

Reminiscences of George Pearce Gould.

IT is not easy to write of such a man as George Pearce Gould in a fashion which will do justice to the impression he made on those who came into close contact with him. Many of us found him a man whom it was difficult to know. To a commanding presence and a dignity of which he was probably unconscious, he united a reserve which almost amounted to shyness. A student who, like the present writer, came from the freer life of Cambridge, inevitably missed the sense of comradeship and the atmosphere of fellowship in common things. The undergraduate had been at liberty to drop in on his Tutor for tea or a chat when he would, and it must be confessed that life at Regent's Park was rather like being back at school again. Indeed, as long as Dr. Gould lived, one, at least, of his students always visited him with the feeling that he was once more a third-form boy who had been summoned to the Headmaster's study. This was probably the fault of the student, for there were others who were able to get past the reserve and win a very deep and tender personal friendship.

But if intimacy was not always possible, there was room for respect, reverence, and almost worship. We did not ask ourselves whether we admired our Principal; our admiration was a matter of course—if, indeed, the term be not altogether too mild to describe our real feeling for him. Discipline, in the ordinary sense of the term, was unnecessary, and it is impossible to recall an occasion on which anything like a punishment was imposed. It goes without saying that at times rules were broken, and repressed spirits sometimes exploded in a "bust", but it was one of the Principal's great gifts to know how far these things could be ignored, and, if notice had to be taken of them, a plain rebuke was invariably enough to reduce the offenders to contrition.

Even to our ignorant minds it was obvious that Dr. Gould was a great scholar. It is true he never published any original work on the subjects he taught, but that, we felt, was one of the effects of his modest and retiring attitude to life. That he had the knowledge and the capacity none of us ever doubted. His work, both in Historical Theology and in Old Testament studies, was always up-to-date, and the latest authorities were freely

quoted. We all knew that the Principal worked harder than any one else in the College, and that he imposed on himself a rigour far greater than that with which he treated us. If he demanded pointing exercises of us, he did them himself, as we sometimes discovered, and the preparation he made for his exegetical lectures on the text of the Old Testament would have been quite adequate for an *ICC* commentary. He was at once thorough and accurate, and he set before his students a high standard. He could condone genuine stupidity, but had no patience with laziness or slovenliness. A student to whom he once gave 80% in a Hebrew examination might have expected some sign of approval, if any remark was to be made at all. But when he was summoned to the Principal's study, it was to receive, not commendation, but a vigorous and forcible reprimand for some careless mistakes. That was characteristic; nothing less than the best a man could do was good enough, and Dr. Gould himself always gave his best.

Thoroughness and a passion for accuracy were among the qualities which made Dr. Gould the greatest teacher of Hebrew in modern times. A distinguished Oxford scholar once said that the best men he had were always those who came from Regent's Park. Very few Regent's men—possibly not more than one—ever failed in a Hebrew examination. What is more, a large proportion continued to read their Hebrew Bible after they left the College. When Serampore College was reorganised, the first small staff was composed entirely of Regent's Park men, and all five were competent to teach Hebrew. Their teacher had inspired them with a real love of the language and of the Hebrew Bible. To read with him a book like Isaiah 40-66 was an experience to be remembered and treasured through life. Each of us would stumble through his verse, cope, more or less successfully, with a searching enquiry into our knowledge of the grammar involved, and take down necessary textual and other notes. Then the Principal would move back from the desk over which he had been leaning, lift that noble head of his, square himself in front of the blackboard, and give us an inspired and inspiring exposition of the passage we had read. We were never allowed to feel that philology and criticism were ends in themselves; they were necessary and indispensable means to the fulfilment of a higher purpose. That purpose was the understanding and interpretation of the Word of God. The dullest clod among us could not fail to catch something of the passionate enthusiasm which our master had for the Book, and we realised that the drudgery of grammar and dictionary work was but the preliminary to the transmission of the eternal message enshrined in the language of Holy Scripture.

Regent's Park has a great missionary tradition. From the day that a student entered the College he was made to feel that the onus of proof lay with the man who stayed at home and not with the man who went abroad. The question he had to ask himself was not "Why should I be a missionary rather than a minister in this country?" but "Why should I be a minister in this country rather than a missionary?" This spirit was to some extent due to the long series of men who have given their lives to the work of the foreign field, but it was certainly fostered by the Principal. He never appealed to men to go abroad, but we had no doubt as to his feeling in the matter, and his unobtrusive influence played a very large part in the maintenance of the tradition. In private conversation with a student, he came nearer to breaking through his reserve when discussing the foreign service than at any other time, and one man, at least, will always treasure the memory of an hour in which he told the Principal of his resolve to go abroad.

