

BIBLICAL RECORDER.

J. D. HUFHAM, Editor and Proprietor.

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BIBLICAL RECORDER,

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Letters to a Young Minister.

No. VII.

BY A NORTH CAROLINA PASTOR.

The Minister of the Gospel should give especial heed to that exhortation of the apostle, "be diligent in business." He has no time to idle. Indolence in any follower of Christ is certainly a very grave if not an unpardonable offence. Life is not a playground on which men may pass their days and years in merriment and ease, but a scene of earnest activity and solemn reality, and that man alone comprehends its responsibilities and privileges, who seizes every hour as it passes, and improves it for his own spiritual advancement, the good of his fellow beings and the glory of God. Said the pious author of the "Alarm," "Give me a Christian that counts his time more precious than gold." Seneca has said that it is a virtue to be covetous of time. The minister of the Gospel must, by a rigid economy of his golden moments, learn to stamp improvement on the wings of time. Let no moment, my dear brother, pass unimproved. Each hour spent in idleness will one day deepen your regrets and rob you of much delight when in a green old age you should take a retrospect of the past. Says Young in his Night Thoughts, "The man who consecrates his hours, by vigorous efforts and an honest aim, at once he draws the sting of life and death: he walks with Nature, and her paths are peace." While I would not have you immerse yourself in your study and constantly tax your intellectual energies in the acquisition of knowledge, still I would urge you to form habits of profitable study. Time hangs not heavily on the student's hands. With habits of study, exercise and prayer, a man of moderate talents will become a far more profitable laborer than one of much greater ability who lacks diligence and application. By examining the biographies of Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, Calvin, Baxter and other eminent divines, you will find them men of indelible industry and unremitting diligence. Many wise men have spent years of successful toil and study in their Master's work, and have bequeathed to us the rich legacy of their experience and knowledge. These writings will be a source of profit to us, and it should be our delight to learn of those who have followed the Saviour before us. Avail yourself of the vast store of knowledge which they possess, and your time will be spent most profitably. Diligent study is the gate to a life of eminent usefulness. Says Mather, "There never was an eminent, who was not an industrious man. You must be diligent in your business, if you hope to stand in any desirable circumstance before that Great King, unto whose service you are dedicated." Says Prof. Miller, "I have directed close attention to this subject, and the result without one solitary exception is, that I never knew an individual to gain any considerable mass of really digested and valuable knowledge, without unwearied industry."

Our studies however should have a direct reference to our work. If we lose sight of this, and seek to roam over the entire field of literature and learning, we shall soon most painfully experience that "much study is a weariness of the flesh." In our short life time we can not read every book worthy of consideration. Our reading and study should therefore be chiefly directed to religious knowledge, a better understanding of the Scriptures, and, in a word, to whatever will enable us to make full proof of our ministry. The preacher's time, more precious than gold, should not be wasted in the enjoyment of agreeable society and the perusal of such books as may be foreign to his work. Of course time profitably spent with the people of his charge, in religious conversation and Christian intercourse, is a part of his legitimate work. A man may become so excessively fond of society and so much wedded to the acquisition of human learning, as to lose a great degree of his spirituality and suffer a serious abridgement of his spiritual comforts.

Seek knowledge then, my brother, not to be known as learned, but to afford you material for usefulness among your people. A knowledge of men and things, is a valuable adjunct to the gifts of the Spirit, but without that Spirit it is but the chaff which the wind driveth away. Let all your reading and study have reference to the work of the ministry. This is the work of your life—magnify your office. Here concentrate all your talents and energies. And while you advance in knowledge, and with a commendable zeal and diligence derive lessons of profit and delight from the experience of others, daily seek the blessing of the Holy Spirit to sanctify your labors to your own spiritual improvement and the prosperity of the Redeemer's cause. Try to cherish that lovely spirit of Henry Martyn who considered "all other studies subservient to the great work of ministering things to immortal souls."

