

# The Wesleyan.

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## THOUGHTS ON DEATH:

AWAKENED BY THE DEPARTURE OF THE  
REV. JOSEPH HART.

Oh! death! what mysteries  
In thy domain are found;  
Thy victims rest in peace,  
Thy spoils are under ground;  
But soon thy triumph will be o'er,  
Mankind will rise to die no more.

Ah! while the dust remain,  
Of our departed ones;  
We know they'll come again,  
With life, and flesh, and bones;  
Before the judge shall appear,  
Their everlasting doom to hear.

Reluctantly we gave  
Our brother to thy sway;  
We linger at thy grave,  
With tearful eyes to-day;  
Naught but his mortal dust is thine,  
Which Christ allows thee to refine.

With Christ in Paradise,  
The soul, the immortal part;  
This all thy skill defies,  
Strangely eludes thy dart;  
Safe in the better home above,  
Region of life, of light, and love.

Ended the fight of faith,  
The armour laid aside,  
No more to taste of death,  
No wish ungratified;  
No struggling thought for wider sphere,  
No mental haze, all bright and clear.

Is this the great reward?  
Which waits us in the skies,  
Thanks to our risen Lord,  
Our mediator wise;  
O, blessed christian hope, how sweet!  
Our friends again we soon shall meet.

April, 1880.

## THE CANDOR OF CHRIST.

"Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?"

Yes! it is not merely a general belief in Christ as the teacher who "will tell us all things," which suffices for heart conviction of "the reality of Jesus Christ," but the individual knowledge of Him as the searcher who "told me all things that ever I did." This is what led the woman of Samaria to exclaim "Is not this the Christ?" This was to her the irresistible proof of his Messiahship.

What about ourselves? If we know anything of true intercourse with the Lord Jesus, our experience will not be unlike hers. When He who "searches Jerusalem with candles" turns the keen flame of his eyes upon the dark corners of our hearts, and flashes their far-reaching, all-revealing beams upon even the far off and long-forgotten windings of our lives; when in his light we see the darkness, and in his purity we see the sin that has been, or is; when he "declareth unto man what is his thought," and then convinces him that "as he thinketh in his heart so is he," then we know for ourselves that he "with whom we have to do" is "indeed Christ."

He does not merely show us; it is something more than that. It is not merely an invisible hand drawing away a veil from hidden scenes, and a light brought to bear upon them, so that we can see if we will; it is more personal, more terrible, and yet more tender than that. He tells us what we have done; and, if we listen, the telling will be very clear, very thorough, very unmistakable.

Many feel what one expressed: "Whenever I do think about it, I feel so horribly bad, that I don't like to think any more." Ah, "if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day," that it was not mere "thinking about it," but the voice of the Saviour beginning to tell thee what would have cleared the way for "the things which belong unto thy peace," what blessing might not the patient and willing listening have brought! O do not shut the voice, do not fancy it is only uncomfortable thoughts which you will not encourage lest they should make you "low spirited!" Instead of that, ask him to let his voice sound louder and clearer, and believe "that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Only listen, and we will tell you not only all things that ever you did, but all things which he has done for you. He never leaves off in the middle of all he has to tell, unless we willfully interrupt him.

Perhaps we have gone through all this, and known the humbling blessedness of being searched and "told" and then pardoned and cleansed; and now again there is something not right. We hardly know what, only there is a misgiving, a dim, vague uneasiness; we really don't know of anything in par-

tical," and yet there is something unsatisfied and unsatisfactory. There is nothing for it but to come to our Messiah afresh, and ask him to tell us what we have done, or are doing, which is not in accordance with his will. It will be useless coming if we are not sincerely purposed to let him tell us what he will, and not merely what we expect; or if we hush up the first word of an unwelcome whisper, and say, "O, that can't have any thing to do with it!" or, "I am all right there, at any rate!" We must simply say, "Master, say on;" and perhaps he will then show us, as he did Simon, that we have done him the true and loving service which some poor despised one has rendered. Never shrink from the prblings of our beloved physician! Dearest and dearest will the hand become as we yield to it. Sweeter and sweeter will be the proofs that he is our own faithful Friend, who only wounds that he may perfectly heal.