By common consent, however, it was at morning prayers that we learnt to know Dr. Gould best. In class we realised his scholarship and his enthusiasm for the Bible, while occasional flashes of humour showed us something of another side. But when we met in the mornings for the worship which began our day, it seemed as if all the reserve were stripped away, and we saw the real heart of the man. It would not be true to say that he forgot our presence, but he was certainly far more conscious of the Father with whom he communed. We "listened in" as it were, to an intimate conversation, and we were led ourselves to share in the fellowship. It was, perhaps, this which made it impossible to admit any feeling other than reverence towards him. His great learning and his impressive personality will always stand subordinate in our memory to the depth of spiritual life and experience which were revealed to us in these hours. More than at any other time his evangelical zeal was apparent here, and though we may have forgotten most of the things the Principal tried to teach us, the impression made by his spirit in prayer is ineffaceable. We knew him to be one of the really great men of our day, but the greatest thing about him was that he walked humbly with his God.

THEODORE H. ROBINSON.

Dr. John Ryland on Dr. John Owen's "Work of the Spirit," 1791.

I HAVE no words to express my joy which I feel at having received the news, that so wise and good a man as Mr. Burder of Coventry was going to publish an abridgement of Dr. Owen upon the Holy Spirit. I wish it had been done an hundred years ago. I rejoice that it is likely to be accomplished now. It is a work exceeding needful at all times, but especially *now*, when the Holy Spirit is peculiarly hated and blasphemed. No Man can wish a larger spread to this blessed work than myself and, if I had ability equal to my wishes, I'd give away 100,000. I pray God that this glorious Author of all that is good and beautiful in man may spread the knowledge of Himself thro' the whole world. Dr. Owen's original work has dwelt with me above twenty years. I have read it with great pleasure and profit, but it was too big for my faculties and I suppose that has been the case with many other Christians. The savour of gospel holiness which runs thro' it, is beyond all expression. The learning tho' rich encumbers it. The prolixity in many places renders it impossible to be read by God's people in general. This abridgement will put it into the possession of five hundred people to one in past times. If my word of recommendation among my particular friends or the public in general would stand for anything, I would rejoice to give it, and with my latest breath I will recommend that great and good Spirit to whom, thro' Christ's Blood and Righteousness, I owe all the holiness and happiness of my immortal soul. If these words, or any other that I can write, will be thought of any use, I shall rejoice to have them printed, and when Dr. Owen is published if I have a tongue to speak or a hand to write, they shall be devoted to the spread of it.

JOHN RYLAND.

Enfield.

December 22nd, 1791.

Records belonging to St. Mary's, Norwich.

(Those marked * are deposited with the Norwich City Library for safe keeping. The article, "Historic Documents of St. Mary's," by C. B. Jewson, *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. VIII., 326, deals with some of these records.)

- * 1. CHURCH BOOK, C. 1690 TO 1778.
Articles of Faith; Lists of Members; Proceedings of Church Meetings; Records of Ordinations, &c.; Register of Births 1745-1774 and deaths 1745 to 1761.
- * 2. CHURCH ACCOUNT BOOK, 1726 to 1803.
- * 3. REGISTER OF BIRTHS, 1758-1836 (Certified copy made in 1837).
Includes members of the families of Bignold, Brightwell, Colman, Crome, Theobald, Wilkin, &c.
4. NOTE-BOOK OF WILLIAM LINDOE, 1746-1773.
Containing his religious reflections, &c.
5. LETTERS AND PAPERS FROM 1758.
Subscription lists; notes of Church affairs; correspondence of Joseph Kinghorn and others.
- * 6. CHURCH BOOK, 1780-1832.
Covering the pastorates of Rees David and Joseph Kinghorn.
- * 7. THE WILKIN PAPERS, 1780-1854.
152 letters and papers, originally the property of Simon Wilkin, F.L.S., ward of Joseph Kinghorn, including letters of William Jackson Hooker, Amelia Opie and many Baptist celebrities.
- * 8. CHURCH ACCOUNT BOOK, 1788-1859.
Includes list of Trustees and Subscription Lists of Charities.
9. QUARTERLY SUBSCRIPTION BOOK, 1803-1846.
10. ST. MARY'S BUILDING ACCOUNTS, 1810-1816.
11. M.S.S. SERMON.
Preached by Joseph Kinghorn at the opening of St. Mary's Meeting, 1812.
12. M.S.S. MEMORIAL SERMONS.
Preached by Joseph Kinghorn on the deaths of members of the Theobald family, 1823 and 1829.