

**MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS  
OF OMAGH**

**A Finished Course — 2 Timothy 4:7.**

**Born - - - - - 1879**

**Saved by Grace - 1892**

**Fell Asleep - - - 1951**



**WHEN** the word was spread abroad that beloved William Rodgers of Omagh had been "called home" on March 2nd, it is not exaggeration to say that many thousands in the homelands and the colonies and the continent of America, as well as remote parts of the earth where the savour of a good name had gone, were powerfully affected by this visitation of God.

What was it which caused this whole-hearted appreciation of this servant of Christ? It was the fact that he was a "man of God."

The apostle expresses the thought in 2 Cor. 6:9—"As unknown, and yet well known"; Yes, unknown indeed, on the rosters of earth's great, yet well known amongst those who had spiritual perception and who could appreciate a godly and humble life. However, his outstanding ability as a scholarly student of God's Word earned him a respect and standing in the minds of many contemporaries who perhaps would not deign to associate with the "lowly people of God" in testimony.

Saved when thirteen years of age, baptized and received into fellowship in Omagh Assembly a year later, he went on steadily for God, became a truly spiritual guide and leader after his years of Gospel activity and learning of God's mind and was one to whom very many looked for help and comfort and instruction in the things of God.

We can do no better in this note of our beloved brother's life than to quote from letters received from some of those who intimately knew him.

The impact of this godly life has been felt in many circles and his record is on high, but certain lessons may be noted and laid to heart—some of such we would seek to pass on.

The Editor.

### THE TALENT

Well done, beloved warrior,  
Who stood for God and truth,  
Who used the talent wisely,  
From early days of youth.

Age and the years but showed us  
The grace of God, so true,  
Measured by His own Spirit,  
Which He had granted you.

Now! Be it ours to treasure,  
The mem'ry of thy care  
For God's own work and service,  
In which we all may share.

W. H. F.

**MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS OF OMAGH****MR. WILLIAM BUNTING of Dromore**

**I**T IS with deep regret that I write of the passing away of our beloved brother, Mr. William Rodgers. His death has come as a great shock to all who knew him, for though he was in his 72nd year and his strength had been declining for some months, no one suspected that the end was near. He attended Ardstraw Believers' Meeting on Wednesday, February 28th, and spoke with freshness and power upon our Lord's Temptations. Next night he was present at Omagh Assembly Prayer Meeting and followed up his Ardstraw address by speaking from Luke 22:28: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." This was his last message. About 5 a.m. the following morning, he passed quietly in his sleep.

As a young Christian he was greatly influenced by coming in contact with late James Campbell and William Matthews who were laboring for the Lord in his district. He made rapid progress in the things of God, and while still in his teens gave his full time to Gospel work, laboring with Dr. W. J. Matthews, Mr. James Megaw and others who are now with the Lord. In those early days he did much pioneering work and was used in the planting and upbuilding of scripturally gathered Assemblies.

Mr. Rodgers was one of the soundest and most reliable of expositors. Perhaps it was in Bible Readings that he was at his best. For many years he had taken a leading part in the annual Lurgan Readings. In these his presence was always a pillar of strength. His judgment when expressed was always sane, balanced and mature. He was a man of profound wisdom, consequently, his counsel was much sought and from all parts of the world he received letters asking for guidance and advice in spiritual matters.

He was an able writer. For many years he contributed papers to Assembly periodicals. Some of his series of articles are now in book form, while his "Things Written Aforetime" which some years ago appeared in WORDS IN SEASON, is at present in the hands of his printer and will shortly be published.

The truths of Separation and Church Order were dear to Mr. Rodger's heart and he was deeply grieved by the present trend of some who would amalgamate with unscriptural systems and introduce amongst the Assemblies methods copied from the religious world. He visited the U. S. A. and Canada in 1905, and again in 1928.

He will be much missed, especially by the small country Assemblies of County Tyrone, for which he had such a godly care.

May we who are left to carry on the testimony which he so faithfully maintained, have grace to "follow him, even as he followed Christ."



## MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS OF OMAGH

MR. T. CAMPBELL of Bangor

**M**Y OWN acquaintance with our departed brother was both close and of long duration. My first meeting with him was at a Conference in Letterkenny in 1900 where he was one of the speakers. I can distinctly recall the Scriptures he dealt with on that occasion. His youthful appearance, together with the able manner in which he handled his subject, led me to form the impression that he was an exceptionally promising young man.

First impressions are not always correct, but in this case, the fifty years and more that have intervened have amply justified mine. I have yet to meet the man who had such a profound knowledge of the Word of God. This deep knowledge, coupled with his modest, retiring and unassuming disposition, went to make him altogether a man by himself.

Although possessing every qualification of a severe critic, he was anything but critical. The youngest brother who had a little word could feel quite free in speaking in his presence, whilst other brethren of much less consequence would have embarrassed or deterred them. Younger brethren could always count upon his fatherly advice and encouragement. May his mantle have fallen upon some other young man who will come forward to stand in the breach for God and His Truth and for the good of His people.



## MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS OF OMAGH

MR. JAMES QUINN of Omagh

**D**URING all my life as a Christian I have looked upon Mr. Rodgers as one who had a special care for my spiritual state. Though he was a junior to me in years, he was regarded as a father. Mr. Rodgers carried out in his lifetime the exhortation of 1 Cor. 15:58 for he never seemed to tire in the Lord's work. His powerful grasp of God's Word, and understanding of His ways, constituted him a unique gift to the Church. The most obscure passages of Scripture were almost immediately accessible to his mind.

Being strong, physically, he was ready to do any work in the service of the Lord. He assisted in the erection of a number of Gospel Halls, and in his early days worked canvas tents, preaching, sleeping in them, and doing his own cooking, etc.

My recollection of Mr. Rodgers goes back to his school days but I became intimately acquainted with him in the year 1894 and a friendship was then formed which continued until his death.

I accompanied him once on a tract distribution tour of 400 miles in the year 1897, and considering the quality of bicycles and roads in those days, it meant a lot of work to do a circuit of Ulster. In those times his usual journeys on Lord's Days would be almost sixty miles on a push bicycle. He did this in order to be with the young Assembly at Rooskey in the morning and preach the Gospel in County Fermanagh in the evening. He usually preached five times each Lord's Day.

When we think of all the work our beloved brother Rodgers did and how we enjoyed his messages, we have a faint idea of how much we have lost by his death. But we know that "he rests from his labors, and his works do follow him."



## MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS OF OMAGH

MR. R. CURRAN of Banbridge

**M**Y RECOLLECTION of Mr. Rodgers dates back to Easter 1915 when I heard him speak at one of the Belfast Conference meetings from the text—"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." He emphasized the denying of SELF—i. e. should be prepared for death in the Lord's cause. Though 36 years have passed since then, that address is still fresh to me.

A year later, Mr. Samuel Wright and I pitched our Gospel Tent about five miles from Omagh. Not being able to secure lodgings in the district, Mr. Rodgers invited us to stay in his home. This we did, and I have often thanked God that He guided me there, as the time spent under his roof has been a blessing to me ever since. I soon learned that Mr. Rodgers had a profound knowledge of the Word of God. I also learned the secret of this — the Bible was his constant study. Even when visiting in homes, he was sure to be at its sacred pages if a little quietness gave him opportunity. And, of course, it was the great theme of his conversation, for he believed that those who preach should not spend their time in idle talk. In his own home I much enjoyed the family Bible readings, morning and evening, because of his valuable comments. Then after the others had retired to rest he sat up, night after night, seeking to help me from the Scriptures. Indeed it was usually 2 a.m. when we got to our beds. Is it any wonder, therefore, that I thank God that I ever got to know Mr. Rodgers?

Though so deeply taught himself, our brother was always very humble and was always willing to take a low place. When

he attended the meetings to which I have already referred, he stood at the door of our tent and gave out the hymn books. He was sympathetic, considerate, hospitable and liberal.



## MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS OF OMAGH

**MR. ROBERT BEATTIE of Omagh**

**A**FTER my conversion to God he was a great blessing to me and the help he gave me from the Scriptures still remains. He always had a special interest in the lambs of the flock and sought to lead them on in the ways of the Lord.

Mr. Rodgers's interest in the little Assemblies of Tyrone, Fermanagh and Donegall was very real. He often visited them and took his place, perhaps with only two or three others, on a Lord's Day morning to "remember the Lord" and then passed on a word of encouragement and help from the Scriptures. He never got occupied with numbers but could address a meeting of half a dozen people just as he would three thousand at the Belfast Easter Conference.

As a preacher of the Gospel he had a great desire to bring the good tidings into new districts, often searching his map to find places where they had not heard the Gospel message. It is believed that for the last fifty years, he preached in a tent every Summer without a break.

Although a man of profound knowledge of the Scriptures, it was a treat to hear him speak to the children at their Annual tea meetings. He always brought his message down to their level. We have seen him pull a leaf from the tree as he went into the Hall and from this object speak to the children of life and death. We have also seen him take a lamp from the wall, thus referring to the lamp mentioned in the Scriptures.

There was no work too mean or journey too long for Mr. Rodgers because he had the welfare of God's people at heart.



## MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS OF OMAGH

**MR. W. J. ABERNETHY of Dungannon**

**I**T IS with a measure of grief that I make an attempt to place on record my appreciation of our departed brother. I well remember an address he gave when I was a young believer in 1914. His subject was "Unity as seen in Psalm 133." At that time we formed a happy fellowship which has remained unbroken during the intervening years. When taking my leave of him and apologizing to him and Mrs. Rodgers on the Wednesday evening before his homecall, his last words to me were—"We are not tired of you yet."

An attempt to place on record the true value of his helpful addresses, given to small and large gatherings, would be

futile. His lucid opening up of the Holy Scriptures was undoubtedly a precious gift from the ascended Lord which may not be duplicated in our day. It is a pleasure to recall it. I have heard him speak from every Book in the Bible. He was strong in the belief that the Bible is ONE Book, "welded together" and he sought to teach it as such. It was continually in evidence that his life's work and aim was to care for the Lord's people and the unsaved in every way possible. His interest was untiring, tending to their temporal and spiritual needs.

Small, out of the way Assemblies could always count upon his help, and the freshness of his ministry was greatly appreciated.



## MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS OF OMAGH

MR. WILLIAM WARKE of Chicago, Ill.

I WAS saddened to hear of the homecall of our two dear brethren, Mr. William Rodgers and Mr. Samuel Wright.

I met both of these men shortly after I was saved and they were a great help to me. I have held them in the highest esteem ever since. The kindly and gracious manner of Mr. Wright and Mr. Rodgers' profound knowledge of the Scriptures, impressed me deeply.

From these men, and others like them, I learned God's truth in those early days. Recently I was struck with the words of 2 Tim. 3:14, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." As I thought of the outstanding godliness, the unswerving principles and the sincerity of these men, I could not help but contrast them with the men who today speak of these same truths as "mere traditions" and "non-essentials."

William Rodgers was an intellectual giant and would have been a genius in any field; but he devoted himself to the study of the Scriptures and the result was, a written and oral ministry that far surpassed in depth and tone anything of this generation. He had a thorough knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages but, in spite of this, he was most unassuming. While home on a visit to Ireland in 1925, it was my privilege to preach with him for three weeks at Ballycastle, Co. Antrim, and I have never preached with a more humble or congenial partner.

The Assemblies in the North of Ireland have been preserved in a great measure from the declension that is so evident in other places and I feel, that in no small measure, this has been due to his fearless ministry and sound advice. It has been truthfully said — "He was a terror to evil doctrines."

May the Lord raise up others who will practise the same self-denial and show the same devotion to God and His Word.



## MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS OF OMAGH

MR. W. FISHER HUNTER of Waynesboro, Pa.

