

Biblical Recorder

J. D. HUFMAN, Editor and Proprietor.

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BIBLICAL RECORDER,

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For the Recorder.

Letters to a Young Minister.

No. IV.

BY A NORTH CAROLINA PASTOR.

Classical education is by no means an indispensable qualification for the work of the Christian Ministry. Indeed I may say that hundreds of our brethren, destitute of collegiate training, and unacquainted with the learning of the schools, have been far more successful in the work, than many who have enjoyed superior advantages at the University and the College. Zeal and diligence do not always accompany intellectual attainments. Men of moderate acquirements have been eminently useful in this great work and when they rested from their labors, have left behind a name dear to many hearts and a character fragrant with piety and devotion. And here, my dear brother, allow me affectionately to counsel you not to underrate or regard with a careless indifference those dear brethren in the ministry who have spent many years of successful toil in their Master's vineyard, merely because they are unlearned, or have not enjoyed the advantages with which you have been blessed. They labor under disadvantages and still meet with much success, and should share largely in your consideration and esteem. While they have taken but few draughts at the fountain of human learning, they have had access to the richer fountain of spiritual wisdom, and under the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit, have still taught the people knowledge. There are many aged brethren in the ministry who have never enjoyed the advantages of a thorough education, and yet at whose feet I could sit with profit and delight. Let the young ministers of the present generation as they emerge from the walls of the Seminary, with evidences of their accurate scholarship and general intelligence, regard with the highest respect and the deepest affection these Fathers in Israel. As a means however acknowledged and blessed by our Master, a thorough education greatly increases the power of the ministry. The mind of the minister becomes strengthened by discipline his capacity is enlarged and under Divine guidance, he is better qualified to comprehend and expound the mysteries of revelation. As physical exertion develops the strength of the body, so intellectual discipline develops the strength of the mind.— The general information also which he has acquired in such a course of study will afford much valuable material for his pulpit preparation, in the way of comparison and illustration. As the masses are daily progressing in intelligence; he, who expects to be their teacher must make similar and even greater advances, or they will not be edified by his ministry. The various sources of knowledge should be employed as the means of increasing the usefulness and efficacy of his labors. The various branches of human learning should be required to contribute of their strength and substance to this, the most exalted of all sciences, the doctrine of the Cross.

I may safely say that at this time an uneducated minister, among a cultivated and intelligent people, will be barren of success. A minister should by all means be educated. I do not mean that he must pass through a regular course of classical and mathematical study, but that he must be educated chiefly in the Scriptures. A man, effectually called to this work, with a well disciplined mind and possessing a reasonable share of talent, can soon, under the blessing of God, become so well educated in the Scriptures, that his ministry will be profitable among any people. This can only be acquired by labor and diligent study. Some have discarded the idea of study and application as a minister's duty, and through failure to employ these means, have relapsed into a state of mental indolence, and consequently rendered their ministry barren and unfruitful. Paul saw the necessity of mental activity and constant diligence when he exhorted Timothy in these words: 2d Tim. ii: 15. And again, "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." 1 Tim. iv: 13. Avail yourself of all the true knowledge you can acquire, that can in any way afford materials for the education, comfort and instruction of your people. If our brethren generally understood the Greek and Hebrew

in which the Scriptures were originally written, very many passages would appear to them far more beautiful and striking than they now do in the present translation. But I will not say that this is a "sine qua non," a thing indispensable. Happy is the man who has zeal and diligence and a familiar acquaintance with the oracles of God, even if he is destitute of human learning, but *thrice happy* he who is able to combine a well-stored mind with a heart full of the Spirit, and a good degree of human learning with a large measure of genuine piety.

For the Recorder.

A Good Conscience—How Acquired.

Article IV.

BY T. JUDSON KNAPP.

