

BIBLICAL RECORDER, RALEIGH, N. C.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1862

Religion Gloomy.—A Mistake.

Young persons often plead as an excuse for not embracing religion, that it is so cold and gloomy. They seem to think that the self-denial and the duties enjoined by christianity would be to them a tiresome and painful routine; but there can be no greater delusion than this. It is a very common mistake, however, and leads many to delay, until it is forever too late, to make their peace with God.

It does not require of its votaries a sudden and entire change in their mode of thinking and acting without first fitting them for it; otherwise it would be cold and hard and repulsive. The great difficulty, in the way of the reformation of the drunkard, is that he has to struggle against a vitiated appetite, a nervous system which craves some stimulant, and against an evil habit, which, grown strong by long indulgence, continually threatens to enslave him again.

Such a change is wrought in the hearts of all those who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ. They are new creatures with new affections, new hopes and aspirations and new motives.

They bring to the discharge of these duties, souls renewed and so changed by grace as to find in them their chief, their only enjoyment. He who has felt the evil and the guilt of sin, makes no painful sacrifice in abstaining from it. He who has learned his dependence on God, or experienced the love and joy and peace which are bestowed so freely and richly on those who walk in the footsteps of their Redeemer, can only be happy while he lives a life of prayer and active service for God.

This will further appear from the united testimony of those who have remembered their creator in the days of their youth. In the immense host of redeemed spirits now enlisted under the glorious Captain of our Salvation, are many who were once the willing slaves of Satan, and the blind devotees of the world. Through abounding grace, they renounced these things in the hey-day of life, and entered on the new and higher career which once seemed to them so repulsive and so barren of pleasure.

To this may be added the testimony of those who in their old age have been led to Christ.

Some there are, miracles of grace, who, even while standing on the confines of the eternal world, have been rescued from the shadow of sin. The golden years of youth

and the vigor of manhood have been spent in roaming over the wide and flowery fields which Satan shows to his followers; they have tasted the best fruits which he could offer them and now in old age, they have returned from their wanderings to walk in the footsteps of the Son of God. And what report do they give of those years spent in sin? They look back to them with shame and tears and bitter regret; consider them wasted; wish, oh, so earnestly, that they could be recalled; and feel that never until now have they known anything of real solid happiness.

Such is the testimony of those who of all others are best entitled to be heard on this subject. From their experience and from the nature of religion itself, we have seen that it is not the cold, unpleasant thing which to the youthful imagination, it appears to be. It alone renders us truly happy in health and prosperity, gives us comfort in the hour of affliction and sustains us in the hour of death.

Truly has the poet sung,
"More needful this than glittering wealth,
Or sought the world bestows;
Nor reputation food nor health
Can give us such repose."

"Religion should our thoughts engage,
Amid our youthful bloom;
Twill fit us for declining age
And for the awful tomb."

The Guiding Principle.

Most men acknowledge that love to God is of vast importance if viewed with reference to the future world, but comparatively few know its worth, in guarding and directing our destiny for this world. It is the only shield and strength which is ever present with the traveler over life's stormy sea, to guide him amid the hidden rocks and shoals, and keep him unharmed from the warring elements around him.

The soul without love to Christ is like a ship which has lost its rudder. Its framework is complete; its masts rise proudly in the air; its sails swell in the breeze; it glides beautifully over the untroubled surface of the deep; and to the eye of the inexperienced beholder there is no defect about it.

But this illusion is soon dissipated. For as the wind increases in violence, and the sea, like a giant writhing in agony, tosses the ship over its heaving bosom, it becomes apparent that the guiding power is wanting. The ill-fated vessel is driven far away from its desired haven, or stranded on rocks and shoals, and its crew are in jeopardy.