IT IS an honored privilege to utter a few words to the memory of the late William Rodgers. I had heard so many persons speak of his spiritual worth, and in such terms, that I often questioned if it were not over much. But when, in June, 1950, I met him and spent several days in his company, fellowshipping with him over the things of God in his home; listening to him in his public ministry of the Word of God, I freely acknowledged that "the half had not been told me."

I never met a man who was so mighty in the Scriptures and so unanimously loved, or so highly esteemed by all his brethren, as was Mr. Rodgers; yet, with all that, he remained humble and kept his ways free from pretense and ostentation.

In his going to be with the Lord, the Assemblies in the North of Ireland have been bereft of their most valuable gift and a wise counsellor.



## MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM RODGERS OF OMAGH

### THE FUNERAL SERVICES

ON LORD'S Day, March the fourth, about two thousand mourners gathered together, according to the newspaper account, which said that "the sorrow and sympathy at his demise was not confined to Omagh. Rather was it manifest throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, for there was scarcely a single corner of the country in which the deceased was not known for his active evangelical work for more than half a century." It then continued to report many interesting and spiritual results of Mr. Rodgers' testimony which we forbear to give, but it showed the respect and esteem in which our beloved friend and brother was held by those who knew him in his own community.

Mr. W. Abernethy gave out the opening hymn—"Midst the darkness, storm and sorrow." Mr. William Bunting read 2 Sam. 3:38; Acts 7:54, 60 and 2 Tim. 4:5, 8. He spoke of Stephen as a New Testament "prince"—his name meaning a "crown." In Acts 7 he won the martyr's crown. Five aspects of his life and testimony were pointed out:

A man of honest report—testimony in the world.  
Intense love for saints, as his deacon work manifested.

A faithful preacher.

Profound knowledge of Scriptures, as revealed in Acts 7.



Outstanding for his wisdom—Acts 6:3, 10.

All of these aspects, Mr. Bunting pointed out, were prominent in the life of our dear, departed brother who had now “finished his course.”

Mr. James Quinn of Omagh Assembly, a life-long friend of Mr. Rodgers, then prayed. At the grave, Mr. T. Campbell gave out the hymn—“Man of Sorrows.”

Mr. T. McKelvey gave a very searching and suitable Gospel address on Hebrews 11:13, 32 and 12:1, 3 — speaking of the list of “worthies” not yet being closed, including “godly guides,” and he closed with an appeal to us all today as in Heb. 12:1. Mr. R. Curran then prayed.



Thus this humble servant of Christ has passed from our midst — we feel deeply the loss we all have suffered; but it is ours to carry on for God in all conscious weakness and seek to emulate his godly example and cling, tenaciously, to the truths he enunciated during his valued testimony.

“YET A LITTLE WHILE, AND HE THAT SHALL COME WILL COME, AND WILL NOT TARRY.” Hebrews 10:37.

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## WHOSE FAITH FOLLOW

### Lessons from the death of Godly Leaders

WM. H. FERGUSON

**C**HANGES in life are inevitable—“One generation cometh and passeth away” and in each succeeding generation there is left an impact for good or ill. Well is it for us if we realize this and live for the future, in view of eternal manifestation and eternal reward, 2 Cor. 5:10. That godly and capable leaders amongst the saints are becoming fewer is very evident. Therefore, in the removal of such when there seems to be so much need, there is real food for thought and cause for deep exercise.

### FINISHING THE COURSE

Paul, the loved apostle, writes—“so that I might finish my course with joy” Acts 20:24 and later on, on the eve of his execution, he re-iterates this thought and triumphantly, as a dying warrior, yet in deepest humility, he could say “I have finished my course.” He does not refer to the mere fact of meeting up with death but rather that he had been enabled to “fulfill the ministry” which he had received from the Lord and there is doubtless a reference to the “courses of the priesthood” as outlined by David centuries before. Happy is the servant who can “finish his course with joy.” Too many finish under a cloud, or in a state of decay, as Asa (diseased in his feet) or in a state of separation from God’s house (through

rashness and pride) as Uzziah, 2 Chron. 26:21; and perhaps under such a heavy cloud that it causes wonder as to the eternal state—sad thought indeed.

