

In Memoriam.

Sir Christopher Nicholson Johnston, Lord Sands, D.D., LL.D.

THE Church Service Society, in common with the whole Church, mourns the death, on February 26th, of one of its most distinguished and devoted members, the Honourable Lord Sands. Although he had nearly attained the psalmist's allotted span of "four score years," he preserved to the end his wonderful vigour of mind and body. He died young, if ever man did.

Lord Sands was the most outstanding layman of our generation. Perhaps "layman" seems a scarcely adequate description of one who became an elder of St Stephen's, Edinburgh, forty-two years ago, was a Lay Reader of the Church of Scotland, a Doctor of Divinity of Edinburgh University, an authority on St Paul, and a preacher of the Gospel whose services were in constant request. Yet Christopher Johnston, with his high doctrine of the Holy Ministry, would have scorned any other title for himself. He was content to belong to that consecrated army of Christian laity, recruited so largely from the legal profession, who have always been the special glory of the Scottish Kirk.

Few men of this age have touched life so vitally and at so many different points. With Terence he might well have said, "*Humani nihil a me alienum puto.*" God gave him the gifts and talents of a richly versatile personality, and he used them without stint. Judge and theologian, novelist and biographer, statesman and preacher, sportsman and lover of youth, he touched nothing which he did not adorn, and never spared himself in any cause to which he had given his interest and his powers.

One of the great Procurators of the Church of Scotland, a staunch defender of her rights in the old days of dis-establishment conflict, he was to become in later years one of the protagonists of Scottish Church reunion, trusted as fully by one side as by the other. He it was who inspired

the historic Memorandum which opened the way for final success and a happy settlement of delicate and difficult issues.

But his service to the cause of Christian unity had wider bounds than those of his native land. A typical Scot, his outlook was truly catholic. He was a prominent member of the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order in 1927, and the closing months of his life saw him conferring with the representatives of Anglicanism. Fittingly enough, he received what was to be his last Communion from the Archbishop of Canterbury, only a few days before his death.

Lord Sands was an Honorary President of the Church Service Society, and attended its meetings with great regularity. His contributions to its proceedings were ever interesting and valuable, and many of our readers must recall his paper on Church Worship, which was printed and had a wide circulation. In his "Story of St Stephen's," written to commemorate its centenary in 1928, he has a stimulating chapter on the order and conduct of public worship in that church during the hundred years of its existence. It was ever his desire that all things in the sanctuary should be done "decently and in order." Yet he never forgot the central purpose of God's service. His last speech, given to the overseas theological students at the Scottish Universities, ended with the moving words: "By all means preach the great Teacher, the great Healer, the great Example—but never, never forget Christ the Saviour, and His Cross."

That was his final message and testimony to the Church he had loved and served so well.

T. B. S. T.