

# The Wesleyan,

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## "THE GREAT COMPANION IS DEAD."

BY RAY PALMER, D. D.

The name of William Kingdon Clifford, professor of mathematics in the University College, London, had hardly become familiar to the American public at the time of his death, in March last. His extraordinary powers, his great versatility and eminent attainments in almost every department of knowledge had been already recognized in his own country, and high anticipations were entertained in relation to his future, when his career was prematurely ended in the very prime of his manhood. Religiously educated, he came at length into sympathy with the theories and the speculative philosophy of Darwin and Spencer, till he ultimately reached conclusions far in advance of them on their line of thought. We have seldom been more deeply touched by any brief utterance of a seriously thoughtful mind than we were when reading the pathetic confession—for so it may well be called—made by him not long before his death. Not that it seemed surprising that a man of rare genius and liberal culture should find himself, after travelling down through the mazes of adventurous speculation to positive Atheism, in the state of mind which his words clearly indicate. On the contrary, nothing could be more natural in the case of such a man that the process of thought and feeling through which he had been passing should have led to this result. The strong language which he uses can only be understood as expressing a profound consciousness of an oppressive weight upon his heart. It seems like a moan of anguish from one who, though gifted with great powers, had failed to comprehend the constitution of his own being, and so had persistently endeavored to detach himself, by the contravention of its fundamental laws, from the Eternal Being whom he had before recognized in consciousness as the source and vitalizing energy of all sensitive and rational existence. So understood, they exhibit, one may say, a sublimity of hopeless disappointment. It seems amazing that a man so constituted should have been able, by whatever misinterpretation of nature or whatever subtle speculative reasonings, to convince himself, or to think that he had done it, that those natural invitations of the soul on which rest the foundations of theism and spiritual religion can by any possibility be regarded as mere "cradle faiths"—beliefs imposed on it from without in the intellectual feebleness of childhood. That the profound feeling of dependence, of relation to the independent and the infinite, together with the yearning of the soul for sympathy and for the beauty of perfect goodness embodied in the exalted person, to be adored and loved, revealing themselves as they do among the earliest manifestations of intellectual life, should have their origin in any educational influence is utterly incredible. At least, so it would seem but for such cases as that of Prof. Clifford. That a man born with these constitutional elements and trained under influences favorable to their development should be able by any processes of speculative thought to rid himself of them altogether would seem an absolute impossibility. Indeed, we cannot but think that such cases as Prof. Clifford's after all, demonstrate that it is so.

For Prof. Clifford, in his candid but sad declaration, distinctly recognized the fact that the conception of a personal God, an infinitely good and loving Father, has found ready reception in the soul of man and has taken strong hold of its sympathies and affections. "It cannot be doubted," he says, "that theistic belief is a comfort and solace to those who hold it, and the loss of it is a very painful loss. It cannot be doubted, at least by many of us in this generation who either receive it now or received it in our childhood, and have parted from it since with such searching trouble as only cradle faiths can cause. We have seen the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven to light up a soulless earth." The stars that we felt with utter loneliness that the Great

Companion is dead!" This is a distinct and emphatic admission that, where theistic belief once exists, it so enters into the soul's life, feeling, habitual consciousness that to eliminate it again proves to be the most difficult of tasks. There is found to be in the very constitution of the soul a spiritually sympathetic and social aptitude, a natural capacity for receiving and holding the conception of the Infinite Being; and very much in proportion as so conceived he has been an object of thought; he has met, and to a greater or less degree satisfied, profoundly felt necessities. He has so attracted the heart as to enable to find in him a divine and ineffable companionship. How generally and deeply this belief of the constant presence and agency of an infinite person, himself the basis of all being, has entered into the thought and feeling of the race has been amply shown by those who have most thoroughly studied the great religions of the world. Even polytheism has been found to have, back of its local and limited deities, the more or less definite conception of such an all-prevailing and conscious intelligence. As Wordsworth poetically puts it:

"A sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things."