So with the human heart which is void of love to God. When the world opens fair, and no whirlwind of passion sweeps over the soul, and there are few temptations to deviate from the beaten path, and all things conspire to render the course through life easy and pleasant, there seem to be no deficiency and no dangers. But when friends forsake and turn to foes; when ambition holds out her laurel wreath and beckons onward, or wealth with its gaudy trappings is seen in the distance, or pleasure shows its fragrant, flowery path; the need of this guiding principle, love to God is seen and felt. If it is absent, the soul, like the ship, is driven helplessly along before the wild torrent of passion; reason and conscience and self-respect plead in vain; their voice is not heard in the tumult; and the victim is soon overwhelmed and lost, or lives on for years, just what circumstances and temptations have made him.

Love to God is the only source of safety for men even in this world. Nothing else can supply its place. Early training, social influences, pre-eminent natural gifts are alike powerless against the fierce temptations which assail us in our daily life. Such must be the confession of every impartial observer of men. Every day, the sad, surprising and hopeless fall of persons still young, who a short time before, had awakened such bright hopes and confident expectations in the circle of their friends, or of some one long admired and trusted for his integrity of character teach us that love to God is the only safe, sure, guiding principle through the present scene of sin and tumult and toil and sorrow.

The sun is the centre of planetary system and the smaller bodies are held in their orbits, and their movements are regulated by the power of its attraction. If one of them should, by some mysterious power, be thrown from its orbit and placed beyond the attraction of the sun it would wander away through the realms of space, to be dashed and broken against some other planet, or be caught by the attraction of some larger and more powerful body and revolve around it forever. God is to the human soul, what the sun is to the starry orbs which revolve around it. While it feels and acknowledges the strong attractive power of His love, it moves on safely, happily and harmoniously. Withdrawn from sin from its proper sphere, it wanders away and is speedily broken and ruined, or is directed in its movements by wealth, fame or the pleasures of life, as any one of them may for the time be in the ascendant.

The Minister—His Encouragements.

While there are many things whose inevitable tendency is to sadden the heart and depress the spirits of the faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, there are many others, which if kept constantly in view will animate and encourage him in his work. The first of these is the fact that God has commissioned him to it and that he is ever in the view of the great Task-master. With what pride and pleasure do men receive a commission from those they love and honor? What though the undertaking be difficult and dangerous? They heed not these things. The confidence which is shown them and the honor conferred on them is a sufficient stimulus. The disciples of Plato, when questioned or ridiculed in regard to any of their doctrines or practices answered proudly and defiantly, "The master has said it." This was sufficient for them. The soldier, who is directed to make a reconnaissance, or bear a message, through the enemy's lines, to a distant part of the country, does not stop to think of the dangers and hardships of his mission. It is enough, that his commander expects this of him. The officer, who, on the day of battle, is ordered to storm some strongly fortified position, thinks not of the hazards of the undertaking; the general who has given him this mark of confidence, is watching him and he will discharge the duty or die in the attempt. And shall not the disciples of Him, who "spoke as never man spake," glory in fulfilling his commands? Shall they manifest less confidence in such a teacher and less affection for him, than others have shown for a frail imperfect man like themselves? Shall the soldier brave danger and death to carry out the commands of his General, and shall we manifest less alacrity in obeying the orders of the great Captain of our salvation? He knows our capacity, and understands fully the nature of the service which he enjoins, and when he says, "go, labor in my vineyard," shall any falter, or complain that it is a heavy task? He watches, to see that all his servants discharge their duty and shall they be laggard or faint hearted while he looks on them?

But it should further encourage the minister to reflect that he is a fellow laborer with Christ in this enterprise. He is our great exemplar. Laid over all, blessed evermore, he assumed our flesh; rich, he became poor for our sake; enjoying the bliss of his bright abode, at the right hand of God, he became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; he was despised and rejected of men; infinitely pure and holy, he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed. He came into the world to save sinners; suffered and died; rose again and ascended to the right hand of his Father; and there he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Though he is now exalted far above all principalities and powers, he is still engaged in the same work which first drew him from the skies. How strange that he should allow weak, short-sighted, sinful men to be laborers together with him?—What honor is thus conferred on the members of our fallen race? Angels would gladly have assumed the task, but it is reserved for man. Viewing the ministry of reconciliation in this light, human dignities and titles, compared with it, shrink into insignificance. With such an illustrious exemplar and leader, who can be discouraged? What 'ho' the difficulties be great, and our enemies gather around us, in strong, apparently overwhelming force? Christ is with us and he can vanquish all our foes. What tho' we must encounter ridicule and scorn and persecutions and endure many and great hardships? Christ has assigned us our work and he is engaged in it with us. What more do we want? Our sufferings can never, never equal his. At most they are but as a pebble, compared with a mountain. He says, "follow thou me," and shall we refuse, or having started, become discouraged and turn aside, because the way does not seem easy and pleasant?