For the Recorder.
Letters from the Army.
Rev. W. M. Kennedy writes from Magnolia, N. C., Feb. 25th, 1863:

"Dear Bro. Cobb.—When the troops first came to Magnolia, I wrote you a note requesting you to send me some tracts for distribution among them, and offering at the same time to visit and preach for them occasionally in a gratuitous way, and after waiting some time, I received a letter from you tendering me a commission as colporteur, with a salary. I am sorry to say that my time is so much occupied, that it would hardly be worth while for me to engage as a colporteur for any time at a salary. I am willing, however, to do all I can in a voluntary manner to aid the blessed work of army missions. I received your package of tracts the other day, through brother Gold, just after Pettigrew's Brigade had left here, but I had a fine opportunity last Monday of distributing tracts in Ransom's Brigade. I found the troops very anxious to get them. As soon as I made my appearance among them, I was thronged by the eager crowd until all were supplied. I visited one Regiment when my supply was well nigh exhausted, but when I told the Colonel I had more tracts up town, he detailed a man to go back with me for a bundle, promising to have them distributed in the Regiment."

I have some of the tracts on hand yet and the troops have left this place and Kinston too, but I hope to have an opportunity of distributing them in a useful way. I expect to go down the Rail Road this week, and I will supply the soldiers at Rockfish and North-East. I will try and pay you for all the tracts I use; so here is a small mite with the promise of a little more soon.

From friends at Well's Chapel, \$16.25
From Concord, 3.50
For myself, 1.00
\$20.75

I hope to be able to send you more soon. The work must go on. There is money enough in the country, and all that is wanting is for the restors to bring the matter before their churches, and you will not lack funds."

From Fredericksburg.

Rev. A. B. Ervin, a soldier of the 4th N. C. Regiment, who has been detailed by Gen. Lee to act as Colporteur under our appointment, writes from camp near Fredericksburg Feb. 27, 1863:

"I have visited nearly all the soldiers in two Brigades and conversed with them on the importance of personal piety. I have distributed 15,000 pp. of tracts, preached twice, and held two prayer-meetings. There has been no general awakening, but my meetings have been well attended. Large congregations have given me their serious attention. The soldiers and officers have received me with courtesy everywhere, and were glad to get tracts and have preaching. A great many wanted Testaments and hymn books but I had none."

We have forwarded this brother by Express a lot of Testaments, hymn-books and tracts, which we hope he will soon receive.

From Weldon.

Rev. Wm. Brant, colporteur new at Weldon, reports that during the months of January and February, he distributed tracts and held religious conversation, with five regiments around Goldsboro, viz: 11th and 42d Miss. and 45th, 32d and 59th N. C. Troops, and with the troops in hospital and camp at Weldon. He has sold and given away 314 books and distributed about 22,000 pp. of tracts. He writes from Weldon, March 3, 1863:

"I have preached in the hospital when the health of the patients would admit."

and I had opportunity from other duties, and also to the 42nd N. C. Regiment, and the company guarding the bridge. These troops have not enjoyed the advantages of a chaplain, and I find that the ground, in nearly every instance, must be broken up ere it is good ground. Officers have every where visited me with great respect seemingly. No conversions, as far as I know, have taken place at the camp. Some from the 42nd Regiment, however, have professed religion in the hospital. There have been four professions, and a dozen perhaps, who have been induced to put all their trust, as they think, in the atonement of Jesus Christ, but without that conviction of safety which indicates that a realization of salvation through Christ has become a part of themselves."

From Cook's Brigade.

Rev. S. W. Howerton, colporteur in Cook's Brigade, writes Feb. 17th from Magnolia:

"I find that there is a great destitution of religious books and instruction in this Brigade. There is not a chaplain in that part of the Brigade stationed here. The men are very anxious to get our tracts, and seem to read them with much attention. I have sold all the Testaments and hymn-books I brought with me, and yet they crowd around me and beg for them. Some three or four told me that they have not had a Testament since they have been in the service, which has been 12 months and upwards. I believe that four-fifths of the men are without Bibles or Testaments. I wish I could tell you how anxious they are to get these Testaments and hymn-books, but I can not. We had preaching for them three times yesterday, and have prayer-meetings every night. I never saw men more attentive and respectful to the preaching of the Gospel. They go in crowds to hear it. Please send me 250 Testaments and 250 hymn-books if you can possibly do so; for if men ever did or ever will need them, these do now."

Such is the testimony of those who have been laboring among the soldiers, in favor of the work of Army Colportage. Let us continue to furnish them with the Testament, the Camp Hymn-book, the Soldier's Pocket Bible, and the tract, to console them in their sufferings and privations, and to direct their thoughts and footsteps heavenward. Enclose contributions for this object."

