising, preaching, almost weekly, over an extensive range of country, keeping in vigorous action missionary and temperance organisations, holding sessional fasts every quarter, when the day was spent in united prayer and conference for the spiritual welfare of the congregation, he laboured, in season and out of season, literally spending himself and being spent in the work of the ministry. Only in the pastorate of the sainted Samuel Rutherford can I find a parallel, in recent times, to such continuous and prodigal exertions. An admiring contemporary has left this record:—"I have known many great and good ministers in this Church, but for such a piece of clay as Mr. Rutherford was, I never knew one in Scotland like him to whom so many great gifts were given; for he seemed to be altogether taken up with everything good, excellent, and useful. He seemed to be always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always catechising, always writing and studying."

(3). Another characteristic feature of his life, from which we might all learn much, was his intense eagerness for the salvation of the souls of men. He felt that the members of his own flock had been given to him in trust, and would be individually required at his hands. Under this sense of tremendous personal responsibility he was constrained to labour, and to travail in birth until Christ had been formed in their hearts. He loved his people with a yearning and tearful affection, that never could be appeased until he had some evidence that they were in Christ. With what plainness, pointedness, and fidelity of speech, oftentimes even weeping, he dealt with the souls of Gospel hearers, to rouse them to conviction, and to secure, if possible, their immediate conversion! How often have I heard him, in the spirit and in the very words of Rutherford, taking heaven and earth, and the stones and timbers of this house, to witness that their individual salvation would be like two salvations to him, and their heaven two heavens to him. Such painful wrestling and agonising in prayer and effort for the salvation of men is never altogether in vain in the Lord. The number of those already in heaven who are reckoned as a part of his joy and crown, and of those still on earth, scattered over many lands, and labouring in different ways in the Gospel, who gladly acknowledge him as their spiritual father, must be left undeclared until the great day. But few min-

isters, I am assured, could appropriate the solemn soul-relieving words of the Apostle with greater sincerity and weight of conscious reason :—" Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish."

(4). Again, I would be utterly untrue to the spirit and character of our dear departed father if I did not mention that he willingly sacrificed every worldly advantage, and was willing, I have no doubt, to have sacrificed even life itself for the testimony and glory of his Lord and Master. His whole soul was possessed with the conviction that it was necessary for him to maintain, at all hazards and under all circumstances, the testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, for the Covenanted ascendancy and royal prerogatives of the Lord Jesus Christ in these lands. Presuming to judge no man, but loving and honouring the true servants of Christ, irrespective of wide differences of opinion, and of denominational distinctions, he yet felt it to be his duty to stand identified with the cause for which the martyrs suffered, and to labour, witness, and pray for its dissemination. The glory of his exalted Master, foreseen in the assured return of these nations to His Crown and Covenant, and in the rapturous acclamations of a free, united, and redeemed people, walking in the ways of truth and righteousness, was the very pole-star of his existence. For the sake of an honest testimony to the righteousness and certainty of this consummation, and as the way which commended itself to his mind as most likely to facilitate the desired result, he was willing to endure loss, to expose himself to reproach and misrepresentation, and to feel himself publicly isolated from many friends and brethren whom he heartily esteemed and loved for their works' sake. And no man can say he had not a sufficient cause. He was no visionary, no wild dreamer, no idle enthusiast. It was his supreme love to Christ, his intense jealousy for the honour of His name, his firm faith in the near approach of the kingdom of righteousness and peace, and his ardent desire for the true and permanent reformation of these covenanted lands, that forced him to occupy that position. There was true heroism in the nature of the man. Christ, and not self, was exalted in every step that he took. Many will judge, of course, that he was mistaken in certain parts of his public action. But none will deny that he freely encountered loss and reproach and discouragement for conscience sake in a spirit of true and noblest heroism. Selfishness, under any of its guises, could never have been the prevailing motive of his conduct. It was for the name's sake of Jesus Christ that he bore burdens and endured trials that might have been easily evaded; and he did all in the spirit of most cordial and thankful resignation, even rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

