

That must not occur. A brave nation must not be let down."

THE LATE DR D. C. BENTINCK.

A TRIBUTE.

The news that the Rev. C. D. Bentinck, D.D., died suddenly in his Edinburgh home will be received with very great regret by many in the town and parish of Dornoch. He came to Dornoch in 1907, to a small congregation, and at a time when ecclesiastical strife was rampant in the parish. For the long space of 25 years he laboured, and he was spared to see rich and lasting fruits from his labours. With all the other ministers of the other congregations in the parish, he cultivated the most cordial and brotherly relations; and it is not too much to say that the union of the two congregations in Dornoch was very largely the result of his long, patient, and faithful ministry. He eschewed all ecclesiastical controversies and was a lover and promoter of peace and concord. He was very kind to the poor and the needy, and the amount he gave away in charity will never be known, for he let not his right hand know what his left hand did. He was the poor man's friend. With them he was quite at home, for he knew how to be friendly with them. He was equally at home with the rich and was very successful in interesting many of the summer visitors in the Cathedral as a sacred building of venerable antiquity, and in the vital needs of the congregation.

Many of us who were students will remember the testimonial he gave us and how willingly he would set himself to work for us in using all the influence he could to give us every chance as we set out on the great adventure of life. Who is there that knew him that can ever forget his kindly and genial presence, his smiling countenance, and his mellow cultured voice?

To his own congregation he was a real pastor, but all his parishioners shared to the full in his willingness to help, in his almost boundless willingness to help. Few ministers there are, and few men there are who can be equally at home with the very rich and with the very poor, and retain their own place and natural dignity all the time. Dr Bentinck was a gentleman who could.

During his ministry in Dornoch a great work of restoration was carried out on the Cathedral—a work that has made the Cathedral one of the noblest places of worship in Scotland.

No doubt other pens than mine will write of his book on Dornoch and its Cathedral, and of the rich mediating influence he exercised for peace and goodwill on many

occasions among all classes of the community, of his gifts and powers as a preacher, for he combined all that is best in the Moderate with all that is best in the Evangelical. The writer realises that that is saying a very great deal about any minister, for very few are able to combine both. Many devout people there are who are sure such a combination is impossible. In Dr Bentinck that union was complete. He was the ideal parish minister, and his departure from Dor-noch, on his retiral, was like the silent passing of an age, and the closing of a chapter in the long annals of the Ancient Burgh and Parish.

To the writer of this short tribute the most outstanding gift that Dr Bentinck possessed was his unique and marvellous gift of prayer. Prayer, said a great teacher, is an act, an attitude, an atmosphere. And in this sacred act Dr Bentinck excelled; in this attitude he discharged all his ministerial duties; and this atmosphere he always created wherever he went by his gracious presence. His was the language of the very richest devotion. His voice was rich and far-carrying and mellow, and his words were always most choice and appropriate for whatever the occasion might be. He had that wonderful power in his prayers of getting right home to the hearts of his hearers and bringing them right to the throne of God. That fact has been noticed and commented upon by many outside his own congregation as well as inside it. He had a marvellous gift of prayer.

He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast;
He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

Perhaps those words of Coleridge, "He prayeth best who loveth best," have a new and peculiar emphasis and a new and deeper significance for those of us who were privileged to know Dr Bentinck intimately.

One of the books he loved most was John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. In those words of the sublimest comfort for every faithful soul departing this life, words he himself would have used to many in the course of his ministry, "O Death, where is thy sting; O Grave, where is thy victory?" can there be any doubt but that he found his anchor there? Who can doubt that as he too passed over all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

CONTRIBUTED.