That even the imperfect recognition of God as in constant contact with men and related to their welfare has been a source of strength, of encouragement, of hope and aspiration, and so has acted steadily as an elevating power on the human race at large, no person of intelligence, probably, will doubt. But much more than this may be said of the theism which is so fully developed under the influence of both Judaism and Christianity, especially of the latter. Not only those who profess heartily to believe the Christian revelation and to live in its spirit, but also those who have only felt its general influence, are quite familiar with the idea of the infinitely Great and Good as in vital relation to every human being. Even those not avowedly religious undoubtedly find comfort and support in the recognition of His all-embracing providence and the persuasion that it is continually working toward the happiness of men. To those who in heart are at one with God in Jesus Christ, as they believe, the consciousness of nearness to God, of living contact and communion with him becomes the sweetest of all bliss, the highest motive to all goodness, the supreme blessing and glory of existence. "Thy favor is life. Thy loving kindness is better than life. In thy presence there is fulness of joy." Such words as these give fit expression to the soul's profoundest experience. No wonder that Prof. Clifford, or any other person whose moral nature from its first development has felt its correlation to this fatherhood and blessed companionship of God, should find it nearly or quite impossible to break away from the influences that have so entered into all the thought and activity of his conscious life. No wonder that, if by persistent effort this be approximately accomplished, he should groan under the distress of infinite bereavement and intolerable loneliness. It is easy to talk of atheism so long as no attempt is made distinctly to picture to our thought the horrible reality. With what desperate determination the human soul in all ages and countries has refused to yield itself to atheism all the mythologies of the false religions of the world bear witness. They clearly demonstrate that the soul has been ever "feeling after God if haply it might find Him" by a constitutional necessity, because it could not rest with its first and intensest want unsatisfied. We cannot but conceive that, were it now proclaimed as an established certainty that, in the words of Prof. Clifford, "the Great Companion is dead," mortal faces all over the earth would gather blackness and every mortal heart sink under the anguish of absolute despair. Even to the bad the announcement would be terrible, as extinguishing for them, as well as others, every hope. The heavens that from the beginning have been declaring the glory of God would at once become forever mute. Then, indeed, we should see "the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven to light up a soulless earth." The stars that have appeared glorious while regarded

as illustrating the thought and power of the Infinite Intellect, would thenceforth only serve to reveal the eternal gloom. The mind of man, that has loved to form to itself the loftiest ideals, with aspirations toward the perfect in which it thought to satisfy its craving affections, now that it has learned that there is no perfect, no being higher than itself, must turn back in disgust, contemning its own being as only that of a brute. Such are the dismal issues to which, it appears, pseudo-science may lead a man of eminent ability and learning, when having surrendered himself to its guidance, he attempts to empty the universe of the Infinite and Eternal Mind. True science, it is safe to rest quite sure, will never propound conclusions at once so horrible and so absurd. To sinful, suffering, struggling humanity—humanity ever striving upward in its inborn instincts and yearning for help, for sympathy, for companionship worthy of its best affections—the joyful truth remains that the "Great Companion" is alive, for-evermore.

## NEWFOUNDLAND CONFERENCE.

The sixth annual session of the Newfoundland Conference, commenced in George Street Church, St. John's, on Wednesday, June 25, 1879.

The retiring President, the Rev. G. S. Milligan, M.A., gave out hymn 750; the Secretary read the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel, and the Revs. J. S. Reid and Thomas Fox engaged in prayer.

The Conference then proceeded to the election of officers for the coming year, with the following result:—President, Rev. James Dove; Secretary, Rev. Chas. Pascoe; Journal Secretary, Rev. Joseph Pascoe. The retiring President and the President elect briefly addressed the Conference. The Revs. F. G. Willey, J. Pascoe, and J. Nurse, were appointed Assistant Secretaries; and the Rev. J. B. Heal, Assistant Journal Secretary.

The Conference prayer-meeting was held from 12 to 1 o'clock. We were pleased to notice a good number of city friends present, and the meeting was one of great profit.

### AFTERNOON SESSION.

Hymn 569 was sung. Bro. Jabez Hill engaged in prayer. The hours of session were appointed. The retiring President, the secretaries, and sub-secretaries received the thanks of the Conference for their services during the year. Conference adjourned at 4 o'clock to allow the Missionary Committee to meet.

The annual Missionary meeting was held in George Street Church commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Report read by the Secretary showed a decrease of Missionary receipts of about \$400 as compared with last year, occasioned mainly by the partial depression of our industries and the consequent poverty of many of our people. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. R. W. Freeman, J. P. Howell, W. Swann and J. Shenton.

