

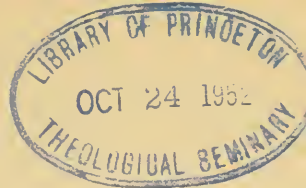
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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

REV. WILLIAM HARRIS.

ENTERED INTO REST MARCH 23rd, 1885

James O. Murray



James Ormsbee [✓]Murray

REV. WILLIAM [✓]HARRIS.

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ORDER OF SERVICES AT THE CHURCH.

Hymn.

Reading of the Scriptures. DR. DUFFIELD.

Address. DR. J. O. MURRAY.

Prayer. DR. MCCOSH.

Hymn.

Benediction. DR. MACLEAN.

HYMN.

High in yonder realms of light
Dwell the raptured saints above,
Far beyond our feeble sight,
Happy in Immanuel's love ;
Pilgrims in this vale of tears,
Once they knew, like us below,
Gloomy doubts, distressing fears,
Torturing pain and heavy woe.

'Mid the chorus of the skies,
'Mid th' angelic lyres above,
Hark ! their songs melodious rise—
Songs of praise to Jesus' love ;
Happy spirits, they are fled
Where no grief can entrance find.
Lulled to rest the aching head,
Soothed the anguish of the mind.

All is tranquil and serene,
Calm and undisturbed repose ;
There no cloud can intervene,
There no angry tempest blows ;
Every tear is wiped away,
Sighs no more shall heave the breast ;
Night is lost in endless day,
Sorrow in eternal rest.

ADDRESS.

We gather in the house of God under circumstances of unusual solemnity and unusual grief. Death is always solemn—the most solemn thing on earth. When the soul passes from the seen and temporal to the unseen and eternal, and from probation to award, the solemnity of the event, come in what form it may, is always to a thoughtful mind, dense and subduing. But coming so suddenly, so unexpectedly, coming when to our view the work of life still had its tasks to fulfill, its burdens to carry, its christian ends to meet and satisfy, we are arrested by the thought, and must ask each for himself solemn questions as to our personal fitness for life or death, as the Great Arbiter may appoint.

But if possible the grief of the hour appeals to our sympathies even more strongly than its solemnity appeals to conscience. A few weeks since our friend left his home here for a few week's sojourn in the South. What apprehensions may have dwelt in his own heart we know not. If they were grave, in thoughtful love for those whom they would have distressed, he kept them fast locked in his own bosom. But that he had fully anticipated resuming his life and work here, his thought was only of a brief rest, and

then new devotion to his labors with recuperated energy, is clear beyond a doubt. And so his visit finished, he set his face gladly homeward, and his last letter, not yet one week old, was full of longing to be once more at home. But as we all know, it was ordered otherwise. He was suddenly seized with a mortal illness. It came on him like a flash. Alone he entered the valley of the shadow. In the land of the stranger, he sank under the sudden stroke. A few moments of sickness, then unconsciousness, then death.

“By foreign hands his dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands his decent limbs composed.”

Scarcely less sudden to those of his household, and to his friends and acquaintances was the shock. It smote us all dumb with astonished sorrow. There was but one voice from all hearts, “The Will of God, let us bow silently and humbly! His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. The cup that He giveth shall we not drink it.” I speak then in assurance of a most uncommon sympathy, a few words in regard to the life and character of Mr. Harris.

He was born Dec. 20, 1831. His father, Dr. William Harris, was a physician in Philadelphia, favorably known in his profession, and also in the church, having been chosen an elder in the 10th church under Dr. Boardman’s ministry. He came from a good lineage on both the paternal and maternal side, for integrity of character, and for a staunch godliness of life.

Mr. Harris was graduated at the University of Pennsylvania in 1850. His first purpose was to devote himself to a

business career. In pursuance of this design he entered a business house in New York city. Then, if I mistake not, he joined himself to a band of earnest Christian young men under the honored ministry of Dr. J. W. Alexander, and gained that impulse for Christian work among young men which never left him. In 1858, he gave up flattering business prospects to enter the Theological Seminary at Princeton, and was graduated from the Seminary here in 1861. The war was then upon us and he became a chaplain in the 106th Pennsylvania Volunteers, remaining in this position for one year. Another year of service to his country he gave in the work of the Sanitary Commission. Much of his time during this period was given to visiting and comforting the sick and dying in hospitals. It seems an affecting coincidence that he himself in his last hours should have received from the hands of strangers in the St. Joseph's Hospital at Savannah, the same kind ministries he himself had so often rendered the sick and the dying. He had however consecrated himself to the Christian ministry and in 1864 he became pastor of the church in Towanda, Pennsylvania, where he remained for six years. That ministry was marked by the confidence and affection of his people. It is not long since he by a visit there renewed the sacred memories of those years, and came back from it, happy in the assurances freely given that his work there was still kindly treasured in his old people's memories. From that position, he was called to be Treasurer of Princeton College in 1870.

It is due the memory of Mr. Harris to say that, in accepting this position, he had no idea of secularizing himself, and laying aside all his offices as a Christian minister. He

has from the beginning taken his place as preacher in the College Chapel. While fulfilling sedulously all the manifold duties of his office as Treasurer of the college, he has from first to last manifested the warmest interest in the religious welfare of the institution. No one has co-operated more heartily with the Philadelphian Society in its religious work than he. It is owing largely to his spirit and his endeavors that the movement was begun here, which has resulted in the Inter-Collegiate Young Men's Christian Association.

Always interested in this field of christian work among young men, he took an active part in the affiliation of our Philadelphian Society with the Young Men's Christian Association. And whatever may have been the misgivings of some of us at first as to the wisdom of the movement, none who are now familiar with what has been accomplished will hesitate to own, that the work of christian young men in our College has been greatly helped by this organization. While however Mr. Harris was giving himself to such efforts here, he was interested in a wider field of Christian effort. He was a leader in the Sabbath School Work of the State. I am glad to give the following testimony furnished by Dr. Worden, his co-laborer, to his zeal and efficiency here:—

“The eminence which Mr. Harris attained in this department of church work may be estimated by considering the following facts :

“Mr. Harris was so favorite a leader of Sabbath School Conventions' and Institutes that he was sought for by all denominations, and by all parts of the country. He could accept but a few of the many pressing invitations to conduct the meetings.

“ For several successive years he was unanimously elected President of the New Jersey Sabbath School Association, embracing all denominations. Not only did he ably and successfully preside at the Annual Conventions of this Association, but he systematized and extended the work of Bible instruction throughout the State.

“ For years he was the associate conductor of the Sabbath School Assembly at Ocean Grove.

“ In 1878 Mr. Harris was elected by the International Sabbath School Convention, then meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, to represent New Jersey on its Executive Committee. On account of declining health the Chairman of that committee, Mr. Franklin Allen, retired, and Mr. Harris took his place.

“ The Triennial Convention was approaching; it was to meet in Toronto, Canada. Upon Mr. Harris rested the responsibility of preparing a programme of that most important gathering of Sabbath School workers in the world. The programme of subjects, and speakers, which he arranged and published, and which was carried out at Toronto, June 22–24, 1881, was one of the most satisfactory ever produced.

“ Time would fail to give further details of a work of such distinguished importance and success.

“ There were three characteristics in the Sabbath School work of Rev. Mr. Harris :

1st. His high appreciation of the importance of Bible study, his view of the Scriptures as God’s Word, and his persistent effort to render more *thorough* the study of the Bible in these schools.

2nd. His superb executive ability was shown in his success in systematizing the details of this work.

3rd. His constant and conscientious endeavor to keep the Sabbath School work to its true aim—the complete salvation of the scholar, his immediate conversion to Christ and his after-training in Christ.

“On these accounts, thousands of earnest Sabbath School superintendents and teachers blessed God for his assistance to them, and *cherish the memory of Mr. Harris*, as that of a Christian leader and helper.”

And so for fifteen years he has been among us filling up his record of Christian endeavor. Holding the position he did, he was made aware of many opportunities of personal kindness to students. Not a few of the graduates of the fifteen years past will gladly testify to such acts of consistent kindness on his part. For he was a man of generous and kindly nature. Quick and impulsive in temperament, he was also quick and impulsive in his readiness to give a helping hand when it was needed. Letters which have come to condole with and comfort his sorrowing household, show how warm and true his friendships were. Of the home and its loss it is not for me to speak. That grief is too deep and too sacred for any unveiling to the public eye. The happy and blessed memories of the past; the bright anticipations of reunion beyond the grave, are now its only heritage. May God uphold and comfort all in this hour of dreadful loneliness and sorrow!

It is now recalled with more and more distinctness that for two years past, his health has been failing. He sought needed rest in a voyage to Europe in the Summer of 1883. It was hoped that would secure him complete restoration. But it was seemingly only a temporary relief. He has kept

at his work, at times prostrated, but bravely struggling and never for a moment allowing his friends to think any serious calamity impended over him. And the end has come at last, has come suddenly. Not however without alleviations. It was no long decay of impaired powers. It was no sharp and painful struggle. He had turned his face toward his beloved earthly home. But he was nearer to his Father's home, than he thought. The summons came.

Then with no fiery throbbing pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain
And freed his soul the nearest way.

For so sometimes it pleases God "to give his beloved sleep."

HYMN.

“ Forever with the Lord ! ”
Amen ! so let it be ;
Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality.

Here, in the body pent,
Absent from him I roam ;
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home.

“ Forever with the Lord ! ”
Father ! if 'tis thy will,
The promise of that faithful word
E'en here to me fulfill.

So when my latest breath
Shall rend the veil in twain,
By death I shall escape from death,
And life eternal gain.

Knowing as I am known,
How shall I love that word !
And oft repeat before the throne,
“ Forever with the Lord ! ”