

Walden, Islay N.B.T.S. - 1879

WALDEN'S

Sacred Poems,

WITH A

SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

"Where there's a Will there's a Way."

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.:

TERHUNE & VAN ANGLE'S PRESS, 31 ALBANY STREET.

1877.

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NOTE OF COMMENDATION.

MR. ISLAY WALDEN, the author of the hymns in this little book has, for the past year, attended lectures in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church at New Brunswick. He is struggling against many difficulties to prepare himself for pastoral work among the Freedmen of the South. By the sale of this book, MR. WALDEN hopes to be assisted on his way to the holy ministry. A kind reception is bespoken for him.

S. M. WOODBRIDGE.

NEW BRUNSWICK, April 30, 1877.

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INTRODUCTION.

ISLAY WALDEN, the author of this little book of poems, was born a slave in North Carolina.

He is now a student in the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, N. J.

As the story of his struggles can not fail to commend him to the sympathy and encouragement of all who admire perseverance and a strong christian faith, and may give additional interest to the perusal of his "poems" a brief sketch of his life is here given.

His youth was passed on different North Carolina plantations; he having been sold from the auction block several times—twice while an infant in his mother's arms. His duties were the usual ones assigned to young slaves—house work, the lighter kinds of field work, &c.—until he discovered a remarkable talent to which he gives the Yankee term of "reckoning." The possession of this talent was as mysterious as that of "Blind Tom's" for music, as he had received no instruction and could not explain his mental processes. This faculty gained him the favor of his master and he was often called in to "show off" before company—his master generally betting on his ability to solve problems proposed.

His first poem was called forth by the death of an ox, which was thrown into the shaft of a

mine in which he was then working. This melancholy event inspired him to recite impromptu the following lines:

"Poor old Dick!
 He died quick,
 He died all in a minute:
 Here is a shaft thirty feet,
 And we have thrown him in it.
 He was red,
 And he is dead.
 The buzzards may forsake him;
 For he is buried thirty feet
 Where they can never get him."

His master said, "Walden, you are a poet." "What is a poet?" answered Walden. "One who writes poetry," and this also had to be explained by referring to the hymns which Walden knew, as examples of poetry.

Soon after this came the news of Lee's surrender. Walden was working at a mine when his master came riding by, and calling out to him, said, "Islay, have you heard the news?" "No, sir," said Islay, "what is the news?" "Well, you are free,—Lee has surrendered to Grant."

It had been the wish of his mother that he should become a minister, and as his own convictions of duty pointed in the same direction, he lost no time, now that he was his own master, in starting on his long walk northward determined to get an education. It was in the middle of winter, and snow fell almost every day for weeks; he was poorly clad and without money, and finally became sick and was compelled to take refuge in Richmond hospital where he was confined several weeks. But, still undiscouraged, he pressed on to Washington.

Here, at first, he engaged in various kinds of manual labor. But finding this unprofitable he wrote two political poems—one of them on the impeachment of President Johnson—had them printed and sold them on the streets.

But his labors in Washington were not all selfish. He established Sunday Schools in the most vicious neighborhoods where hundreds of the poor and degraded colored children were gathered. His labors in this direction are warmly commended by a christian gentleman then in the office of Paymaster General of the War Department, and by others prominent in christian work. While on his way through Pennsylvania, after leaving Washington he hit upon a new device for earning money. He committed to memory several chapters of a text book on anatomy. Then on his arrival in a town he would announce a lecture on Anatomy and Hygiene, which he would generally deliver in the open air, sometimes in small churches and halls. After the lecture he would take up a collection and sell his poems of which he now had quite a number. In this way he sustained himself, travelling through Pennsylvania and New Jersey as far as New Brunswick, where it was his fortune to fall into good hands. Through the efforts of one of the Professors of Rutgers College, a promise of pecuniary aid was obtained from the Second Reformed Church, and WALDEN returned to Washington and entered Howard University where he completed the course of instruction. He is now, as before stated, attending the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church at New Brunswick, N. J.

I have gleaned these few facts from WALDEN's own narrative as the ones most likely to be of interest to the indulgent reader; and, I may add, my daily observation of his character for the past year has left no doubt in my mind of their strict truthfulness. His story and his future work alike appeal to the generosity of all who wish well to his race.

WILLIAM R. TAYLOR.

NEWARK, N. J., May 10, 1877.

Mr. Walden was graduated from the Seminary in 1879 and he immediately proceeded to his native North Carolina where he became useful in missionary work. He died in 1884.

SACRED POEMS.

The Healing Stream.—C. M.

Jesus, my Lord, that healing stream,
Comes flowing from Thy side ;
I see Thee hanging on the cross,
I see Thy garments dyed,
In blood which can atone for sin ;
How rich that blood must be,
Which can atone for all the world—
Which doth atone for me !
Oh precious stream, forever flow
To gladden every eye,
'Till every cloud has disappeared
Of sin beneath the sky !
'Till Jesus reigns on earth alone,
And reigns in Heaven above ;
'Till all the nations feel and know
That God is only love.