But the minister may derive encouragement from considering the nature of his work. What other can bear comparison with it? Its object is to bring the rebellious world back to its allegiance to God; to banish sin and strife from the earth and make the peaceful sway of the Gospel universal; to set the captives of Satan at liberty; to fit the wretch, stained with the guilt of unnumbered transgressions, to stand approved in the presence of God; to carry hope to the desponding and comfort to the sorrowing; to bring to a condemned and ruined race, the offer of a free and full salvation through Jesus Christ. Men of science have periled and even lost their lives in the pursuit of knowledge; the miser denies himself every comfort that he may accumulate money; the man of ambition sacrifices every thing else to this cherished passion; and yet how poor, how mean are these, are all earthly pursuits

compared with the ministry of reconciliation? Well has it been said, "What honors does this word offer?" What stars, what jeweled honors flash on your swelling breast, to be compared with the crown, they that have turned from darkness to light—from the cursed power of Satan to the living God? Each soul a gem in the crown, they that have turned many to righteousness shall shine with the brightness of the firmament, as the stars forever and ever.

The certainty of success is another encouragement to the minister. He can not be in vain. God has declared it. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth, and bud that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be which goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Our Saviour said to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you alway." There can be no such thing as failure in the life of the faithful, earnest minister. What though he may not see the fruit of his labors? What though he may be poor, and meet with opposition and bitter persecution? He will not have lived in vain, as the last great day will show. If he shall not be under great privations and discouragements in the pursuit of an earthly object, of whose attainment they are by no means certain, surely the minister of Jesus Christ may endure them with the certainty of success in such a glorious enterprise.

The last source of encouragement which we shall mention is the final reward.—The Apostle Paul has shown us with what triumphant joy, the faithful minister can review the past year, contemplate the future, "I am now ready to be offered," says he, "and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." In the closing hours of life it is surely worth more than countless wealth, to be able to make such an examination. But if the anticipation be thus inspiring, what must the reality be? The reward is not given in this world; but when it is so certain and glorious we can then patiently and cheerfully await its coming.

"The Only Son of a Widowed Mother," A Life Picture.
As we were glancing over the obituary columns of one of our exchanges a few days since, our eye rested on the short and simple sentence, "He was the only son of a widowed mother." It was the only comment on the announcement of the fact that a youthful volunteer from a southern state had died, after a short time, in one of the military hospitals in Virginia; but brief as it is, it presents to the mind a series of life-pictures, so sad, that we can look upon them without being moved.

A widowed mother. In the bloom of early womanhood, she had given her ardent and unalloyed affection to the man of her choice, and as she stood at the altar and those solemn words were pronounced which bound them together for life, her cup of happiness was full to overflowing. For the present, she had all that she could wish, and for the future she had no fears. As she looked down its winding path, she hoped brightly beaming with beauty and splendor, a dream of sorrow or disappointment, sullied the joys of the present or tarnished the hopes of the future.

Years passed on, years of joy and peace; and while the sky all seemed bright and there was no trace of approaching danger, there came a stunning, crushing blow. The strong man sickened, and in spite of her ceaseless attention and tearful, agonizing prayers, passed away from earth. For the time, the light of life seemed nearly extinct in the widow's heart, and she almost gave up in despair as the loneliness of her situation for the first time flashed across her mind. But then she remembered that she still had one treasure left. Her only boy, so gentle and kind, like his father in voice, feature and action, all remained to her, and to him she transferred all the warm, gushing affections of her heart. The stalwart oak around which she had twined its tendrils so proudly and lovingly, and in whose arms it had so fondly nestled, through the years gone by, was torn rudely away, and its fragile companions, for the time, left prostrate in the dust. Gradually the tendrils take hold on the root from the parent tree, one by one, they twine around it until this new connection grows closer and stronger than the old one.

