

**MEMOIR OF HENRY
WILKES, D.D., LL.D.;
HIS LIFE AND TIMES**

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Memoir of Henry Wilkes, D.D., LL.D.; his life and times by John Wood

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JOHN WOOD

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MEMOIR
OF
HENRY WILKES, D. D., LL. D.,
HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

BY THE
REV. JOHN WOOD,
OTTAWA.

WITH PORTRAIT.

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1887.

PREFACE.

THE preparation of these Memoirs has been undertaken, amid pressing pastoral and secretarial duties, with much diffidence and hesitation. It had been expected that the task would have fallen to another and much abler pen, but that expectation having failed, I was applied to, by confidential friends of the family, in their behalf, to render this loving service to the memory of the departed. Very much do I appreciate the honour done me, yet I feel as if some apology were due for my yielding to their solicitation. Dr. Wilkes' *work* is his best memorial, and one is almost tempted to say, in view of any proposal to write his life, "If you would see his monument, look around you." It was felt by many, however, that a life and ministry so exemplary and useful ought not to be allowed to pass away without some permanent record of it, to stimulate and encourage those who are left to follow him. My aim has been, in part, to be the index-finger to point out to those who may come after us the monuments which, by his patient toil and energy, the Lord enabled him to raise throughout the land. "His record is on high;" let it also be, as far as we can trace it, where the churches and ministry may read and profit by it!

My life-long and intimate acquaintance with Dr. Wilkes, first as my pastor and counsellor, by whom I was led into the Kingdom, and into the ministry of the Gospel, and subsequently through the various official relations which we sustained towards each other, on the Missionary Committee, and in the Congregational Union, has greatly facilitated my work, and has lightened the labour through the interest I have felt in performing it. It was his habit, almost yearly, for some years after my settlement in Brantford, to visit his parents and family—then resident there, and members of my church—when an exchange of pulpits, for several Sabbaths, was frequently arranged, so enabling me to visit the home of my boyhood in Montreal, where I distinctly remember hearing his first sermon in St. Maurice Street Church, in October, 1836.

When, therefore, it was urged, on these and other grounds, that I should become his biographer, my warm affection for his memory, and my grateful sense of personal obligation to him, forbade me decline the request; I yielded to the judgment of others, and the result is before the reader.

Active and public as Dr. Wilkes' life was, and intimately connected as it was with all the principal Congregational movements of this country for the last half century, no proper account could be written of it that did not embrace more or less of our denominational history. Yet here was one of the difficulties of his biographer. To embrace it all, even in merest outline, was manifestly impossible; while to make selections, and references of a personal character, in one instance and not in another, probably equally noteworthy, might seem invidious. The alternative had to be chosen, however, and I have had to confine myself, as a rule, to churches and individuals with whom Dr. Wilkes had personally to do.

This story, as will be seen, is largely auto-biographical, the Doctor having left behind him a mass of material in the shape of "jottings"—written, and read to the family in the evening, as opportunity offered—from which selections have been made. I have to express my thanks to Mrs. Wilkes for valuable assistance in arranging and copying much of the material in hand.

Thanks are also due to Dr. Jackson for the valuable Introductory Chapter on our early history, as well as to the Rev. Charles Chapman, the Rev. David Russell of Glasgow, Dr. Gibson of London, Dr. Duff of Airedale College, and other gentlemen who have contributed to the volume.

JOHN WOOD.

OTTAWA, September 7, 1887.

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