### SECOND DAY—MORNING SESSION.

Hymn 213 was sung. Secretary read 122nd Psalm. Bro. Embree engaged in prayer. The ex-President read a letter from Rev. Dr. Douglas, announcing his intention to visit Newfoundland during the present summer, if possible. A committee was appointed to consider rules of order and report.

Rev. W. H. Hertz, of Nova Scotia Conference, was announced as a visitor, and being called to the platform, delivered a very pleasing fraternal address, which was responded to by several members of the Conference. On motion of Rev. J. Shenton, an address was presented to Bro. Hertz, expressing the kind regards of the Conference towards him, and wishing him a pleasant journey across the ocean, and a safe return, with renewed vigour for the work of the ministry.

The Educational and Sabbath School Committees were appointed. Bro. Bond was appointed Corresponding Member of the Sabbath School Committee.

### AFTERNOON SESSION.

After devotional exercises, the Contingent Fund and Parsonage Aid Committees were appointed. Questions 2 and 3 were answered. The ex-President read communications from Drs. Douglas and Sutherland on the subject of the Thanksgiving Fund, which were ordered to be laid on the table for future consideration. Conference adjourned at 4 o'clock, to allow committees to meet.

The public Educational Meeting was held in Gower Street Church. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. J. Parkins, George Boyd and G. S. Milligan; the meeting was a most interesting one, and the collection at the close considerably in advance of last year.

### THIRD DAY—MORNING SESSION.

After usual devotional exercises, the Pastoral Address was read, and highly praised for its excellent matter and composition, but being thought too lengthy, was referred back to the Committee for abridgement. Several communications on the subject of the Supernumerary Fund were read and laid on the table.

### AFTERNOON SESSION.

Rev. G. S. Milligan was appointed Conference Treasurer of the Educational Society. The President was elected representative on the Central Missionary Board.

It was decided, on motion of Rev. J. Shenton,—That all sessions of Conference be open to the public, except during the examination of ministerial character, and such other times as the Conference shall order the doors to be closed.

Conference adjourned at 4 o'clock.

The public Sabbath School meeting was held in George Street Church. The Report showed that our Sabbath Schools have made considerable progress during the year, and that the ministers and people are becoming more deeply interested in fostering these important institutions of the church. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. J. Embree, Charles Myers, E. Taylor, and T. W. Atkinson.

### FOURTH DAY—MORNING SESSION.

Opened by singing Hymn 367. Secretary read Psalm 30. Bro. Matthews engaged in prayer. Several miscellaneous resolutions, recommended by the Districts, were read and referred to Committees appointed to report on them to Conference.

A Committee on Finance was appointed. A dispensation of absence was asked for, and granted, to the Rev. Thomas Harris.

Conference adjourned until 8 o'clock.

### AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Secretary of the Examination Committee reported on the cases of the brethren who have travelled four years. The report showed that each of them had obtained more than the average number of marks for their written papers. The oral examination of the candidates for ordination was then proceeded with, and being deemed satisfactory, they were respectively voted for to be received into full connection and ordained.

On Saturday evening a Devotional Meeting was held in the basement of Gower Street Church. The pulpits of the city were occupied on the Sabbath as follows: Gower Street, Revs. T. H. James and George Boyd; George Street, Revs. John Goodison and James Dove; Temperance Hall, Revs. T. G. Willey and J. W. Atkinson.

The services which we were privileged to attend, were marked by uncommon unction and speculative power. Official prominence was given to the glorious doctrine of Entire Sanctification, which, we think, is occupying the minds of the ministers of the Conference more than at any previous year.

The Conference Love-feast, held in George Street Church, on Sabbath afternoon, and presided over by the Rev. Jos. Pascoe, was the best of the kind we remember having attended.

### FIFTH DAY.

Conference opened with usual devotional exercises. Arrangements were made for the Ordination Service. Tenders were received and read to the Conference for the printing of next year's Minutes.

The Conference then resolved itself into the Methodist Day-school Society Committee.

### AFTERNOON SESSION.

Several questions were answered. Bro. G. H. Bryant, who continues in a very precarious state of health, was, by the recommendation of his district, appointed to become a supernumerary.