All the mysterious fervor of a mother's love, rendered doubly strong by the loneliness of her situation, is lavished on her boy. How unweariedly he ministers to his wants; how anxiously he glides noiselessly into his chamber during the lone watches of the night, to be certain that all is well with him; pines for his return when he is absent, and at all times keeps him in her thoughts? It is for him that she toils and practises self-denial; and she fondly hopes that when he is grown up, he will repay all her sacrifices and her love; will ever speak kindly to her; and be her comfort and stay as the shadows of old age are creeping on. Thus she lives for him and in him. He has reached the age when she fancies that all her hopes are to be realized, but her cup of happiness is again dashed to the earth.

War is begun. The sons of the South—he among them—volunteer to defend their country against the fiendish foe. There is a fearful struggle in the mother's heart, between patriotism and love for her son. How can she give him up, her only boy? There are others enough; why may not he be spared to take care of her? Patriotism at length prevails. She will make this sacrifice, the greatest that she could have made, for her country. The hour arrives; with speechless, fearless agony, she presses him to her bosom for the last time and sends him forth with her prayers and blessing to meet the enemy.

He is gone; but she toils on, looking hopefully to the time of his return. She reads his letters with mingled emotions of fear, gratitude, and joy; counts the months which must elapse before his return; and anticipates a blissful reunion at no distant day. Every thing makes her desire this. As she sits down to the well filled table, she thinks of his coarse and scanty fare; safe from the howling wind, the rains and snows of winter, she is reminded that he is exposed to them all. She misses him when kind friends are gathered around her; he would have been the life of the group; she misses his cheerful step in the morning, and his companionship by the lone fireside at night; but hope whispers that he will soon return; peace will be made and they will be separated no more until she goes before him into the spirit-world. Again the cup of happiness falls from her hands.

A dispatch, painfully brief, informs her that her son is dead. It can not, must not be, and yet there it is, too plain to be mistaken. She bows her head in mute anguish. The buoyancy of life and the light of hope have gone forever. What is wealth, what is the world to her now. He for whom she prized these things is cold in death. Her grief bursts out afresh. She even murmurs against God. Why should others be spared and he taken? Then she thinks of him in the dreary hospital, calling her name and wishing in vain that she were near, and she feels that he might not have died had she been there, or if he had, she could better have borne it; goes over again and again the list of his noble qualities and bright prospects and weeps afresh each time; lies down at night to dream that he is with her again, and wakes to weep as she finds that it was all a dream. She misses him more and more each day and is constantly made more sensible of the desolateness of her situation. Life is aimless and dreary, and she plods wearily through the years, longing for the time to come when she will go to meet her lost ones in heaven.

How many such cases there are in the Southern Confederacy? May God comfort them in their affliction. The mind reflecting on these things asks instinctively if there is no vengeance for him who is the author of so much misery. He will meet a just award, not at any human tribunal, for this is impossible, but at the bar of the Lord of all the earth.

Sandy Creek Association—A year's Labors.
Elder R. R. Moore sends us the following:
One year has just closed since my arrival here as a citizen. I accepted a call to one church only, leaving three Saturdays and Sabbaths in each month, for Missionary labors. Have visited and preached to thirteen different churches, some of them, I have visited as many as three times. Besides churches, have preached at two missionary stations to larger congregations—baptized nine.

Went to two Associations and to the Convention; visited three camps of volunteers, praying with some and talking with others, upon the subject of religion. Have received in all for my labors as pastor and visitor \$25.90, one book and one pair of shoes.

Our educated and talented ministers are leaving our Associational bounds, for the want of encouragement and support in the ministry. We do hope that instead of slaking the dust from their feet, as a testimony against us they will pray for us.