### FINISHING WELL

To finish well is to live well and those who do, leave a rich heritage for us—Paul writes to Timothy—“Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned . . . knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” And again, “the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” 2 Tim. 2:2. Thus we see a perpetuation of godly teaching follows godly living and stewardship.

### GOD'S WORKMEN

These are not all cast in the same “mould” but they are all cast by the same Hand and to them is committed the Holy Scriptures and the precious deposit of truth contained therein. The injunction of God to stewards of His truth is—“Hold fast the form (or pattern) of sound words” 2 Tim. 1:13. This implies an acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, not only so, but a very deep and real study and apprehension of the revealed will of God contained therein. It has been this which has characterized such godly men. Coupled with prayer and consistency of life, it has marked them out as men of the Book. Thus we see the importance of the study of the Word—“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them (live in them); that thy profiting may appear to all.” 1 Tim. 4:15.

This entails much self-denial, as to time spent with friends and families; and many things which might occupy the time and energy of the servant of Christ, will need to be laid aside that he may more fully enter into the presence of God and spend time alone with God. **THERE IS FAR TOO LITTLE TIME SPENT WITH GOD TODAY BY ALL OF US**, consequently there is weakness in the ministry and a lack of freshness and “mouldy bread” is often offered to God's people or something “stale” and well worn because there has not been time spent in God's presence in prayer and meditation. One can detect this in ministry very readily. Our aged brother Mr. Gould used to say—“An old sermon is all right, if it has been born again.” Those who would be helpful to God's people, as have been some of our lately mourned leaders, must not neglect any of the whole range of truth and must be prepared to pay the price of loyalty to it. Well has it been said that “on every coin for which we sell any of God's truth, there is stamped, faint as it may appear, the image of antichrist.”

### MEN OF STABILITY

All things in connection with God's testimony are weighty and men and women of God who desire to live for God must abandon all lightness, frivolity and worldly show.

Usually God's men have been attached to some district with definite sphere of service therein. Paul says—"Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labors; but . . . to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand." 2 Cor. 10:15, 16. Donald Ross said to John Knox McEwen—"God does not send preachers to the church to preach the Gospel, He sends them to the world." And Dr. Matthews asked bro. John Knox years ago — "How many preachers would be around if there was not an assembly to receive them?" God's men have no need to parade themselves over vast stretches of territory, nor, like the Levite of old—"look or search for a place and a suit of clothes and victuals." Nay, rather, the godly have SOUGHT THEM and their advice and help. The fact that saints know where to find such men and be able to get spiritual help from them is a great comfort to many thousands of His own who are, more or less, affected by such godly and stable living. Even when God's call leads such men farther afield, there is a weighty consideration of the path—cp. Paul in his planning of his journeys in 2 Cor. 1:15, 17—"Did I use lightness?" No! It was a real burden to him, consequently a real blessing to saint and sinner. Good is it when the call of God leads such men to visit what might be termed "far-away fields," that they leave behind them a "godly seed" and a "savour of God." The false enthusiasm and popularity of men who can grasp an opportunity and use it to the fullest advantage and then retire from it to seek fairer and richer fields, is as valueless as it is unscriptural.

### LET US CARRY ON

"God buries His workmen, but carries on His work" is an old adage and so He leaves us here to carry on "till He Come," to "strengthen the things that remain" and to throw our weight behind every thing that is of God. This will keep us all busy, leave no room for meandering into "by-path meadow" and one who seeks to do this will find abundant scope for any gift that is of God and his time will be fully occupied for God. The true servant is not envious of fellow laborers nor does he seek to derive personal advantage at another's expense.

The great evangelist George Whitefield was asked by a strong and sturdy Calvinist—"Do you think we'll see Wesley in heaven?" That good man mused . . . and said slowly . . . "No, perhaps not . . . you see, he'll be so near the Throne and ourselves so far in the rear that we'll hardly see him." Noble answer by one of God's noblemen.

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**T**HE Word of God teaches us lowliness of mind; it teaches us to know ourselves. If we learn not humility, we learn nothing.

H. & S. Commentary