But something more than a knowledge of duty is necessary in order to acquire a good conscience. Many have known their duty, and instead of enjoying the approbation of conscience, have been "like the troubled sea when it can not rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Many who know their duty, are not inclined to perform it. Such can not expect an approving conscience; nor do they obtain it. Peace of mind departs and leaves them a continual prey to the fury of a violated conscience. A person of an enlightened understanding and a tender conscience, who lives in the neglect of duty, is far from being happy. He may be surrounded by all the objects of interest and endearment that can fall to the lot of man this side of the grave—his landmarks may enclose many plantations, his coffers may be filled with gold, worldly honors may encircle his brow, slander may cease to move her serpent-tongue as his name is mentioned, a loving companion and smiling offspring may fill his cup of domestic pleasure to the brim, and to the spectator all his paths may seem illumined with the radiant sunshine of happiness—while his soul is the theatre of the most tormenting anxieties and most awful forebodings. A darkness more dreadful than the shadow of death broods over his soul, and shrouds all his anticipations in the most appalling gloom. The still, small voice of God within, which points him to a just day of reckoning in a future world, is more terrible to endure than the cannon's roar amidst the groans and shrieks of the dying. An officer of distinction, who had faithfully served his country, and upon whom had gathered thick those honors which are so highly prized and sought after by men, was frequently congratulated as being the most happy man in society, on account of his prevailing cheerfulness and hilarity. But notwithstanding his seeming cheerfulness and supposed happiness, he was one of the most unhappy and wretched men in existence. Whilst he wore a smiling countenance and a cheerful exterior, his heart was the seat of the most fearful contention and the most bitter recriminations. Upon a certain occasion, when complimented by a convivial party as being the most happy man in existence, he replied that they only saw the exterior, and casting his eyes upon a dog that had entered the room, he exclaimed, "I wish that I were that dog, for I am a most unhappy and miserable man!" Nor did he obtain relief from that wretched state until he forsook his sins and turned unto the Lord with a faithful and obedient heart.— There are many who know their duty, but are prevented from discharging it, from a want of moral courage. They dare not face the frowns nor the scoffs of those who affect to despise a morality so strict and rigid as the gospel enjoins. This is peculiarly observable among young persons. Bent upon pleasure, they no sooner enter upon the enchanted ground than the wholesome requirements of the Bible appear dull and insipid, and they think it strange their more conscientious associates run not with them to the same excess of indulgence in the pleasures of sense and dissipation. And in order to seduce them from the path of duty, they frequently resort to ridicule, and also to often succeed in drawing them into the mazes of vice in defiance of all the remonstrances of an injured conscience. Whilst such knew and approved the right way, they had not courage to follow that way which duty and conscience pointed out. Such can never acquire a good conscience. It follows, therefore, that the next and last step towards acquiring a good conscience, is to do the will of God.

There is a divine blessing pronounced upon those who know and perform their duty, and a curse pronounced upon those who

know their duty and do it not. When a person habitually pursues a certain course, it not infrequently happens that however loudly conscience may have upbraided him at first by disregarding its clamors, he succeeds finally, either in lulling it to sleep or bringing it over to sanction his foul deeds. The first step into known sin is frequently most appalling. The most awful sensations seize upon the soul, and the young offender starts back with horror. Soon, however, he repeats the offence, and conscience having been partially stifled by his first great plunge into the loathsome sink of pollution, raises a more feeble note of remonstrance, and every repetition weakens its cry, and at last it ceases to disturb the hardened offender. This accounts for the backslidings of so many professors of religion, and for the course of iniquity pursued by many in the midst of so much light and knowledge. And this also accounts for the prevalence of many errors in Christian lands. They first stifle and deaden their consciences by sin, then without remorse try to defend the course they are pursuing until they are brought unconsciously to believe that they are right. And now a false conscience is created, or rather conscience blinded by corruption, becomes the handmaid of a false judgment.— And to minds thus disordered there is nothing pure, because their minds and consciences are defiled and perverted. Hence, by neglecting to do the will of God, the whole moral machinery of man becomes deranged, and conscience can never perform its legitimate office until the heart, by faith, receives Christ and humbly obeys his commands.— "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and coupled with the exhortation to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, is the promise that "all other things shall be added." And as "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus," so will that man possess a good conscience who is faithfully performing his duty to himself, his fellowmen and his God.

For the Recorder.

DEAR BRO. HUFMAN:—I send you a few notes taken while on a short trip, (principally through the Tar River Association) in behalf of the Colporteur Board. I spent a few days very pleasantly with Bro. Cobb in Goldsboro', and was gratified to learn of the improved morals of our soldiers located there, among whom Bro. Cobb has been laboring. And here I may notice an erroneous impression which I found existing in some places concerning the disposition of the soldiers to receive religious instruction. So far from receiving, and treating them with indifference, the Colporteur and Preacher is warmly welcomed by all. There are many in the army who are not "ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," and they will cluster around the Colporteur, and afford him every facility for the prosecution of his work.— This erroneous opinion I found chiefly among those who do not take the Recorder.