## "SOME GREAT THING."

Many Christian people are as willing to do "some great thing" as was Naaman, when he went away enraged at the thought of curing his leprosy by sprinkling himself with the waters of the Jordan. They often imagine that their success depends largely upon great attempts, favorable opportunities, and wide fields of labor.

Such should remember that a large proportion of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ appears to have been done in personal, private conversation. It was in a quiet evening talk with Nicodemus that the great truth of being born again, and the glad tidings of God's love to a lost world, were so clearly stated that age after age has echoed with the wondrous words that Jesus spoke. It was to one woman who approached him as he sat faint and weary by Jacob's well, that he spoke of that well of water that springeth up to everlasting life, and enunciated the grand truth that not merely in Jerusalem and Samaria, but in every place where there were spiritual worshippers, there could be acceptable worship offered to God. That wonderful "sermon on the mount" was not preached to the promiscuous throng; but "seeing the multitude he went up into a mountain, and when he was set his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them."

Our Lord's great prophecy of the course of this age and its mighty consummation in his coming to judgment, was not delivered to a thousand gazing and wondering listeners, but with only a few of his most intimate disciples he "sat down upon the Mount of Olives" and answered their earnest question—"When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" His most wonderful discourse, followed by that prayer which seems the beginning of the intercession which he still continues before the throne of the Majesty on high (John xiii-xvii.), was uttered, not in the corners of the streets, nor in the precincts of the temple, but in the upper chamber where only his chosen disciples were assembled. More private still were his utterances when walking on the way to Emmaus with only two disciples, "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself," and kindled in their burning hearts a flame of faith and love which never could be extinguished. It was on the shore of the sea of Galilee, with only his disciples around him, that Jesus pressed upon Peter that important question: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

Thus our Saviour dealt with men personally, singly, individually, or in little companies, where he could speak without reserve, and answered every question that might be raised; and those words spoken in secret have been proclaimed on the housetop; words which he whispered in the ear, have been told through all the lands and all the ages.

Perhaps while we are thinking of doing "some great thing" we are neglecting many little things. We are not without opportunities if we are content to labor in a narrow and lowly sphere; and a word in season, spoken to a few weary souls, which proves effectual to their salvation, is better than any conceivable amount of elegant words poured upon the ears of listening thousands who hear, and depart, and forget it all. Let us each in our little sphere do our little work; let us strive

to bring men and women to personal consideration of the things of God! Let us press upon their minds, kindly and earnestly, the thoughts of human need and human responsibility, and point out to them Christ as the Saviour of the lost, the helper of the weak, the Redeemer and deliverer of all who trust in him. Nothing is little which glorifies the great God.

## A SERMON FOR ALL MANKIND.

I have found in myself a strong tendency to personal dislike to strangers. It is not difficult to recall the faces of men whom I have met on common ground, and to whom, without provocation, I have felt stirred in angry resistance. There was a man who used to frequent one of my daily resorts. I rarely heard him speak, but to my confidential companions I habitually spoke of him as the assassin. If ever a man wore a murderous countenance he did. His brow was dark and lowering; his eyes were baleful; his figure was squat, and his motions were feline. He carried a habitual frown, and his whole bearing was singularly repulsive to me. I must have felt thus toward him six months, until one raw winter morning I saw him carrying a heavily laden basket along a squalid street. He had lost none of his baleful influence over me, and without knowing or asking myself why, I followed him to his destination. It was a house in which lived a widow whom I chanced to know, and whose children had been sometimes for days with insufficient food, and often the house was fireless. The basket that my assassin carried contained a generous donation of necessaries, and from that time until the spring buds gave promise of a betterment of the widow's state, he kept her well supplied with food and fuel whenever her own resources fell short. My God! I did not know it then, but that which I had mistaken for a frown was the involuntary expression of pain from a disease that never left him until he died! He was a railroad conductor who had been discharged because he could not resist an appeal from the poor for free transportation. I wish that I had never called him the assassin, for no more cruel injustice could have been done a fellow-creature who strove with all his might against his own painful afflictions to save and soothe the hurts of other suffering ones.

