



WM. HARLAND, Stockton-on-Tees.

WILLIAM HARLAND.

WILLIAM HARLAND, Chartered Accountant, Stockton-on-Tees, came of a seafaring family of Whitby, Yorks, his parents being Presbyterians. He was born in 1846, and born again in 1864 under the preaching of J. S. Oliphant. For some time previously he was under deep conviction of sin through hearing the late Sir Arthur Blackwood and Lord Radstock preach on Whitby Pier, the latter actually going about the town as a "sandwichman" with texts of Scripture in bold type urging sinners to repentance. He did not at first enjoy much peace, having doubts and fears, though it was not long before his attention was drawn to 1 John 5. 13. He often related that he immediately ran home to make quite sure it was in his own Bible, as it seemed too good to be true. Since then he never doubted his Salvation, and through quoting the same verse has been the means of leading others to the same blessed assurance. He at once started to serve the Lord, and had the joy at his first attempt at preaching of winning two souls for Christ.

In 1869 business led him to Stockton, in the High Street of which town he distributed tracts and stood alone preaching the glad tidings. His first known convert through this was a Mr. Tait, with whom he and his wife commenced meeting at home for the "breaking of bread" on Lord's day mornings, which was the beginning of the present assembly which now meets in Hebron Hall. Although Mr. Harland knew nothing of the people known as "Brethren," he learned from the Scriptures that the disciples met together on the First Day of the week to commemorate the Lord's death, and was astonished to find that Christians in other towns were like-minded with himself. For forty years his powerful voice was heard on Sunday evenings in the open air beseeching sinners to come to the Saviour, many being thus converted to God.

Mr. Harland had a burning passion for the souls of men, and apart from public speaking, his testimony for the Lord in railway carriages and private conversation with friends and strangers were honoured of God in the Salvation of many. He frequently walked twenty-four miles on Sundays to carry the glad tidings to villages in the district, and when on holiday in the summer stood alone on many village greens preaching to bystanders.

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His ministry to the saints in Stockton for forty-seven years, and at Christian conferences in various parts of the British Isles, was profitable. A letter was received only on the day of the funeral inviting him to the Annual Easter Conference at Belfast, where he had frequently ministered. He was an intimate friend of the late Robert Chapman, of Barnstaple, one of whose "Choice Sayings" he frequently quoted, and always endeavoured to carry out: "WALK IN THE NARROW WAY WITH A LARGE HEART." He had a great love for all God's people by whatever sectarian name known. Mr. Harland leaves a large grown up family, who in answer to the earnest prayers of their parents are all on the Lord's side, each one serving the same Lord that their dear father served so well for fifty-two years. He loved his home, from which he never absented himself except on business or the Lord's business, and was devoted to his wife and family. He was a man of one book, "The Bible," and was always ready to defend the same from the assaults of those who denied its inspiration in any detail. His writings in this direction, as well as against those in the assemblies of God's people who attempted to sectarianise or dogmatise on unprofitable subjects concerning the Lord's Table, are well known. His gracious manner and his sympathy with the bereaved were a comfort to many.

On Sunday, 16th January he took part in the meeting for worship at Hebron Hall, and in the evening preached with remarkable vigour and power from the words, "IT IS FINISHED" (John 19. 31), which sentence he uttered at least twelve times. Strangely prophetic. On the Tuesday following, 18th January, 1916, he entered into rest in his seventieth year. Though a great physical sufferer for many years, he had enjoyed fairly good health for the past ten years, and on his last day upon earth travelled from Stockton to Redcar with his wife, intending to stay a fortnight. After retiring for the night he suddenly passed away before medical aid could be obtained. "He was not, for God took him."

The remains were carried to their last earthly resting-place by brethren from Hebron Hall on Friday, 21st January, and in the presence of a large company, including the Mayor and Corporation, Mr. A. E. Knowles spoke most

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appropriately from the words, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4. 18). At the graveside Dr. Jones, of Prudhoe, made an earnest appeal to sinners to come to the Saviour. Then the hymn, "Sleep on, beloved; sleep, and take thy rest," was sung, and we left the grave in the sure and certain hope of meeting him again with all "who have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb."

A. B. H.
