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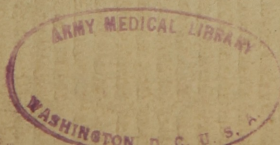
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Henry Wheatland, M.D.

BORN JANUARY 11, 1812.

DIED FEBRUARY 27, 1893.

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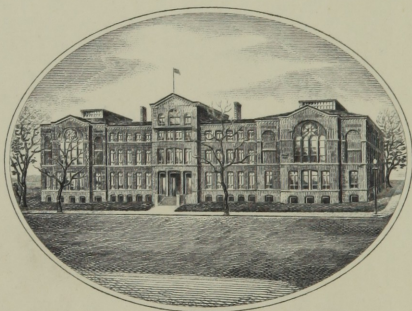


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# SERMON

PREACHED BY

REV. EDMUND B. WILLSON,  
*on Dr. George Wheatland*

AT THE

NORTH CHURCH, SALEM,

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 1893.

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## SERMON.

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*If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. Matt. vi : 22.*



THE single eye is the good eye which sees things as they are. He is a happy man who sees clearly before him his path in life. For though it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, so as to determine what shall befall him, it is in him to determine what manner of man he will be and on what lines of life he will move.

Jesus is reported as having said just before, "where your treasure is there will your heart also be." What has worth to the clear-seeing eyes will draw the affections.

He is reported as saying just after : "No man can serve two masters." A man can serve two, or even more persons, interests, motives or ends that do not clash. But only one can be master.

He is reported to have said at another time to his disciples : "Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you ;" signifying not that they were not following him from choice, but that their choice was compelled as it were by an irresistible something in him which selected them, as the magnet selects and draws to itself what belongs to it.

This single eye, this compelling choice, this following

the lead of the affections are so many symbols of that decisive power of spiritual concentration, which in Jesus wrought his mighty works and is in sharp contrast with that distracted mind and not-clear vision of those who seem drawn many ways at once, and whose great want is some one overpowering and controlling motive worthy to rule,—a desire and purpose mastering all other desires, reducing them to order and producing harmony by silencing all lesser and opposing motives, and giving by concentration or singleness of vision unity and power to the life.

I could not anticipate when speaking to you last Sunday of one aged, leading and life-long member of our communion just gone, that another of the same household, and certainly not less worthy of commemoration would, by his almost immediate departure, invite us again to personal reminiscence and biographical retrospect.

It is but a few weeks since that, as I was illustrating the rare success and productiveness of some lives which are yet even exceptionally quiet and retiring in habit, I mentioned as a most pertinent example the President of the Essex Institute then a good while retired from active duty by what seemed a prostrating and incurable invalidism. He has followed to his rest after a week the elder brother of whom I spoke last Sunday morning at some length. His history furnishes a notable illustration of what large results that singleness and clearness of vision, which selects an object or end to live for and holds steadily to it for the years of a long life, may accomplish. It might be put as Jesus put it—accomplished by one who is more chosen and called to his work than he is conscious of choos-



ing it, so adapted does he seem to it. It is natural selection. Nature selected him for it.

In the first place, the end sought was a worthy and noble one; in the second place, it was distinctly comprehended in all its nobleness; in the third place, it was pursued with an unwavering steadiness of aim and constancy of faith that refused to be turned back by obstacles or discouragements, and finally compelled even obstacles to become allies.

In pronouncing the end or object to which Doctor Wheatland devoted his life, a worthy and noble one, my meaning is not that he saw in their perfected shapes from the beginning the very institutions and agencies of social education and elevation which he did so much to create, foster and develop into their present forms. His vision was by no means so narrow and definite as that. More broadly his vision comprehended all possibilities behind these nearer ones; they were indefinitely large. They comprehended, as the hymn we sing has it,

“Whate’er is friendly to our race.”

To what outlined and formal proportions his vision would shape itself he could not foresee. This would appear as he went on. Time and the beginnings and the possibilities would determine that. He no doubt builded better than he knew. All do so who build in faith and seriousness, and put heart into their work. Yet he saw more beyond what he was building, as what was to come after.

In his early manhood he began the search for knowledge: not simply for the glory of it, as would appear, or that he might be rich in large accumulations, or exhibit great store

of learning, but that he might put his acquisitions to use. As he travelled—partly for health—he made use of his opportunities to observe and study, and think over plans of life; so that he brought home not only a sharpened appetite for knowing, but some gathered fruits, and brooding thoughts of what to try to do. And looking around him modestly in this his home community, and taking note of the things most needing to be done and things seeming possible, he quietly went about doing them in his own fashion, pretty much unnoticed. He put out no prospectus of new and large operations, but took the materials at hand, went among his fellows with suggestions, which after the usual amount of delay, objections and discussion bore fruit. By the time that harvest was ripe—usually a good while before—he had forecast the next step, and was ready with further suggestions, and plans more or less matured as to the direction the advance should take next, and how to compass it.