## SLIPSHOD SAINTS.

There are many slipshod saints. They are not slipshod because they are saints, nor are they saints because they are slipshod; but they are saints in spite of being slipshod, and slipshod in spite of all their saintliness. The grace of God renews men's hearts; but the reformation of their lives involves continuous instruction and careful training. There is a great difference between a well-trained vine and one that runs and climbs wherever it will—and yet both of these may be living vines. But there is a still greater difference between a living vine, however untrained it may be, and a dead one, even though it be pruned and tied after the most approved manner. A stick of timber may be badly bent and warped, or it may have been hewn without regard to proper lines or patterns, and so be comparatively valueless; but there is a great difference between even such a timber and a rotten stick, which, no matter how it may be shaped, is entirely worthless. So there are men who, in the judgment of charity and honesty must be counted as children of the Lord, through there are still clinging to them old habits, customs, irregularities, and defects, which through long-continued use have become second nature, and can only be eradicated with the greatest difficulty.

Among these slipshod saints are men who get in debt and do not pay; who do business without keeping accounts; who make promises which cannot be depended upon; who incur obligations which they know not how to meet; who spend their money for that which is not bread, and sometimes for tobacco and strong drink; who are always behind the time; late in the morning, late at meeting, late in fulfilling their engagements, and slipshod in all their business arrangements.

There are slipshod saints in the pulpit, who find it easier to preach bad grammar than to learn to correct it; who are too lazy to get things right; who find that guessing is easier than

studying; and who have spent the time which should have been employed to improve their minds, in dawdling and fooling, in cracking jokes and telling stories in places of public resort. There are men who do not adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; whose course of conduct is not calculated to inspire confidence in the Master whom they serve, nor the religion which they profess. They suffer themselves to be entangled in snares; they are overtaken in faults and imprudences; they are creatures of habit, and their habits are mostly bad; they do not discern quickly between the right and the wrong; they sometimes do wrong with the best motives, and refuse to do right with conscientious zeal. They need to be toned down, strengthened in conviction, enlightened in judgment, quickened in conscience, and so prepared to serve their generation by the will of God.

Slipshod saints are not to be cast away or despised. They need instruction, honest reproof, plain speaking and plain dealing; and this course of treatment will do much towards straightening them up, and making them what they ought to be, followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in all the ways and walks of life.

It is well for young persons to beware of this slipshod method of living and acting. Carelessness in regard to personal habits, engagements, and business transactions, brings people at last into a condition of chronic unreliability of the lowest moral tone, and not only subjects the persons themselves to contempt, but brings reproach upon the cause of Christ. The Lord calls on us to be examples of manliness. "Quit you like men," is the divine injunction, and when we do this we find a blessing such as never can be known to persons of careless, indifferent, and slipshod life.

## THE SPIRITUALITY OF GOD.

Our lesson confirms the teaching of the Bible everywhere enforced in it, that God is a spirit, and the Father of the spirits of all flesh. The notions our lesson gives us of God "are utterly inconsistent with any outward figure or shape, which would confine to a certain determinate portion of space him who declares of himself, "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" No sooner do men begin to make the Deity an object of their senses than they begin to think him altogether such a one as themselves. Descending from the high and holy place where the Divine Being dwells, the mind, accustomed to contemplate him under a visible form, gradually sinks lower and lower in approximation to his own level, till at last men come to conceive of him as compassed with infirmities like themselves. As the Infinite Spirit, however, God is the source of all the intelligence and wisdom which exist in created spirits. He must be perfectly acquainted with all the operations and results of all other minds, since he has constituted them, and they are entirely the effects of his own intelligence and wisdom. When the heathen world lost sight of the spirituality of God they also lost sight of his attributes, and after sinking gradually lower, in proportion as they receded farther from that view of his character, their notions of him became at length so debased that they invested him with a corporeal form. The spirituality of the divine nature having been attested by the Saviour, and made one of the principles of his religion, has raised the conceptions of the human mind far beyond what the greatest philosophers could previously attain; and enabled children to surpass in both spiritual and intellectual illumination the sages of pagan antiquity."

