

Fort Payne church of Christ

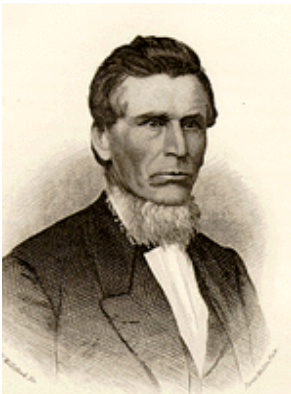


The Weekly Moment

A Weekly Motivational Message

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Moses Easterly Lard 1818-1880



The forces that form character are so complex and remote that we stand with unbarred head in the presence of a great life. If the heart shrinks from the attempt to solve the mysteries that invest the giant oak, rooting itself in the earth and representing the conquest of the life within over the forces without, the product on the centuries, without thought or conscience, with no power to choose a supreme end, though a thing of beauty and a joy forever, how much more do we tremble in the presence of one made in the divine image, empowered to rise to the plane of angels or sink to the level of demons?

Do we not hear the words that came to Moses from the burning bush? *"Put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."* A great life, the joint product of agencies human and divine, is the most sublime product in the universe. Let no man seek to pierce the unseen. We can only touch the outer edge at best.

Moses E. Lard was born in Bedford County, Tennessee, Oct. 29, 1818, and after *fighting "the good fight of faith"* for over sixty years, entered into eternal life from Lexington, Ky., at midnight, June 17, 1880. His father, Leaven Lard, with his family, moved to Ray County, Missouri, about 1829, hoping to secure a home by entering land, and also to enjoy the chase, for at that time game of all kinds abounded. Though disappointed in proving up his claim, and doomed to succumb at an early day to the dreaded scourge, smallpox, and to leave his family of six children without adequate support, his son Moses was entered in the school of adversity, from which he learned independence and that courage which has bequeathed to posterity the example of true greatness. Surely the fires within and without played over his soul with a fury that would have consumed one of inferior

mold. It was from the pure ozone of the West, from the wide prairies and boundless forests, from great rivers that swept past his feet onward to the sea, that the early life of Moses E. Lard drew its inspiration. Here he derived his power of depicting nature, here he put himself *en rapport* with the throbbing heart of God in trees and brooks and running streams.

From his father he inherited his noble, stalwart frame and his conceptions of honor and integrity. From his mother he received that profound veneration for God's Word which vitalized all his intellectual powers. The proof of this is found in the following words written by his own inimitable pen: "*As my brother and myself stood beneath the eaves of our little cabin, just ready to take leave of the only objects on earth dear to us, and thus close the saddest scenes of our lives, my mother said to us, 'My dear boys, I have nothing to give but my blessing and these two little books.'* She then drew from her bosom two small Testaments and placed them in our hands, and, as her tears were streaming down her cheeks, and lips quivering, she screamed as if it were her last, and that family was forever broken on earth." The memory of that sad hour was the supreme benediction. It was his pillar of fire by night, the cloud to shield him by day from the burning heat of forces that forever played upon his sensitive nature. From this source came the strength that enabled him to pass upward and onward till his name belted the earth with its influence, touching alike the shepherd upon the plains of Australia, and earth's cultivated thousands. While he was the image of his father in strong, rugged build, with grey, piercing eyes, he possessed the sweet tenderness and affection of his mother's disposition. It was her hope that sustained him through the dark hours when penniless and alone he was buffeted about by a cold, heartless world. But we have reason to rejoice that he found friends who recognized the pure gold that only waited the touch of benevolent hands to reveal its true worth.

General Alexander W. Donaphan saw that he had in him the elements of a great man. He awakened in him the ambition to perfect his education, and with friends provided the way by which he entered Bethany College, after he was married and had two children. Here, by his superior natural abilities and close application, even while he was earning by his daily labor his support, he completed in three years the course which entitled him to the degree of Master of Arts, and was by his own class appointed valedictorian. He never used his degree, urging that in the end every man must stand upon his own intrinsic worth.

From Bethany College he returned to Missouri, and his eloquence thrilled his audiences and swept them before the truths which he uttered into the kingdom of God by the score. When he arose in the pulpit there was an air of supreme confidence in the grandeur of his theme and sublime worth of the soul that drew all eyes to him. His mind bounded over his theme as the doe leaps over the prairie. He came to his work after long, laborious research. His words were always well chosen and leaped from his lips full of fire that burned its way into the heart through every obstruction. His keen, piercing grey eyes shot out their sparks in every direction, and there was a magnetism that knit his hearers to him with resistless grip. Among his greatest themes were *Abraham Offering Isaac, Remember Lot's Wife, and the Millennium*. His vivid imagination created his word pictures with a power rivaling the pencil of the master painters. All the wealth of his genius flowed from his lips upon the canvas, and the men and women created by his own words stood before you real beings, living, moving, breathing at his command. Although he spoke without note, these masterpieces came from his mind ready for the press and defied the criticism of the best scholars and writers. It is much to be regretted, that aside from what was left in the Quarterlies, no sermon survives. Had his best sermons been written out and published, they would today be masterpieces in sermonic literature, and all others would pale before their brightness, beauty and logical coherence. The Scriptures had so penetrated all his powers, so