(5). Another marked characteristic of Dr. Houston, which should challenge our imitation, was the burning zeal and boundless sympathy which he manifested on behalf of the cause and people of Christ throughout the world. Adherence to a particular testimony, and loyal attachment to the claims of a small denomination, instead of narrowing down his Christian sympathies and chilling the fervour of his zeal, served only to intensify and to expand them. Positivists talk of the religion of humanity as that universal religion which is ultimately to supersede Christianity itself; and tell us that the purest ideal of devotedness is for a man to feel that his life is not his own, but that it is devoted to humanity at large. Humanity, however, needs a Divine Saviour; and all its hopes and interests must eternally centre in Jesus Christ. The man who is most closely identified with Him is in a position to feel most truly for the wants and sorrows of perishing humanity. The heart of our departed father had learned to beat in constant unison with the great heart of the Lord and Saviour of men, and hence it followed eagerly the movements of his mighty hand, even to the ends of the earth. Wherever humanity groaned and agonised most painfully for deliverance, wherever the humblest servants of his Master were subject to outrage or to shame, thither the whole sympathies of his nature instantly rushed. His prayers went up for the conversion of Jew and Gentile, and with them such material aid as his own resources, together with the frequently solicited gifts of his friends and people, would enable him to send. I could scarcely name a benevolent enterprise, or a Christian project or mission in any part of the world, that has not received some substantial succour from his hands. "Set as a seal on the heart" of Christ, he seemed to feel and to vibrate with all its pulsations, to sparkle and glow with every flash of Divine emotion that burst from its depths. "Set as a seal upon His arm," he seemed to realise the vast sweep of his administrative energy and power, and to be carried instantaneously to the spot where that arm was most needed, or seemed to be in busiest action; so that everywhere he heartily co-operated with God in all His doings of mercy, and rejoiced because of His judgments.

(6). In conclusion, let me ask you to observe how he was sanctified and perfected, mainly through a life of entire consecration to God. Very rarely and slightly indeed was he called to endure bodily affliction. Regular, simple, and temperate in all his habits, with mind and heart continually engrossed in his work, he was kept free to a remarkable extent from wasting disquietude and distraction, and moved in an atmosphere of singular forgetfulness of self. When under domestic and relative trials, the steadfast prosecution of important objects elevated and soothed his spirit, strengthened his habits of application, braced, while it refined, all the thews and sinews of his nature, "and made his life a perfumed altar flame." Some of the most spiritual and refreshing works that

issued from his pen were conceived and written under the dark shadow of bereavement and trouble. Even the mysterious affection in his throat, which at last resulted in his removal, failed to lessen perceptibly his bodily or mental vigour till within three months of the close of his career ; while it constantly reminded him that the end was at hand, and led him to live in daily expectation of the coming of the Son of Man.

“ But well I know  
That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
The same grand year is ever at the door.

No jot of his usual work was abated, save that which required the exercise of his voice in public. His flowing pen seemed to have been plied more busily than ever as he saw the day approaching. A new volume on the Intercession and the Intercessory Prayer of Christ, was completed while he was constantly standing face to face with death, and it is now passing through the press.

Although utterly unable to preach, a fresh sermon was carefully prepared, as was his wont, every week. The subjects chosen show how strongly the current of his thoughts and feelings had been set towards the eternal world :—“ Behold I die, but God shall be with you ;” “ To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” The very last which he wrote was on the text—“ For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.” His conversation was in heaven, and the work of final preparation for bidding farewell to all earth-scenes was manifestly completed, even when moving undisturbed among his friends in his usual easy and placid manner. Like our Lord Himself on the mount of transfiguration, he spoke freely with his intimate friends of the decease which was now so soon to be accomplished. To the last he walked with God in loving intercourse and acquiescence, and now he is not, for God has taken him ! In his pocket Bible he had written down the dying sayings of some of God’s most eminent saints, and added the exclamation, “ Oh ! that this were my experience !” They are now seen to describe exactly what his experience was :—“ The more you are acquainted with God while you live, the more willing you will be to die, to go to him ; for death, to a child of God, is nothing else but a resting with God, in whose bosom he hath often been, by holy meditation, when he was alive.”—“ Blessed God, though I change my place, I shall not change my company ; for I have walked with God while living, and now I go to rest with God.”

His last days on earth were spent very much like those of Elijah, when he went forth from place to place, at the bidding of God, to finish his work on earth, and to meet the expected chariot of fire and horsemen of fire. Although he dutifully submitted to the prescribed operation, he expressed himself at times as though he knew it would only be the mode in which his translation was to be effected. And he could add—“ Amen. Even so, come, Lord

Jesus." The last passage which was read, in order, at family worship, seemed singularly like a direct intimation to himself and to the family of the will of his Heavenly Father concerning the result. He was wont to notice how often an appropriate message was found, at the very time it was needed, in the course of their daily reading through the Bible. The solemn import of this message, immediately before setting out for the Belfast Royal Hospital, was instantly recognised and deeply felt by all. His eldest son was conducting morning worship. In regular course he began to read the twentieth chapter of Numbers. When he had advanced to the 22nd verse, instinctively realising the wonderful coincidence, his heart filled, his voice trembled, so that he could not proceed. Dr. Houston, with all the self-possession he was accustomed to show in the presence of God, then took up the Book and firmly read the following passage. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. Take Aaron, and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor, and strip Aaron of his garments and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there. And Moses did as the Lord commanded; and they went up into Mount Hor, in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount; and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel."