He was interested in education and studied ways and means of improving the schools. He was an early and zealous if not the foremost promoter of the selection of Salem as a seat for one of the Normal Schools of the state. He was not covetous of the honor of connecting his name with any new or good thing if he could get it done. He sought to enlist such as had means, such as had influence, such as had powers of persuasion in the carrying forward of his plans, and never betrayed any sign of envy or of hurt to his pride if the credit of any success went to them. He saw respectable and venerable societies devoted to scientific and historical research whose histories had had

honorable beginnings, but had come to the languishing period, and showed but a feeble vitality, and he labored to revive them, to arouse interest, to raise funds, and by combining their resources, insufficient for a separate maintenance, to make them sufficient in combination. So he brought those who were working apart to work together. Gradually he gathered helpers about him. This was an intelligent community. There were men in it who more and more appreciated the importance of what he was doing. Some could not at once see the use of all that gratuitous toil and drudgery to which he submitted in gathering old papers, pamphlets, MSS., relics, curiosities, cast-aside furniture,—much of which seemed to them nondescript rubbish; but they came to believe that he knew what he wanted and what he would do with it; so they let him collect and began to lend him a little help in it, and little contributions came in to his cabinets and museums and various collections. And by and by here were mere boys forming their little associations and collections. They had caught this healthy habit of going through the world with their eyes open and their thoughts about them. And there grew up little by little a cluster of institutions and activities of an intellectual and educational sort about here, such as has rarely if ever been seen equalled in any other community of the size of this, unless it were a university town or the seat of some important institution of education,—and a parallel even in such a community I imagine it would not be easy to find. They did grow up here; they were natural products; came quietly, first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn

in the ear ; but none the less was the soil to be tilled ; and it was in no small part the hand of the diligent husbandman whose work I am tracing that helped it to be.

He was always at work for the people. He seemed to resort little to the centres of learning and investigation for fellowship with the learned. They knew him as of their guild and appreciated his labors. But instead of affecting to spend his time in seeking them and associating with them exclusively, or in a select and separate way, he sought to bring them here as fellow-workers with him, and to induce them to impart to the community at large of their riches. They recognized him as of their order and came at his call, glad to find here a group of receptive and intelligent listeners. So he made friends with Cambridge professors and those of other colleges and institutions and such as had the gift of instructive and scientific exposition. Here some of the literary men found a more than usually congenial atmosphere in which to express themselves. Here the men who had made new and wonderful discoveries and inventions liked to make early exhibition of their experiments and accomplishments.

Do I claim for this one man all these wonderful results? By no means. Doctor Wheatland was himself a product of this ripe American civilization which has known no better soil for its planting and unfolding than this spot. It had been the home of Doctor Prince and Doctor Bentley and Doctor Bowditch and others who, if less known, had something of their quality. Its brave and intelligent mariners and its sagacious commercial factors had been taught already to lay under tribute the rarely visited shores of

foreign lands, civilized and barbarous, as also those of the most remote and secluded islands, for whatever thing, native or created by man, could illustrate the natural history or the civil history of man; nor to omit to bring of the natural products of every soil and clime. But he was more than receptive. He recognized opportunity, and he made opportunity. With a discerning and single eye he saw what needed to be done to preserve and to pass on this rich civilization to posterity, bettered too, by at least so much as one quiet man with his eyes open, his wits about him and his heart in it, could do to increase and deepen its benefactions. And observe again that his object was always to extend these helpful influences among the people. If he could bring Professors Agassiz and Gray and Norton and others of eminent ability to speak here from time to time, it was not that it might shed reputation upon himself, but that the minds of the people of the young especially might be aroused, their tastes guided and their minds enlarged. He made it his business to watch for and encourage every inquiring mind about him in its first curious explorations for knowledge. He had no scorn for small and feeble beginnings. No man or woman, or curious child, need think the book of the universe closed and sealed against investigation even from one whose life was given to labor and industry. If a real thirst for knowledge existed it could secure even in what could be saved from leisure hours some acquisition worth striving for; and, if he did not himself possess the knowledge you sought, he would tell you where to go for it. He was always eager to extend these social and educational

influences. Salem, if it had arrived at anything of benefit to itself as to its educational advantages, must carry it through Essex county, and then beyond, and all abroad. Correspondence, exchange and fellowship with all associations elsewhere seeking similar ends, namely, the increase of human knowledge and the elevation of men and society, he sedulously cultivated.

