

The Rev. Thomas Burns, C.B.E., D.D.

DR BURNS was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh since the year 1888. He was a man of catholic sympathies, unique energy, and very varied gifts. In the fifty years of his ministry in Lady Glenorchy's Parish he found ample room for the exercise of these. In its teeming population dwelt every kind of problem, for in its varied humanity lurked the difficulties of poverty and the slum, though it was not wholly the asylum of the distressed and depraved. He was kept going by a vision which upheld him. He set himself to schemes of education that a door of opportunity might be opened to the children of the poor. In the School Board, on the Heriot Trust, and in the Training College for Teachers he made his practical energies felt. In the interests of the blind he employed all his driving force, with most helpful results. The Royal Blind Asylum and its workshop were in his parish, and many of the blind people had homes and lodgings there, making little of life with their meagre earnings. Work among these gave him his great inspiration after the War, when the difficulties of a sightless population were multiplied. He established Newington House, where the blinded soldiers might be taught to earn their living. And he also founded a home for blind women. For the many-sided activities of a practical religion such as his was, he built a church which was a pioneer in institutional congregational life, and it became a hive of activity. These are his lasting monuments.

He knew intensely the value of education as an uplifting fact, and he was content to make his self-denying labours his best and most eloquent sermons. For the realisation of his humanitarian projects he had no shyness in asking, and I never heard of his receiving a refusal to any appeal he made.

Amidst all his varied activities he made himself a little corner of leisure, in which he wrote his valuable work on *Old Scottish Communion Plate* and other fruits of his archæological knowledge: and he was successful in recovering much forgotten and lost treasure-trove of the Church. He was not confined to any idea of mere parochialism or ecclesiasticism. His interests had a wide stretch in them, but whatever benefits they bore were passed on to the needs of the folk whom he loved to serve. He carried light and a breeze with him, for which many a soul had reason to be thankful. Nothing in his life, work, or thought belonged to a world of standardised humanity or programmed enterprise, yet he was a master of method, and sure of victory, because he had deleted the word "surrender" from his vocabulary of conduct.

He died on January 15, 1938.

L. MACL. W.