thrilled his entire being, that they came from his lips burning with fire off God's own altar. It is true that he was not uniformly eloquent. Genius is never uniform. It will not be subject to ordinary devices or be thrust within the narrow confines of the ordinary nutshells of commonplace brains.

Alexander Campbell, unable to meet all the demands made upon him by the attacks coming from the various sources, assigned to Moses E. Lard, at the age of thirty-nine, the work of reviewing J. B. Jeter, a distinguished Baptist preacher, who had in some measure misrepresented the plea that was being made for a complete return to the faith and practice of the apostolic churches. In this review the writer dissects, with merciless logic, every fallacy and leaves his opponent without the power of reply. If this work is too severe in its tone, too sarcastic in its retorts, too merciless in its exposure of error, it must be remembered that the age was superheated by religious prejudice, and that Moses E. Lard's intense nature was ablaze with indignation, because he felt that all error was hateful to God and should be exterminated. It has been urged by some that one of the chief defects in his style was his dealing with words as if they were made of iron, and each had a value as exact as a mathematical formula. If this be true, let it be remembered that at that time a darkness had settled down over religious thought, and that the world was beclouded with mysticism. Nothing but definition could lift the hanging clouds and let in God's clear sunlight.

But granting that this is in part true, what is more delightful than to glide along the current of his translucent thought, looking down into the depths where there is no mud, and where associated truths glitter and sparkle like the pearls at the bottom of the Silver Spring in Florida?

When the Civil War came, such was the ardor of Moses E. Lard in the advocacy of what he believed to be right, such his hatred of all that was oppressive and unjust, that he was compelled to leave Missouri, refusing to submit to an oath that was subsequently set aside by the Supreme Court of the United States. He spent some time in Canada. It was during the intense excitement of the war that he moved to Georgetown, Kentucky, and afterwards to Lexington.

Recognizing his great gifts as a writer, his friends induced him to undertake the publication of what became at that time the ablest periodical published by the advocates of the Restoration, *Lard's Quarterly*.

In spite of the turmoil of war, the rage of passion throughout the land, the impossibility of making one dollar do the work of three, the pages of this magazine will forever remain one of the best proofs of his great genius. Such was the estimate placed upon his logical powers that his papers were used in one of the colleges in Canada as the best specimens of clear, distinct and connected thinking.

In the papers entitled "My First Meeting," "Dick and South Point," the lover of prose poetry, true word painting and sweet pathos will find himself charmed beyond expression. No pen ever glowed with such fervor or painted pictures more highly interwoven with the beautiful and true than Moses E. Lard.

Lard's Commentary on Romans is a work that deserves to be in the library of every preacher of the gospel. It represents the ripest and best scholarship of the author, and though written in a few brief years, near the close of his illustrious life, it gives evidence of great ability, clearness and independence of thought. No man can read it without being strengthened and invigorated intellectually. He is luminously clear, always strong and dignified. We may dissent from some of his positions, but the cogency of his reasoning and the onward sweep of his thoughts, that march forth like drilled soldiers doing his bidding, leave you in no doubt as to his meaning.

The *Apostolic Times*, a paper, projected chiefly by his efforts, and of which he was the chief editor, enjoyed a large circulation for a number of years. His gifted pen made the columns glow with his own fervid spirit, and it was greatly regretted when he felt compelled to turn his attention to other more enduring work.

He was in every way unique. He stands alone. He constitutes a class of his own; hence is not subject to the ordinary rules of criticism. With such rich and rare endowments, he escaped the curse of pride and envy. He was not absolutely perfect, but such were the elements that made up the man that he challenges our admiration, evokes our love and bequeaths to posterity the rich legacy of a great character wrought out under the fires that would have consumed to dust ordinary mortals. In proof of his humility, we quote from his Commentary on Romans: "*To my Savior, in profound humility, this volume is gratefully inscribed.*" Before he closed his eyes in death he said, "*There is not a cloud between me and my Heavenly Father.*"

Source: <https://www.therestorationmovement.com/>

Think about it.

Here's hoping you'll make the "*most of your minutes*" this week.

Hope to see you at Bible Study *soon!*

In Christian Love,

Bob Strickland