

W Y FULLERTON

David C F Wright DD

William Young Fullerton was born in Belfast on 8 March 1857. His father died when he was three years old and, in later life, he often spoke of his mother and her simple courageous faith.

He was converted at the age of thirteen in Sunday School and while still a teenager began preaching when Moody and Sankey visited Belfast.

For business reasons he came to London and attended the Metropolitan Tabernacle where the minister was Charles Hadden Spurgeon (1834-1892) and they became good friends. Often Fullerton would deputise for Spurgeon at the Tabernacle and elsewhere and helped Spurgeon with writing out his sermons. Spurgeon urged him to join his Pastors College and on completion of the course he formed an evangelical partnership with W J Manton Smith and they conducted missions throughout the British Isles.

In the time of F B Meyer Melbourne Hall in the Highfields district of Leicester had been built and in 1894 they called Fullerton to be their minister. This he gladly accepted since this would give him more freedom in evangelism than in being a Baptist minister. He was there for 18 years and built up a large and strong church.

In 1912 he was elected to be the Home Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society which was formed in 1792 by William Carey (1761-1834) and proved himself to be a good administrator and keen worker for missions.

Fullerton first spoke at the Keswick 1908. He would stand with a small Bible in his left hand and without any notes. He was always precise backing up all his said with Scripture references. He was tall, bearded with gold-rimmed spectacles and was a kind man with a gentle sense of humour. He also quoted verses of poetry and hymns in his addresses to emphasise any point he was making.

Lift up your hearts, ye sorrowing ones,
And be glad at heart,
For Calvary day and Easter day,
The saddest and the gladdest day,
Were but one day apart.

Then on each He setteth
His own secret sign;
They that have my Spirit,
These, saith He, are mine.

I thought His love would weaken,
As more and more He knew me
But it burned like a beacon,
And its light and heat got through me:
And I ever heard Him say
As He goes along the way:
“Oh, silly soul, come near me,

My sheep should never fear me;
I am the shepherd true”.

Praise is more divine than prayer;
Prayer points the happy road to heaven.
Praise is already there.

Laid on thine altar, O my Lord divine,
Accept this day my gift for Jesu' sake.
I have no jewels to adorn Thy shrine
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make;
But here I bring, within my trembling hand,
This will of mine — a thing that seemeth small;
And, only Thou, dear Lord, canst understand
That when I yield Thee this, I yield thee all.
It hath been wet and dimmed with sighs,
Clenched in Thy grasp till beauty it hath none:
Now from Thy footstool, where it vanquished lies,
The prayer ascended, “Let Thy will be done”.
Take it, O Father, ere my courage fail,
And blend it so with Thy divine will, till e'en
If in some desperate hour my cry prevail,
And Thou giv'st back my gift, it may have been
So changed, so purified, so fair hath grown,
So one with Thee, so filled with peace divine
I may not know, nor feel it is my own,
But gaining back my will, may find it Thine.

For the weariest day
May Christ be thy stay,
For the darkest night
May Christ be thy light.
For the weakest hour,
May Christ be thy power,
For each moment's fall
May Christ be thy all.

See Him in the street,
Serve Him in the shop,
Sow him with thy wheat,
House Him with thy crop,
Love and learn Him more
As a common friend
Joys thou thus shalt store
For the happy end.

Show me Thy face at Dawn,
Give me to see Thee at break of day,
O Saviour King:
Show me Thy face at the dawn,
As the dew now softly falleth,
So refresh the soul that calleth,
Drop by drop Thy grace distilling, bless me,
O my Saviour King:
Show me Thy face at dawn.

I need not leave the jostling world,
Nor wait 'till daily tasks are o'er
To fold my hands in secret prayer
Within the close-shut closet door;
There is a viewless cloistered room
As high as heaven, as fair as day,
Where, though my feet may join the throng,
My soul may enter in and pray.

We do not have hymns and choruses like this today but, rather inane jingles concentrating on self.

He gave the Bible readings at Keswick three times. His set of 1916 was entitled The Practice of Christ's Presence. He was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree.

He was an accomplished author. He wrote Studies in the Human Side of the Christian Life (1900), a biography of Spurgeon (1920), The Pitcairn Islands (1923), New China, a biography of F B Meyer (1929) a biography of J W C Fegan (1931) and a biography of Bunyan (1932). From these titles it will be noted that he wrote about living the Christian life, missionary work and biographies of Christian men.

He is best known for his hymn I cannot tell which is usually sung to the tune of Londonderry Air.

He died in Bedford Park, Middlesex on 17 August 1932. He was 75.

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