

The Rev. Dr. John B. Stewart

By A. S. HUNTER

I loved and honored my uncle, the Rev. Dr. John B. Stewart. He was a great preacher and a great man. It is with pleasure that I undertake to prepare this brief sketch.

Dr. Stewart was a son of Richard and Mary Stewart and was born near Clinton, Allegheny County, Pa., May 7, 1825; he graduated at Washington and Jefferson College, 1848; he became an alumnus of the Western Theological Seminary in 1851; he was licensed by the Presbytery of Ohio in June of the same year and was ordained by the Presbytery of Wooster in 1854.



REV. JOHN B. STEWART, D. D.

During his work in the ministry he served as pastor in the following pulpits: Fifth Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, Milwaukee, Wis., and in Davenport and in Des Moines, Iowa. These were all important pulpits to which he was called without effort on his part. I remember as a boy being greatly impressed by hearing him say that he had never solicited a call.

He was a most original, impressive and attractive preacher. The interest and admiration of the audience for the speaker continued and increased from the beginning to the end of his sermon.

When quite a lad, I remember hearing my mother speak of her clerical brother for whom she had a very great admiration. I distinctly remember her describing one of his first sermons on the text, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines." I note with interest that he preached on this same text on the last day of his life, and it is with no surprise that I read that one of his hearers said that it was the best sermon that he had ever heard.

This summer at the General Assembly at Atlanta, I fell in with one of my uncle's old friends. In speaking of his attractiveness as a speaker, he said: "If Stewart preached in a vacant church it was not worth while for any one else to try."

Early in his ministry he married Nancy MacGregor, a woman of Scotch-Irish ancestry of the illustrious family of MacGregor. She had a good intellect and attractive personality and great charm of manner. She lived a serene, sweet, helpful life. She was an ideal minister's wife—loved and admired by all who knew her.

Dr. Stewart was as strong as well as an attractive man. He thought deeply, believed profoundly, and walked humbly with God.

The originality of his thought and the incisiveness of his style compelled attention and always left an impression for good. He was not only broad-minded, but what is perhaps a rarer virtue, he was always fair-minded. His quiet, sociable manner endeared him to all who knew him. He did much for his fellowmen and in the service of God. He, in short, lived a life that was worth while.