I remember most distinctly how much I was impressed when I first became a citizen of this place by the aspect of things here and how soon I observed this man's influence in much which interested me most. Here was a remarkable centre and gathering-place for young men, students they called themselves I suppose, many of whom have since made for themselves names of distinction, and who as they have scattered widely have carried with them the enthusiasms fostered in this congenial climate: professors, teachers, lecturers, explorers, they are still in the various fields of science. How came they here? They were not pupils of Doctor Wheatland. Something drew them, chose them,—they came by natural selection. But when I inquire how it happened that the conditions were made so favorable for them to pursue their studies here, to act upon each other and to stimulate each other in their chosen pursuits, I find that the one chiefly watchful and diligent to make ready the conditions and help forward the result was, as I am sure no one would deny, Doctor Wheatland; that his was the leading influence in creating this Salem school of young scientists. He was their chief; their central figure about whom they ranged themselves.

Perhaps nothing filled me with greater admiration at

that time than the—to me—novel and original institution called a “field meeting” of the Essex Institute. I had never seen or heard of anything like it. I do not know whether he originated it or not. It has since declined in popular favor, somewhat, I believe, though it still has all its original capabilities if it had the same leadership. It was then in the full tide of success, and I never missed an opportunity in those early days of my ministry of attending one unless it was impossible. It seemed to me the most thoughtfully devised and simply managed method of extending and popularizing knowledge, of quickening mental life, of teaching the value of observation and of opening the book of nature to the study of the young and curious of all ages, of which I could conceive. Here came a little group of specialists to a country town of the county, few, perhaps none of them, very learned yet, even in their own department of science; but, though rating themselves as students and collectors only, possessing so much knowledge that they could study the locality and and discuss its history and its natural history intelligently. And this they did. After a morning spent in exploring the vicinity, divided into parties according to their tastes and special studies, and accompanied by any who chose to join them in the walk and the search, they assembled at mid-day, and after partaking of the refreshments they had brought with them, they made their reports to an audience composed half of members of the Essex Institute and their friends and half of such dwellers in the vicinity, old and young, as were interested enough to attend.

The more expert we will say in geology, mineralogy

and archæology now gave their interpretation of the geological formations of that locality, finding on that little spot of the earth's crust the signs of how it had come to be, hill and stream, rock and soil, the processes of pre-historic times by which it was being made fit for man's habitation ; with mineralogical specimens before them they gave interesting information of the order of rock-making, the succession of deposits, the agencies of sun, rain, and weather, and of internal and external temperatures, in shaping this bit of the world to its existing contour and consistency.

The botanist followed in turn with talk of the forests, the flowers, the plants, the vegetable growths of that same territory ; made known the methods of identifying families and species of trees and plants, with leaf and bud and plant in hand to illustrate the lesson, all given in the simple and familiar conversational style.

Then came the zoölogist, whether ornithologist, entomologist, ichthyologist or ophiologist, with their accounts of the animal life of the region, with specimens gathered from the waters, the woods and fields, to give flavor and color by illustration, and thus deeper impression to their discourse.

From fossil implements, graveyard inscriptions, family and town records, the antiquarian and local historian brought interesting fragments of early settlement, family history, the developments and changes of industries, the statistics of schools and literary associations, of inventions and architecture, and whatever else would diversify, instruct and entertain the meeting.



Now the most significant thing about all this was, to my mind, its simplicity and efficacy as an educational agency. It was a series of object-lessons gathered from the ever-open leaves of nature's text-book, and her uncollected collection—if I may call them so—in natural history. It was not so much for the knowledge dispensed or gathered in that hour that it had value, as it was for the quickening impulse it gave to every listener, especially to the young, as it became a revelation of the wonderful things lying close at hand to every man and woman, boy and girl, in his or her own however isolated home. It opened eyes to see, it set minds to thinking. Without other text-book or teacher than this open book of nature, it became possible for each one to enter on a course of observation and experiment for himself by the roadside, in his door-yard, in the brooks, pastures and woods of the homestead;—everywhere were these most interesting and curious facts open to the discovery of one who had eyes and would use them, who had the powers of thought and would think. The learned book would follow in time, the more perfect science would come later. Here was the start, the quickening of mind, the faculty and the thirst for observation and comparison set going, the foundation and beginning of all knowledge. And this far-seeing man perceived here the means of impulse and guidance, in line with all wise educational methods from Kindergarten to University.

Another fact, which early and greatly impressed me as showing the wide and wise beneficence of this man's methods, was one which I had never noticed to anything

like the same extent elsewhere, kindred, to be sure, to that just spoken of; the fact, namely, that an unusually large number of persons engaged in regular and exacting occupations, had felt a marked intellectual stimulus from this widely prevailing tone of thought. Not only were the sea-going men inspired with an interest to collect for these museums, and educated by that interest, but here were busy men and women in bank and factory, in shop and garden, giving regular and full time to their respective professional, mechanical or mercantile pursuits, who yet had found the fascination of some field of observation, or research, or special reading and study so great, that they had surrendered a large portion of their leisure to these pursuits, and found no other pleasure or diversion sufficiently attractive to draw them away from them.