'Till we shall meet in that blessed land
With neither pain nor fear ;
Until we feel His loving hand
Removing every tear.

'Till we shall join that happy host
Thy holy name to praise ;
With harps and voices sounding sweet,
In everlasting lays.

April 23, 1877.

The Third Psalm.—C. M.

Oh Lord, how have my foes increased ?
What can the reason be,
Oh why should they against me rise
Or seek to trouble me ?

They, say "for him there is no help
In God," the all in all,
With longing eyes they look to see
Both king and kingdom fall.

But they shall in their wishes fail,
This thing they shall not see,
For Thou the glory of my life,
My strength and shield shalt be.

And Thou, Oh Lord, wilt e'er attend,
And listen to my cry,
Thou wilt not slight a humble prayer,
When it ascends the sky.

But when I on my bed repose,
Thy gracious hand sustains,
And when I wake to see the light
Thy love with me remains.

Nor will I Lord, the people fear,
Ten thousand though they be,
Who disregard Thy holy One,
Or thus encompass me.

Arise, O Lord, my soul to save,
My foes by Thee are slain,
Their teeth and cheek bones broken are
For all their works are vain.

Salvation, Lord, belongs to thee,
The earth and sea are thine,
Nor blessed can the people be,
But through the kingly line.
April 27, 1877.

The Anointed One.—S. M.

My Prophet, Priest and King,
Who wilt Thy saints reward,
I would be absent from the flesh,
And present with the Lord.

But let Thy will be done,
And let me, Lord, obey :
Yet I would hear Thee bid me come ;
Why should I from Thee stay ?

I love Thy holy name,
I love Thy gospel grace,
I love to think, O Lord, that I
Am of Thy chosen race.

Let Israel raise the song,
Let all the people sing,
And every nation join to praise,
Their Prophet, Priest and King ;

Who reigns on Zion's hill.
For us he prophesied,
And now He stands and intercedes
For whom He bled and died.

How blessed is His reign
 Which is from sea to sea !
 How great are all His gifts of grace,
 Which He imparts to me !

April 23, 1877.

Morning Prayer for Children.—L. M.

Jesus, I from my sweet repose,
 Arise to see the morning sun.
 Help me, dear Lord, that at the close
 Of day, my duties may be done.

Accept my thanks for blessings past,
 And for these golden rays of light ;
 For every gift of grace bestowed
 And guardian angels of the night.

And if, dear Lord, by day or night,
 Thou shalt be pleased to call me
 hence,

Thou art my strength, my all in life,
 In death thou art my strong defence.
 May 1, 1877.

Evening Prayer for Children.

—C. M.

Beneath the falling shades of night
 Dear Lord I bow and pray
 That Thou wilt keep me while I sleep
 As Thou dost through the day.

I pray that harm may not appear
 Nor evil near my bed,
 Nor that I should be hurried hence
 And numbered with the dead.

But that I may, O Lord, arise
 Refreshed from every care ;
 That I may bow and pray again,
 And feel Thee ever near.

May 1, 1877.

Second Psalm—FIRST PART.—L. M.

O Lord, why should the heathen rage,
 Or vanity the people know ?
 Or why should kings together sit
 And rulers to their councils go ?

Why should they all united be
 Messiah's reign to thus oppose ?
 Or why His bands assunder break
 And cast His cords unto his foes ?

But soon on that eternal Throne,
 Shall He not laugh their deeds to scorn,
 And in their hearts vex them with wrath,
 That He may all the Future warn ?

Almighty God, 'tis Thy decree
 That Zion's King shall ever reign ;
 This day have I begotten Thee,
 And I this day will Thee ordain.
 May 4, 1877.

Second Psalm—SECOND PART.—
 8's and 7's, PECULIAR.

Ask, O my Son, and I will give
 To Thee each tribe and nation ;
 And by Thy power, they shall be
 Raised up from degradation.

Thy rod shall surely heathen break,
 And dash them all asunder ;
 And then, my Son, Thy glorious reign
 Shall cause the world to wonder.

Let all the earthly kings be wise,
 And, from all evil turning,
 Let judges, too, instructed be,
 And find in Thee their learning.

With fear the earth shall serve the
Lord,

In love shall they assemble ;
Shall bow and worship at His feet,
And each rejoice and tremble.

Kiss ye the Son all earthly hosts,
And to Him be returning :
Lest ye shall perish by the way,
Whene'er His wrath is burning.

The faithful then shall blessed be,
Whose hearts are free from wav'ring;
Who trusted in the "Holy One,"
Who is His people saving.

May 6, 1877.

The Christian's Consolation.

—S. M.

Dear Father, think of me,
A sinner poor and blind,
And in my Saviour's righteousness
May I salvation find.

For He's my living friend,
And He's my all in all,
For me He interposed His blood,
When ruined by the fall.

And truly there and then,
On His eternal Throne,
For reasons that I cannot tell
He claimed me as His own.

Was it because he saw
That there was good in me,
That I should have elected been
To all eternity?

In me there is no good,
I'm wretched and undone,
And, Father, all my hope doth hang
On Thy eternal Son.

His is a right divine ;
And creatures must respect,
The just Creator's right to reign—
His power to elect.

But let none doubt His love,
Let no one disbelieve,
That though He doth elect His own
The seeker shall receive.

May 5, 1877.

The Repenting Sinner.—8's, 7's.

Though my God I have offended,
Though I'm wretched, weak and blind
Yet the day of grace extended,
Proved Him merciful and kind.

Now may I, the chief offender,
'Gainst my holy God and King,
Thus behold His lordly splendor
When to Him I pray and sing.

Though I have my God offended,
Though my sins are fierce and wild,
Yet He has His wrath suspended,
He's my father, I'm his child.

Though I be the chief offender,
And my heart is cold and stern,
Yet the Saviour will be tender,
If to Him I look and turn.

Though my God I have offended,
And my sins do grieve me sore,
Yet His love has far transcended
In the cross my Saviour bore.

If my sins my God can pardon,
 If to me He's reconciled,
 Though my heart I long have hardened,
 He adopts me as a child.

Should the world then be offended,
 While He is the sinners all?
 For to each His love's extended—
 Everyone that God doth call.
 April 20, 1877.

A Prayer of Reflection.—C. M.

Dear Lord, forgive my follies past,
 And strengthen me to pray;
 Condemn me not to death at last,
 But lead me in Thy way.

All my desires to Thee are known,
 Thine eyes count every tear,
 And every sigh and every groan
 Attracts Thy listening ear.

O righteous Father, Holy One,
 Behold my wearied soul,
 And help me while I try to reach
 The final, heavenly goal.

No voice can sing, no heart can claim,
 Nor can a sinner find,
 A sweeter word than Thy blest name,
 O saviour of mankind !

If I have wronged my neighbor, Lord,
 Or caused one soul to sin,
 O cleanse me with Thy Holy blood,
 Nor let me err again,

And take me on Thy Holy arm
 Where I can never fall ;
 To join the everlasting throng,
 And crown Thee Lord of all.

The Kingdom of Christ.—L. M.

O Lord Thy kingdom doth expand,
 King Jesus reigns from land to land ;
 He comes to make His mission known,
 He comes to rule on Zion's throne.

He comes that He may sinners save,
 He dies, He lies within the grave ;
 And from that tomb He doth arise,
 Triumphantly into the skies.

And from the grave amid the dead,
 Captivity He captive led ;
 O glorious Saviour, King of Kings !
 Who to the earth salvation brings.

O Lord, Thy kingdom shall withstand,
 The mighty nations of the land,
 Until earth's nations shall become
 United—an eternal one.

And then, O Grace, Thy King alone,
 Shall reign supremely on Thy throne;
 When princedoms shall before Him fall,
 We'll crown Him Saviour, Lord of all.

ISLAY WALDEN, April 23, 1877.

The Transition.—S. M.

The golden wings of time
 Are ever gliding by ;
 They bear my body to the tomb,
 My spirit to the sky.

This life is but a breath
 Which is and is no more.
 'Tis like the struggle of a wave
 To reach some distant shore.

But tossed upon the deep,
Strong billows o'er it surge ;
Its drops are scattered far and wide
Ere it can reach the verge.

Eternally 'tis lost,
Nor will it more arise,
'Till nature shall its vapors bear
To mingle in the skies.

And I, alas ! I die !
On earth I cannot stay !
My soul returns to God who gave,
My body to the clay !

I'm like the fallen race
Which pass from mortal sight,
To dwell in one eternal day,
Or one eternal night.

But am I like the wave
Whose parts can never meet,
Except it be by chance when they
Shall mingle in the deep ?

Ah ! no, for I'll arise
Upon the last great day ;
My spirit from its God shall come,
My body from the clay.

United, we shall stand
 Eternally in one.
 Yes, in the likeness of my God
 The image of His son.

April 28, 1877.

Love for God's Name.—C. M.

Great God, I love Thy holy name,
 And all Thy blessings too ;
 I will take heed to all my ways,
 And what I speak or do.

Because thy name is music sweet,
 And every note's a charm ;
 Because creation is upheld
 By Thy Almighty arm.

Therefore I love Thy holy name,
 To me there's naught so sweet :
 While angels worship round thy throne,
 I'll worship at Thy feet.

Thy name is all on earth below,
 Is all in heaven above ;
 And in Thy holy word, we know
 That Thou art only love.

ISLAY WALDEN, April 28, 1877.

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