N. B. COBB,
Gen. Supt. Army Colportage of N. C. Goldsboro', N. C.

For the Recorder.

DEAR BRO. HUFHAM:—I have recently returned from a very pleasant trip to the old North State. I find the army, so far as I have learned, in good health and fine spirits. The religious element found in many of the Regiments of Gen. Jackson's corps is very encouraging. There have been two conversions, very recently in our Regiment. On the 16th there was a meeting of the chaplains of Gen. Jackson's corps. It was, indeed, very interesting, and I hope great good will result from it. All seems to be quiet on the Rappahannock this evening. The enemy's cavalry crossed the river at Kelley's Ford in large force a few days since, but Gen. Stuart drove them back with heavy loss on both sides. We are now having a fine prospect for a large snow, and I suppose every thing will remain quiet here at least for several days to come.

Before closing, I will state that while in N. C. I had the pleasure of visiting the school at Taylorsville, found it in quite a flourishing condition for the times. The number of students is 35. The Principal is Rev. F. A. Belcher, who is assisted by Mrs. Belcher. From the general satisfaction they have given in that institution, I believe them to be well qualified for the position which they now occupy. I was pleased to find that not only every possible means is used for the mental culture of the student, but no pains is spared in endeavoring to impress upon the minds of the pupils lessons of morality and religion. No locality can be more healthy. From its close proximity to the mountains none can be more desirable. And now when our country seems to be swallowed up in a gulf of extortion and speculation, one would be greatly surprised to find board so cheap and tuition so very low, as is the case in Taylorsville, N. C.

Yours in Christ,
R.

It was a beautiful expression of Burke's upon the death of his son, that his child in this world should be his ancestor in the skies. Elder-born in glory, the junior of the household is the senior in Heaven.

For the Recorder.
Memories of Early Days.
BY QUELQU'UNE.

Upon a high and rocky hill stood the little edifice, commonly known in the village of W—as the "Red School House." It looked down upon the whole length of the one wide, level street along which the village was situated, though the path from the valley below up to this temple of learning was tortuous and steep. As its name imports, it was red; though much of the brilliancy of its hue had disappeared with the years and blasts that had swept over it. How long it had flourished I know not; it had been the scene of my mother's school days, and my father, too, had studied *Pike* and *Murray* within those walls. It was the most wonderful of places to my young mind. I had heard of it from my first recollection, and at three years of age, I was sent on my first pilgrimage thitherward. It was no insignificant journey to a child like me—through deep sand all across the valley and then the steep ascent. The latter, however, was delightful, for the pathway led me among rugged, brown rocks, half overgrown with moss, and here and there on every sunny side, some wild flowers might be found, and the green grass was cool and pleasant to my weary little feet.

Within the school house there was a solemn kind of look that half frightened me at first, though the fear soon faded out. The walls had (ages ago it seemed) been plastered; but then there were huge naked places, brown and sooty, from which the plaster had fallen long ago. The windows were high and small, and had the look of sentinels, so spectral was the sky light that came to us, little ones.

Around three sides of the room ran a long desk or series of desks, called on the one side "the big girls' seat," and on the other "the big boys' seat." In front of these were lesser seats, constantly diminishing in height down to the "front seat," where A. B. C's set all in a weary row. Enthroned in a high backed chair, with a huge desk before her, was the teacher, so situated as to take us all in at a glance. Memory has only recorded of her that she was gentle and kind. In fact, all these recollections are shadowy, yet golden. It seems as if the sky was always blue and bright in those early days, the flowers sweeter, and birds and insects floated nearer then to me than ever since.

I can not tell how long I went to the "Red School House," though there I learned to read a little, but I can relate how I came to a full stop in my literary career for the time.

It is a noted custom with mamma to lay aside for children wonderful garments called "Sunday clothes," only to be worn on great occasions, and as such they are looked upon with especial admiration by all juveniles. When no longer suitable for holiday wear, they become less fascinating under the name of "every day clothes." This custom, obnoxious and harrowing as it is at times to the feelings of all children, was my mother's also. In the course of events, a pair of yellow morocco shoes had, by reason of age, become my "everydays," and, for a time, were quite the pride of my life. True, they looked a little dingy, but fancy still saw through all their dirtiness and dirt, and beheld only their primeval yellowness and gloss; and I trudged about in them feeling myself still half dressed up while wearing them.