The measure of Doctor Wheatland's influence will appear more and more fully as time goes on and as we trace back to their beginnings some of the best features of the social life of this city. His eye was single. His motives were pure and unselfish to a rare degree. His life-work was a continuous labor of love. No man for earthly reward would have given himself so heartily and wholly to his calling. He saw visions, and dreamed dreams, and built castles with a prolific imagination: yet he was no visionary. He employed his imagination as faithfully and laboriously in devising ways and means as in shaping structures fair to the eyes and aspirations of those who love their kind. Night and day his brain was busy with his creations, at first only imaginations, of the good to be striven for. If his hopes met with delay, disappointment,

defeat, he was not soured, impatient, despondent. His faith that time would bring him his harvest seemed never to waver. He was always on the lookout for recruits. He was interested to know of each new-comer to town whether he was one to help forward his public-spirited designs in any capacity. He reconciled those disposed to work by themselves, to one another and brought them into coöperation. He dealt gently with prejudices. Though naturally quick in feeling he had infinite patience with the slow. He was no partisan in anybody's contentions and strifes. Always a peacemaker, he would lend a hand to any one, or any company endeavoring to make things better for man, and to make man himself better deserving, and of more worth to himself.

And the noblest example of all which he has left us was his unselfishness. Most men need appreciation, and feel the slight, if in their generous endeavors to serve their age, they receive inadequate recognition and credit for what they do. Doctor Wheatland probably valued the good opinion of his contemporaries as we all do; and of late years, as many of his plans have ripened to a noble harvest visible to all eyes, he has had this appreciation in no stinted measure. But he had many early discouragements to struggle against. Men did not see so far in advance as he did. His methods were quiet. He carried the strongholds of objectors and doubters individually, not in the mass; by personal explanations; by the exhibition of results already gained; by watching every opportunity to make a new friend or seizing an unexpected advantage. The progress was slow, tedious, costly in time, and in

expenditure of effort. And when some single, unusual gift, or unexpected lift of the burden came, what was seen by the many was the last sudden and exceptional generosity, and to the liberal giver went naturally and properly the meed of praise; but he to whom fell the long and toilsome previous persuasion and study of means that led up to it was more easily overlooked. But want of popular and immediate appreciation and response never seemed to dampen the ardor, or chill the faith, or give pause to the industry of this friend of all good causes. Observe: of *all* good causes. Because he seemed to foster the Essex Institute like a beloved and only child, you had only to know him more closely and intimately to know that he did not confine his sympathies or his efforts to this institution. Literally, "Whate'er is friendly to our race" could count on him as a friend. Especially whate'er was friendly to that portion of our race which has the fewest friends and the most need of them. He was the President of the Salem Fraternity from the beginning; an institution which sought to gather in and minister to the needs of those standing most in need of home influences, of a healthy, moral environment, refining companionship, rational amusement, industrial training and reading habits.

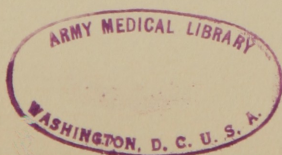
Long an officer in the principal library association of the city (before the public library was established), he was one of those who gladly entertained and forwarded the endeavor to devote that library as far as it would go and in combination with others to the founding of a free public library in Salem. All the appliances which he could gather, appropriate and adapt to educational uses, he was

ever disposed to place at the service of the public, or of any individual pursuing any particular line of investigation. He would extend to the schools all available helps and privileges which could contribute to teachers or pupils assistance and encouragement in their work. What one of us did he not place under obligation by referring him to the sources of information upon some point or theme of interest to him, modestly furnishing hint and suggestion to facilitate his labors, and rendering him all the aid and encouragement in his power?

I must bring to an end my hasty enumeration of some of the principal and best-known services rendered to this community by this man of the single purpose and clear vision. Many another will bear more full and adequate testimony to the merit of his labors as a friend of science, a patron of learning, an attentive observer and ready helper in establishing important industries, and opening new sources of prosperity to his native city. I can hardly believe that any other will accord to him a more hearty and venerating appreciation of the spirit of generous self-sacrifice in which he devoted his life, his counsel, his substance and all his abilities to the welfare of his native city and the service of mankind. Doing good was the business of his life. And the influence of his life is not ended. It is just beginning.

“ . . . They serve God well  
Who serve his creatures.

. . . . .  
What's done is what remains! Ah! blessed they  
Who leave completed tasks of love to stay  
And answer mutely for them, being dead.”







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