## IT IS SO.

When the sun rises there is light. Why, I do not know. There might have been light without the sun, and there might have been sun that gave no light; but God has been pleased to put these two things together, sunrise and light. So whenever there is prayer, there is a blessing. I do not know why. There might have been prayer without a blessing, for there is in the world of woe; and there might have been a blessing without prayer, for it often is sent to some who sought it not. But God has been pleased to make this a rule for the government of the moral and spiritual universe, that there shall be the answer to earnest, believing prayer.

## THE DOCTRINE OF WORKS.

We cannot dwell too strongly on the rewards of Christian activity. Our doctrine of justification by faith may have somewhat obscured the other truth, that we are rewarded according to our works. It is faith that gives entrance into heaven; it is works alone that can give abundant entrance. It is by grace that we are saved; but it is only according to patient well-doing that we are rewarded. Whoever will may take the water of life freely, but the Crown of life can only be gained by the most intense and resolute and persistent toil. Have you noticed that in almost every allusion to the rewards of the judgment-day our works are spoken of as the ground of our commendation or condemnation? "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." No reference to our faith in the bestowal of the rewards of glory. If you have received the word of life into your heart, you are regenerated and saved. But if you want wages you are told, "He that reapeth receiveth wages."

## THE HELPFUL DISCIPLE.

"But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way."

Next to the man who achieves the greatest and most blessed deeds is he who, perhaps himself wholly in capable of such high work, is yet the first to help and encourage the genius of others. We often do more good by our sympathy than by our labors, and render to the world a more lasting service by absence of jealousy and recognition of merit than we could ever render by the straining of personal ambition. Thus did Barnabas save Saul for the work of Christianity. To his self-effacing nobleness is due the honour of recognizing, before they had yet been revealed to others, the fiery vigor, the indomitable energy, the splendid courage the illuminated and illuminating intellects, which were destined to spend themselves in the high endeavor to enoble and evangelize the world.

Nothing more powerfully argues a life beyond this, than the failure of ideals here. Earth gives us only fragments of humanity, fragments of heart, fragments of mind, fragments of charity, love, and virtue; and instead of being a world, is only a handful of seeds out of which a full-blown world might grow but has not yet grown.

JOHN NEWTON says: "I measure ministers by square measure. I have no idea of the size of a table, if you only tell me how long it is; but if you also say how broad, I can tell its dimensions. So when you tell what a man is in the pulpit, you must also tell me what he is out of it, or I shall not know his size."

So is God's will, that the prayers of his saints should be one great and principal means of carrying on the design of Christ's kingdom in the world. When God has something very great to be accomplished for his will there should precede it the extraordinary prayers of his people.—Edwards.

It is asked, "How can God be influenced by our prayers?" It is a sufficient answer to reply, that he says he is so influenced. If asked again, "How can God answer a particular prayer in a world of general laws?" it is a sufficient reply that he is God.—J. Tompson.

If we are not to expect that the devil should go out of a particular person, that is under a bodily possession, without extraordinary prayer, or prayer and fasting; how much less should we expect to have him cast out of the land and the world without it.

WHEN you say you will begin to take pains to-morrow, be assured that it is the same thing as if you said: "To-day I will be shameless, impertinent, base; it shall be in the power of others to grieve me; I will be passionate, I will be envious to-day."—Epictetus.

HELL is the harvest of iniquity; every sinner reaps what he has sown. Heaven is the harvest of holiness: every saint reaps what, Christ has sown for him, and what under divine teaching, he has been sowing for himself.

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