From Goldsboro', I proceeded to Wilson, and stopped a day or two at the Military Hospital and preached to the convalescent soldiers. A brief description of this Hospital one of the best in the Confederacy, may not be uninteresting to those who have friends in the army. It is under the charge of Dr. S. S. Satchwell, assisted by Drs. J. E. Douthett and W. A. Duggan. I noticed while there, a little incident which proved that the hearts of these Surgeons are in their work. The rules for the regulation of this Hospital reflect great credit on the chief Surgeon, and they are carried out to the comfort and the welfare of its inmates.— There are four Matrons, among whom is the sister of the lamented Pritchard. The building was formerly used as a seminary for young ladies, and has every possible convenience—plenty of water—and hot and cold baths. The clothes of the soldiers are returned to them clean and neatly patched. Particular attention is paid to the food of the sick, an appropriate diet is nicely prepared, and in this, there is a striking contrast to some other Hospitals I might mention. At the head of each bed is a board fixed to hold a ticket, on which the full name of the patient—his age—Company—Regiment and date of entrance into the Hospital are registered. If he dies these items are transferred to a board and placed at the head of his grave. Thus the friends of those who die there, may ascertain with certainty at any time, their grave. There is also connected with the Hospital a reading room, to which I hope the friends of the soldiers will send any spare volumes they may have. Many families have books which they value little, but which would serve to while away the tedious convalescence of the soldier. Let all who read this, send a package of old books directed to Dr. S. S. Satchwell, General Military Hospital, Wilson, N. C. marked "Reading Room." The number of patients treated during the months of October, November, December, was 761. Number of deaths 15—a practical comment on the general efficiency of those who have charge.

I made a very pleasant visit to Louisa, stopping with Bro. Guilford Lewis, to whom I am much indebted for aid in my work. The friends of Elder G. M. L. Finch will be pained to learn that for the present at least, this zealous and devoted minister is almost wholly incapacitated for labor. May the Lord restore him to wonted health and usefulness. I closed my work at Warrenton. The church at this place, under the pastoral care of Elder H. Petty, though affected by the war, gives some signs of improvement. The congregations are increasing, and there is a desire for a series of meetings. It is difficult however for Bro. Petty to secure the services of an efficient minister to aid him in this work at present.

I would return my thanks to the brethren generally for their kindness and co-operation, and would ask them to bear in mind the importance of army colportage, and as the Lord prospers them, send up in a few months another donation to Bro. Cobb.

J. B. T. PATTERSON.

For the Recorder

Letters from the Army.

In his report for February, 1863, Rev. B. F. Jessup, Colporteur at Wilmington, writes:—

"I received 137 hymn books, all sold— not half enough. I have sold about 40 testaments, and, if I could have taken them out to the camp, I might have sold several hundred. As to the tracts, I have given away more than all you sent me. I have been very kindly and warmly received by officers and men wherever I have been. Send me 1,000 or more of Soldier's Text Books, and the same of the Pocket Bible, 1000 'True Riches and Security,' and any other you can send me."

From Clingman's Brigade.

Rev. O. Churchill, Chaplain 31st N. C. Regiment and Colporteur in our employ, writes from Charleston, S. C., Feb. 25, 1863:

"After I arrived in Wilmington, I sold Testaments and hymn books to the amount of \$700, and if I had the books I could sell any amount of them. When I got to Wilmington, I found most of the Brigades gone to Charleston, S. C., and I am now in the Brigade on James Island near Charleston. The 31st, 8th, 51st, and 51st Regiments are in this Brigade. If you could furnish me with books I could sell a great many of them. The soldiers of this (Clingman's) Brigade are all from N. C., and are anxious for books."

From Dotes' Brigade.

Rev. W. R. Gaultney, Chaplain of 1st N. C. Regiment, writes Feb. 5th, 1863, from Fredericksburg, Va.:

"I have preached one sermon to this Regiment, and held one prayer meeting, at which a deep interest was manifested. Several mourners came forward. I trust the Lord is going to bless us with a great revival of religion. Will you please remember us in your prayers?"

From East Tennessee.

Rev. John Ammons, Colporteur and Missionary among the troops in East Tennessee and Western N. C., writes from Marshall, N. C., Jan. 26, 1863:

"For the present month I have not been able to do much as colporteur. I have distributed 4076 pages of tracts, but have not had a single opportunity of preaching to the soldiers. The last of December the Yankees made a raid into East Tennessee, and produced a great moving about of our troops. Immediately the Tories along the mountains between N. C. and Tennessee broke out in large force to robbing and plundering the defenceless citizens, upon which a great part of N. Carolina's troops were called back to defend their own homes, and have been scouting, marching, and countermarching through the mountain fastnesses fighting Tories as they are likely to do for a month and probably over. What sicks these are in this department are scattered all over the country, depriving one of the privilege of visiting but a few of them. They are at Knoxville, Morristown, Clinton, Jackboro,

and various other places. This has been a hard field of labor because of the altered condition of our forces—some in Tennessee and some in North Carolina. I am still anxious to serve the cause of the soldiers. I have learned something of their trials and sufferings. There is nothing could do, consistent with duty and right, as I would do for them. Their sufferings in their country are without a parallel, but while they suffer as soldiers for their country, they fall out of Christ, O what a thought! they must suffer forever. As to the spiritual condition of our troops in this department, I can only say it is not the most favorable. Few of these here in East Tennessee ever seen an enemy, and so far as anything is concerned, they appreciate it very little, yet they respect the colporteur."

From Daniel's Brigade at Kinston.

Rev. J. D. Davis, Army Colporteur at Kinston, writes in his report for February, 1863:

"I visited General Daniel's Brigade and saw away 7000 pages of religious reading. I passed through the camps, the soldiers would come to me from every direction, and 'Give me something to read.' 'Send me some more,' 'Yonder is a sick man, he said send him some good reading.' 'has been said the soldier will not read a pamphlet, but it is only said by those who are willing to give their contributions not to the soldiers."

After laboring all day, I endeavored to catch at night to a large and attentive audience, and then sang a hymn, and many of these made to feel a foretaste of those joys which are laid up in store for those that love to serve God in this world.

L. Thorne went with me to the hospital where we endeavored to encourage the men, held up before them a dying hour, and directed their minds to many encouraging words the Lord has given us. We found a man, who at times was not rational, affected by fever. He said he had been a great sinner and felt himself to be in a bad condition without the help of the Sabbath School.

We met the Rev. Mr. Brooks, Chaplain of the 2nd N. C. Battalion, and we had a happy moment together. He invited me to fill his stand on the Sabbath, but was not able to do so.

I heard a man taking the name of God in vain, and gave him the tract, 'Don't Swear.' He looked at it and said he had been guilty of a great crime, but he would from this time never swear any more."

N. B. C.

For the Recorder.

Child's Index.

The Sabbath School paper is published monthly by Elder S. Boykin, at Macon, Ga., at 50 cts. per annum or 3 for \$1. Our Sabbath Schools should scatter them over the land like leaves of the forest.

E. DODSON.

Vicksburg.

Der F. H. Ivey, chaplain of a Georgia Regiment, stationed at Vicksburg, in a private letter writes:

"When our six months' term in the Georgia State army expired, our Regiment was reorganized for the Confederate service, and I received the appointment of Chaplain. I was absent nearly all last year in middle and west Tennessee, and Kentucky; and two months ago were sent to Mississippi, and to perform a part of the forces defending Vicksburg—the Sebastopol of the Confederacy. Vicksburg is naturally a very strong position, situated on a high bluff, and surrounded by a broken, hilly country. All that military art and engineering skill can do, has been done, or is now doing, to strengthen the place. Cannon from every direction, fortifications abound at every turn; batteries are planted at every available point, and breast-works and entrenchments encircle the city, at a distance of from one and a half to three miles. Our army is confidently believed to be strong enough to repel any emergency that may arise. It is posted in and around Vicksburg, and for eight or ten miles up and down the river, where field artillery sufficient for all purposes. The valleys swarm with brave and determined men, and the hills bristle with all the pomp and circumstance of glorious warfare. The eyes of the whole country are turned to Vicksburg, with deep interest; and as the hand drama nears its enactment, the interest constantly increases. It is now considered to be the most important point in the hands of our government; it is so small, and so dependent. If Vicksburg falls, the formidable hosts by whom she is besieged, it must contribute greatly to the close of this struggle at no very distant day.

Our enemies have an army here supposed to number 80,000 men, with an ample fleet of gun-boats, transports, mortar-boats, and all other necessary appliances; with the determination, certainly, to succeed if they can. But we feel perfectly secure, though still active and vigilant. Our army is cheered by the prestige of two victories already; while our opponents are disheartened by the remembrance of two defeats. I think a third awaits them; and we are content for the destiny of the Republic to turn upon the issue of the conflict. That conflict will doubtless be stubborn and bloody; but when it is past, it will be seen that the confidence of the country in the ability of our troops to defend this stronghold were not misplaced. May we then have cause to exclaim,

"Proud then of the waters,
Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourning daughters;
As they were constant in our ills, be joyous in our joy;
For they are cold and stiff and still who would our walls annoy."

Upon the river of late, our operations have been successful and important. A few weeks ago the Yankees captured from us the ferry-boat DeSoto; but we compelled them to destroy her, to prevent her recapture. Subsequently, one of their rams, the Queen of the West, ran by our batteries, passing down the river, and doing our commerce between here and Port Hudson, much damage. (Port Hudson is nearly 300 miles by the river, below Vicksburg.) The Northern papers were jubilant over the exploits of this adventurous craft. But she was very shortly captured on Red river, and is now doing good service under Confederate colors.

A few nights ago, another of their vessels, the Indiana, a fine new iron-clad gunboat, also ran the gauntlet, and passed down the river to join the DeSoto and Queen of the West. Again the Northern press went into ecstasies over this brilliant achievement. Join the Queen of the West, she did, but it was in hostile array; and she was whipped and captured; but so disabled as to be of but little service to us, except as a water battery.

Our enemies have placed great hopes upon the canal, which they have been engaged for months in digging. The probabilities are that it will prove a failure; but should it succeed, it will turn the Mississippi into a new channel, leaving Vicksburg high and dry, some two or three miles in the country, it would then avail the enemy nothing; for the blockade of the river would be renewed at some point below, to which our strength now here would be transferred.

Whipping the Devil on Sunday.

There is a popular error among country churches, that in protracted meetings nothing can be accomplished on Sunday. Many ministers are of the same opinion, and do not hesitate to express it. The foundation upon which this view is held, is plausible but false. It is maintained that on the Sabbath the crowd is so anxiously and the confusion so great, that no good can be done. The dawn of the Sabbath is looked upon as a serious calamity. The tide of worldliness is considered too strong to be resisted. The day is quietly surrendered to the devil, with the tacit understanding that he is to behave himself for the balance of the week. In some cases one service only is held on that day. Some ministers, despairing of glorifying God, gracefully attempt to glorify themselves by preaching "crack sermons." It is not uncommon to omit the invitation for the serious to come forward for prayer and instruction. In short, the day is given up, or else an effort to make the meeting "hold its own," is all that is attempted, unless indeed we except big promises to "move things" on Monday.

Last fall I had the privilege of attending a meeting in a community where this error had gained considerable hold. It was a season of unusual interest. A day or two before the second Sabbath of the meeting, one of the ministers in attendance alluded to the approach of that day, and the confusion and dissipation that would come with it. He assailed the prevailing error, and made the startling proposition that the day should be fortified and held at all hazards.— He went so far as to express the belief that if proper efforts were used the devil could be thrashed. His suggestion was favorably received. Vigorous preparations were made for the important engagement.— The church was busily engaged in prayer. The day came, and with it the hosts of worldliness and fashion. Christians met early for prayer meeting. Great solemnity prevailed. While the house was filling, the devotional exercises went on. By the preaching hour the house was packed to overflowing. There was however, no disorder, no levity. The vast crowd was subdued into solemn stillness. The exercises were conducted as on other days. In the morning there was general thoughtfulness. The intermission passed quietly.— The afternoon brought joyous fruits of victory. There were instances of powerful conviction. At the close of the service seven conversions were reported. The meeting held its own, and gained a good deal more beside. It was generally conceded, even by his friends, that the devil had once got decently thrashed on Sunday.

Moral.—In protracted meetings, always try by earnest prayer and faith to whip the devil on Sunday.—Religious Herald.