

DEATH OF THE REV. W. STOWELL.

(From the *North Daily Express* of Saturday, February 2nd, 1878.)

It is our painful duty to record the death of the Rev. Wm. Stowell, Congregational minister, Ryton. His death took place early yesterday morning at the Mansel, Ryton. Mr Stowell, who has been connected with the *Newcastle Chronicle* ten or twelve years as a contributor and leader-writer, took ill about a month ago, and it appears that something like paralysis of the brain had then set in. Since that time he has been practically unconscious. An attack of inflammation of the lungs has, however, hastened his death. Mr Stowell was the eldest son of the late Rev. W. H. Stowell, D.D., the eminent Congregational minister, who wrote the Congregational lectures, "The Work of the Spirit," and was president of the Independent College at Rotherham, and subsequently president of the Cheshunt College. Mr Stowell was born at North Shields in 1825, his father being at that time pastor of the Independent Church. Dr. Stowell removed to Rotherham in 1834, where his son's studies were directed towards the work of the ministry. Mr Stowell matriculated at the London University, and took his degree of B.A. when he was only 18 years of age. He was called to the ministry before he reached his majority, his first church being at Longsight, near Manchester. A few years later he received a call from a church at Boston Spa, near Thelcaster, thence he removed to Ware. Mr Stowell had inherited a literary taste from his father, who wrote the first and other volumes of the monthly series of the Tract Society; and his connection with the newspaper press dates from many years, for he removed some 20 years ago from Ware to Bedford, where he edited the *Bedfordshire Mercury*. He had not at Bedford a settled pastorate, but his editorial duties did not prevent him from being ministerial and other work. He received a call from a church at Ampthill, in Bedfordshire, where he remained four years, and edited the *Northampton Review*, a newspaper which had a great reputation in the Midland counties at that time for its literary character, literary excellence not being a feature of the weekly newspaper as it is now of the daily press. He published a memoir of the life and labours of Dr. Stowell, a cheap edition of which was published in 1859, on a suggestion made by the *Morning Star*. Camden Town, London, was the next scene of Mr Stowell's labours; and he remained at a Congregational Church in that part of London for about four years. Some changes in his ministerial views lead him to resign his charge, and he came North in 1865, to his native town, where he resided for a short time, preaching and teaching. He then became connected with the *Newcastle Chronicle* as an occasional contributor, and subsequently became one of the regular staff, residing at Gateshead, until about six years ago, when he received a call from the Congregational Church at Ryton, where he has since lived, and finished his ministerial and literary life. Mr Stowell, as will be seen, had a varied experience, and his life was as laborious as it was varied. Having

an active mind, and a fluent pen, both were often brought into requisition, but rarely rewarded according to their merit, and the fruits of both were often generously given. He had a vivid imagination, and spoke and wrote with ease and with little preparation, his well informed mind furnishing material for a speech or article upon any subject at a minute's notice. In addition to his numerous contributions to the various papers in the shape of leading and descriptive articles, sketches and reviews, his graphic and versatile pen furnished occasional papers to some of the principal magazines. Of his pulpit efforts—and through the whole of his life, no matter how engaged the ministerial work ran like a golden thread—the description of Dr. Stowell from the deceased's pen will be recognised by many of his hearers as a fair sketch of himself:

"There was a freshness and earnestness about him which harmonised with our notions of life and its duties. To be sure, care had written its sorrowful sentences on that otherwise placid countenance, and there sparkled those mysterious hieroglyphics which all perceived, while few could suitably interpret them. But now and then the face won back its calmness, and heaven gleamed through the mist and gloom of earth. His exegetical skill was sometimes of a high order, when the passage for the morning was of a kind that he dearly loved. Very often his heart rose out from its burthen, and the spirit within answered not to the calls of the Divine word. Then all was barren and lonely; but the rush of enthusiasm was strong and abundant when there was power in the sacred pages, and a movement of the Spirit of God in that heaving soul. Those who heard him at such periods as these will not forget the vividness of his illustrations, the lucid nature of his suggestions, the warmth of his sympathies, and the sweet pride of his soul at having struck forth some new thoughts into the world before his brief passage, which had been obscured by the mists of many years, received from him such light and radiance that we have never been in doubt about them since. He scarcely ever gave any of his thoughts upon a passage without evincing a marvellous acquaintance with the general tenor of the whole of the Scriptures."

He was a genial companion, a kind-hearted friend, gentle and guileless as a child, realising fully the Apostolic description of a Christian—"in malice be ye children; in understanding be men." He had a kindly word for every one, and could accommodate himself to his surroundings. He carried his heart on his sleeve, and probably not a few daws picked at it, but in the fulness of his nature, and in the honesty of his purpose, he could afford to expose what many other men must conceal. Industrious and generous with what he possessed to a fault, and scarcely recognising the value of his labour, whether in the pulpit or elsewhere, and certainly rarely exacting its value during his laborious life, he worked on doing the work for its own sake, and for what it brought him in reward and opportunities for good, finishing his life's labour in harness, and dying in some measure a victim of overwork, the result in part of his natural activity and inherent vivacity.

He married, early in life, Miss Cowen, a daughter of a near relation of the late Sir Joseph Cowen—then a wealthy manufacturer at Rotherham; and he leaves ten children, the youngest five or six years of age, to mourn a sire cut down practically in the prime of life, and in the midst of his most active usefulness.