

[Lewis, Jason]

Death of Rev. Jason Lewis

BR. AUSTIN:—It becomes my task to announce that Rev. Jason Lewis is numbered among the dead. He passed from earth to a higher life, on the morning of June 23d, at his home in Keating, Potter co., Pa., after a brief sickness of typhoid fever, enduring nine days. He was fully conscious from the first attack, that his earthly career and labors were finished. He made due arrangement of his business, and patiently endured pain, and calmly, peacefully, triumphantly passed away in the full assurance and sustaining power of that Faith and Hope which he had through life enjoyed and proclaimed to the world. He was 59 years old the 27th of January last. He leaves a wife [Almira] and four children [Lavinia, James, George and Cyrus]. The eldest and youngest sons are in the army, near Richmond; the other son and daughter are married, and reside near his old home. His family are not left destitute—he having secured and paid for a small farm.

Br. Lewis, I believe, never enjoyed the blessing of a good physical constitution; but during the last year or two his health had been better, and we hoped he might remain with us many years. But suddenly and unexpectedly to his family and many friends, has he been called home. We feel that our denomination, as well as his bereaved family, has sustained a great loss. He was buried on the first day of the present annual Allegany Association, convened at Belfast, N.Y. So that instead of meeting him in council, as we had hoped to do, the writer was called to attend his funeral, and perform his part on the mournful occasion, and assist in depositing his earthly remains in the tomb. His neighbors had lined it with evergreens and wreathed it with flowers—fit emblems of immortal life and beauty.

I have gathered only a few brief sketches of his life from which to write. He was born in Middletown, Conn., and when a child was removed with his father's family to Upper Lisle, Broome Co., N.Y., and resided there till he arrived to manhood. His parents, and, I think, all his connexion, were Baptists. His father was a preacher in that order, and still lives, retaining its fellowship. Br. Lewis, I am informed, became a believer in our Faith when a child, though for some years he was not aware that he was a Universalist. This outgrowing the doctrines in which he was educated, at such an early age, evinces the originality and strong reasoning powers of his mind and the benevolence of his heart. In the year 1830 he commenced the ministry as an itinerant, within the present bounds of the Allegany Association, which body he ultimately helped organize. He received fellowship and, I presume, ordination, from the Chenango Association. It is said he preached the first Universalist sermon in Independence, when too feeble in health to stand—sitting in a chair in a private house, to a few neighbors; and the good seed

[Lewis, Jason]

thus sown, has borne fruit an hundredfold. Some of the present members of our Society date their conversion to the truth from that sermon.

Br. Lewis was not a popular speaker. His health was generally poor, and his voice small and feeble; and hence he could not interest the lovers of mere declamation. His real strength and talent consisted in the originality of his thought and clearness of ideas and perception of truth, which he usually presented so as to be very instructive. Hence to the mind that appreciated the *matter* of a sermon, rather than the *manner* of its delivery, he was exceedingly entertaining. He was one of the preachers I best loved to hear, for I could always gain instruction from his sermons.

As a writer he is too well known to require a word from me. All who have been conversant with our periodicals, or read his published work on the "Resurrection," will award him due merit as a student and a profound and clear thinker. What acquirements he possessed as a scholar in the English and Greek languages, were mostly obtained without the aid of schools or teachers. How thankful ought our young men to be for the better opportunities they now enjoy.

As a social friend and companion, a husband, a father, a citizen, he was all that his friends and family desired. The purity of his life is worthy of imitation. Br. Lewis was always modest and retiring, yet sufficiently self-appreciating to develop an independent manhood; and while he sought information and counsel from others, still he was self-reliant and firm in his own convictions and judgment—depending mostly on his own reason as a guide to truth and duty.

In the Allegany Association his influence has been beneficial in the upbuilding of truth, and we deeply feel our loss. Most sensibly and warmly do we sympathize with the afflicted family and implore the Father's love to abide with and comfort their hearts.

S. E. DARROW

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 12 Jul 1862

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Rev. Jason Lewis, died in Keating, Potter county, Pa., June 23, 1862, in his 60th year—after an illness (typhoid fever,) of only nine days—leaving a wife, three sons (two in the army,) and a daughter. He was born in Middletown, Conn., January 27, 1803 and in childhood was removed to Upper-Lisle, N.Y., where he attained his manhood. His father was and is a Baptist preacher; but Jason became a Universalist some years before he himself knew what Universalism meant, while yet a mere lad. In 1830, when in such feeble health that he had to sit in a chair, he delivered his first sermon, and soon after commenced itinerating in the bounds of the present Alleghany Association—which he subsequently aided to organize. In 1831 he received the fellowship of the Chenango Association, in which he had been reared, and was ordained in 1833. He early attained a high rank as a clear and forcible writer for the "Magazine and Advocate," Utica; and his Letters to Clergymen, inviting their candid examination of Universalism, were several times published in pamphlet form and widely circulated. His late valuable work on the Resurrection is the only book from his pen, and is the result of many years of thought and research. The Register gives his residence in Boston, N.Y., 1836 to 1840; Spring-Mills, N.Y., 1840; Ulysses, Pa., 1841 to 1845; Whitesville, N.Y. 1845.; Ulysses, Pa., 1846 to 1851; Homer, Pa., 1851 to 1854; Phillips' Creek, N.Y., 1854 to 1856; Homer, Pa., 1856 to 1861; Candersport, Pa., 1861 to 1862, (probably his nearest post-office.) Br. Lewis was of very slender and frail frame—health always delicate—voice a feeble treble—hence never a popular preacher; but always acceptable to those who regarded matter before manner; for his sermons not only showed reading and careful study, but original thought, and his style was terse and lucid: his scholarship, beyond a common English education, was self-acquired under many and great disadvantages. He was remarkably pure in life—modest and rather reserved—but in the family and friendly circle, free and affectionate. His neighbors floored and lined his grave with evergreens, and wreathed it with flowers—fit emblems of immortal life, affection and beauty.

Universalist Register, Boston MA, 1863

Transcribed on 3 Dec 2011 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY