

THE BIBLICAL RECORDER.

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From the Ch. Observer.

THOUGHTS ON THE MINISTRY.

"Let man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, as stewards of the mysteries of God." 1 Cor. iv. 1.

This exhortation of the apostle ought, in these days, to be strenuously insisted upon. There is a great and growing disposition to regard the ministry in the same light with the other professions of life; to regulate and judge of a man's entrance upon the sacred office, and his conduct in it, by the maxima which obtain in the ordinary business of the world; and to forget or dispise the authority, which, aside from the personal influence of him who fills it, pertains to the office itself. We do not now allude to those enemies of the gospel, who, not having grasp of mind sufficient to conceive of a higher motive than sordid selfishness, regard all preachers as mercenary knaves, and their disciples as their dupes. The world always has been full of such. In the infancy of the church, they called the abstemious John a madman, and railed at the blessed Saviour as a wine-bibber and a glutton; and with the same zeal and inconsistency they still hate and slander the professors and preachers of godliness. It was not to such that Paul addressed the exhortation, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ." He spoke to professors of religion; and upon them the proper estimation of ministers is a subject which in our day needs to be zealously urged.

People are too apt to look upon the preacher as the paid servant of a congregation, employed to minister to their personal gratification; and therefore bound not only to preach, but to live in the precise way which may be most agreeable to them. They would make him subject to the whims of every self-appointed prophet in Israel, and have him shape his course by maxims as foreign to the word of God, as the laws of the Medes and Persians. They would come into the minister's house, which ought to be to him, as well as to other men, his castle, and regulate the cares, the enjoyments, and the economy of the family circle. Nay, more, they assume that the disciple is greater than the teacher, and would dictate to the ambassador of Christ how and what he must preach to them.—And while they are thus exercising an episcopacy over the minister's character and deportment, they entirely lose sight of the fact, that he is divinely authorized to rule the household of faith, and expound to them the oracles of God; and claims a support from the church, not as the gift of a stinted charity—not as the price of his labors—but as the right of those whom the Master has declared shall "live by the gospel."

One reason why people exercise such harsh and uncharitable judgment with regard to ministers is, they forget that they "are men of like passions with themselves;" that the sanctity of their office gives them no exemption from the common infirmities and wants of our nature, and ought not to exclude them from any of its privileges. We would not take one iota from the rigor of that law by which the preacher's life should be governed; for we are well aware that his conduct often preaches more effectually than his sermons. But we would rebuke that officious hypocrisy, which is so ready to pluck the mote out of the preacher's eye, while it is so indulgent to the beam in its own. The motives and obligations to godliness, which rest upon ministers, are infinitely solemn; and if they are unfaithful, the consequences, both to themselves and to others, will be much more fearful, than in the case of those whose advantages are fewer, and whose stations are less prominent. But the standard of piety and devotedness at which a minister should aim, is not a whit higher than that by which every Christian should measure his conduct; and no private member of the church is excusable for a degree of conformity to the world, or want of zeal in the cause of Christ, which would be culpable in his pastor.—There is in the Bible no peculiar rule laid down for regulating the dress, living, and private deportment, of ministers and their families.

Another reason of the unworthy estimation in which ministers are held is, that, like the Corinthians, people are "puffed up for one against another;" and some members of the church seem to think that it is a peculiar duty, which they owe to their own minister, to dispise and abuse all others. "There are envyings, and strifes, and divisions." One says "I am of Paul," and another "I am of Apollus." And if the subject were not too solemn for mirth, it would be not a little amusing to consider the arguments by which these zealous partisans uphold the claims of their favorite. The amount of their learning, and the style of their oratory, constitute but a small por-

tion of the topics introduced into the discussions upon this subject so frequent, by the wayside, in the social and fashionable assembly, and even in the church itself. The elegance or awkwardness of their personal appearance, the shape of their features, their style of dress, the appearance and conduct of their wives and children, and many other things too small to mention, are accurately examined and insisted upon; while the fact that they are all the ambassadors of Christ, speaking in his name, and used by him as instruments for the conversion and salvation of souls, is entirely lost sight of.

Shame on the Christians who bring disgrace upon the ordinances of God, by their vain babbling about his ministers!

But we believe the great reason why the ministry is not held in more appropriate estimation, is to be found in the conduct of ministers themselves. We do not now refer to those melancholy cases of profligacy of the professed ministers of Christ, which have been, alas! so frequent of late, and which have given the enemies of the cross such a pretext to blaspheme. Neither do we allude to those, (if such there are,) whose eagerness after "the loaves and fishes," whose anxiety to keep pace with the follies of fashionable life, or whose indolence in the discharge of their official duty, gives the world a pretext to rail at what it falsely terms "an hireling clergy." But we allude to the obvious fact, that ministers themselves do not set a good example in this matter. They do not account of each other as of the ministers of Christ. They do not esteem and love one another, as they ought. There are among them "envyings, strifes, and divisions." Ecclesiastical courts have become notorious for a bitterness of spirit and a disregard to the courtesies of debate. The alienations, jealousies, and petty contentions among ministers, even in the same branch of the church, which of late years have been so frequent, have done much to destroy the influence of the ministry—much to grieve away the spirit of God from the churches, and leave his people in a state of coldness and spiritual death.

When ministers suspect, and condemn each other; when, to gratify their aversions, or their "elective affinities," they trample not only upon the feelings of their brethren, but upon the authority of the church, as exercised by her courts—how can they expect the people, to whom they are teachers and patterns, to account of them as of the ministers of Christ?

And then, too, the policy which is too often employed by them, to extend their influence and uphold the kingdom of Christ, is of that worldly kind, which must necessarily reduce the ministry, in the estimation of the people, to a level with other professions. The cunning and skill of a Talleyrand may be successful, and even commendable, in the kingdoms of this world; but they are altogether out of place in the kingdom of God. The secret caucusing, by which the public action of ecclesiastical bodies is pre-determined—the management by which, in too many instances, the charities of the church are provided for, and the offices of the church distributed, may seem to meet temporary expedients; but in the long run, can be productive of nothing but evil.

But this article is already too long, and we therefore reserve the subject of ministerial policy for a future number. CALVIN.

THE CHIEF MOURNER AT NAIN.

"Now when we came night to the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."—LUKE vii. 12.

A widow! Then she had formerly had a wedding day. The hopes of a bride adorned for her husband had once animated her bosom. Her friends had congratulated her on her prospects.—Her parents had kissed her and given their parting benediction. Her beloved had received her, and spoken of pleasant scenes before them.—Now, however, she was walking sorrowfully towards the burying place—"and she was a widow!"

A widow! Then she had known the enjoyments of domestic life. Often, it is probable, had her husband soothed her spirit in seasons of anxiety. On him her hopes had rested for the support she would need in declining years. He was her companion, her guide, her protector. She had seen widows around her, and blessed God that she was not in their case. But the brightness of the morning had passed away; the shadows had lengthened; a dark and gloomy evening had succeeded;—"and she was a widow!"

A widow! Then she had trodden the same path before. This was not her first visit to the cemetery. Who can describe her feelings as she followed her husband's remains to their last resting place, sometimes glancing back upon the past, sometimes forward upon the future, now thinking of conversations abruptly broken off, and now of the circumstances of her fatherless boy? On her return, with what emotion had she clasped him to her arms, saying, "Now I have only you; when I am in trouble you must comfort me; when I am ill, you must nurse me; when I die, you must bury me; O, my son, you must now be my husband!" Many a widow who has spoken thus, has, however, soon perceived fresh sources of anxiety. One has observed that the countenance of her only solace was becoming less healthy; the eye glistened, but the face was pale; the strength was less firm; the cough continued troublesome, the flesh seemed wasting; ah, yes! it became evident at length, that death alone would place him beyond the need of her care. Another has heard as she was sitting, the sound of unusual feet at the door of her habitation; it is a company of strangers carrying one who has met with a fatal accident; her son is living, but he cannot speak; he

turns his eyes towards her with a living look, and expires. These, or some other distressing circumstances, occurred at Nain: "there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

And how did Jesus feel and act when he saw this mournful spectacle? "He had compassion on her." Well he might: he knew the bitterness of her grief, and the helplessness of her condition. He remembered that it was written of the righteous, that he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy, and he delighted in exemplifying the character of the righteous. He knew that it had been said of his Father, "He relieveth the fatherless and the widow;" and he delighted in displaying his conformity of disposition to him of whom he was the visible image.

"The Son of God, in all the majesty Of power illimitable—all the zeal Of pure benevolence—now raised to him, And as it rested on the morrow's dawn, His voice imperative the silence broke: 'Young man, arise!'"

A deep responsive groan, An undulation of the spreading pall, Convulsive motion, and thick spreading sob, Declare the spirit heard its Maker's voice, Heard and obeyed."

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And Jesus delivered him to his mother." There was but one person at Sarepta to whom Elijah was sent, and she was a widow. There was but one female to whom the fact was revealed when the Consolation of Israel was born, and she was a widow. There was but one contributor in the temple whose liberality the Saviour commended, and she was a widow. "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in holy habitation;" and this is a message which he has sent by prophets, patriarchs, and apostles.—"Seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow."—Bap. Mag.

THE YOUNG MOTHER.

BY MRS. S. W. BROOKS.

Youthful mother, bending low
O'er the cradle of thy boy,
Is there not one drop of woe
Mingled in thy cup of joy?

Is there not one anxious thought
Struggling in thy bosom now?
And has busy fancy wrought
No dark cloud to shade thy brow?

Need we ask? 'tis thine to know
All a mother's boding fears;
And this tender plant must grow
Watered by a mother's tears.

Though the folded flower seem pure,
Yet the tempter dwells within,
And too soon his wiles may lure
The frail blossom into sin.

Dost thou fear lest this sweet one
From the Saviour's fold should stray,
And thy path to heaven be lone
If thy child forsake the way?

When that Saviour was a guest
In this sinful world of ours,
Often to his guileless breast
Did He fold such infant flowers.

Mother, trust the undefiled;
He will save that gem from blight;
Trust him, he will lead thy child
Safely to the world of light.

Mother's Magazine.

THE LAST HOURS OF EMINENT PERSONS.

But many as we should naturally expect, throw off concealment in that hour, and appear in their simple unvarnished characters. This may be attributed to different causes. Either they have become sick of the world, and its hypocrisy, and then, escaping from restraints, resolve at last to act themselves; or losing respect for its fawning sycophants, they neither fear their scorn, nor care for their opinion; or alarmed in the prospect of entering eternity, they give vent, in a selfish spirit to their true emotions; or in the temper of the true Christian, humble, honest, simple, sincere, they speak forth the calm repose of their souls on the Rock of Ages, or their triumphant raptures in the prospect of everlasting joy. Under one of these classes falls the virgin queen of England, who in her dying moments, being informed that she had come to the termination of her proud career, is said to have exclaimed, in her anxious desire for continued life, "Millions of money for an inch of time." Her haughty spirit, which had never been known to cower, was forced to bow before the sceptre of death. When God began to deal with her, she felt that she had not "an arm like Him." Here also belongs the English chancellor, Thurlow, who died with an oath upon his tongue. He was callous to duty and to shame, and in the dialect of the lower regions, as if the echo were heard before, not after the sound. Such a man might have received priestly absolution, and partaken of the sacrament, as a preparation for his last journey; but what hope could there be in his death!

There was no hypocrisy at the death bed of Charles IX. It was in his reign that the massacre of St. Bartholomew swept off from the earth so much precious blood of the saints. This king went profusely in the presence of his Huguenot nurse, and other attendants, and condemned himself for the part which he had taken in the tragic event. "Ah my dear nurse," he said, "my beloved woman, what blood! What murders!—Ah, I have followed wicked advice. O my God, pardon me and be merciful. I know not where

I am, they have made me so perplexed and agitated. How will all this end? What shall I do? I am lost forever! I know it." In contemplation of his sin his handkerchief was drenched with tears, and his last moments were indistinguishably miserable. "This was not, as d'Israeli suggests, 'the effect of religion operating on a feeble mind;' but of an awakened conscience, calling the royal sinner to account, and compelling him to speak out honestly and sincerely.

Deeply affecting is the narrative of the last days of the celebrated John Randolph, of Roanoke. In his case conscience seemed to have triumphed over conventional forms and usages, and without fear of man he spoke as he felt. The account is from the deposition of Dr. Parish, the physician who attended him in his last moments.

"The morning of the day that John Randolph died, I received an early and earnest message to visit him. Several persons were in the room, but soon left it, except his son, John, who appeared affected at the situation of his dying master. I remarked to John, soon after I arrived, that I had seen his master very low several times before, and he had revived, and perhaps he would again. The patient directly said, 'John knows better than that.' . . . He then said, 'John told me this morning, master, you are dying.' I made no attempt to conceal my views. On the contrary, I assured him I would speak to him with entire candor on the occasion, and told him it had been rather a subject of surprise that he had continued to live so long.

"He now made his preparations to die. Between him and his faithful servant, there appeared to be a complete understanding. He directed John to bring his father's breast-button, which was immediately produced. He then directed him to place it in the bosom of his shirt. It was an old fashioned, large size, gold stud. John placed it in the button-hole of the shirt-bosom; but to fix it completely required a hole in the opposite side. When this was announced to his master, he quickly said, 'Get a knife and cut one.' I handed my penknife to John, who cut the hole, and fixed the valuable relic to the satisfaction of the expiring patient. A napkin was also called for, and was placed over the breast of the patient. For a short time he lay perfectly quiet; his eyes were closed, and I concluded he was disposed to sleep.

He suddenly aroused from this state, with the words, 'Remorse! Remorse!' It was twice repeated; the last time at the top of his voice, evidently with great agitation. He cried out, 'Let me see the word.' No reply followed,—having learned enough of the character of my patient to ascertain, that when I did not know exactly what to say, it was best to say nothing. He then exclaimed, 'Get a dictionary; let me see the word!' I cast my eyes around, and told him I believed there was not one in the room. 'Write it down then; let me see the word.' I picked up one of his cards from the table. 'Randolph of Roanoke!' and inquired whether I should write on that?—'Yes, nothing more proper;' then with my pencil, I wrote REMORSE. He took the card in his hand in a hurried manner, and fastened his eyes on it with intensity: 'Write it on the back,' he exclaimed. I did so, and handed it to him again. He was excessively agitated at this period; he repeated, 'Remorse! You have no idea what it is; you can form no idea whatever; it has contributed to bring me to my present situation; but I have looked on the Lord Jesus Christ, and hope I have obtained pardon.' He then said, 'Now let John take your pencil and draw a line under the word! which was accordingly done. I inquired what was to be done with the card? He replied, 'Put it in your pocket; take care of it; when I am dead look at it.' The original is now in my possession.

"This was an impressive scene. All the plans of ambition, the honors and wealth of this world, had vanished as bubbles in the water. He knew and he felt, that his very moments were few and even they were numbered."—Christian Review.

MOUNT LEBANON.

In a sketch of the Rev. Mr. Pomeroy's recent travels in the East, published in a Bangor paper, he gives the following notice of Mount Lebanon. On his way from Athens to Palestine, he spent a day in Cyprus.

The next morning (he says) he saw the sun rising over Mount Lebanon, that "goodly mountain." It is a range eighty miles in length, by from twenty to thirty in breadth. Some of its peaks are 10,000 feet high, and covered with snow. He spent some time at Beirut. In this country there is one thing that the traveller sees—that he is in a land of the Bible. He cannot travel at all in the country, without seeing something that reminds him of the Bible. He went into Mount Lebanon, where he spent some days, and he saw what the Bible meant, when it said, "that goodly mountain." It is cultivated 5,000 feet from the base. And he looked to see what the prophet Habakkuk meant when he said, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of salvation." These were all the articles of sustenance produced in the mountain; and were they all swept away, yet would the prophet rejoice in the Lord! The prospects in the mountain, for the spread of the gospel, were never so encouraging as now. "The people were scattered all over the mountain, and among them was a freedom of thought not to be found among those in the plains below. The missionary was welcomed there. In the evening

the people gathered themselves together for family worship. He was told that twenty missionaries might find employment there.

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST CONVENTION.

The meeting of this body brought together a large number from different parts of the State, acting as Delegates from various and benevolent associations. It was also attended by many visitors, not members, and its sessions were graced by the presence of numerous ladies, who evinced a lively interest in the proceedings.

Aside from the ordinary business of such a body, there was nothing of special importance before the Convention. A running account of the proceedings from day to day, will be found in our columns. The reports on Foreign and Domestic Missions, and on Education, hereafter to be published, will be found interesting. The amount of funds sent up to the treasury, will appear small; but this amount indicates only a small proportion of the funds raised during the session.

Within this time, some five thousand dollars have been subscribed for Home Missions, and two or three thousand for Foreign Missions. A deep interest was manifested by the members of the Convention, as well as by visitors, in the Howard College and the Judson Institute; and great satisfaction was expressed at the present prosperity and prospects of these institutions. A resolution was unanimously adopted to raise one hundred thousand dollars in the next five years, to endow professorships in the Howard.—An agent has been already appointed to carry into effect the purpose of the resolution.

The Convention devoted a couple of hours just before the adjournment, to a free interchange of opinion, respecting the best methods of instructing the colored people. The claims of this portion of our congregations were distinctly and feelingly admitted by the numerous pastors who spoke; and it was evident that the interest in this matter was universal, deep, and increasing.

The utmost harmony and brotherly affection prevailed during all the session of the Convention. On Tuesday night the body adjourned, to meet in Greensborough, on the Saturday before the third Sabbath in November, 1847.—*Ala. Baptist.*

HUGH LATIMER.

Hugh Latimer was born in the year 1470; when fourteen years old he was sent to Cambridge; at the usual time he took his degrees in arts, and entering into priest's orders, was remarkably zealous in defence of Popery. By the influence and exertions of Mr. Thomas Bilney, who favored the Reformation, Mr. Latimer was led to examine the corrupt features of the Romish church, and at the age of fifty-three, became a decided Protestant, and was active in supporting and propagating the reformed doctrine, as he was before in efforts to destroy it. He, more than any other man, promoted the reformation by his preaching. "The strait forward honesty of his remarks, the liveliness of his illustrations, his homely wit, his racy manner, his unalloyed freedom, the playfulness of his temper, the simplicity of his heart, the sincerity of his understanding, gave life and vigor to his sermons when they were delivered, and render them now the most amusing productions of that age, and to us perhaps the most valuable.—As a faithful court preacher he excelled. Having preached a sermon before Henry VIII, in which he touched on some topics displeasing to his Majesty, he was commanded to preach again the following Sunday, and to introduce an apology for the offence he had given. After naming his text, the bishop thus commenced his sermon:—'Hugh Latimer, dost thou know to whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore, take heed that thou speakest not that which may displease. But then, consider well, Hugh Latimer, dost thou not know from whence thou comest, and upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great God, who is all present, and beholds all thy ways; who is omnipotent, and able to cut both body and soul to hell together; therefore, take heed, and deliver thy message faithfully.'

He then proceeded with the same sermon had preached the preceding Sunday, and confirmed it with redoubled energy. The sermon being ended, the court was full of expectation to know the fate of this honest plain dealing bishop. After the dinner the king called Latimer, and with a stern countenance asked him how he durst be so bold as to preach in this manner. Falling on his knees, Latimer replied, that his duty to his God, and to his prince had enforced him thereunto; that he had merely discharged his office and conscience in what he had spoken, though his was in his majesty's hands. The king raised a worthy prelate from his knees, embraced him, and exclaimed, 'Blessed be God that I have so honest a servant.'

He died at the stake, with Bishop Ridley, Oct. 15, 1555.—*British Pulpit.*

THE REV. MR. NEWMAN.—There is good reason to believe that the Rev. Mr. Newman is not in his new position as a member of the Church of Rome, and that it is by no means improbable that he may follow the example of the Rev. Mr. S. Thorpe, and retrace his steps. Evidently he sits to enter that Church as a priest. It has been lately announced that, to prepare him to become one, he was about to make a long residence in Rome—a preparation, by the by, not needed other and later converts. We are now informed that "one of Mr. Newman's books had been by order of the Pope of Rome."—*Correspondent the Lincolnshire Chronicle.*