If our churches are in error on this subject, how shall they be brought to see their error? By leaving them to die in ignorance? Not so. Preach to a christian servant so sharply he will love the more, and hypocrites will get out of your way. We may preach the whole Gospel to a people except on one little point and it would not be a whole Gospel.

A Colporter for the Sea Coast.
Elder A. E. Dickenson, writes from Wilmington, N. C.:
There are in and around this city, several thousand soldiers. I have arranged with Ellis and Mitchell to keep on hand a large assortment of our Testaments and tracts. Bro. Ellis has done a good work in supplying the Camps, but he needs help. I do not know a better place for an earnest, pious and laborious Colporter. Will not some brother give himself to this field? This Association (Union) will doubtless pay his salary, and I will supply him with books and tracts.

Any one disposed to work among the soldiers here, will do well to address Capt. C. D. Ellis, Wilmington, N. C.
We sincerely hope that the services of an efficient Colporter will be secured, and we do not doubt that our brethren of the Union Association will pay his salary. They are heartily enlisted in this noble enterprise.

Various Things.
CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE SOLDIERS.—Elder R. B. Overby, who is agent for Army Colportage in the Chowan Association, writes that he has collected \$280 for this object. He has been operating but a short time and this speaks well, both for his activity and the liberality of the brethren of the Chowan Association.
TO CHURCHES WANTING A PASTOR.—A brother sends us the following: "Do you need a faithful, God-fearing pastor? Address, Box 195, Murfreesboro, N. C."
THE RECORDER.—Elder E. Dodson makes the following suggestion: "A simultaneous effort should be made in January and February, by every minister, deacon and member to procure new subscribers for the Recorder."

TRACT DEPOSITORY IN WILMINGTON.—We clip the following pleasant announcement from the daily Journal:
We are glad to learn that Rev. A. E. Dickinson, General Superintendent of Army Colportage, intends to establish a depository in our city, which will be well supplied with Testaments, Tracts, and other religious publications. By this arrangement our soldiers can the more easily be supplied with religious reading.
THE RECORDER FOR THE SOLDIERS.—We have received from brother Daniel Hackney, eight dollars to pay for the Recorder, for members of two volunteer companies that have gone from Chatham county, for the defence of their country. The money was contributed by Louis Creek church.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—We are indebted to Elder L. H. Shuck, Dr. S. J. Wheeler and others for handsome lists of subscribers. Every day brings us from different quarters, cheering evidences that the Recorder is dear to the Baptists of North Carolina, and that they are determined to sustain it through the war. With such friends we shall be able to go on with our work, notwithstanding the pressure of the times. We can not mention the names of all those who have cheered and encouraged us by kind words and deeds, but they are gratefully remembered.
ELDER T. J. KNAPP.—This gentleman was in Raleigh and preached two entertaining and instructive discourses on Sunday the 12th instant. He was a private in the first North Carolina Regiment, of Bethel fame, until it was disbanded in November. He is now Captain of a company which has been raised since that time.
THE LOUISIANA BAPTIST.—The editorial corps of this Journal has been increased by the addition of Elder W. C. Crane and Dr. F. Courtney. We rejoice to see these indications of thriftiness and we hope that a long career of usefulness and prosperity awaits our brethren of the Baptist.

LEBANON UNIVERSITY.—This institution the Baptist College of Louisiana, says the Baptist, has opened with an increased number of students and there are prospects of a still larger increase. Our brethren of Louisiana are certainly men of the right character. They are sustaining both their University and their denominational organ, while in other States where the Baptists are much more numerous, their colleges have suffered seriously and their newspapers are suspended.

BANNER AND BAPTIST.—We are pleased to see that the publication of this journal has been resumed. We hope our brethren in the Confederate States will soon learn that they can afford to patronize a religious newspaper in spite of the war and the blockade.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CITIZENS OF RALEIGH TO THE CHARLESTON SUFFERERS.—The Contributions from this city to the Charleston sufferers amounts to \$2,241.50. This is acknowledged in a note from the Mayor of Charleston, to P. F. Pascoe, chairman of the committee to solicit and forward contributions.