A Sunday came at length, when I was arrayed for church, and lo! my mother produced a pair of brilliant red shoes. These had long been my ambition; for a little friend next door had red ones, and I longed to be just as fine. That day was one of my happiest—proudest. I was perpetually in motion, and only fearful that every body would not notice my beautiful red shoes. Monday morning, however, brought out the yellow ones again, and what a fall was there! I pouted, I fretted, I cried, but all to no purpose. I was not permitted to glory in my red shoes that day to my great disappointment, but I was not content to give up the idea.

I had heard other children wail, in a paeon, declare they would, and would not do this or that, and had observed that by their brave throats often carried their point. I had never ventured so far as to try the effect of this upon my mother, and I thought I would just try and see what I could do. I declared that I wanted my red shoes, and

she would not have them, I would not wear any, and go barefooted first. My mother looked at me and surprised at this exhibition of temper, but quietly replied, "Very well, if you can go without any," and suiting the action to the word, she put the yellow ones away also.

I was not accustomed to going bare footed, and had not really and seriously thought of anything possible, although I had named it as a danger. I was proud and stubborn, and since I had attempted to gain an end and had been overcomen and thwarted, I would not show that I cared; but set off for school through sands ankle deep and scorching hot under the influence of the summer sun. I arrived with feet cut, sore, and bleeding; already I began to repent my obstinacy, but it was too late. I soon became feverish and when school was dismissed at night, I was so ill that I had to be carried home. Three weeks of fever ensued as a consequence of my first fierce trial of temper, and in the intervals of physicking and sitting up I had abundant leisure to discuss in my mind the value of the saying, "Never tell your mother 'you won't.'"

For the Recorder.

Scriptural Enigma for the Young.

Composed of 32 letters.
1, 13, 5, 10, 23, 21, was a doubting

disciple.
3, 28, 14, 18, was one who denied his Lord.
10, 27, 12, 17, 21, was the leader of the disciples.
22, 20, 10, 5, 28, 16, 11 was a faithful minister to whom Paul was much attached.
21, 27, 23, 22, was one who was saved when the earth was destroyed by a deluge.
18, 2, 27, 19, 30, was the name of the vessel who went to the gate when Peter presented himself after his miraculous escape from prison.
10, 23, 6, 11, was the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears.
13, 24, 8, 23, 9, the prophet on whom the figure of Elijah fell.
28, 26, 8, 14, 25, was the prophet who interpreted the mysterious writing on the wall.

While is a beautiful and comforting Psalm of Scripture written by the sweet Psalmist of Israel.

"Receive My Spirit."

The happy accord, the willingness of the departing soul, should proceed not from stupidity, but trust in him who keeps these keys, and from such preparedness for removal as the gospel requires. O happy soul, that, finding the key is turning, and opening the door for them, are willing to go forth upon such terms, as "knowing whom they have believed," &c., and that neither principalities nor powers, nor life, nor death, can ever separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord." Life, they had not separated, whereof was the greater danger; and death is so far from making this separation, that it shall complete their union with the blessed God in Christ, and lay them enfolded in the everlasting embraces of divine love! Happy souls, will be a speedy end of all thy griefs and sorrows; they will be presently swallowed up in fulness of joy. There is already an end put to thy tormenting cares and fears, when once thou art reconciled to death. This is the most glorious sort of victory—namely, by reconciliation. For as thou art conquered, not the enemy only, but thy enemy itself, by which he was so deadly to become thy friend, and so no longer to be feared; nor is there anything else from whence thou art to fear hurt; for death was thy last enemy, even this bodily death. The whole region beyond it is, to one in thy case, clear and serene, when to others is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

O transports of joy that do now most rationally result from this state of the case, when there is nothing left between the dislodging soul and the glorious unseen world, but only the dark passage of death, and that so little formidable, considering who hath the keys of the one and the other!

We must, it is true, be absent from these bodies; we cannot, as we would, be present with the Lord. And is that all? Can anything show be more certain than that? O happy state of our case! How should our hearts ring and leap for joy, that our affairs are brought into this posture; that in order to our perfect blessedness, nothing is farther wanting, but to die; and that the certainty of death completes our assurance of it! How glorious may good men triumph over the impotence of their most mischievous enemies, because the greatest mischief they can do to them, is to put it out of their own power to hurt them any more; for they can never come out of their reach. They can (being sanctified) kill the body, and after that do us no more than they can do (Luke xii. 49). What a remarkably significant "ye shall be dead" what a defiance doth it im-

port of the utmost effort of human power and spite, that here it terminates!

And thus we are to look upon all our other trials and afflictions, that in any providential way may befall us: we may be sick, in pain, in poverty, in disgrace, but we shall be not always in mortal flesh, which is the occasion of all the rest. Can we be upon better terms, having but two things to be concerned about, as necessary to our complete felicity—union with Christ, and distinction from these bodies? God is graciously ready to assist us in reference to the former, though he requires our care and exertion: in reference to the latter, he will take care himself, in his own fit season, without any care or concern of ours in the matter; and only expects us to wait with patience till that fit season come. And come it will, perhaps sooner than we may think.—John Howe.

Soothing Memorials.

We have recently had the privilege of examining the pocket Testament of a youthful soldier, who fell in the service of his country. The volume had been picked up by his faithful servant on the field of battle upon which he received the wounds of which after some months he died, and presented to his young master. Its small size and the fact that it contained an appendix of psalms and hymns, induced him to substitute it for a larger volume, a Bible which had hitherto been his companion on the march and in the camp. The young soldier was a man of piety; his pocket Testament, and a likeness of his young wife, he carried about his person, precious remembrances of his home on earth, and his home in heaven. To the one he was never to return; but the other is now his blissful abode.

The volume bears traces of diligent and thoughtful perusal; and certain passages are marked on the margin as indicative of his faith and hope. Among them is:—"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Among the hymns the following stanza is marked:

"Not in mine innocence I trust, I bow before Thee in the dust; And through my Saviour's blood alone, I look for mercy at Thy throne."

A volume might be written, illustrative of the various emotions, which are indicated by the verses, which bear the impress of his pencil. There is one, however, which is well suited to assuage the anguish of his bereaved relatives: "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

This pocket companion, with the likeness of his young wife, was taken from his person by a friend, when he was about to breathe his last. "The only son of his mother, and she a widow," he has left to her and his bereaved widow the comforting reflection that his sword and his Bible were the weapons of his warfare. With the one, he stood a victor on the gory field of Marathon; with the other, he achieved a victory over the last enemy. Henceforth, his name is inscribed on the martyr-roll of his country, and written in the Book of Life.

Fidelity in the Church of England.

The Nassau Correspondent of the *Charleston Courier* writes as follows concerning the state of public opinion in England:—"By far the most important subject is that of the alleged revolution in progress in England relative to the belief in the historical authenticity of the Bible. Over a year ago a series of powerful articles were published in book form, entitled "Essays and Reviews," in which the accuracy of the historical portions of the Old Testament was severely criticised. The strict constructionists took alarm. Numerous replies appeared, and the authors of "Essays and Reviews" were called before the Ecclesiastical Court to answer the charge of heresy. To the surprise of many the accused were acquitted and according to the Westminster, the Court laid down the principle, that "the clergy of the established Church are not obliged to maintain every part of the Bible as an infallible record of past history and every word as the sacred utterance of the spirit of God."

In the midst of the confusion created by this decision has appeared the first volume of "The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically examined," by Rev. William Colenso Bishop of Natal. The author takes the ground boldly that the Pentateuch is not reliable as a historical record, and that it was not written by Moses. He fixes its authorship at a date considerably posterior to the events it relates. The Westminster emphatically agrees with the Bishop, and the whole is discussed, with the conclusion that the intellectual world is about to take the Bible as an expression of men's ideas of God's will rather than an expression of the will of God himself."

No Sabbath.—A soldier, writing to the *Confederate Baptist*, from camp near Charleston, says: "So far as my observation extends, there is no such day (as the Sabbath) known, at least recognized in the army. The same routine of the camp is gone through on that day as any other and if the soldiers are detailed on fatigue duty of any kind, when Sunday comes they are not allowed to rest from their labors. It is the same case with the negroes that have been and are still working by hundreds and thousands on our fortifications."