This year we have only one candidate for the ministry who was received and allowed the past year as the first year of his probation. The afternoon was chiefly devoted to the Committees.

The Ordination Service was held in George Street Church, which was well filled. The candidates were the Revs. R. Bramfit, George Bullen, W. H. Edyvean, W. Keñdal, and E. Taylor. The senior members of the Conference took part in the imposition of hands. The charge was delivered by the ex-President, who founded his remarks on Colossians 4th chapter, and 17th verse. We trust that it will be presented for publication at an early date and therefore forbear the attempt to give any outline of it.

The Conference thus far has been one of great harmony. The actual state of finance is simply deplorable, and all but ruinous, and the prospects for next year exceedingly dark; but in spiritual matters, there is great cause for joy. We are able to report an increase of several hundreds of church members, and we believe that the piety of our people is becoming deeper, and more Scriptural in its nature.

OWING to an extensive pressure of Conference matter this week, we are compelled to lay over several communications.

## DEATH OF MARTIN G. BLACK, ESQ.

To-day we record, with great sorrow, the sudden and most unexpected death of the above well known and most estimable citizen. The lamented gentleman was in his garden at 8 o'clock Monday evening, retired as usual apparently in good health, was seized with apoplexy through the night, and passed away almost without a struggle. Mr. Black has through life been favourably known in this city, of cultivated tastes and unassuming manners; he in many ways contributed, and at times, perhaps, almost unnoticed, his various talents toward advancing the intellectual good of many of the past and present generation. For many years connected with the Sons of Temperance, he worked well in that good cause, and in that connection—about thirty years ago—founded, with a few other worthy citizens, several of whom are alive to-day, the Cadets of Temperance, an organization which embodied in its ranks many of our present leading Nova Scotians. Mr. Black was a most enthusiastic member of the Scottish Volunteer Rifles, and for twelve years scarcely missed a drill or turn out of the organization. As a musician, and as a florist, he has been long known for his devotion to these branches of art, his abilities in these departments being marked as accompanied with strong, sound judgment. Mr. Black was the third son of the late Martin Gay Black, an eminent merchant in a past generation, and one of the founders of the old Halifax Bank, the first bank established in this city; was educated here, and entered early in life into business; was a member for many years of the well known dry goods firm of Bell & Black; subsequently continued in business on his own account, until about fifteen years since, when he accepted the office of Teller in the Halifax Bank, which position he occupied at his death. We join with his many friends in this city in extending to the bereaved family our sympathy in their great sorrow, and believe that few have passed away from amongst us who will be so universally regretted as our friend the genial and kind-hearted Martin Gay Black.—*Herald.*

## THE HULL MURDER.

### CONCLUSION OF THE INQUEST AND THE VERDICT

#### "MURDER IN THE FIRST DEGREE."

NEW YORK, June 26.—The inquest in the Hull murder case was resumed this morning. By ten o'clock the crowd in front of the police headquarters had become so great that the street had to be cleared by the police. The spectators were under a vague impression that the murderer would be taken to the Coroner's office and that they would have a chance to see him. He was confined at headquarters where the inquest took place. At 10.30 o'clock precisely, Captain Williams and Detective Schmitzburger handcuffed Cox and brought him to the court-room and took seats behind the Coroner's desk. The most intense excitement prevailed, and every eye was strained to catch a sight of the murderer. The negro held his eyes down, but otherwise looked calm and collected.

#### THE VERDICT.

The jury was absent 34 minutes and returned with a verdict, "that the death of Mrs. Hull was caused by shock and asphyxia at the hands of Chastine Cox."

The prisoner, in answer to the Coroner, said that he was thirty-two years old, and was born in Virginia. He added, "All I have to say is that I did not intend to injure a hair on the lady's head. I only went there to get what I wanted and to leave. I did not intend to commit anything disorderly."

George Taylor, the prize-fighter, who pawned some of the jewellery, and Bolla Johnson were sent to the House of Detention and Bristow Francis was discharged. When the carriage reached the entrance to the prison, and Cox saw the immense crowd which had gathered round, he said to Capt. Williams:—"Stick close by me, Captain." When searched at the Tombs Cox had in his possession a bunch of cigars and a T-statement.

The Grand Jury at two o'clock this afternoon found an indictment against Cox for murder in the first degree.